PART IV

IMMIGRATION AND AMERICA'S RACIAL GROUPS

Immigration and a Changing America

By Mary M. Kritz and Douglas T. Gurak

INTRODUCTION

Immigration has deep roots in American history and continues to be a dynamic force in reshaping America. People from many nations helped America settle and expand its frontiers, build its industrial complex and service economy, and become the leading economic and military power in the world.

The United States is now in the midst of its fourth immigration wave. In the 1990s, the foreign-born population increased by 57 percent and reached 31 million in 2000. If this population lived in a single country, it would be larger than the population of Canada; larger than the combined populations of Austria, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden; and the 33rd-largest country in the world. No other country has a foreign-born population of this size, although some do have larger shares of their populations who are foreign-born. Because of immigration, the United States has a relatively high population growth rate and will see its 2000 population of 281 million rise to over 400 million by 2050 if immigration continues at its current pace.[1]

America's current immigration wave, called the Globalization Wave in this report, started in the 1960s. At that time, immigrants had a diminishing profile in the U.S. population, but they have since become an important social and economic group in America. The portrait of immigration that emerges in this report is one of change. Since 1960, foreign-born numbers have tripled; major shifts have also occurred in the geographic origins and characteristics of the foreign-born population. Given these trends, the U.S. Census Bureau projects that the size of the overall U.S. population will increase rapidly in the years ahead, as will its race and ethnic diversity.[2] While today's immigrants come to America with the same hopes and dreams that earlier immigrants had, growing numbers are not traditional settlers, but rather come to America to study or work for a few years and then return home or move to another country. This means that while many foreigners residing in America today form part of the large foreign-born population recorded in the 2000 Census, they are not immigrants in the historic sense (see Box 1, page 260).

In addition to the unexpected surge in immigrant numbers recorded by the 2000 Census, other factors since then have renewed interest in immigration. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001, prompted a federal review of immigration policy and management and led to the passage of the USA Patriot Act. That legislation gave law enforcement officials the authority to track, detain, and deport foreigners suspected of terrorist connections or intent. Critics of the Patriot Act charge that it threatens the civil liberties of both Americans and foreigners and undermines the values on which America was built. Congress set up the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2003 in order to reduce the likelihood of immigration abuse and to improve the management and coordination of domestic security (see Box 2, page 261).

Concern about terrorism sparked these government initiatives, while continued immigration of unauthorized labor migrants from Mexico and elsewhere sparked other initiatives. In early 2004, President George W. Bush asked Congress for the authority to set up a temporary worker program that would allow the estimated 8 million to 10 million unauthorized migrants in the United States from Mexico and other countries to work here legally for up to six years. That proposal was quickly criticized by some in Congress and the public for not granting unauthorized migrants permanent immigration status and by others as being too generous to a population that has broken U.S. laws.

Questions about immigration are increasingly being raised not only by Congress but also by the media and

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Box 1

Who Is An Immigrant?

Legally, foreigners living in the United States can be classified into four categories depending upon their mode of admission:

- Permanent residents who have been admitted for long-term residence;
- Nonimmigrant residents who have been issued visas (subject to renewal) that admit them to perform specific activities for a fixed period of time;
- Asylees and refugees admitted for humanitarian reasons; and
- Illegal or unauthorized migrants who either enter surreptitiously or overstay a temporary visitor visa.

Under U.S. immigration law, only permanent residents would be considered immigrants, but all foreigners present for more than one year would satisfy the United Nations definition of an immigrant.

Americans tend to equate foreigners with immigrants. The fact that the 14th Amendment set forth the birthright principle of citizenship reinforces the idea that foreigners already in the United States have the right to stay and that physical presence is a sufficient basis for claiming access to American rights.

In the 1900s, Congress increasingly drew legal distinctions between different categories of foreigners and between citizens and immigrants. Whereas permanent immigrants now have most of the same rights as citizens (except the right to vote), the rights of unauthorized migrants remain unclear. In the 1982 case of Plyer v. Doe, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that children of unauthorized migrants have the same rights to a public education as children of legal aliens or citizens. In 1996, Congress passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, both of which restricted unauthorized migrants' access to public assistance.

Increasing numbers of foreigners living in the United States are nonimmigrant residents, a group that mainly includes managers, professionals, technical personnel, and other highly skilled people admitted to the United States on a temporary basis to work for the institutions that recruit or sponsor them. Immediate family members of those immigrants are admitted with the same status.

While the *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* provides data on the number of permanent residents and refugees arriving in a given year, the *Yearbook* has poor data on nonimmigrant residents, and no data on unauthorized migrants. Since the census does not ask about a foreigner's legal status, we do not know the distribution of the 31 million foreign-born counted in the 2000 Census across the above-mentioned four legal status categories.[1] Moreover, the United States gathers no data on the number of foreigners and Americans who move outside the country, although both outflows are thought to be substantial; and the return migration of Americans living abroad is also growing.

The decennial census has the richest data on foreigners in America, but anyone who uses this data has to decide how people should be classified. Should naturalized citizens be classified as Americans or immigrants? Should foreigners who have lived in America for decades be classified as immigrants? Should a person born abroad of an American parent be considered an American or an immigrant? And comparisons across time may be biased because foreigners present at the time of one census may have left the country by the next census.

In this report, the term "foreign-born" refers to the total population of foreigners counted in the U.S. census regardless of legal status or citizenship. The term "recent immigrant," in contrast, refers to foreigners who arrived in the 10-year period preceding the census. Both the foreign-born and recent-immigrant categories may include some naturalized Americans, since foreigners admitted for permanent residency can apply for naturalization within five years of their arrival in the United States.

Reference

1. Daniel B. Levine, Kenneth Hill, and Robert Warren, eds., *Immigration Statistics: A Story of Neglect* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 1985); and Barry Edmonston, ed., *Statistics on U.S. Immigration: An Assessment of Data Needs for Future Research* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 1998).

the public, but immigration has always been a polarizing issue, particularly during previous historic periods of high immigration. In order to inform these discussions, this report focuses on three issues: the historical context that set the stage for contemporary immigration to America; the policy, economic, and social forces that shape immigration today; and the demographic, sociocultural, and economic diversity of America's foreign-born population and changes in that population since 1960. The report draws heavily on data from the 2000 Census as well as on data from earlier censuses. While census data provide rich information on the origins and characteristics of the foreign-born population, the data are silent about immigrants' reasons for coming to America or about their values, beliefs, and dreams. Since the United States is a country where the latter group is believed to be as important as one's background and characteristics in shaping one's life, the rest of the immigration story will be written by immigrants and Americans themselves in the years ahead.

Box 2

MANAGEMENT OF U.S. IMMIGRATION

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), created in 2003 in response to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, describes its mission as: "We will lead the unified national effort to secure America. We will prevent and deter terrorist attacks and protect against and respond to threats and hazards to the nation. We will ensure safe and secure borders, welcome lawful immigrants and visitors, and promote the free flow of commerce."

Before DHS, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in the Department of Justice managed immigration and border enforcement. Now, INS functions are assigned to three different DHS agencies: the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS); the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (BCBP); and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (BICE). The BCIS manages immigrant visas and naturalization services and publishes the annual *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* (formerly the annual *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service*).

The 11,000 U.S. Border Patrol agents are part of the BCBP. Their function is to prevent the illegal entry and smuggling of aliens and drugs into the United States and to intercept those aliens who do enter illegally before these aliens move away from border areas. The BCBP also inspects agricultural items and ship containers suspected as potential carriers of people or animal and plant pests or diseases.

The BICE posts customs and immigration inspectors at U.S. international airports and border crossings and manages the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System, started after 9/11 to keep track of visitors to the United States. Males 16 and older who are nationals of Muslim countries have to register annually with BICE. The USA Patriot Act required the BICE to set up the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, which collects data annually from the 5,900 universities and schools certified to enroll foreign students.

IMMIGRATION TO AMERICA: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

For four centuries America has received immigrants from other continents. However, the number of immigrants, their national origins, the causes of immigration, and the policy context guiding immigration have changed greatly over time. In order to highlight differences between the current wave and earlier immigration waves, this report reviews U.S. immigration history.[3] To frame this discussion, we use Philip Martin and Elizabeth Midgley's classification of American immigration:[4]

- Colonization.
- Frontier Expansion.
- Industrialization.
- Post-1965 Wave (Globalization).

Colonization Wave: 1600–1820

This period lasted almost 200 years and established the roots of the population and culture that characterize America, but it in fact brought the smallest number of foreigners to America's shores (see Table 1, page 262). While England needed immigrants in the 1600s to settle its North American colonies, it was difficult to recruit large numbers of people willing to make the difficult and long journey across the North Atlantic to settle in territories perceived as wilderness. England had a population of only 4.1 million in 1600 and needed people at home to advance its economic and political interests. But since England also wanted to establish control over its distant North American colonies, it pursued a wide range of recruitment practices to get people to move to the colonies, including offers of free land in America, indentured servitude, free transport, and forced deportation of convicted criminals and other social outcasts. Fernand Braudel claimed that "men, women and children were kidnapped into emigration in Bristol; or heavy criminal sentences were passed to increase the number of 'volunteers' for the New World who could save themselves from the gallow or from the galleys."[5]

By 1700, the American colonies had a European-origin population of about a quarter-million; and this population, composed largely of people born in the colonies, was growing rapidly through natural increase—reaching 2 million by 1775. While England continued to treat the colonies as dumping grounds for its paupers and criminals, the colonists had started to object. In 1722, Pennsylvania responded to England's settlement there of several thousand religiously persecuted Palatines from Germany by passing a law requiring shipowners to pay a fee for every undesirable person landed. Pennsylvania was also the first state to set a head tax on immigrants in order to discourage immigration of the poor and destitute. Public antipathies toward particular origin groups began to rise and became an important political issue in the 1700s. The Irish were the first group singled out as "undesirables" and unlikely to assimilate—because they were Catholics. Most of the colonies passed legislation in the late 1700s that restricted the entry of Catholics.

By the mid-1700s, England realized that its practice of deporting undesirables had become a major source of conflict within the colonies. Although England then started to change its emigration policies, requiring for the first time that heavy taxes be levied on all people from England and Ireland seeking to emigrate to North America, it was too late. In 1776, the colonies issued their Declaration of Independence, citing England's emigration practices as one of their grievances.[6]

In the 1700s, England spearheaded another unfortunate episode in American history: the forced importation of slaves from Africa. Slavery was one way for

Table 1

FOUR U.S. IMMIGRATION WAVES, 1607–2000

Period	Number of immigrants arriving	Top national origins of immigrants	Underlying economic forces	Policy highlights
1607–1820	600,000 Europeans	England, Scotland, Ireland, Netherlands, France, Germany, Sweden	Colonization	England placed no restrictions on emigration.
	300,000 Africans	West Africa	Plantation economy	1808: slavery importation abolished.
1820–1870	7.4 million	Ireland, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Mexico	Frontier expansion	Few policy restrictions.
				1876: Supreme Court affirms federal authority over immigration.
				1875 Act prohibited immigration of criminals and prostitutes.
1880–1925	25 million	1860–1890—Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, Scandinavia	Industrialization and urbanization	Federal numeric restriction of immigration begins.
		1890–1920—Austria/Hungary, Italy, Russia, Germany, Ireland, Canada		1882: Chinese Exclusion Act.
				1921 and 1924: National Origins Quota acts.
1965–present	26.4 million	Mexico, China, Soviet Union, India, Philippines, Vietnam, Dominican Republic, Korea, El Salvador, Canada	Global interdependence	1965: Immigration Act abolished national origin quotas.
				1986: IRCA amnesty; increasing federal regulation.

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service, *2001 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (2003).

southern tobacco and cotton plantation owners to obtain a secure supply of workers. In the 1600s, England had encouraged indentured workers from Western Europe in order to meet the growing need for labor in the colonies. But supply did not keep up with demand. After working for a few years to pay off their passage, the freemen usually opted for land ownership rather than wage labor. The colonists also were unsuccessful at enslaving indigenous Indians, because Indians knew the terrain and often escaped and went back to their tribes.[7]

The colonists then turned to Africans, who were thought to be an ideal labor population because they could be identified by color, were already accustomed to working in a tropical climate since their homeland had a climate similar to that of the southern United States, and were generally viewed at that time as racially inferior.[8] Although the first Africans had arrived in Jamestown in 1619 as indentured servants, their status changed to that of slaves in the late 1600s as the need for labor grew. The slave trade took off in the 1700s and continued until 1808, when the young U.S. federation passed a law prohibiting slave importation. By then an estimated 300,000 Africans had been forcibly uprooted and taken to Britain's colonies in the Americas. Many more died en route. Vernon Briggs claims that slave importation did not end in 1808 but continued until President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.[9] If so, this suggests that the first illegal immigration to the United States occurred from 1808 to 1863 because shipowners and their financial backers ignored U.S. law and continued to import slaves.

Frontier Expansion Wave: 1820–1870

The beginning of the second immigration wave is usually set at 1820, perhaps because government data on immigration began to be compiled from that date onward. But 1820 is an arbitrary date, and the roots of the second immigration wave were established during the presidency of Thomas Jefferson (1801 to 1808), following passage by Congress of two pieces of legislation favorable to immigrants. The first action was the repeal of the 1798 Naturalization Act, which required a 14-year residency period before foreigners could apply for naturalization; the second was a decision not to renew the 1798 Alien and Sedition Acts, which facilitated the deportation of foreigners deemed dangerous. While Jefferson was not a proponent of immigration, he had ambitions for America—namely, that it should stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific—that eventually would

require immigrants. To achieve that vision, Jefferson made the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and then sponsored the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1804. He was unsuccessful in his bid to acquire Florida from Spain; the treaty with Spain that deeded Florida to the United States was not signed until 1819.

The ensuing westward expansion needed settlers. Immigrants from northwestern Europe were encouraged to migrate by offers of free land in the West. Although the West was already sparsely populated by Indians, many of whom had resettled there after being pushed out of the eastern colonies and told that lands west of the Mississippi were theirs, the westward movement of Europeans did not slow. Throughout American history, neither Britain nor the United States felt it important to honor pledges to the indigenous Indian populations. Nor did Britain or the United States ever make a serious effort to incorporate Indians into the growing American population.

By 1820, frontier expansion was well underway, setting off increased immigration of Europeans to a new peak of more than 400,000 people annually in the 1850s. Further settlement was stimulated by the acquisition of additional land in 1848, after President James Polk forced Mexico to cede the Southwest Territories following the Mexican War. Gold was discovered shortly thereafter in California's Sacramento Valley and fueled the rush of both Americans and immigrants to this new territory. In just one year, 1849, California's population increased from 20,000 to 100,000.

California's settlement not only attracted migrants from Europe and the eastern United States but also lured the first Chinese immigrants to America. Gold initially attracted the Chinese, but as labor shortages developed in the West, they were recruited for low-wage jobs. In order to attract Chinese workers, the United States signed the Burlingame Treaty with China, which guaranteed Chinese immigrants the same rights as other foreigners.[10] Western entrepreneurs then started to recruit Chinese men to work in the mining industry and to help build the transcontinental railroads. By 1870, a quarter of California's population was of Chinese origin.[11] The growth of the Chinese population in California was not welcomed either by those U.S.-born citizens concerned that the Chinese would dilute the country's racial stock, or by labor organizers concerned that Chinese workers would be willing to work for lower wages than U.S.-born workers and thus would drive down wages. In response to this growing opposition, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 and banned immigration of new Chinese workers for 10 years. That law allowed some Chinese to continue to come to the United States, including wives and children of citizens and returning residents; foreign students; visitors and government diplomats; and family members, servants, and employees of dipomats.[12] The Chinese Exclusion Act was renewed decennially until 1945.

For immigrants from northwestern Europe, there was an open-door policy in the 1800s. Most immigrants from that region came from Ireland, England, Germany, France, Sweden, and Norway. According to Philip Martin and Elizabeth Midgley, large numbers of Frontier Wave immigrants were Catholics, which led to the emergence of Catholicism as the largest U.S. religious denomination in the 1860s.[13] The Catholic immigrants, mainly Irish and German, were feared by Protestant Americans because of Catholics' tendency to develop parochial schools along with their own churches. Germans were also the first large non-English-speaking immigrant group and were widely viewed as separatists because they developed social clubs, newspapers, and schools. As the number of new immigrants increased, opposition to immigration grew. The Native American Movement emerged in 1835 in New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania and demanded restrictions on immigration. The "Know-Nothings" organized in secret societies in the 1850s and sought to get anti-immigration politicians elected who would ensure that Americans ruled America.[14] Though ultimately unsuccessful, the "Know Nothings" influenced the political discourse of their day and illustrated the strong anti-immigrant attitudes often generated during periods of large-scale immigration.

During the Frontier Wave, states continued to take the lead in the recruitment and processing of immigrants, but authority over immigration began to shift toward the federal government. Although Congress took no steps to restrict immigration during the Frontier Wave, it did pass a law in 1819 that sought to reduce crowding and improve conditions on ships that transported immigrants to America. The law responded to reports that sailing vessels were riddled with disease, were poorly provisioned with water and food, and caused many deaths of passengers during the crossing.[15] The 1800s were an important period for sorting out whether the federal government or states could regulate immigration. Before affirming in 1876 that Congress rather than states had authority over immigration, the U.S. Supreme Court addressed several questions: Did state regulation of immigration interfere with international commerce? Could states extract a head tax from shipowners who transported immigrants to America? Could states require shipowners to provide a written report on the characteristics and origins of their passengers? Although the Supreme Court vacillated in its decisions as to which government body had authority over immigration, it eventually sided with Congress (see Box 3, page 264).

Industrialization Wave: 1880–1925

After a drop in European immigration during the Civil War years, America's third immigration wave took off in the 1880s and reached historic levels before being

Box 3

Supreme Court Cases on Alienage and Commerce in the 1800s

Before America's independence from England in 1776, immigration had been controlled by Britain and by each American colony. After independence, the newly created states continued to regulate immigration, and many states enacted passenger laws in order to control the type of immigrants who would come. One set of laws focused on how to prevent ship captains from bringing in paupers, criminals, and other foreigners deemed undesirable. New York, Massachusetts, and other states required shipowners to submit a written report of passengers' names, places of birth, ages, occupations, and last place of residence. In order to minimize the costs to cities and states, some states imposed a head tax on immigrants.

In the 1800s, these state regulations began to be challenged in the courts on the grounds that they interfered with international commerce. In 1824, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the authority of Congress over international commerce in the case of Gibbons v. Ogden. In 1827, in Brown v. Maryland, the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional a Maryland law that imposed fees and restrictions on interstate and international commerce.

It still remained unclear whether transporting foreigners to America was the equivalent of international commerce. The Supreme Court had acknowledged in its 1824 and 1827 decisions that states had the right to police and secure the welfare of their citizens. In the 1837 case of New York v. Miln, the Supreme Court upheld a New York State law that required ship captains to submit a list of passengers within one day of docking, held that immigrants were not equivalent to international commerce, and said that the New York statute was a police-power matter rather than one of international commerce. But in an 1849 ruling on several Passenger Cases, the Supreme Court took a different direction and decided that a head tax on immigrants did interfere with international commerce.

Following that decision, New York and other states attempted to get around the head tax prohibition by requiring shipowners to pay a temporary bond on foreigners and collect fees from all arriving passengers, including Americans. The New York State law was challenged in 1875 in the case of Henderson v. Mayor of the City of New York, and in 1876 the Supreme Court ruled that, while New York had the right to request that a shipowner submit a list of foreign passengers, the collection of a bond or fee was equivalent to a head tax on immigrants, which had been ruled unconstitutional in the 1849 Passenger Cases.[1] The Supreme Court also opined that Congress was the appropriate authority in the United States to develop a system of laws to regulate immigration.

Reference

1. Craig T. Friend, "An Omen of Change: State Power to Regulate Commerce," in *Historic U.S. Court Cases: An Encyclopedia*, 2d ed., ed. John W. Johnson (New York: Routledge, 2001): 365–67; and The Dillingham Commission, *Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission*, Vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1911).

checked by the National Origins Quota acts of 1921 and 1924. Immigration during this wave was fueled by the growing demand for workers in urban areas, the building of a transcontinental rail system, and improvements in the North Atlantic voyage. Steamship travel had become common by the 1880s, reducing the Atlantic crossing to less than a week compared with the seven to 10 weeks that the crossing used to take. By 1873, 97 percent of immigrants were arriving by steamship rather than sailing vessel.[16] The Industrialization Wave also brought a shift in the national origins of immigrants, from northwestern Europe to southern and eastern Europe. Since immigrants from the new origin areas were widely viewed by Americans as racially and ethnically inferior to earlier immigrants, a strong anti-immigrant movement emerged in the early 1900s that culminated in the passage of restrictive immigration acts in 1917, 1921, and 1924. Opposition to immigration came from several sectors, including followers of the eugenics movement, labor unions, and social service agencies.

Despite the importance of urban industrial growth as the major stimulant underlying immigration in this period, not all immigrants in this wave settled in urban areas. Although Frederick Jackson Turner claimed that the frontier had closed by 1890, in actuality, "in the forty years after 1890 the government gave away almost four times as much land as it had given away before that year."[17] The continued availability of free land in rural areas meant that the immigrants who continued to come from Germany, the United Kingdom, and Scandinavia flowed westward to take advantage of land opportunities there rather than settling in the rapidly growing industrial cities in the Northeast.

Nevertheless, the demand for cheap labor to support rapidly expanding urban industries meant that new sources of immigrants had to be found elsewhere. Southern and eastern Europe were sources for those new workers. To attract migrants from those regions, labor recruiters and state governments stimulated outmigration by developing flyers, posters, and other material to spread information about job opportunities in America. By 1900, migration flows to the United States from Italy, Poland, Austria-Hungary, Greece, Russia, Bulgaria, and Rumania were well established.[18] Although the new immigrants were similar to northwestern European immigrants in that they also were mainly rural peasants or farmers fleeing poverty and seeking economic opportunity in a new land, the recruitment networks that brought them to America differed. While migration from northwestern Europe was encouraged by existing social networks between earlier settlers and people in their homelands, migration from eastern and southern European was stimulated by U.S. labor recruiters who worked for companies or state governments. Cultural differences in language and dress between the new immigrants and Americans made the

immigrants highly visible targets in urban areas for xenophobes, who believed they would never assimilate.

In response to the growing public debate over the appropriate number and characteristics of immigrants, President Theodore Roosevelt set up the Dillingham Commission in 1909. When the commission released its 41-volume report three years later, its principal conclusion—that a slower pace of immigration would make it easier for America to assimilate the newcomers—quickly became lost in the rhetoric. Charges of "racism" and "anti-immigrant" were made against the commission, and most of its findings were eventually dismissed. Nonetheless, one of its recommendations—that a concerted effort should be made to ensure that the newcomers did assimilate—was heeded by a wide range of agencies seeking to promote social justice in America.[19] Social service agencies reached out to immigrants in the early 1900s in order to help them and their children adjust to America. In adult education classes, immigrants were taught English and sufficient history and government to enable them to pass the test required to become naturalized citizens. Other "proassimilation" agencies reached out to ethnic churches, newspapers, and clubs. Efforts were also made to educate the public about the contributions and special needs of immigrants. Social service groups promoted legislation to protect the rights of foreigners and ensure that immigration laws were fairly administered.

During the Industrialization Wave, about 25 million immigrants arrived before the southern and eastern European flows were effectively shut down following passage of the 1917, 1921, and 1924 Immigration acts. The 1917 law banned immigration from Asia and required that immigrants over age 16 be given a literacy test in their own language. To change the source of immigration back to northwestern Europe, the 1921 law limited the total number of foreign-born from a given country to 3 percent of the total number of foreign-born already in the United States from that country in 1910. That restriction applied to Eastern Hemisphere immigrants (who were then mainly Europeans) and implied an annual numeric ceiling on immigration of about 358,000.[20] In response to continued anti-immigration lobbying, in 1924 Congress passed the National Origins Quota Act, limiting the total number of immigrants from a given country to 2 percent of the 1890 foreign-born population from that country. This percentage implied an annual quota of about 164,000 immigrants from the Eastern Hemisphere, most of whom would be from northwestern Europe.

Immigration became a routine part of governance. Almost yearly in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Congress passed legislation or the Supreme Court ruled on some aspect of immigration.[21] Immigrant processing at U.S. seaports became the responsibility of the federal government following passage of the Immigration Act of 1891. That act also authorized the creation of a federal immigration facility, Ellis Island, where foreigners could be interviewed and receive medical exams to determine whether they should be admitted to America. However, after numeric restrictions on immigration began in the 1920s, a new method had to be found to screen prospective immigrants before they made the long journey to America. The consular visa system was the method developed. Under that system, which continues today, prospective immigrants are screened at U.S. overseas consulates to determine whether they are eligible to immigrate and, if so, with what type of visa. After overseas processing started in 1924, Ellis Island was no longer needed for that purpose, and its buildings were abandoned.

Globalization Wave: 1965–Present

U.S. immigration slowed to a trickle from 1925 to 1950. The Great Depression and World War II, along with immigration restrictions in the 1920s, combined to create this pause in immigration. With trans-Atlantic migration on hold, a shortage of U.S.-born agricultural workers developed during World War II. Western agricultural employers lobbied Congress for a temporary worker program with Mexico. Earlier, from 1912 to 1922, a temporary worker program with Mexico had operated, and employers wanted a new program to admit workers during harvests and other seasons when labor demands were high. These employers were successful in their efforts—Mexico and the United States signed the Mexican Labor Program Agreement in 1942. Commonly known as the *bracero* program, the agreement was renewed several times until 1964. A similar program for Caribbean seasonal workers was set up in the 1940s. The British West Indies temporary worker program was approved by Congress in 1943 and allowed nationals from Jamaica, the Bahamas, St. Lucia, and other parts of the West Indies to be admitted as seasonal agricultural workers throughout Florida and the East Coast.

Although immigration picked up during the 1950s, the numbers coming to the United States were still modest—265,000 permanent immigrants were admitted in 1960—and most analysts thought that the era of large-scale immigration had ended. That view seemed reasonable given that other countries of permanent immigration —Canada, Australia, and New Zealand—had seen their immigration flows slow to a trickle after passing similar restrictions on immigration. It was widely believed in the United States and elsewhere that the passport and consular visa system, along with policy restrictions on immigration, were effective tools for managing immigration. Moreover, there was no strong demand for increased U.S. immigration in the period after World War II. The American frontier was definitely closed and labor needs in industry and urban areas were being met by south-to-north migration of U.S.-born blacks, internal migration of white Americans from rural to urban areas, and increased labor force participation of women.

Changes in the global economy play a major role in America's fourth immigration wave, the Globalization Wave, so named because of the growing interdependence among countries.

The international economic and political forces transforming this era are complex.[22] International flows of capital, raw materials, goods, information, and people have increased dramatically since World War II and have led to increased interdependence among countries. International migration of highly skilled people has become an important dynamic between countries and an integral part of international exchange. Many institutions are part of the growing global apparatus that facilitates international migration of highly skilled people, including governmental and multilateral agencies, multinational corporations and private companies, universities, churches, development agencies, and a wide array of other nonprofit social and humanitarian agencies.

Just as growing numbers of Americans have gone abroad in recent decades to work for the U.S. government, corporations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other institutions, so too are growing numbers of foreigners coming to the United States to do similar work for their government and other institutions. These migrants are usually highly skilled managers, professionals, and technical personnel. From a legal standpoint, they require institutional sponsorship and are admitted to the United States as nonimmigrant residents for varying periods of time. Their visas are readily renewed and they often become permanent immigrants after being in the United States for several years. The fact that this category of migrant virtually did not exist in previous immigration periods indicates that forces propelling migration now differ from past forces.

The number of unauthorized labor migrants has grown in the Globalization Wave, increasing not only in the United States but also in the European Union and other relatively prosperous countries in Asia (Japan, Korea, Malaysia, and Thailand); Africa (South Africa, Senegal, and Egypt); and South America (Argentina and Brazil). Differential relative prosperity and geographic proximity underlie unauthorized migration flows, and easier and cheaper international communication and travel facilitate these flows. In addition, social networks between earlier migrants and their relatives and friends back home encourage more workers to migrate and take advantage of low-wage opportunities in economically prosperous countries. Rapid population growth in Africa, Asia, and Latin America in recent decades contributes to labor migration because of the burgeoning numbers of young people and rapidly growing labor forces that stagnant economies cannot absorb. As such, if economic opportunities appear better in neighboring countries, migrants are likely to vote with their feet and move to those countries.

Refugees have been ubiquitous throughout history, but as national borders have been sealed, growing numbers can no longer find refuge in neighboring countries. Since World War II, a system of international and nongovernmental organizations has been developed to meet the needs of refugees and facilitate their resettlement. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) leads these global efforts, along with an array of bilateral and nongovernmental organizations. In 2002, UNHCR estimated the world's refugee population at 10.4 million. If asylum seekers, returned refugees, stateless persons, internally displaced migrants, and other quasi-refugees who receive some protection and assistance from the UNHCR are included, that number doubles.[23] While the United States, Canada, Australia, and a few other industrialized countries admit some refugees annually for permanent resettlement, most refugees subsist in camps in neighboring countries and live on assistance from the UNHCR until they can return home. In 2002, for instance, an estimated 2 million Afghan refugees were displaced to neighboring Pakistan and Iran, and 750,000 civilians displaced within Afghanistan returned home.

Current U.S. Immigration Policy

These changing global forces set the context for contemporary U.S. immigration policy. In 1965, Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act, which is generally credited with starting America's fourth immigration wave. Passed during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, the act abolished the use of race and origin criteria for selecting immigrants, and it opened up immigration to nationals of all countries. Nonetheless, numeric controls remained: 120,000 migrants annually from the Western Hemisphere and 170,000 from the Eastern Hemisphere.

After eliminating national origin as the criteria for selecting immigrants, another basis was needed for allocating the limited number of permanent immigrant visas. Family reunification became the new mechanism. Under the 1965 plan, Congress decided that 74 percent of visas should be allocated to foreigners with a familial relationship to a U.S. citizen or permanent resident; 10 percent to professionals, scientists, and artists; 10 percent to skilled and unskilled workers in short supply in the United States; and 6 percent to refugees. While country quotas of 20,000 were set for Eastern Hemisphere countries, immediate relatives of U.S. citizens (spouses, minor children, and parents of citizens over age 21) were exempted from both the country and hemisphere quotas. Family reunification remains the centerpiece of U.S. immigration policy, although the distribution of visas in different preference categories has changed (see Table 2).

Since 1965, the federal government has passed legislation almost annually to address the main problem that regulation of international travelers and migrants now poses—namely, how to control unauthorized labor

Table 2

FOREIGNERS ENTERING THE UNITED STATES FOR PERMANENT OR TEMPORARY RESIDENCE, 2002

Category	Number
I. Permanent immigrants	**[1,063,732]**
Family-sponsored	673,029
Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens (no limit)	485,960
Spouses	294,798
Children (including orphans)	97,099
Parents	94,063
Other family-sponsored	187,069
Spouses of permanent residents	84,860
Siblings of U.S. citizens	57,570
Adult sons and daughters of U.S. citizens	44,639
Employment-based	174,968
Refugee and asylees	126,084
Diversity immigrants	42,829
Other immigrants	46,822
II. Nonimmigrant residents*	**[800,000]**
H-1B skilled workers	104,000
Foreign students*	344,000
Foreign government officials and families*	47,000
Businessmen/women (company transfers) and families*	150,000
NAFTA workers and families*	30,000
Other temporary workers and families*	141,000
III. Unauthorized migrants or illegal migrants*	**[550,000]**

* Estimates.

Note: The three categories in this table are not mutually exclusive across time and are not net additions to the U.S. population in 2002 because emigration is not considered here. Half of foreign students and their families were assumed to be newly arriving rather than returning foreigners. A third of people arriving in the other nonimmigrant categories were considered to be newly arriving. Only H-1B workers who are considered new or initial workers are included in the total shown. The annual estimate of unauthorized migrants was assumed to be the same as the Department of Homeland Security estimated that it was in the 1990s: 550,000 annually.

Source: Department of Homeland Security, *2002 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* (2003): tables 4 and 25; page 216.

migration while maintaining ready access for highly skilled foreigners, refugees, and others whose admission is considered to be in the national interest. Achieving this balance is not easy because immigration policy continues to be based on the premise that the United States is screening foreigners overseas to determine their eligibility for a permanent immigration visa. However, most foreigners who receive permanent immigration visas today are nonimmigrant residents and unauthorized migrants already living here who are converting their legal status to that of permanent immigrant. In 2002, 64 percent of all permanent immigrant visas were granted to foreigners already living in the United States as nonimmigrant residents or as unauthorized migrants who had petitioned for an adjustment of their legal status. The most common basis for the petition was that these foreigners had become an immediate relative of a U.S. citizen. In 2002, 72 percent of visas in the family-sponsored category were granted to exempt family members. Most of these people had already lived in the United States an average of three to four years before adjusting their status.[24]

A review of immigration policy efforts in recent decades indicates much back and forth. The difficulties Congress has in formulating and managing immigration policy stem from an inherent tension between policy measures intended to control unauthorized labor migration and other measures intended to facilitate immigration of immediate family members, nonimmigrant residents, and refugees whose admission is widely accepted by the American public because of underlying social, economic, and humanitarian interests. However, rather than taking a comprehensive look at the forces driving immigration trends, Congress tends to focus on specific problems and passes legislation that has unintended consequences.

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) is an example of legislation that was passed to halt unauthorized immigration, but that might have contributed to its increase. To find the votes, both pro- and anti-immigration legislators had to compromise. To appease proimmigration forces, IRCA allowed unauthorized migrants who were continuously in the United States after Jan. 1, 1982, to apply for permanent immigration status. To address the concerns of those seeking to deter unauthorized migration, the bill increased funding for border control and imposed sanctions on employers who "knowingly" hired unauthorized aliens, but only after legislators had removed provisions that would have made these steps enforceable. Nearly 2.7 million foreigners received permanent immigrant status under IRCA. The bulk of those whose status was legalized were Mexicans, but significant numbers were Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Canadians. Many IRCA status adjusters were from distant countries (such as Poland, Italy, and the Philippines) that also send large numbers of legal migrants to the United States.[25] Studies suggest that a substantial number of applications may have been fraudulent.[26]

IRCA was unsuccessful in reducing unauthorized immigration because neither employer sanctions nor increased border deterrence worked as expected. Employer sanctions failed to work because, in the absence of a secure national identity system, employers inspect documents such as driver's licenses and social security cards that are easily forged and hard to verify. A verification system initially included in the bill was dropped in order to secure the votes needed to pass IRCA. While significant investments were made following IRCA to expand the personnel, resources, and technology needed to police borders, the fact is that the United States has about 6,000 miles of land borders with Canada and Mexico and close to 5,000 miles of coastline

not including Hawaii, Alaska, or Puerto Rico.[27] Dramatic efforts such as the construction of concrete walls in densely populated areas along the Mexican border appear to only alter entry patterns.

The Department of Homeland Security estimates that 7 million unauthorized migrants lived in the United States in 2000,[28] a higher number than was present in the early 1980s before IRCA was passed. Some immigration experts estimate that the current number of unauthorized migrants is even higher—8.5 million or more.[29]

Congress has passed dozens of other bills in recent decades to facilitate the immigration of nonimmigrant residents, refugees, and their family members. Since passage of the Displaced Persons Act of 1949, which granted refugee status to European Jewish survivors from World War II, similar laws have been passed to admit other refugee groups of special interest to the United States. Following the Soviet Union's repression of the 1956 uprising in Budapest, Hungarian refugees were granted asylum in the United States. The Cuban revolution in the late 1950s led to the first admission of a large refugee group to the United States. To reduce the fiscal impact of Cuban refugee resettlement on states and communities, Congress authorized a refugee assistance program in the 1960s, a practice subsequently continued for other refugee populations, including the Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians.

In the 1990s, as civil conflicts developed in many parts of Africa, the United States responded by offering to resettle refugees from Somalia, Ethiopia, Liberia, the Sudan, and Sierra Leone. In Africa and elsewhere, the United States extended resettlement largely to refugees from countries in which it had a special interest. Refugees from Rwanda, Burundi, the former Zaire, Angola, and other parts of Africa in which the United States has little foreign policy interest have not been admitted for resettlement. Although the United States passed the 1980 Refugee Act to bring its refugee admission policy into conformity with the United Nations Protocol on Refugees, most refugee admissions continue to be selective and linked to U.S. national interests.

Other legislation opened up immigration to other groups. The 1979 Panama Canal Act granted permanent resident status to Panamanians and other foreigners who had worked in the Panama Canal Zone when it was controlled by the United States. A 1991 act granted special immigrant status to aliens who had served honorably in the Armed Forces of the United States for 12 years. Several nursing relief acts have been passed by Congress to admit nurses willing to work in areas with nursing shortages or to allow nurses previously admitted on temporary visas to adjust to permanent resident status. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Congress passed the Soviet Scientists Immigration Act to admit highly skilled scientists who had worked in nuclear physics, germ warfare, or other war- or security-related professions. The Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997 allowed Nicaraguans, Guatemalans, Salvadorans, and nationals of former Soviet bloc countries to remain in the United States.[30]

Most Americans would probably agree that the legislation described above has been responsive to the national interest and the humanitarian needs of specific groups of foreigners. The main point suggested by the increasing amount of targeted legislation passed by Congress in recent years is that foreigners increasingly need to be admitted to the United States for reasons that go beyond immigration policy. Moreover, group-specific legislation has received more support in the Globalization Wave because immigration responds to different forces today. Increasingly, U.S. political interests abroad play a role in determining which immigrants should come to the United States and the conditions under which immigrants should be admitted.

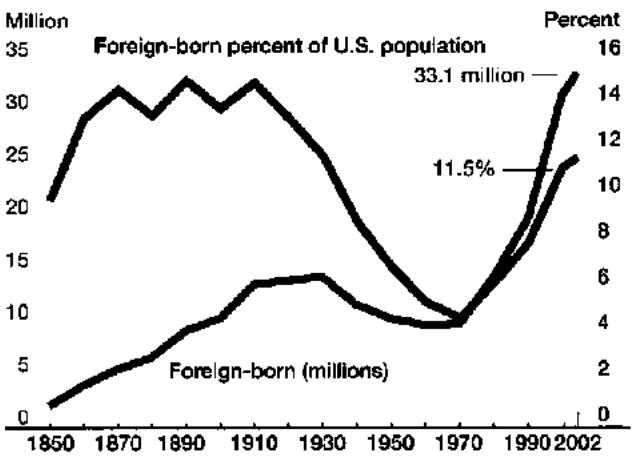
The New Immigrants: Rapidly Growing and Diverse

The United Nations estimates that 175 million people were living outside their country of birth in 2002, double the number in 1975.[31] If this estimate is correct, almost one in five international migrants now lives in the United States. While the absolute size of the foreign-born population is at its highest level in U.S. history, foreigners make up a smaller share of the population today than they did in 1910, when foreigners constituted 15 percent of the population, compared with 11 percent in 2000 (see Figure 1). The Census Bureau estimated that the foreign-born population rose to 11.5 percent of the population in 2002,[32] and it is likely that its share of the total population will exceed the 1910 figure by the 2010 Census. The magnitude of the growth in the size of the foreign-born population becomes apparent when one considers that there were almost as many foreign-born Mexicans in the United States in 2000 (9.2 million) as the total number of foreigners from all countries in 1960 (9.7 million). While the Mexican-born population increased by 116 percent from 1990 to 2000, the foreign-born populations from six other countries increased at a higher rate: Brazil (158 percent); Pakistan (141 percent); Nigeria (161 percent); Honduras (143 percent); India (132 percent); and the former Soviet Union (121 percent).

As the size of the foreign-born population rose in the 1980s and 1990s, so too has the number of countries that send migrants to the United States. While most foreigners come from a relatively small number of countries, America now receives migrants from virtually every country in the world. Historically, international migration to the United States and other countries was more limited in size and geographic scope and consisted of flows that

Figure 1

TRENDS IN THE ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE SIZE OF THE FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION, 1850–2002



Source: C.J. Gibson and E. Lennon, "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850–1990," *Population Division Working Paper* No. 2 (1999); U.S. Census Bureau, 2002 March Current Population Survey; and authors' estimates using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

evolved from special ties between the sending and receiving countries.[33] While those elements remain important, the U.S. flow has been transformed from a relatively confined migration system as late as 1960 into a global migration system in 2000. The expansion of the U.S. migration system occurred because of several forces: the liberalization of U.S. immigration policy, the opening up of the U.S. migration system to nonimmigrant residents, and the increasing inflows of unauthorized migrants.[34]

The diversity of the U.S. flow is reflected in the numbers. In 2000, there were 24 immigrant groups in the United States with populations greater than 250,000; 20 had populations of 100,000 to 250,000, and 43 had populations of 25,000 to 100,000 (see Table 3). These 87 countries accounted for 97.5 percent of the foreign-born population in 2000. The remaining 2.5 percent came from more than 110 other countries. To underscore the point that nationals of all countries can migrate to America, Congress set up the diversity visa program in 1990 to give access to foreigners from countries underrepresented in immigration flows. Since then, the number of countries considered underrepresented has expanded. In 2002, the program allocated 55,000 visas through an annual lottery to which nationals of all but the top 15 senders of immigrants to the United States could apply. Immediate family members (spouse, unmarried children under 18, and parents) may accompany those who

Table 3

SIZE OF FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, 2000

Population size category	Number of sending countries	Country of origin
9 million or more	1	Mexico
1 million to 2 million	3	China, Philippines, India
750,000 to 999,999	6	Vietnam, former Soviet Union, Cuba, Korea, Canada, El Salvador
500,000 to 749,999	5	Germany, Dominican Republic, United Kingdom, Jamaica, Colombia
250,000 to 499,999	9	Poland, Italy, Guatemala, Haiti, Japan, Iran, Peru, Ecuador, Honduras
100,000 to 249,999	20	Nicaragua, Pakistan, Brazil, Guyana, Laos, Trinidad and Tobago, Portugal, Thailand, Greece, Ireland, France, Romania, Cambodia, Nigeria, Argentina, Israel, Panama, Bangladesh, Egypt, Venezuela
50,000 to 99,999	22	Lebanon, Yugoslavia, Netherlands, Hungary, Iraq, Bosnia, Czechoslovakia, Chile, Spain, Indonesia, Turkey, Ethiopia, Costa Rica, Ghana, Bolivia, South Africa, Australia, Austria, Malaysia, Sweden, Barbados, Syria
25,000 to 49,999	21	Jordan, Afghanistan, Kenya, Croatia, Switzerland, Morocco, Liberia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Somalia, Burma, Belize, Denmark, Norway, Grenada, Albania, Azores, Fiji, Uruguay, Sri Lanka, Bahamas
Number of groups with a population of 25,000 or more	87	

Average population size of 87 groups: 347,266
Average population size of groups, excluding Mexicans: 244,776

Note: The 87 groups with a population of at least 25,000 in 2000 made up 97.5 percent of the foreign-born population. Origin groups are ranked from largest to smallest within size categories.

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

receive a diversity visa but are not included in the annual quota. Applications have grown annually; 6.2 million applicants qualified for the 2003 lottery.

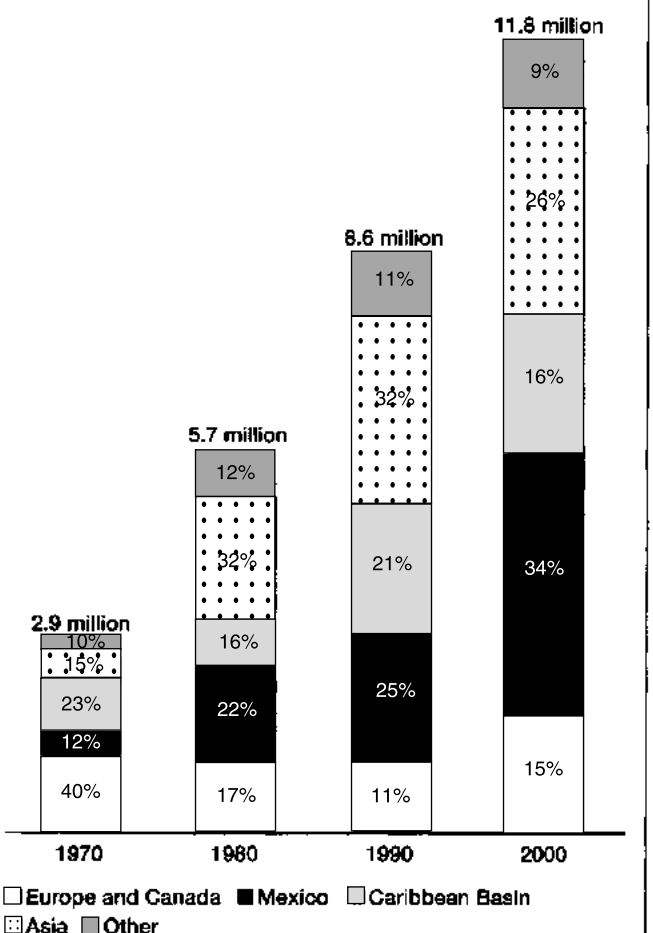
The diversity visa program and other policy measures opened up African immigration in the 1990s. Historically, relatively few immigrants to the United States have come from sub-Saharan Africa. But in the 1990s, migration from that region grew by 174 percent because of three policy forces: the diversity visa program; the U.S. decision to admit increased numbers of refugees from African war zones; and increased opportunities for graduate study in the United States. Most sub-Saharan Africans in America are from Nigeria, followed by Ethiopia, Ghana, South Africa, Liberia, Kenya, and Somalia. The number of African foreign students in the United States is still modest compared with those who come to study from Latin America or Asia, but their numbers are growing. To increase Africa's core of professionals and scientists, a number of institutions—including universities, private foundations, and bilateral and multilateral funding agencies—set up fellowship programs in the 1980s to recruit Africans for graduate study abroad.

Graduate study in the United States often results in permanent immigration because students find salaries and working conditions more attractive in the United States than in their homelands. Others stay because political or economic crises at home make it difficult for them to return. Whatever the cause, when highly educated nationals do not return home following their graduate studies, their origin countries lose the talent of some of their brightest young people. Often referred to as the "brain drain," investments made by students' sending countries in the education of these emigrants can be considered lost. However, sending countries may gain from remittances or by the professional and business ties that highly skilled emigrants often develop with their homelands. All types of migrants remit money to their homelands and thus contribute indirectly to economic improvements there.

U.S. immigration from all regions and most countries increased in the 1990s, but Mexican immigration soared: 34 percent of all recent immigrants in the 1990s came from Mexico, compared with 25 percent in the 1980s (see Figure 2). Recent immigrants are defined in this report as foreigners who arrived in the 10-year period prior to a U.S. census. According to demographer Francisco Alba, Mexican emigration to the United States is economically motivated by U.S. wages that are 10 times higher than Mexican wages, and by the inability of the Mexican economy to absorb the large and growing cohorts of Mexican workers that resulted from Mexico's high birth rates from the early 1970s to mid-1990s (see Box 4).[35]

Increased numbers of migrants to the United States in the 1990s also came from Europe and Canada. This rebound was unexpected and came after four

Figure 2
RECENT IMMIGRANTS BY REGION OR COUNTRY OF BIRTH, 1970–2000



Note: Recent immigrants are those who arrived in the decade preceding the census year given. Caribbean Basin includes all countries, except Mexico, that border the Caribbean Ocean, plus Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, and El Salvador. Percents may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Authors' calculations using the 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) from the 1970–2000 censuses.

decades of decline. In the 1990s, the size of the European/Canadian foreign-born population in the United States increased by 765,000, to 5.1 million. Almost 1.8 million recent immigrants from that region arrived in the 1990s, 84 percent more than came during the 1980s. These immigrants are mainly business executives, engineers, scientists, researchers, professors, diplomats, and graduate students who come to the United States as nonimmigrant residents. Some are relatively well-to-do retirees who spend part of the year in Florida, California, and other warm regions.

The absolute number of immigrants received from all regions increased in the 1990s, but the relative share from the Caribbean Basin, Asia, Africa, and South

Box 4

MEXICAN IMMIGRATION: A SPECIAL CASE

The circumstances shaping Mexican immigration are unique, and stem from Mexico's sharing of a long and relatively porous land border with the United States, Mexican settlement in the U.S. Southwest that predates today's borders, a history of labor recruitment and migration to the United States, continued sharp economic disparities between the two countries, and strong social and economic ties between Mexicans living on both sides of the border.

While Mexican migration to the United States used to be a low-profile issue for both countries, that is no longer the case. Immigration from Mexico to the United States has grown as the Mexican economy worsened in the 1990s, and is now a "rite of passage" for a growing number of Mexicans.[1] An estimated 10 percent of all Mexicans now live in the United States, but they make a major contribution to Mexico's economy. In 2002, Mexico received $9.8 billion in remittances, almost equivalent to the income the country received from tourism and 80 percent of the value of foreign direct investment.[2] With an average annual income of less than $20,000, a Mexican working in the United States sends almost 10 percent of those earnings to relatives in Mexico each year.

Mexico has taken steps in recent years to enhance its ties to Mexicans living abroad and to retain the loyalty of those nationals, even amending its constitution to permit dual citizenship. In 2002, Mexican consulates started to issue matricula consular identification cards in order to improve Mexicans' access to services in the United States. These cards are used in the United States by local governments, banks, motor vehicle bureaus, and other agencies to verify the identity and residence of Mexicans. Other Mexican initiatives have focused on how to extend voting rights in Mexican elections to Mexicans living in the United States; currently Mexicans can vote in Mexican elections only by casting their votes in Mexico. Some political groups in Mexico are lobbying for the United States to become Mexico's sixth electoral district and thus have full representation in the Mexican Congress; other groups want to extend political participation rights not only to U.S. foreign-born Mexicans but also to Mexicans born in the United States of Mexican parents.[3]

An agreement between Mexico and the United States on unauthorized migration was close to being reached before the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in the United States. Under the terms of that bilateral agreement, the United States would have regularized the status of unauthorized migrants already in the United States and set up a temporary worker program to allow Mexicans to continue to migrate in a legal, safe, and orderly manner. But these discussions were put on hold after 9/11, and remain so today.

In 2002, the Mexico-United States Border Partnership Action Plan was signed to improve the infrastructure and flow of people and goods across the border. In 2004, President George W. Bush renewed calls for a temporary worker program that would bring unauthorized migration into the open and enhance border security. While he viewed President Bush's call as a good first step, President Vicente Fox of Mexico stated that unauthorized migrants already in the United States should be legalized and that future policy initiatives should grow out of bilateral discussions rather than unilateral U.S. actions.

References

1. The Mexico-U.S. Binational Migration Study issued its final report in 1997. A number of studies were commissioned under this project and can be accessed online at www.utexas.edu/lbj/uscir.

2. Manuel Orozco and Michelle LaPointe, "Migration, Remittances, and the Rural Sector in Latin America," *Cooperation South* (New York: United Nations Development Program, 2003): 78–92.

3. Ken Bensinger, "Mexican Lawmaker Sees Voting in U.S.," *Washington Times*, July 10, 2003.

America decreased. While the Caribbean foreign-born made up 21 percent of recent immigrants in 1990, they constituted only 16 percent in 2000, despite an absolute increase (see Figure 2) from 1.8 million to 1.9 million in the 1990s. The same pattern held for Asian immigration: The percentage of recent immigrants from Asia in the 1990s decreased from 32 percent to 26 percent, but the absolute number of recent immigrants from Asia increased from 2.8 million to 3.1 million. These anomalous patterns occurred because of the 1990s' surge in immigration.

The Top Sending Countries

The focus on foreign-born regional groupings can obfuscate the fact that, while the U.S. migration system is global in scope, the bulk of its migrants continue to come from a small number of countries—one-third come from Mexico alone, and an additional one-third come from 10 other countries with close historical ties to the United States. Table 4 (page 272) lists the top 10 countries of origin for recent immigrants from 1970 to 2000.[36] Until 1970, most recent immigrants still came from Europe or Canada, but Cuba and Mexico had emerged by then as the number one and number two top senders of migrants. Cuban refugee migration developed momentum quickly in the 1960s and benefited from America's willingness both to admit Cubans and provide them with generous resettlement benefits. After 1970, Cuba's rank as a sending country fell, though Cubans still constituted the 11th-largest recent immigrant group in 2000. By 2000, the top 10 sending countries included four geographically proximate ones (Canada, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Mexico); three Asian countries whose flows grew out of labor migration to the United States during the Industrialization Wave (China, India, and the Philippines); two Asian countries with which the United States has had close military ties (Korea and Vietnam); and one former political foe (the former Soviet Union).

Table 4

TOP-RANKED ORIGIN COUNTRIES OF RECENT IMMIGRANTS, 1970–2000

2000					
Cumulative % of recent immigrants	Rank	Origin	1990 rank	1980 rank	1970 rank
34	1	Mexico	1	1	2
39	2	China	2	3	8
43	3	Former Soviet Union	15	12	29
48	4	India	7	7	17
51	5	Philippines	3	2	7
55	6	Vietnam	5	5	70
57	7	Dominican Republic	9	15	15
59	8	Korea	4	4	19
62	9	El Salvador	6	19	56
64	10	Canada	18	9	3
64	Cumulative percent and		60	54	58
7,513	number of immigrants (thousands)		4,859	3,044	1,675

Note: Recent immigrants are those who arrived within 10 years of the census year given. The cumulative percent and number for the top 10 groups refer to the top 10 groups at the time of each census.

Source: Authors' calculations using the 1% Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS) from the 1970–2000 censuses.

Migration flows from Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and El Salvador evolved from a long history of political and economic contact with the United States. These migrations share several characteristics: They are from countries geographically proximate to the United States, they contain large numbers of unauthorized migrants, and they have resulted in the transfer of a relatively large share of the sending countries' populations to the United States. In 2000, an estimated 12 percent of Salvadorans, 9 percent of Mexicans, and 8 percent of Dominicans lived in the United States. The magnitude of this population transfer stands out particularly for Mexico because of its large population size of more than 100 million. By 2000, the Mexican foreign-born population in the United States had reached 9.2 million and constituted 30 percent of the total foreign-born U.S. population, dwarfing all other senders.

Canada, another neighboring country, rejoined the list as the 10th-largest sender in the 1990s after dropping from third in 1970 to 18th in 1990. This migration has different roots than flows from other countries. Canada is the largest U.S. trading partner and has a comparable level of development to that of the United States. Canadian immigration probably picked up in the 1990s because provisions in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), signed in 1993 by Canada, Mexico, and the United States, specified that highly skilled people could migrate from one NAFTA country to another to work as businessmen/women, executives, scientists, engineers, university teachers, or other professionals. Legally, Canadians admitted under NAFTA would be nonimmigrant residents. According to U.S. immigration statistics, Canada was the number one sender of nonimmigrant residents to the United States in 2002.

The inflows from China, India, and the Philippines can be traced to labor migrations to the United States that started in the 1800s or early 1900s.[37] Immigration from China got underway in the mid-1850s. In spite of restrictions on Asian immigration in the 1900s, the Chinese-born population in the United States had grown to 140,000 by 1950. After 1965, the family reunification provisions of the 1965 Immigration Act allowed members of the settled Chinese population to sponsor family members as permanent immigrants. Chinese immigration got another boost after Congress passed the Chinese Student Protection Act in 1992 in response to the Tiananmen Square prodemocracy demonstrations. Chinese graduate students were thus allowed to remain indefinitely in the United States. In addition, many other highly educated Chinese scientists and professionals have been admitted in recent decades under the skilled employment provisions authorized in U.S. immigration policy.

Filipino migration has its roots in both earlier labor migration and U.S. military actions in the Philippines. After Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States following the Spanish-American War in 1898, Filipinos were considered U.S. nationals (but not citizens) and thus were exempt from restrictions on Asian immigration.[38] Since U.S. employers in the West and Hawaii still wanted low-wage workers from abroad, they turned to the recruitment of Filipinos after the 1924 Oriental Exclusion Act was passed. Labor migration from the Philippines continued for about 10 years before being halted by the Depression and World War II. However, close links between the United States and the Philippines during and after World War II reestablished Filipino migration to the United States. While Indian immigration also had its roots in early-1900 labor migrations, it too was halted by the Oriental Exclusion Act. Indian laborers initially were recruited to help build railroads in Washington State, but they subsequently began relocating to California to replace aging Chinese agricultural workers there.[39]

The Korean War stimulated Korean migration to the United States. American involvement in that war provided an opportunity for American soldiers to marry Korean women and bring them home as war brides; other Koreans were granted permanent immigrant status because of their service on behalf of the U.S. war effort. While Korea had sent almost no migrants to the United States before the Korean War, by 1970 it was the 19th-ranked sender, and by 1980 it was the fourth-largest sender. This surge in Korean immigration stemmed directly from the U.S. military intervention

and then was facilitated by family reunification provisions of U.S. immigration policy. Although still the eighth-ranked sender of recent immigrants to the United States in 2000, the volume of Korean immigration dropped by half in the 1990s from levels in the 1980s.

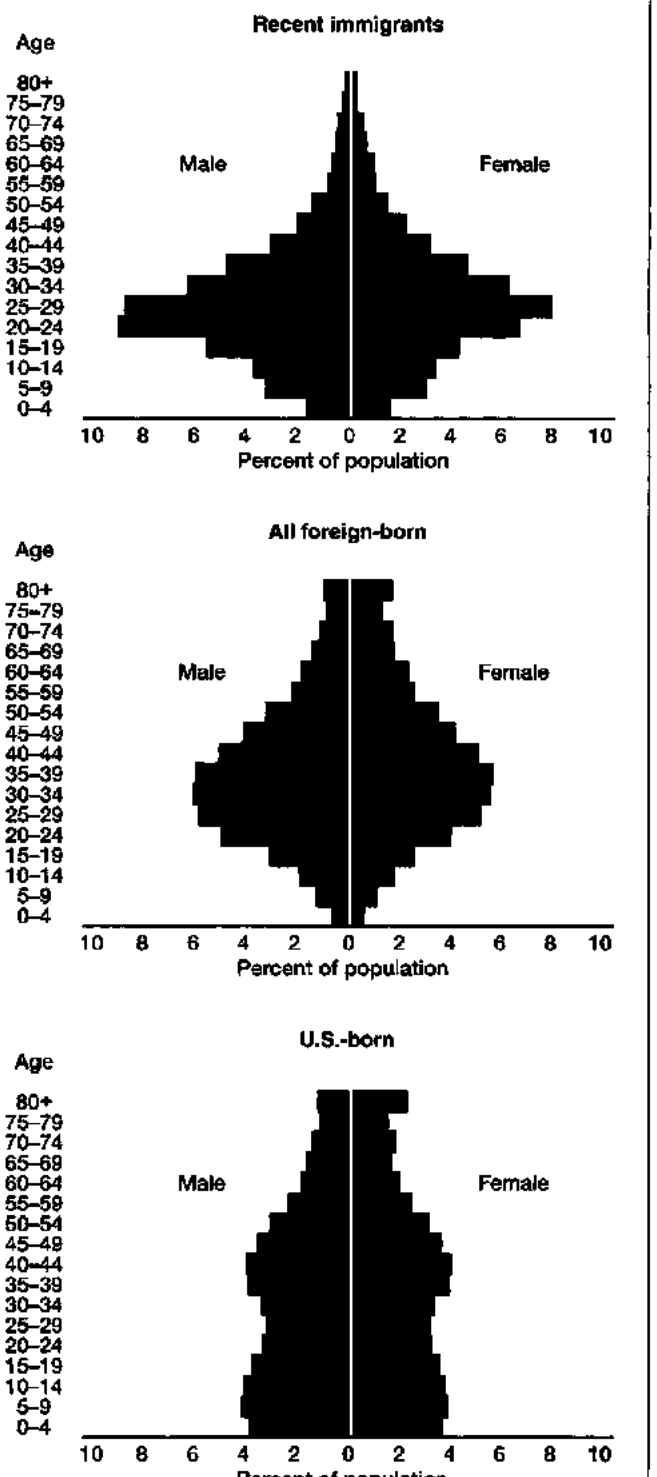
Korea is the first of the large Globalization Wave senders that has shifted from being a relatively poor country when its emigration flows to the United States started to being a relatively prosperous one today that imports immigrants from neighboring Asian countries. If Korean immigration continues to decline in the years ahead, that trend would suggest that economic development may indeed deter emigration and lead to declining emigration from other sending countries if they too are successful in their development efforts.[40] The strengthening of democracy in Korea in recent decades may have contributed to decreased desires to emigrate. Vietnamese immigration also had roots in a U.S. military action but differs from the Korean flow in that the Vietnamese were officially classified as a refugee group and thus granted resettlement assistance in the United States. While Vietnam's sending rank dropped from fifth in 1990 to sixth in 2000, it continued to send about the same number of migrants to America in the 1990s as it did in the 1980s.

As opportunities for nonimmigrant residents to America picked up in the Globalization Wave, immigrants from India, China, and the Philippines quickly stepped in to fill the applications submitted by U.S. companies for skilled nonimmigrant professionals from abroad. India became a large sender of highly skilled nonimmigrant residents in the 1990s, just as it previously was the largest sender of medical doctors and other health professionals in the 1980s. And many Filipino nurses, laboratory technicians, and other health personnel have migrated to the United States in recent decades on nonimmigrant visas.

The Demography of Immigrants

Demographics reveal a great deal about a population's economic and social conditions because schooling, family formation, employment, health, and other life-cycle events are highly correlated with age and sex. Foreign-born populations have selective age and sex characteristics that change over time depending upon rates of return migration and new immigration. Recent immigrants tend to be heavily concentrated in the 20-to-30 age group, and are considerably more likely than the U.S.-born to be in the prime working ages of 15 to 40 (see Figure 3). In 2000, both the total foreign-born and recent immigrant populations had fewer children ages 10 and younger than the U.S.-born population,

Figure 3
Age and Sex Profiles of Recent Immigrants, Foreign-Born, and U.S.-Born Americans, 2000



Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

because children born to immigrants are considered U.S. citizens and thus are classified as U.S.-born. Although the average ages of the foreign-born and U.S.-born populations have converged since 1960, the median age for the former is slightly older—37 years versus 35 years, respectively. In 1960, however, the foreign-born population was 22 years older than the U.S.-born. That disparity occurred because large numbers of elderly immigrants from the Industrialization Wave were present in the 1960 foreign-born population. By 2000, most of those elderly foreign-born had died, so both the foreign-born and U.S.-born had comparable percentages of their populations ages 60 and older (15 percent).

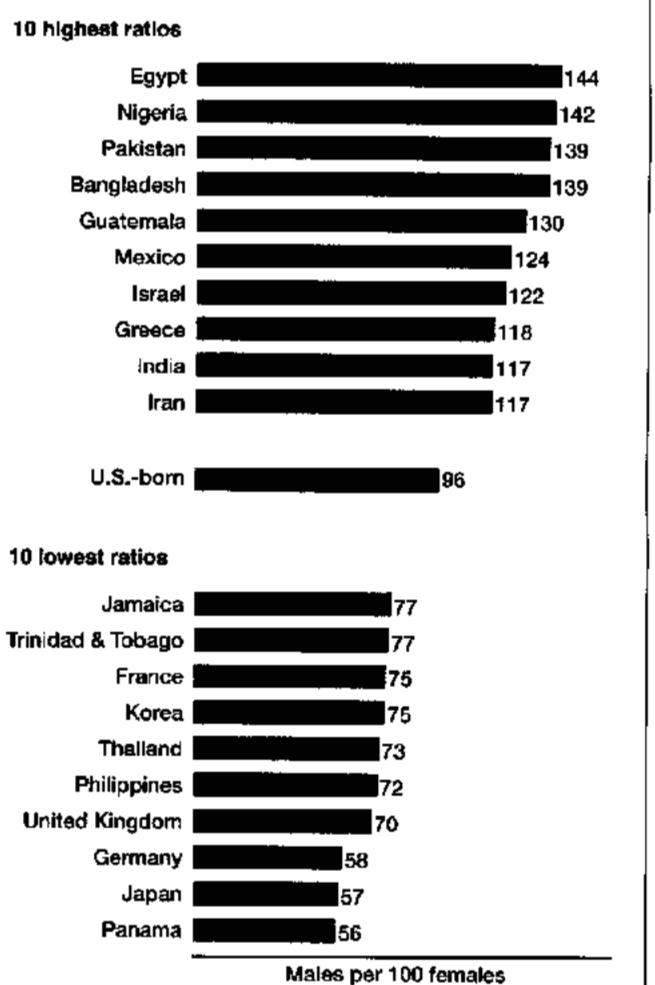
These averages mask considerable demographic diversity across foreign-born groups stemming from differential timing and causes of immigration. Labor migrants, for instance, come to the United States seeking low-wage work, are disproportionately young, and come largely from Mexico and the Caribbean Basin. As long as new labor migrants arrive, the mean age of foreign-born groups with large numbers of labor migrants remains relatively young. In contrast, foreign-born populations that include large numbers of refugees have a relatively young age structure in the decade when their immigration started, but these populations age in subsequent decades because they tend not to be replenished. The initial youthful pattern occurs because the underlying political causes of refugee flows tend to uproot entire families, including children. Cubans, Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians are examples of aging foreign-born populations in the United States.

Sex Ratios of Immigrant Groups

Immigration used to be viewed as a staged process that began with a male family member migrating to America to find work. After securing a job and establishing himself, the man would then send for his wife and children or propose marriage to a woman from his homeland. Under this framework, which corresponded to cultural norms about appropriate gender roles, men were considered to be the breadwinners and women were seen mainly as wives and mothers. This pattern continues to exist for some immigrant groups, but women have emerged as principal actors in many migration flows.[41]

In 2000, women constituted almost half of the foreign-born population. In order to identify how origin groups vary in their sex composition, sex ratios were calculated for the 44 largest immigrant groups. Figure 4 shows the ratios for the groups that had the 10 highest and 10 lowest sex ratios. (Sex ratios measure the number of males in a population relative to the number of females.) Ratios greater than 100 indicate there are more men than women in the population and ratios under 100 indicate fewer men than women.

Figure 4
SEX RATIOS OF SELECTED FOREIGN-BORN POPULATIONS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, 2000



Note: Ratios were calculated for the 44 largest foreign-born groups. Those with the 10 highest and 10 lowest ratios are shown above.

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

Differentials in sex ratios stem from immigration timing and causes. Men usually predominate in origin groups that have relatively large numbers of recent or labor migrants. Older established groups, in contrast, include more women and thus have lower sex ratios. The latter pattern characterizes the foreign-born populations from Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Ireland. All those countries sent large numbers of immigrants to America during the Industrialization Wave. Panamanians also have a low sex ratio (56) that stems from special conditions of this migration flow. Many Panamanian women have immigrated as brides of American men who worked in the Panama Canal Zone; 58 percent of Panamanian women over the age of 19 and with spouse present were mar-

ried to U.S.-born men in 2000. The percent married to U.S.-born men is considerably lower for other Caribbean Basin Hispanic-origin groups, ranging from 9 percent to 21 percent for Salvadoran, Mexican, Guatemalan, Dominican, Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Colombian women. Other migration flows with low sex ratios, such as those from the Philippines, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica, developed because women from those countries tend to migrate independently rather than as family members.

Foreign-born groups with high sex ratios in 2000 tended to be made up of large numbers of recent or labor migrants. For instance, the four origin groups with the highest sex ratios—Egyptians, Nigerians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis—only began to immigrate to the United States in large numbers in the 1990s and are relatively small in number. Because women from these origins have limited autonomy in their homelands, men were the pioneers. Gender inequality at origin could also explain why India and Iran are among the countries with relatively high sex ratios. Most Central American groups that include large numbers of labor migrants had high sex ratios. Guatemalans had a sex ratio of 130, Mexicans had a sex ratio of 124, and Salvadorans had a sex ratio of 108. Those ratios would be even higher were it not for the growing numbers of labor migrants from those origins who have now settled in the United States and brought their family members.

Where do Immigrants Live?

The foreign-born live in every U.S. state and metropolitan area, but those from any given country tend to be highly concentrated in a few areas. Social networks channel immigrants from different origins toward geographic areas where others from their homelands are settled, and these networks discourage immigrants from moving elsewhere once they are settled.[42] During the Industrialization Wave, immigrants from northwestern Europe settled mainly in rural areas and small towns in the upper Midwest and New England, while southern and eastern Europeans concentrated in large urban areas and cities in the Northeast. The remnants of that settlement system were still in place in 1960 and visible on a map that shows the foreign-born share in each U.S. county in 1960 (see Figure 5, page 276). In 1960, many rural counties in states in the Upper Midwest—Michigan, Wisconsin, North Dakota, Montana, Washington, and Wyoming—had populations that were 5 percent to 10 percent foreign-born, and most counties in those states had foreign-born populations greater than 2.5 percent. Similarly, in 1960 most counties in New York and New England had foreign-born populations greater than 5 percent.

At the same time, the 1960 map indicates that a new type of immigration and settlement pattern was emerging in the West and Southwest. In California, northern Nevada, and southern parts of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, several counties were already 5 percent to 15 percent foreign-born in 1960. Six counties along the Mexican border that spread from South Texas (Hidalgo, Webb, Maverick, and Zavala) to Arizona (Santa Cruz) and to Southern California (Imperial) were more than 15 percent foreign-born. The foreign-born who lived in California were mainly Industrialization Wave immigrants who had migrated west after World War II, but growing numbers were Mexican, Central American, Asian, and South American foreign-born whose numbers had started to increase in the West. Elsewhere in the United States, only 15 percent of the foreign-born were from Mexico, Central America, Asia, or South America in 1960. Many of the counties in the West with more than 10 percent foreign-born populations in 1960 were rural, consistent with the *bracero* program's channeling of Mexican migrants into agricultural work.

In the rest of the country in 1960, foreign-born concentrations were largely limited to the New York metropolitan area and a scattering of other East Coast metro areas, including the city of Miami. Foreign-born populations were also growing elsewhere in Florida, including the counties north of Miami up to West Palm Beach, and on the Florida Gulf Coast around Tampa and Sarasota. Some of Florida's foreign-born were Cuban refugees who had started arriving there in the late 1950s, but most were Industrialization Wave immigrants from the Northeast who began retiring to Florida along with other Americans in the 1950s. As roads improved and car and air travel expanded in the post-World War II period, retirement and seasonal migration for the South took off. Air conditioning became affordable for homeowners in the 1950s, making it realistic for Northerners to consider living in Florida's hot and humid climate year-round.

By 2000, most Industrialization Wave foreign-born had died and the rural counties in the Upper Midwest, New York, and New England were among those with the smallest percentage foreign-born in the country (see Figure 6, page 276). In contrast, the settlement system that was getting established in the West and South in 1960 had greatly increased in size and spread into neighboring counties and states. Whereas in 1960, 70 percent of America's foreign-born lived in the Northeast and Upper Midwest, by 2000 two-thirds of them lived in states in the West and South. Historically, New York State was the gateway for new immigrants, but California had become America's new gateway by 1980. While New York was home to 24 percent of the foreign-born in 1960, by 2000 only 12 percent lived there. This drop occurred both because New York

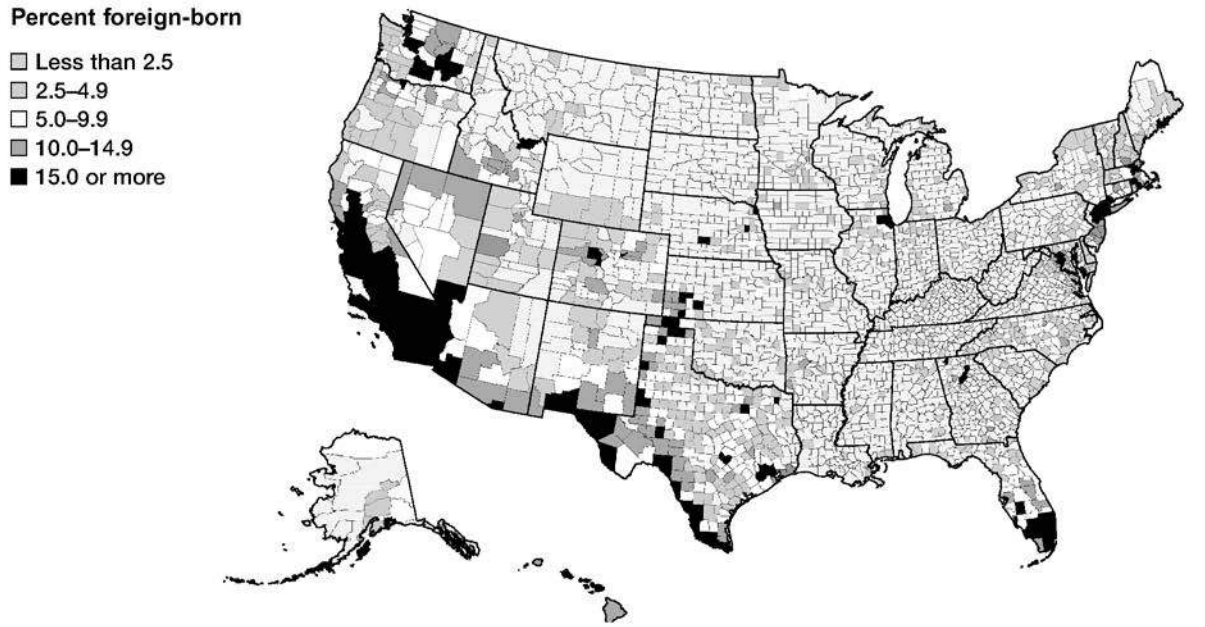
Figure 5

FOREIGN-BORN COMPOSITION OF U.S. COUNTIES, 1960

Note: The highest percentage in any county was 25. Data for Alaska were unavailable.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *City and County Data Book* (1962).

Figure 6

FOREIGN-BORN COMPOSITION OF U.S. COUNTIES, 2000



Note: The highest percentage in any county was 50.9.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 STF3 files, accessed online at www.census.gov.

Box 5

Immigration and Regional Population Change

The growth rates of the foreign-born population in different regions of the United States in the 1990s ranged from a low of 38 percent in the Northeast to 91 percent in the South. These trends are the result of two processes: net internal migration of foreign-born, and net immigration and settlement by foreigners arriving from abroad.

The Midwest and Northeast lost the largest share of their 1995 foreign-born populations (see table). If the foreign-born migrated from one region of the country to another from 1995 to 2000, they were most likely to move to the South—43 percent moved to that region, but only 14 percent moved to the Northeast. The West, particularly the Mountain states, attracted 24 percent of internal foreign-born migrants.

This regional distribution of the foreign-born was also shaped by where recent immigrants who arrived from abroad decided to settle. Most of them settled in the South and West. Though the Midwest ranked third as a destination of foreign-born migrating internally, it was in distant last place as a destination for immigrants arriving from abroad, attracting just 14 percent of them. The Northeast, in contrast, attracted 21 percent of the recent immigrants, which compensated for the net loss of foreign-born through internal migration. All regions experienced net foreign-born increases from 1995 to 2000, with the largest net increase occurring in the South.

Population Change for U.S. Regions, 1995–2000

U.S. region	% 1995 foreign-born who left region	% 1995 foreign-born migrants from other regions who migrated to region	% foreign-born from abroad who immigrated from 1995–2000 and settled in region	Net foreign-born change 1995–2000 (thousands)
Northeast	6	14	21	1,003
South	5	43	33	2,102
Midwest	9	19	14	802
West	4	24	32	1,741

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

attracted fewer immigrants than California in recent decades and because it experienced high out-migration of foreign-born. Nonetheless, the foreign-born population in the New York metropolitan area grew by 31 percent in the 1990s, compared with 19 percent in the Los Angeles metro area, suggesting that New York remains a major gateway.

The biggest change in immigrant settlement trends from 1960 to 2000 was the phenomenal growth in the size of the foreign-born population in the South. For decades the South has had higher rates of economic growth than other regions and has been a magnet for U.S.-born workers. As length of U.S. residence has increased among Globalization Wave immigrants, they too have learned of America's changing South and its economic opportunities. The opportunity to live in a climate more similar to that found in many immigrants' homelands may have been an added attraction. Whatever the reasons, foreign-born growth rates were higher in the South than in other regions in the 1990s (91 percent compared with 58 percent for the country as a whole). Moreover, from 1995 to 2000, the South attracted more internal foreign-born migrants and received more immigrants entering from abroad than any other region (see Box 5).

Mexicans accounted for the bulk of this growth in the South, increasing by 170 percent in the 1990s. If Texas and Florida are excluded from the calculation, Mexicans grew by over 1,000 percent in the rest of the region. While the non-Mexican foreign-born also increased at above average rates in the South, their rate of increase (69 percent) was far lower than that of Mexicans. Groups that more than doubled the size of their populations in the South in the 1990s included Dominicans, former Soviet Union nationals, Salvadorans, Indians, and Vietnamese. The dispersal of the foreign-born to the South and other parts of the country that previously had few foreigners has implications for education, health care, and other services. It is too soon to evaluate whether the foreign-born migrating to nontraditional areas will be disadvantaged or advantaged relative to the foreign-born who settle elsewhere.

Beyond the large foreign-born concentrations in the West and in Florida, in 2000 only five other concentrations in the country spanned multiple counties. This group included the Northeast corridor that runs from Washington, D.C., to Boston; the Charlotte-Raleigh-Greensboro region of North Carolina; the city of Atlanta and its surrounding metropolitan counties; the Chicago-Milwaukee metropolitan region, including Rock and Dane counties in Wisconsin; and the city of Detroit and its metropolitan region. Other regional growth poles appeared to be getting underway in northwestern Arkansas and coastal Georgia and South Carolina, but were far smaller in scale.

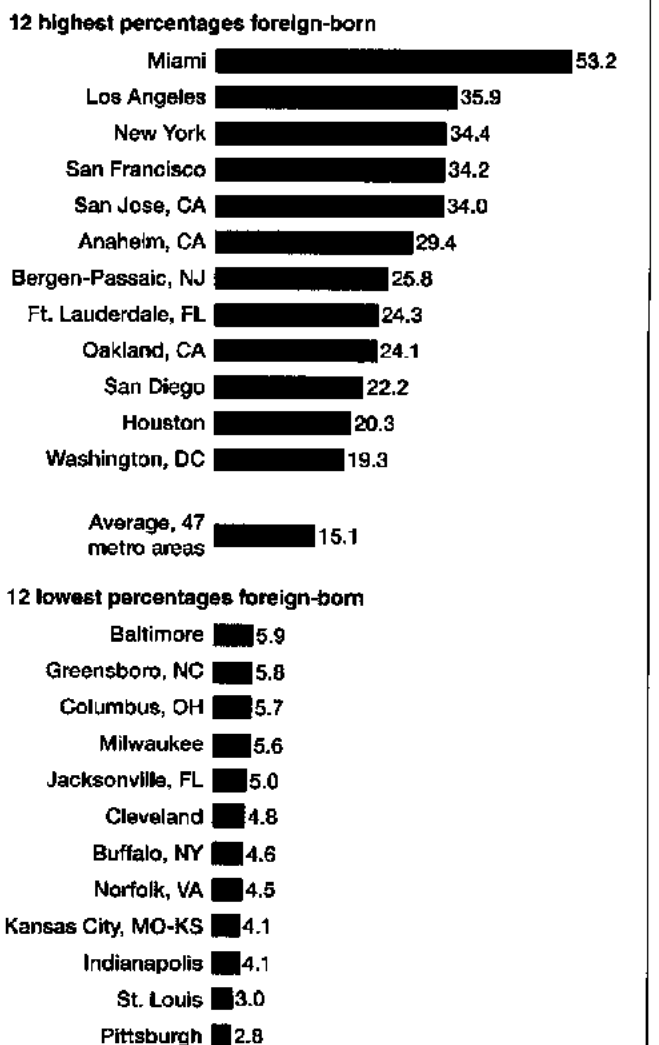
Metro Concentration and Change From 1990–2000

The foreign-born are more likely than the U.S.-born to live in metropolitan areas. Just as America's Industrialization Wave immigrants from Europe concentrated in large urban areas, Globalization Wave immigrants also have shown a preference for such areas regardless of the region in which they settle. Large cities have experience working with people of diverse cultural backgrounds and traditionally have facilitated immigrant integration. They offer migrants a wide range of job opportunities and bilingual education, provide health care and other social services, and have good transportation systems. In the past, once immigrants acculturated, they often moved out of their urban ethnic communities.[43] Many question whether today's immigrants will do the same. Richard Alba and colleagues observed that recent immigrants were less likely to settle in central cities and were starting to locate in suburbs.[44]

Although the foreign-born remained more concentrated in metropolitan areas than U.S.-born in 2000, between 1990 and 2000 they became less concentrated in America's largest areas. The three largest metropolitan areas—Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago—dropped from 30 percent to 25 percent in their share of the total foreign-born. In contrast, smaller-size metropolitan areas, namely those with populations under 5 million, either experienced a relative increase in their share of the foreign-born or had no change. Metropolitan areas that experienced the largest percentage gains in foreign-born populations during the 1990s had populations under 1 million. Areas in the population category of 2.5 million to 4 million also experienced above-average increases in their foreign-born populations. There was a slight drop in the proportion of the foreign-born residing in nonmetropolitan areas in the 1990s, but the numbers of foreign-born in those areas actually increased by 31 percent in the 1990s, reaching 1.7 million in 2000. That anomaly occurred because of the strong overall growth of the foreign-born population in the 1990s.

Individual metropolitan areas differed greatly in the growth rates of their foreign-born populations in the 1990s. Whereas the foreign-born grew very rapidly in several metropolitan areas, Cleveland actually had a smaller foreign-born population in 2000 than it did in 1990. Since Cleveland's unemployment rates and other economic indicators were comparable to or even better than those of other metropolitan areas in the Northeast with increased immigration, the likely explanation for the foreign-born decline in Cleveland is the high mortality of Industrialization Wave immigrants and the length of time it takes for new immigrants to open up economic niches in new areas. Research by William Frey and colleagues indicates that cities such as Cleveland have had stagnant populations in recent decades and have not attracted U.S.-born either.[45]

Figure 7
FOREIGN-BORN SHARE OF SELECTED U.S. METROPOLITAN AREAS, 2000



Note: The graph shows the 12 metro areas with the largest and smallest percent foreign-born. The average is for the 47 areas with at least 1 million residents in 2000.

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

For metropolitan areas with populations greater than 1 million in 2000, 19 had foreign-born populations greater than the metropolitan average of 15 percent. Figure 7 shows that Miami had the highest foreign-born share (53 percent) and Pittsburgh the lowest (3 percent). About a third of the populations of Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and San Jose were foreign-born in 2000, as were 20 percent to 30 percent of the populations of several large metropolitan areas in California, Texas, Florida, and New Jersey. Washington, D.C.,

Chicago, Boston, and Nassau County, New York also had relatively large foreign-born populations. However, metropolitan size was not a direct correlate of immigrant settlement. Philadelphia and Detroit, America's fourth- and sixth-largest metropolitan areas in 2000, had foreign-born populations less than 8 percent and experienced little or no growth in their foreign-born populations in the 1990s. Two other relatively large metropolitan areas, St. Louis and Pittsburgh, had small shares of foreign-born populations (3 percent) that experienced little growth in the 1990s. In contrast, while Atlanta and Minneapolis had smaller-than-average shares of foreign-born populations in 1990, their foreign-born populations more than doubled by 2000.

Diversity Across Metropolitan Areas

Immigrant groups tend to settle in different metropolitan areas and differ in the extent to which they concentrate. The settlement system that an immigrant group develops is usually related to the forces that bring immigrants to America, to migrants' economic niche strategies, and to migrants' social networks. For instance, immigrants who come to the United States for graduate study locate initially in college communities and often settle in that type of place after they graduate. Mexicans, in contrast, are more likely than other groups to be located in rural areas because, both historically and today, many Mexicans are employed in agriculture. First-wave refugees often disperse initially because their settlement is sponsored by churches and other social agencies that locate them in communities throughout the country. Then, as refugees adjust, they often decide to move toward communities where other refugees from their homeland are located. Today's concentration of Cubans in Miami resulted from secondary migration of Cubans from other parts of the United States to Miami in the decades after they arrived.

Although media attention often focuses on first-wave immigration and settlement in gateway cities and states, there is considerable internal migration among the foreign-born. This internal migration contributed to the shifting regional and metropolitan distribution of the foreign-born in the 1990s. The foreign-born are as prone to migrate within the United States as the U.S.-born. This contradicts a common perception that immigrants remain in their first destination cities. Since economic considerations underlie many immigrants' initial decision to immigrate, the foreign-born are highly sensitive to changing economic conditions in settlement areas and often migrate internally if economic conditions deteriorate in their areas of settlement. The declining attractiveness of California and Los Angeles to the foreign-born in the 1990s probably stemmed from deteriorating economic conditions there. The relatively young age of immigrants also predisposes them toward internal migration.

The largest foreign-born groups differed considerably in their propensity to concentrate in 2000 (see Table 5). While Canadians, Germans, and Indians were highly dispersed, 55 percent of Dominicans lived in New York and 56 percent of Cubans lived in Miami. Indeed, 72 percent of Dominicans lived in only five metropolitan areas, as did 68 percent of Cubans. Salvadorans were the only other group which had more than half its population concentrated in five metropolitan areas.

Table 5

METROPOLITAN AREAS OF CONCENTRATION OF THE LARGEST FOREIGN-BORN GROUPS, 2000

National origin of group	Group size (thousands)	% in top metro area	% in top 5 metro areas	Top 5 metro areas
Mexican	9,161	16	35	Los Angeles; Chicago; Houston; Orange Co., CA; Dallas
Chinese	1,493	17	47	New York; Los Angeles; San Francisco; San Jose, CA; Oakland, CA
Filipino	1,395	15	36	Los Angeles; San Diego; San Francisco; Oakland, CA; Chicago
Indian	1,018	8	29	Chicago; New York; San Jose, CA; Washington, DC; Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ
Vietnamese	986	12	33	Orange Co., CA; Los Angeles; Houston; Washington, DC; San Diego
Former Soviet Union	891	23	46	New York; Los Angeles; Chicago; Philadelphia; Boston
Cuban	878	56	68	Miami; Ft. Lauderdale, FL; New York; Jersey City, NJ; Tampa, FL
Korean	857	17	39	Los Angeles; New York; Washington, DC; Orange Co., CA; Chicago
Canadian	844	4	16	Los Angeles; Detroit; Ft. Lauderdale, FL; Seattle; Tampa, FL
Salvadoran	825	31	59	Los Angeles; Washington, DC; Houston; Nassau Co., NY; New York
Germans	712	4	16	Chicago; New York; Los Angeles; Philadelphia; Washington, DC
Dominican	711	55	72	New York; Bergen-Passaic, NJ; Jersey City, NJ; Miami; Boston

Note: Origin groups are ordered by group size. The metropolitan areas listed in the "Top 5 metro areas" column are ordered from highest to lowest percentage concentrated in each area. The data are for the total foreign-born in each group, including those who live in nonmetropolitan areas.

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

At the other extreme, less than 40 percent of Filipinos, Koreans, Mexicans, Vietnamese, Indians, and Canadians were concentrated in five settlement areas. The largest foreign-born groups were less concentrated in 2000 than they were in 1990 or 1980, consistent with the idea that the new migrants are starting to disperse.

The tendency for the foreign-born from various origins to settle in different areas is illustrated in Table 5. For nine of the 12 largest foreign-born groups, Los Angeles was one of their top five settlement areas. New York was in the top five for eight groups; Chicago for six; Washington, D.C., for five; and Orange County (Calif.) and Houston for three groups each. Otherwise, the top five metropolitan areas where each group was concentrated differed considerably. Indeed, six metropolitan areas that attracted at least one group did not attract any of the other groups in large numbers. This set of areas and the group located in them included Dallas (Mexicans); Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon counties in New Jersey (Indians); Detroit (Canadians); Seattle (Canadians); Nassau County, N.Y. (Salvadorans); and Bergen-Passaic, N.J. (Dominicans).

Viewed from the standpoint of the metropolitan area, immigrant group diversity also varies. A comparison of the foreign-born populations of the two largest metropolitan areas, Los Angeles and New York, illustrates this point. Los Angeles received 44 percent of its foreign-born population from just one country, Mexico, while an additional 38 percent came from 10 other countries. In New York, in contrast, Dominicans were the largest foreign-born group but made up only 13 percent of New York's foreign-born population. The next 10 countries that sent the largest number of migrants to New York accounted for an additional 46 percent of New York's foreign-born. Putting these figures together indicates that, while 82 percent of Los Angeles' foreign-born population came from 11 countries in 2000, only 59 percent of New York's foreign-born population came from that number of origins. This means that New York's population is considerably more diverse than that of Los Angeles.

These numbers indicate that very different compositional dynamics can get established in metropolitan areas depending upon the size and diversity of the areas' foreign-born population. Beyond Los Angeles and New York, other metropolitan areas also differ in the extent to which they are developing relatively homogeneous versus diverse immigrant populations. Some western metropolitan areas among the top 10 settlement areas for Mexicans in 2000, for instance, had relatively large foreign-born settlements but almost no foreign-born other than Mexicans. McAllen-Edinberg, Texas, had a total population of 573,826 people in 2000, with 30 percent foreign-born. However, 161,819 (94 percent) of those foreign-born were from Mexico. Similar situations occured in El Paso, Phoenix, and Dallas, where Mexicans made up 90 percent, 67 percent, and 59 percent, respectively, of the foreign-born populations in 2000. Those metropolitan areas, in contrast, that are building diverse populations of immigrants from many lands include Boston, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.

Adjusting to America

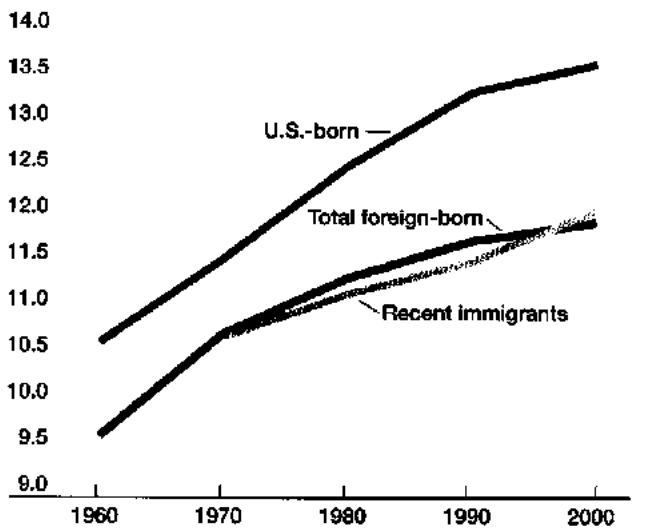
Since education is a good predictor of people's earnings, unemployment, welfare use, and most other social and economic outcomes, the education levels of the foreign-born have implications for the nation's human capital and economic productivity. George Borjas found that, while the education levels of both the foreign-born and U.S.-born rose from 1960 to 1998, the education gap between those two groups increased in that period.[46] Figure 8 shows the trend observed by Borjas and also indicates that educational attainment rose faster among recent immigrants in the 1990s than it did for the U.S.-born. If recent Mexican immigrants are excluded from the comparison, by 2000 there was no gap in educational attainment between the U.S.-born and recent immigrants (line not shown in Figure 8). Both had a mean educational attainment just over 13 percent. Even with Mexicans included, the education profile of recent immigrants improved in the 1990s. This change was unexpected, since immigration greatly increased during the decade and most immigrants continued to come from regions of the developing world that have lower educational levels than the United States.

Reynolds Farley points to the bifurcation of the foreign-born population into two educational attainment groups: a highly educated segment with college degrees or some higher education, and a poorly educated segment with less than high school education.[47] This distinctive educational profile among the foreign-born is consistent with the two main types of migrants now coming to the United States—large numbers of unauthorized labor migrants from Mexico, Central America, and elsewhere in the Caribbean Basin who are poorly educated and fill low-wage jobs; and large numbers of highly skilled nonimmigrant residents coming from other origins who usually have college, graduate, professional, or technical degrees.

The pattern of educational bifurcation within the foreign-born population is heavily influenced by the characteristics of the Mexican foreign-born population. That group has considerably lower levels of educational attainment than Americans or the other foreign-born. Figure 9 gives the ratio of the percentage of recent immigrants, Mexicans versus non-Mexicans, who had college degrees relative to U.S.-born who had degrees in four census periods. Ratios above 1.0 indicate that recent immigrants had more college education than those born in the United States, and ratios below 1.0 indicate that recent immigrants had less college educa-

Figure 8

MEAN YEARS OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY NATIVITY, 1960–2000

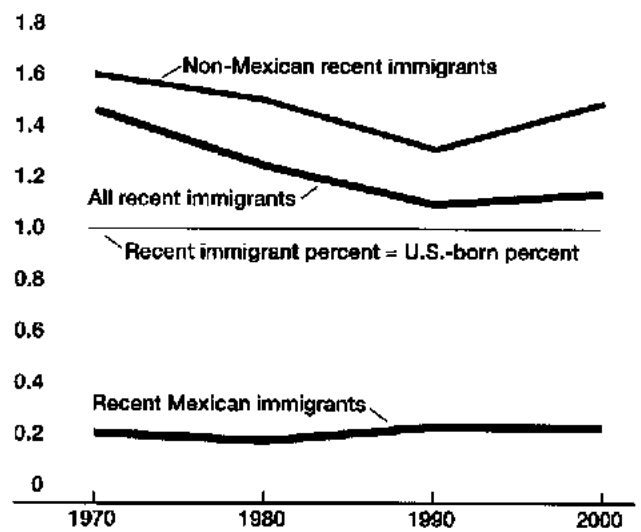


Note: Mean years of education for the census decade for people ages 25–54.

Source: Authors' calculations using the 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) from the 1960–2000 censuses.

Figure 9

PERCENT OF AMERICANS WITH COLLEGE EDUCATION: RATIO OF U.S.-BORN TO RECENT IMMIGRANTS, 1970–2000



Note: Recent immigrants arrived in the decade preceding the census year given. Ratios were calculated for people ages 25–54 who had completed four or more years of college.

Source: Authors' calculations using the 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) from the 1970–2000 censuses.

tion. Figure 9 shows that in each period, recent immigrants were more likely than the U.S.-born to have college degrees or higher levels of education. The recent immigrant advantage was greatest in 1970. Those who arrived during the 1960s were 1.4 times more likely than the U.S.-born to have a college education. But that advantage decreased in the 1970s and 1980s, and then stabilized and started to climb again in the 1990s. The recent immigrant advantage over the U.S.-born in levels of college attainment would have been higher in 2000 if recent Mexican immigrants had the same levels of college attainment as other recent immigrants. Recent Mexican immigrants have been far less likely than other recent immigrants to have a college education and, as their share of the total foreign-born population has increased, so too has their effect on the overall educational profile of the U.S. foreign-born population.

In spite of the low educational attainment of immigrants from Mexico and several other origins, it is impressive that the overall educational attainment of the foreign-born kept up with and even made a slight gain relative to the U.S.-born in the 1990s. Given that labor migrants from Mexico and other Caribbean countries are heavily concentrated in the low education category, this slight improvement in the educational profile of the foreign-born in the 1990s resulted mainly from a dramatic improvement in the profile of immigrants from other origins. This situation can be evaluated as a glass half-full or half-empty. It appears that immigration cannot be directly equated with a society experiencing increasingly lower levels of educational attainment. Nevertheless, educational attainment levels in the United States are lower now than they would have been given no immigration in the past 40 years. Furthermore, the distinct educational profile of recent immigrants, consisting of many very poorly educated and many very highly educated people, differs dramatically from that of the U.S.-born population.

Educational Diversity

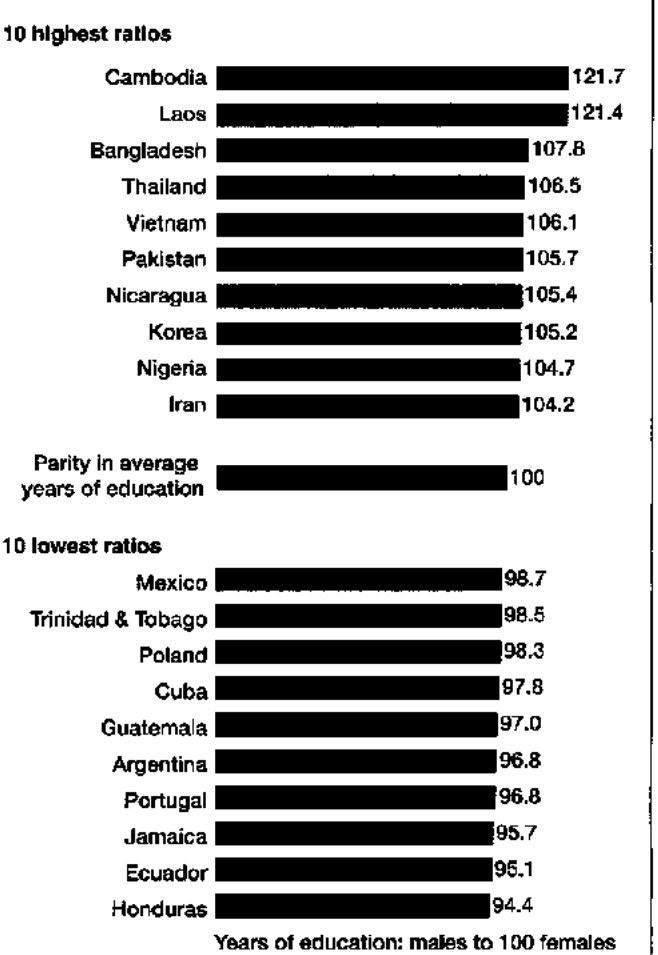
Foreign-born groups differ considerably in their levels of educational attainment. In general, groups that include large numbers of unauthorized labor migrants or refugees have lower educational attainment. The precipitating cause of a refugee flow can shape skill composition. The foreign-born populations from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, for instance, have low educational attainment levels, while the foreign-born from Cuba and the former Soviet Union (two other origin countries that include large numbers of refugees) have relatively high levels of educational attainment because Cold War politics influenced who emigrated. The Refugee Relief Act of 1953 encouraged skilled Soviet Union nationals to defect and granted refugee status to those who did. Technicians and professionals

working in Soviet industries considered to be of security interest were encouraged to flee because such emigration was seen by Congress as a good way to disrupt Communism from the inside out.[48] After the Soviet Union started to disintegrate in the late 1980s, the United States granted permanent resident status to many scientists from the independent states of the former Soviet Union and the Baltic states.

For immigrant men in the 44 largest origin groups in 2000, the lowest levels of educational attainment occurred among Guatemalans, Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Mexicans. Less than 50 percent of foreign-born men ages 25 and older in those groups had completed high school, compared with 87 percent of the total U.S.-born and 68 percent of the total foreign-born. The figures were comparable for women from those origins except for Hondurans, a group in which women were more likely than men to be high school graduates. At the upper end of the education ladder, adult men from several origins had a very high probability of holding a college degree. Among the 44 largest origin groups, there were seven groups in which 60 percent or more of the men ages 25 to 54 were college graduates in 2000, including Indians (77 percent); Nigerians (70 percent); Egyptians (66 percent); Iranians (64 percent); Japanese (62 percent); French (61 percent); and Chinese (60 percent).

Although American women were slightly more likely than American men in 2000 to have a college degree—26 percent and 23 percent, respectively—the reverse pattern occurred among the foreign-born. Twenty-one percent of foreign-born women had a college degree, compared with 26 percent of the men. Indian women were the best educated—69 percent of them had four or more years of college. About 50 percent of foreign-born women from Egypt, France, the former Soviet Union, China, and the Philippines had college degrees. At the other end of the continuum, only 4 percent of Mexican women, 5 percent of Salvadoran women, and 10 percent of Dominican women had college degrees, and the modal education category for women in those groups was less than high school education.

Figure 10
GENDER INEQUALITY IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN, FOREIGN-BORN AGES 25–54, 2000



Note: Average years of education were calculated for the 44 largest foreign-born groups, population ages 25–54. The groups with highest and lowest ratios are shown.

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

Gender Gaps in Education and Group Diversity

Educational attainment not only varies greatly among migrants from different origins but also between foreign-born men and women from the same origin. Many of today's migrants come from societies in which men and women have differential access to formal education and work. Gender inequalities in migrant homelands can underlie gender inequalities among these groups. Although the social profiles of foreign-born groups in the United States should not be expected to be identical to those of homeland populations, it is common to find some comparability between these two groups.

Education sex ratios for the 44 largest foreign-born groups show gender differences across groups (see Figure 10). A ratio of 100 indicates that men and women have the same mean level of education; ratios above 100 indicate that men have more education than women, and those below 100 indicate that men have less education than women. Education sex ratios range from a low of 94 for Hondurans to a high of 122 for Cambodians and 121 for Laotians. All 10 of the groups with the lowest sex ratios had ratios below 100. However, considering that the education sex ratio for the U.S.-born was 99 and the ratio for the foreign-born was 98, not too much should be made of the female advantage for groups that have ratios close to parity.

At the other end of the continuum, high gender inequalities in education are concentrated among three types of foreign-born groups: ones that include large numbers of refugees or immigrants admitted as a result of group-targeted legislation (Cambodians, Laotians, Vietnamese, and Nicaraguans); ones that originate from countries where gender inequalities are high (Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Nigerians, and Iranians); and ones that include large numbers of recent nonimmigrant residents and aging women from earlier immigration flows (Koreans, Germans, Japanese, and British). These groupings are not mutually exclusive in that two of the refugee populations, Laotians and Cambodians, come from societies in which gender inequities are also relatively high. The gender differences for the German, Japanese, and British foreign-born, in contrast, greatly exceed those common in their homelands and are being produced by the combination of increased recent immigration of men admitted as nonimmigrant residents and the continued presence of small numbers of foreign-born women from the Industrialization Wave cohorts. Whereas the recent cohorts of German, Japanese, and British men are relatively highly educated, the earlier cohorts of these groups are composed largely of older women who have relatively low education profiles.

English-Language Attainment

As the immigrant population has grown, so too have the number and percentage of people who live in America and speak a language other than English. The American ethnic pattern, according to Nathan Glazer, tolerates foreign-language maintenance within the home and community, but the public sphere requires communication in a single language, namely English.[49] For immigrants to get ahead economically, to become part of American society, and to participate in the American political process, it is important to know English. To facilitate immigrant adjustment and English-language acquisition, bilingual programs have been set up in public schools. Social agencies regularly provide information in multiple languages to ensure that immigrants have access to health and other services in America.

According to Richard Alba and Victor Nee: "All the evidence about the European and early Asian groups reveals a powerful linguistic gravitational pull that has produced conversion to English monolingualism on a wide scale within three generations; only a small minority of any group has escaped its grip."[50] Alba and Nee recognize, however, that because the United States is still in the midst of the Globalization Wave, the evidence is not yet in on whether today's immigrant groups will take a different course in their linguistic achievement and assimilation trajectories. Those concerned that the new immigrant groups will not assimilate linguistically worry that, as long as immigration continues at high levels, origin cultural elements including language will be replenished; these analysts argue further that language retention is facilitated in this era by modern technologies. Immigrants often tend to maintain close ties with families and friends in their homelands and to participate in social and political life there rather than focusing on how to build a new life in America. Ties between immigrants and their homelands can be maintained at essentially no cost by e-mail; and for those desiring a more personal mode of communication, telephone services are also convenient and inexpensive.

Others are optimistic that today's immigrants will learn English. Such optimism is based on the historical evidence showing that Industrialization Wave immigrants had overwhelmingly adopted English as their mother tongue by the second and third generations, and that Globalization Wave immigrants are doing so today. Data from the 2000 Census showed a level of 67 percent English-language fluency among children 18 and younger who were born in the United States to parents who migrated from a Spanish-speaking country. That percentage rises if the children of recent immigrants are not included in the statistic. Since English is increasingly the international language of commerce and trade and is being taught as a second language in schools worldwide, it would be highly unlikely for English to diminish in importance in the United States as it continues to gain as the leading international language.

The major concern over language focuses on Spanish-language retention, since Spanish is the most common language other than English spoken in U.S. homes. Spanish retention is facilitated by growing concentrations of Spanish speakers in large urban areas and throughout the Southwest, and by the growth of Spanish-language media. In 2000, there were 28 million Spanish speakers in the United States, and 11 percent of the total population ages 5 and older spoke Spanish at home, as did 44 percent of the foreign-born. The geographic concentration of Spanish-speaking foreign-born adds to concern that Spanish will replace English in those regions in the years ahead. Some evidence supports this concern. For instance, in the metropolitan areas of El Paso and McAllen-Edinburg-Pharr-Mission, located on the Mexico/U.S. border in southern Texas, 72 percent and 82 percent, respectively, of the total population spoke Spanish at home in 2000. The foreign-born in those areas were almost all from Mexico and constituted one-third of the population. Since the number of people who spoke Spanish at home was more than double the size of the foreign-born population, these statistics indicate that language retention in the Texas border region remains high among U.S.-born Mexican Americans. However, speaking Spanish does not necessarily imply neglecting English, since 48 percent of the population in El Paso and 54 percent of the population in McAllen spoke English only or very well.

Miami is another metropolitan area with a large concentration of Spanish speakers from one origin, and where more than half of the population spoke Spanish at home in 2000. Over a half million Cubans live in Miami, as do growing numbers of Dominicans, Salvadorans, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, and Spanish speakers from other countries. While foreign-born Spanish speakers made up 44 percent of metropolitan Miami's total population in 2000, Spanish was spoken at home by 62 percent of the population. That pattern is similar to the one noted for El Paso and McAllen and indicates that in Miami also there is some language retention that stretches into the second and possibly third generations.

The patterns observed for Miami, El Paso, and McAllen probably stem from a convergence of very high levels of homogeneity of foreign-born from a single origin as well as extremely close and active links with an origin society. In both the McAllen and El Paso metropolitan areas, Mexicans constitute at least 95 percent of the foreign-born populations. In Miami, 81 percent of the foreign-born population is of Hispanic origin, with 59 percent coming from Cuba. The McAllen and El Paso regions are major border areas with very high and continuous contact and population exchange with Mexico. Historically, these regions' links with Mexico have rivaled in importance their links with the remainder of Texas. Miami is not literally a border area, but it has evolved as a major multidimensional gateway with very active links to Latin American countries. It appears that the combination of a large and homogenous foreign-born population and very active links with the origin society strongly encourages the use of Spanish or any language in the home.

Correlates of English-Language Skills

Immigrants' English-language skills vary greatly by country of origin, education, age, and length of U.S. residence. Some immigrants come from English-speaking regions such as the United Kingdom, Canada, or the British West Indies, and thus have a language advantage. Other immigrants come from countries in which English is the official language used in the public sphere and university education, but where it is not the mother tongue. This group includes India, Pakistan, and countries in English-speaking Africa. Spanish is the mother tongue spoken by the largest number of immigrants in the United States. The top 10 foreign languages other than Spanish spoken in the United States (ordered by number of speakers) include Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, French, Korean, Russian, German, Arabic, and Portuguese.

The English-language skills of the foreign-born population correlate positively with education and negatively with age. If recent immigrants in the 1990s had a college degree, 59 percent of them spoke English only or very well, compared with 31 percent of those with less than four years of high school. Among recent immigrants from origins where English is not the mother tongue, sub-Saharan Africans with a college education were the most likely to speak English only or very well (85 percent), followed by: South Asians (76 percent); other Southeast Asians excluding Indochinese refugees (70 percent); West Asians and North Africans (68 percent); and Europeans (52 percent). Recent immigrants from some origins were unlikely to speak English only or very well even if they had a college education, including Mexicans (30 percent); East Asians (36 percent); and Indochina refugees (37 percent).

Immigrants between the ages of 5 and 24 were most likely to speak English only or very well. Children of immigrants should speak English better than their parents or grandparents because they are in an age group likely to be enrolled in school. Seventy-nine percent of all 5-to-24-year-olds, both U.S.- and foreign-born, were enrolled in school in 2000. Nonetheless, the younger cohorts from some foreign-born origins have relatively low percentages who speak English only or very well or who are enrolled in school. Among Mexicans ages 5 to 24, only 35 percent spoke English only or very well, and 45 percent were enrolled in school. Rates for the rest of the foreign-born were considerably higher. Sixty-six percent of children ages 5 to 24 spoke English only or very well and 72 percent were enrolled in school. The foreign-born elderly have the poorest English-language skills. Recent immigrants ages 55 or older were the least likely to speak English only or very well in 2000. While some of today's elderly foreign-born came to the United States when they were in their productive ages, worked, paid in to Social Security, and then retired, increasing numbers immigrate at the end of their productive life cycle in order to live with or be near their children who are settled in America.[51]

Immigrants' language abilities improve as length of U.S. residence increases. In 2000, the foreign-born who had been in the United States for less than 11 years were slightly less likely than those who had been in the country for a comparable length of time in 1980 to speak English only or very well. Moreover, in 1980, among the foreign-born who had immigrated 11 to 20 years before that year, 26 percent were likely to speak English only or very well, compared with 13 percent of those present for 11 to 20 years in 2000. These trends suggest that the Globalization Wave migrants are not learning English as quickly as those who arrived 20 years earlier. However, linguistic isolation, which the Census Bureau defines as living in a household in which no one age 14 or older speaks English only or very well, showed no change from 1980 to 2000. For the recent foreign-born cohorts in both 1980 and 2000, 42 percent of the foreign-born were linguistically isolated.

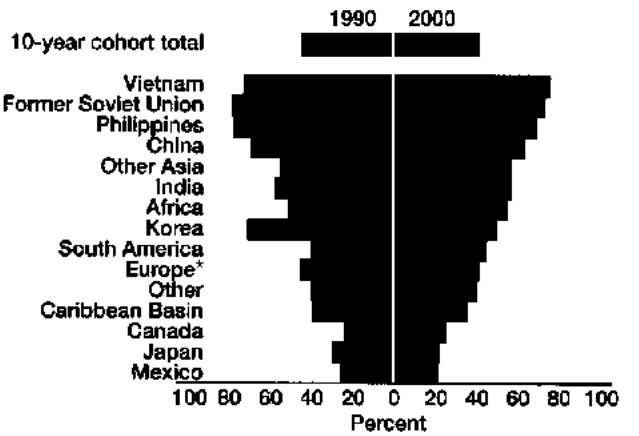
Naturalization and Citizenship

While serving as head of the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform in the 1990s, Barbara Jordan argued that the civil incorporation of newcomers in America is an essential part of immigration policy. She noted: "The United States is the most successful multiethnic nation in history. It has united immigrants and their descendants from all over the world around a commitment to democratic ideals and constitutional principles."[52] The premise underlying American immigration from its outset has been that people from diverse lands can "become American." That phrase used to be equated with learning English and becoming a naturalized citizen. Critics of this view argue that it is an idealized version of American history and that many U.S.-born people were not accepted as citizens or allowed to participate in the polity. Even after the Supreme Court ruled in 1898 that Chinese and other foreigners born on American soil were protected under the 14th Amendment, groups such as American Indians, blacks, and women continued to be denied full citizenship rights.

There are several reasons why foreigners living in the United States as permanent immigrants should consider naturalization. Political participation in federal, state, and local elections is limited to citizens, although a few municipalities in Maryland recently started to allow foreigners to vote in local elections.[53] Since most foreigners who work in the United States pay taxes and Social Security, it is important for them to become citizens and have the right to vote for the politicians who make decisions about how that money is spent. Moreover, while naturalized citizens are not eligible to become president of the United States, they can run for other political offices. The highly visible election of Austrian-born Arnold Schwarzenegger as governor of California in 2003 symbolized the political possibilities open to immigrants should they choose to enter politics. American citizenship also entitles foreigners to a U.S. passport and its associated travel rights. Furthermore, naturalized citizens have the right under U.S. immigration law to bring to the United States immediate family members, including spouses, children, and elderly parents, without any delay in their admission.

Comparisons between naturalization rates among new immigrants and those among earlier immigrants are complicated because of differentials in naturalization rates across foreign-born groups, the changing composition of U.S. immigration, and the close link between naturalization and length of U.S. residency. To become a naturalized citizen, a foreigner must have been a permanent resident for five years (three years if married to an American citizen) and must pass two tests, one that examines English-language ability and one that evaluates knowledge of American history and political processes. Figure 11 shows how two foreign-born cohorts that arrived at different times compare in their naturalization rates. The first group arrived in the 1970s, and their naturalization rates are assessed 10 to 20 years later based on 1990 Census data; the second group arrived in the 1980s, and their naturalization rates are also assessed 10 to 20 years later based on 2000 Census data.

Figure 11
NATURALIZATION LEVELS IN 1990 AND 2000 FOR TWO FOREIGN-BORN COHORTS



* Except former Soviet republics.

Note: Naturalization status estimated for foreign-born age 21 or older who arrived 10 to 20 years before the census year.

Source: Authors' calculations using the 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) from the 1990 and 2000 censuses.

Overall, 45 percent of the 1970 cohort had naturalized by 1990, but levels for this naturalization vary considerably across origin groups. Canada, Japan, and Mexico had the lowest naturalization levels, from 23 percent to 29 percent. Rates were also relatively low among Caribbean Basin immigrants. That finding is consistent with the idea that immigrants from neighboring countries often view themselves as sojourners who regularly return home and plan to do so permanently at some point in the future. While Japanese settlers did come during the Industrialization Wave, now the Japanese foreign-born are mainly nonimmigrant residents who work for Japanese companies in the United States or who come to study. The foreign-born from China, Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, and the former Soviet Union, on the other hand, are mainly settlers and had naturalization levels above 69 percent in 1990.

The second cohort examined in Figure 11 had, by 2000, the same amount of time to become citizens as the 1970 cohort; and its experience proved to be quite similar, though there was a weak suggestion of a trend away from naturalization. For instance, the overall level of naturalization among the 1980 cohort (41 percent) was slightly lower than that for the 1970 cohort (45 percent). Nevertheless, five groups (Vietnamese, Other Asians,

Africans, South Americans, and Canadians) had slightly higher levels of naturalization in 2000 than they did in 1990, and two other groups (Indians and the heterogeneous "Other" category) remained the same. Koreans were the only group that experienced a large drop in naturalization levels, from 70 percent naturalized in 1990 to 50 percent in 2000. This change, along with the drop in Korean recent immigration in the 1990s noted earlier, suggests that the dynamics of that flow changed in recent years. The declines in levels of naturalization that occurred for other groups, including Mexicans and Chinese, were quite small.

The comparison of the naturalization experiences of these two immigration cohorts suggests that the forces influencing the propensity to become a citizen have remained relatively stable in the midst of the tremendous growth of the foreign-born population and an array of other social, political, and economic changes in the legal statuses of the foreign-born. It is possible, however, that the view from the perspective of the foreign-born is more complex than this apparent stability would suggest. Increased numbers of nonimmigrant residents from Europe, Japan, and other origins are arriving in response to globalization. These foreign-born people would not be likely to have, initially at any rate, any intention to settle and become citizens. On the other hand, other foreign-born groups may be accelerating their movement toward becoming citizens in response to changes in the legal and political climate in the United States. Michael Fix, Jeffrey Passel, and Kenneth Sucher showed that, following the passage of legislation in the mid-1990s that restricted immigrants' access to public assistance, naturalization rates started to increase in the latter half of the 1990s, although they had been declining before then.[54]

What Work Do Immigrants Do in America?

Debates about the effects of immigration on America invariably focus on the economic impacts of immigrants on the wages and employment of American workers and on the economy in general. Do immigrant workers take jobs that American workers will not do, or do they displace U.S.-born workers? Do they compete with American workers for low-wage jobs? How does immigration affect the employment of minority workers? Do immigrants fuel economic growth in the communities where they settle? The underlying economic issues are complex, and answers depend upon the level of analysis (federal, state, or local); whether analysts look at the short-term versus long-term impact of immigration; the costs and benefits considered; and the human capital characteristics of immigrants.[55] By looking at the characteristics of immigrants, it is possible to obtain some sense of the range of possible effects. As such, the analysis that follows focuses on providing an overview of the trends and characteristics of the foreign-born in the American labor force and the diversity of the economic contributions of immigrants.

Labor Force Participation

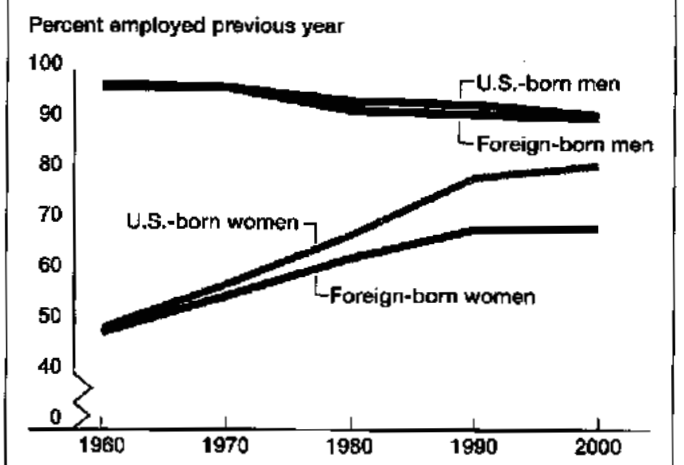
Data from the 2000 Census indicate that, of the 8.7 million new immigrants ages 18 to 59 who arrived in the United States in the 1990s, 5.6 million were in the labor force in 2000. Between 1990 and 2000, the total U.S. labor force increased by 14.4 million. Thus, recent immigrants accounted for 41 percent of labor force growth in the 1990s, compared with only 11 percent in the 1960s. Moreover, the percentage of the total labor force that is foreign-born reached 12 percent in 2000, compared with 6 percent in 1960. The foreign-born, however, are not evenly distributed across the country and thus constitute a much greater share of the labor force in some metropolitan areas. At the high end, in 2000, over half of metropolitan Miami's population and 63 percent of its labor force were foreign-born. The large Cuban enclave in Miami stands out as a thriving foreign-born community that offers a wide range of employment opportunities to Cubans, other immigrants, and Americans. Immigrants also have a big impact on the economies of Los Angeles and New York. About one-third of the populations in those metropolitan areas and just over 40 percent of their labor forces were foreign-born in 2000. Other California cities had heavily foreign-born labor forces as well. One-quarter of California's population was foreign-born, as was 30 percent of its labor force. No other state exceeded those levels.

In several large metropolitan areas, immigration had very little impact on the labor force. Though larger metropolitan areas tended to have higher foreign-born labor force compositions, there were many exceptions. Chicago, the nation's third-largest metropolitan area, had a labor force 20 percent foreign-born; but in the fourth- and sixth-largest metropolitan areas, Philadelphia and Detroit, only 8 percent and 9 percent, respectively, of the labor force was foreign-born. In Washington, D.C., the fifth-largest area, 22 percent of the labor force was foreign-born. In general, the foreign-born constituted a smaller share of the labor force in moderate to small metropolitan areas. For instance, the 17 metropolitan areas that had populations from 400,000 to 500,000 in 2000 had foreign-born labor force compositions of 7 percent, on average.

Employment rates for U.S.- and foreign-born men have been comparable since 1960. About 90 percent of men, regardless of nativity, worked in the year prior to the 2000 Census (see Figure 12). The employment rates for foreign-born and U.S.-born women were also comparable in 1960, but then began to widen in subsequent

Figure 12

EMPLOYMENT RATES OF MEN AND WOMEN BY ORIGIN, 1960–2000



Note: Includes the population ages 25–54 who were employed during the previous year.

Source: Authors' calculations using the 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) from the 1960–2000 censuses.

decades as immigration increased. Women's employment rates increased dramatically from 1960 to 1990, rising from 48 percent in 1960 to 79 percent for U.S.-born women and from 48 percent to 68 percent for foreign-born women. While the employment of U.S.-born women continued to rise slowly during the 1990s and reached 81 percent by 2000, the rate of foreign-born women remained constant. By 2000, there was a 13 percentage point difference between U.S.-born and foreign-born women in employment rates.

America's foreign-born groups vary greatly in their employment rates. Among the 44 largest foreign-born groups, men ages 25 to 54 from France and the United Kingdom had the highest levels of employment in 2000 (95 percent and 94 percent, respectively). Indian and Canadian men also had above-average employment rates at 93 percent; and Irish, German, Polish, and Argentine men were at 92 percent. Lower levels of employment, in contrast, occurred among men from origin countries that sent large numbers of unauthorized labor migrants to America. That group included Dominican men (83 percent) and Haitian men (85 percent). Mexican men had an employment rate of 88 percent in 2000, close to the foreign-born average. Rates for men from origins that included large numbers of refugees were also relatively low—79 percent for Cambodian men and 82 percent for Laotian men. The highest levels of employment among foreign-born women were achieved by Jamaicans (85 percent); Filipinas (84 percent); Nigerians (79 percent); Trinidadians (79 percent); Haitians (77 percent); Romanians (77 percent); and Panamanians (77 percent). The lowest rates of employment occurred for women from Pakistan (46 percent); Bangladesh (52 percent); Mexico (56 percent); Japan (56 percent); and Israel (60 percent).

Gender Inequality in Employment

The origin societies of recent immigrants differ considerably in their norms concerning appropriate economic activities for women outside the household. Many question whether those new immigrants who come from societies that have restrictive approaches toward women and where levels of gender inequality are high will change their values and practices over time as they become familiar with U.S. gender norms. The group differentials in women's employment rates just noted, for instance, could stem from gender norms in migrants' origin societies. That would definitely be the case for foreign-born women from Pakistan and Bangladesh, since Islam dominates in both countries. Throughout the Middle East and West Asia, the world region where Islam dominates, restrictive gender systems prevail. Most of these societies frown upon women's participation in the labor force and public sphere, and girls are segregated from boys in schools. These practices correlate with high levels of gender inequality in schooling, labor force participation, and marriage practices.

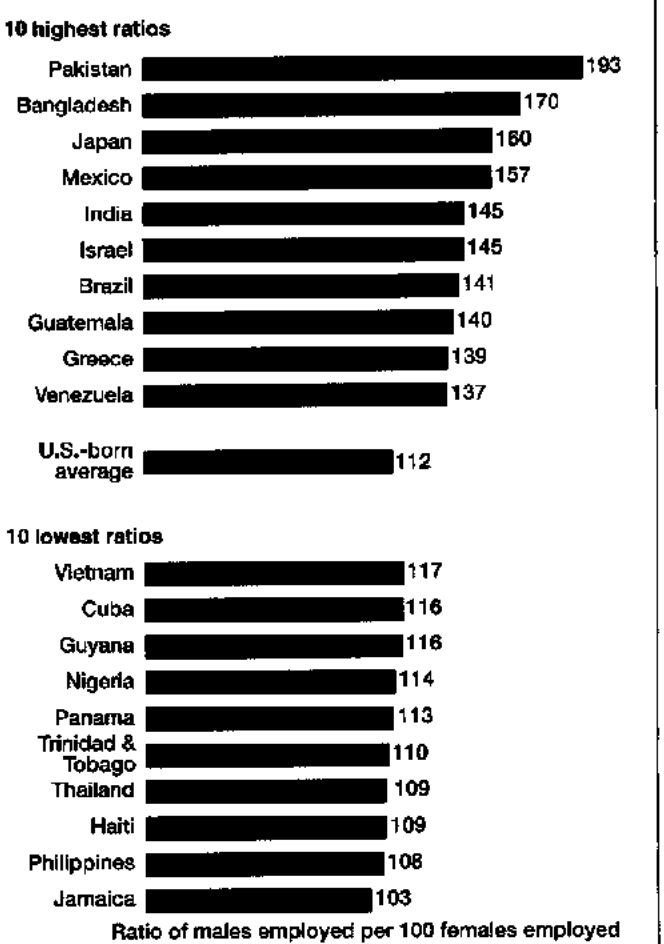
The relatively low rate of employment among Israelis in the United States probably stems from the Muslim component of that flow. The Israeli foreign-born population includes both Jews and Palestinian Arabs. Since data on people's religion are not gathered in the census, those two segments of the Israeli flow cannot be readily differentiated with census data. One study estimated that 31 percent of Israeli migrants were of Palestinian origin in 1990.[56] In the 1990s, immigration of Palestinian Arabs to the United States increased, as did immigration to the United States from Muslim countries in general.

Further light can be shed on gender differences across groups by examining employment sex ratios, which were calculated for adults ages 25 to 54 by dividing the percentage of men employed in the year before the census by the percentage of women employed. Ratios above 100 indicate that more men than women work, while those below 100 indicate that more women than men work. The employment sex ratio of 193 for Pakistanis in 2000 means that 193 Pakistani men were employed for every 100 employed Pakistani women (see Figure 13, page 288). Bangladesh has a ratio of 170, and a few other Asian and Middle Eastern groups also have relatively high employment sex ratios, including Indians, Japanese, and Israelis. While Laos is not a Muslim society, it does retain traditional attitudes toward gender.

In 2000, the employment sex ratio for U.S.-born was 112, compared with 132 for the foreign-born. For all 44 of the largest foreign-born groups, men were more

Figure 13

GENDER INEQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN, 2000



Note: Calculated for the foreign-born ages 25–54 who worked during the previous year. The ratios were calculated for the 44 largest national origin groups; groups with the 10 highest and 10 lowest ratios are shown.

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

likely to have worked in the year before the 2000 Census than women. There were some groups that had lower levels of gender inequality in employment than U.S.-born, including Jamaicans (the lowest sex ratio of 103), Haitians, and Trinidadians. The ratios for Cuba, Panama, and Guyana exceeded that of the U.S.-born by an insignificant degree. Nicaragua also had a relatively low sex ratio. While these Caribbean Basin countries had different colonial experiences and their populations speak different languages today, they share a common historical experience and cultural heritage rooted in their West African slave origins. One can speculate about whether the relatively high levels of women's autonomy and work outside the home that characterize people of African origins in the Caribbean and the United States could be a legacy of a West African cultural pattern. Some anthropologists and African scholars have made that observation.[57] The foreign-born from Nigeria, Africa's largest country and one where many of America's slaves originated, also had a relatively low employment sex ratio in 2000, a finding that supports the cultural-pattern argument. Many of the slaves imported to Jamaica and other Caribbean islands came from Africa's Guinea coast, particularly the Bight of Benin and the Bight of Biafra, where Nigerians live.[58]

Filipinos also have relatively high levels of gender equality in employment. That pattern is consistent with Filipinos origin culture, which strongly encourages schooling for girls and women's work for pay outside the home. Moreover, the Filipino migration stream has been highly selective of females who migrate to fill technical and professional jobs in the health care industry. Fully 30 percent of employed Filipino women in the United States worked in medical services in 2000; an additional 17 percent worked in sales and 13 percent in education and professional services.

Gender inequality in employment can stem from the composition and dynamics of migration flows. Mexicans, for instance, have a high level of gender inequality even though they come from a country where the labor force participation of women is relatively high. Gender equality, however, is characteristic of urban Mexico and not typical of the rural areas and small towns where most unauthorized migrants originate. While many Mexican women in rural and urban parts of Mexico work as market traders, that activity is strictly regulated in the United States and thus not one that Mexican women can readily pursue after coming to the United States. Other factors stemming from Mexicans' rural origins are associated with reduced employment, including low levels of education and English-language ability and relatively high fertility rates. For all groups of women, both U.S.- and foreign-born, childbearing and childrearing dampen labor force participation.[59] Mexican men are more likely than other groups of foreign-born men to work in agriculture in rural and nonmetropolitan areas, a situation that also could depress Mexican women's employment rates because, in general, there are fewer jobs for women in rural areas.

Migration flows composed of large numbers of nonimmigrant residents tend to have relatively high employment sex ratios because accompanying spouses can only work if they too obtain institutional sponsorship. That pattern probably accounts for the relatively high employment sex ratios among the French, Japanese, and other foreign-born groups who mostly come to the United States as nonimmigrant residents. In 2002, for instance, very few French were admitted as permanent immigrants (4,596), but about 111,000 entered as nonimmigrant residents. While one cannot tell from official data on nonimmigrant entries whether these French

people were entering for the first time, or were residing in the United States already, traveled abroad, and then returned, a conservative estimate is that perhaps one-quarter to one-third of them would be foreigners coming for the first time. A similar situation occurs for Japan. Whereas in 2002, only 9,150 Japanese arrived as permanent residents, 87,000 arrived as nonimmigrant residents. Japanese companies have invested heavily in the U.S. automotive, hotel, and finance industries and regularly send Japanese managerial and technical personnel here to manage these investments. Since men outnumber women among corporate executives in France, Japan, and most countries of the world, accompanying spouses of nonimmigrant residents would likely be female and thus restricted from entering the labor force. In order to work, accompanying spouses would have to find employers willing to hire them as skilled workers and to go through the complicated official process to obtain labor certifications for them.

Occupational Shifts and Group Diversity

What jobs do the foreign-born fill in America and how has their economic activity changed in recent decades? Since the foreign-born population has highly diverse skills, there are many types of jobs that they do in America. It is difficult to provide more than a crude snapshot of the wide range of jobs and economic contributions that immigrants make in America.[60] Nonetheless, it is important to try to glean insights about their economic activities in order to understand how they survive after they arrive. The economy that recent immigrants entered in the 1990s has experienced broad structural changes in recent decades. For instance, between 1970 and 2000, the skill requirements of jobs shifted upward and manufacturing and agricultural jobs declined. In 1970, 25 percent of workers were managers or professionals, but 37 percent were in 2000. At the other end of the distribution, the percent employed as operators or laborers declined from 22 percent in 1970 to 15 percent in 2000.

This upward shift was not experienced by recent immigrants to the same extent as it was by the U.S.-born. While U.S.-born men increased their percentages employed as managers and professionals from 31 percent to 38 percent from 1970 to 2000, the percent of recent immigrant men employed as managers and professionals remained constant at 31 percent. Furthermore, although U.S.-born men were shifting out of the operator/laborer category (from 25 percent to 20 percent), the recent immigrant share in this category increased from 26 percent to 29 percent. These trends disguise another shift in the operator/laborer category: a decline in high-paying union jobs and an increase in low-wage jobs with limited benefits. Despite the divergence in the occupational distributions of U.S.-born and recent immigrant men from 1970 to 2000, the latter group worked in a wide range of occupations at both points in time.

The occupational distributions of U.S.-born and foreign-born women also diverged across these three decades, but in a different manner. Unlike men, recent immigrant women significantly increased their share working as managers and professionals, from 18 percent in 1970 to 29 percent in 2000. That gain, however, was outpaced by U.S.-born women, who increased their share working as managers and professionals from 21 percent in 1970 to 40 percent in 2000. In the same period, both U.S.-born and foreign-born women experienced big declines in their percentages working as operators/laborers, from 17 percent to 7 percent for U.S.-born and from 34 percent to 18 percent for recent immigrants. In the service sector, trends by nativity moved in different directions for women. While recent immigrant women's employment in service jobs increased from 20 percent to 28 percent between 1970 and 2000, U.S.-born women's share declined from 20 percent to 15 percent.

The type of work that people do in the U.S. labor force is closely related to their human capital, particularly their education and English-language skills. Indeed, when the population is differentiated by nativity and education, it becomes apparent that, for men, education is more important for occupational position than nativity or length of residence. Figure 14 (page 290) shows that the occupational distributions of recent immigrants, all foreign-born, and U.S.-born men with a college or advanced degree were almost identical in 2000, with about 75 percent of well-educated men in each group employed as managers and professionals. Moreover, virtually no men with a college education worked in farming, forestry, and fishing; and only about 10 percent worked in service occupations. College-educated men employed in other occupations, in contrast, do differ slightly in their employment patterns by nativity. For instance, recent immigrant men with a college education were more than twice as likely as U.S.-born men to hold jobs as machine operators, factory workers, and laborers; and U.S.-born men with college educations were more likely than the foreign-born to hold clerical and sales jobs. Despite these minor differences, the bottom line is that college-educated men have similar occupational distributions regardless of nativity.

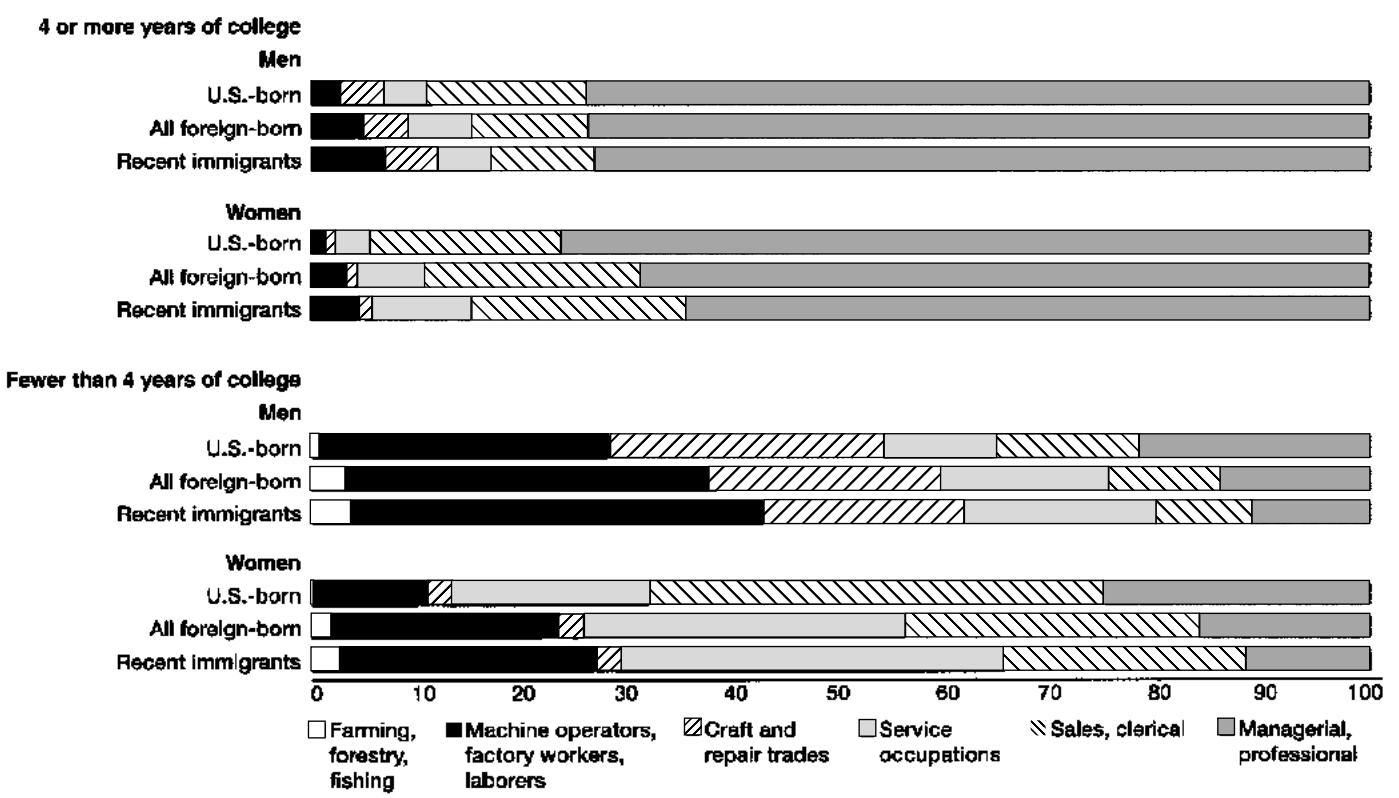
The occupational distributions by nativity of men with fewer than four years of college show greater differences. One-third of foreign-born men with less than a college education worked as machine operators, factory workers, and laborers; followed by 22 percent in craft and repair jobs, 15 percent in service jobs, and 14 percent in managerial or professional occupations. Though the distribution of jobs for U.S.-born men with less than college education was similar, they were more likely than immi-

grant men to hold craft and repair jobs or managerial and professional jobs. Both recent immigrant and foreign-born men with less than college education were more likely than U.S.-born men to work in farming, forestry, and fishing. Research on the movement of unauthorized migrants into agriculture and rural industries in the upper Midwest and South suggest this movement is a growing trend.[61]

The patterns for women by nativity are comparable to those for men. Women who are college-educated have similar occupational distributions regardless of nativity, while those without a college degree diverge in their patterns (see Figure 14). In 2000, the vast majority of all college-educated women worked as managers and professionals—76 percent of U.S.-born women, 69 percent of all foreign-born women, and 65 percent of recent immigrants. If women had less than a college education, however, foreign-born and recent immigrant women tended to work in blue-collar jobs, while U.S.-born women worked in white-collar jobs (managers and professionals or sales and clerical). U.S.-born women were twice as likely as foreign-born women to be sales and clerical workers, but only half as likely to do service work or to work as operators, fabricators, and laborers. Moreover, recent immigrant women were slightly more likely than all foreign-born women to be machine operators, factory workers, and laborers, or to be engaged in agricultural and rural jobs.

Understanding the diversity of occupational experiences of foreign-born men and women in America can be enhanced by looking at the situation of specific origin groups. Figure 15 shows the occupational distribution of Mexican, Vietnamese, and Indian men; and Figure 16 gives the same information for Mexican, Jamaican, and Filipino women. Mexican men and women were examined because they are the largest foreign-born group and include large numbers of unauthorized labor migrants who work for low wages. Indian men were examined because they were the fourth-largest foreign-born group in 2000 and represent the skilled immigrant sector. Vietnamese men are also a large foreign-born group—the fifth largest—and shed light on a group with roots in refugee migration. Filipino women were selected because of the prevalence of well-educated and employed women in that flow. More Jamaican women migrate than men and thus shed light on a predominantly black immigration flow.

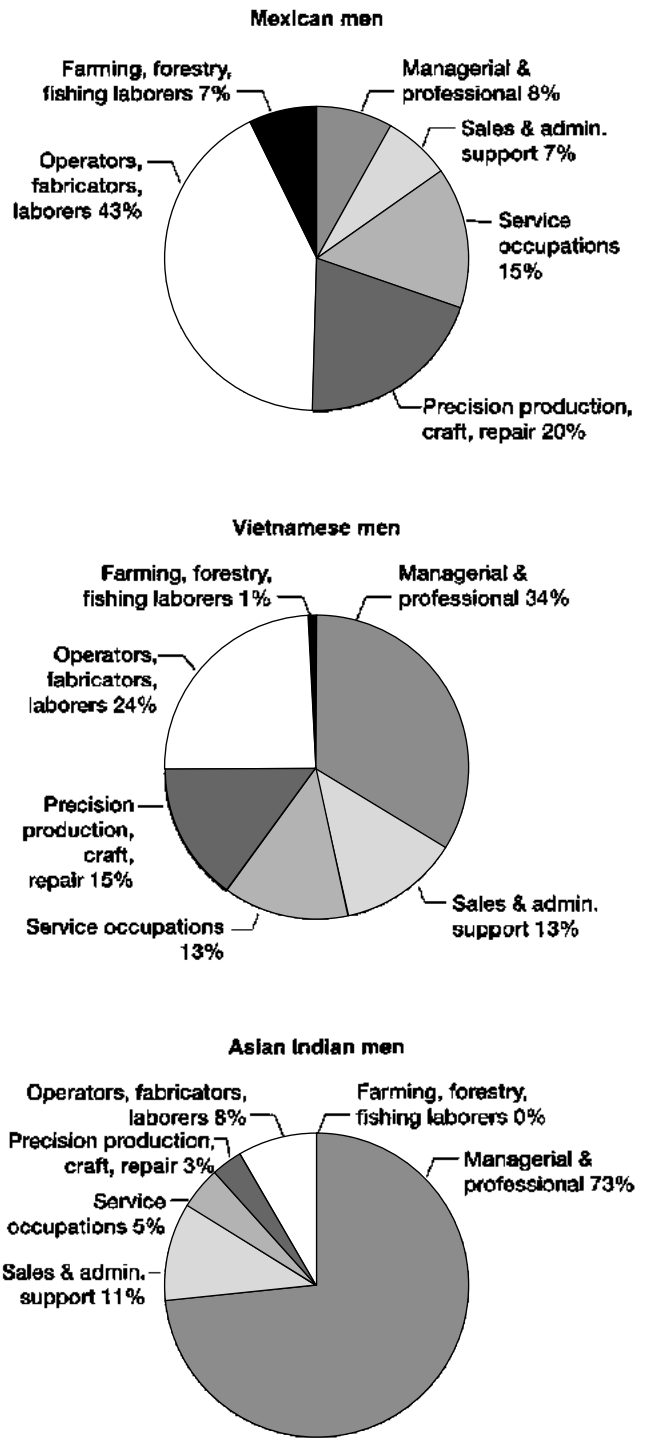
Figure 14
OCCUPATION BY NATIVITY, GENDER, AND EDUCATION, 2000



Note: Includes the population ages 25–59 who were employed at the time of the census or during the previous year. Military personnel excluded.
Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

Figure 15

Occupations of Employed Foreign-Born Men From Mexico, Vietnam, and India, 2000

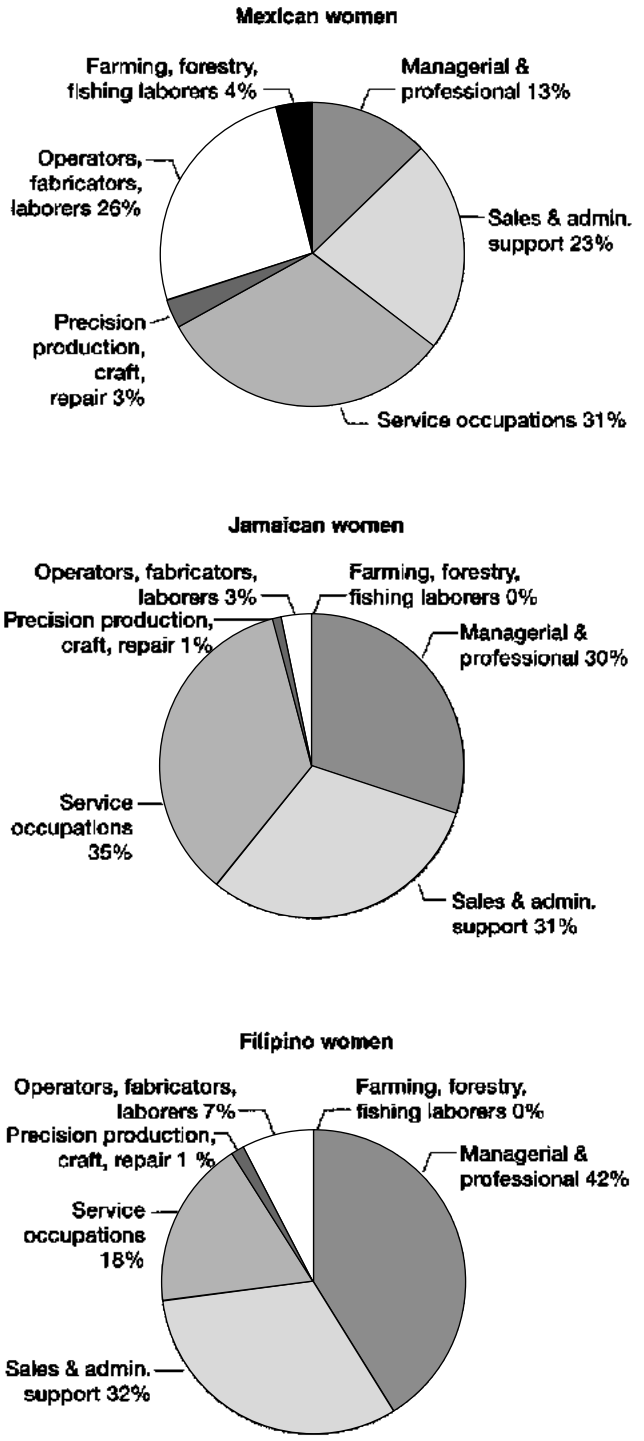


Note: Includes men age 16 or older who were employed at the time of the census. Military personnel excluded.

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

Figure 16

Occupations of Employed Foreign-Born Women From Mexico, Jamaica, and the Philippines, 2000



Note: Includes women age 16 or older who were employed at the time of the census. Military personnel excluded.

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

In 2000, most Mexican men (43 percent) worked as operators, fabricators, and laborers, compared with 24 percent of Vietnamese men and 8 percent of Indian men. In contrast, three-quarters of Indian men and one-third of Vietnamese men worked as managers and professionals, but only 8 percent of Mexicans. Other data indicate that 5 percent of Indian men and 5 percent of Indian women were employed in 2000 as medical doctors, compared with 0.5 percent of U.S.-born men and women. An additional 11 percent of Indian men worked in sales and administrative support occupations. While Vietnamese men had a more diverse occupational profile than Indian or Mexican men, the latter were primarily concentrated in low-wage occupations. An employment pattern unique to Mexicans is their tendency to work in farming, forestry, and fishing; 7 percent of them did so in 2000. That figure represented a decline, however, from the 32 percent of Mexican men who had those jobs in 1960.

Other 2000 Census data on rural industries indicate that 14 percent of all workers in those industries were Mexican men. Rural industries include a broader array of jobs than the occupational category of farming, forestry, and fishing laborers used to calculate the data in Figures 15 and 16. Included in the industry measure would be all workers engaged in farming, fishing, and forestry (not just laborers); workers engaged in meat packing, dairy processing, and vegetable/fruit packing; as well as those who handle farming, fishing, and forestry products. Since U.S.-born workers have been moving out of employment in rural industries, these statistics suggest that Mexican men have stepped in to fill an important niche in America's rural economy. The dispersal of Mexicans to different parts of the country in the 1990s could be linked to their niche in rural industries.

For the three groups of foreign-born women examined, the occupational distributions differ, but not as much as those of the men. The highest concentration among the women occurs for Filipino female managers and professionals (42 percent), but one-third of Jamaican women also worked as managers and professionals, as did 13 percent of Mexican women. Indeed, more Mexican women worked as managers or professionals than Mexican men, although that ratio is not the case for most foreign-born groups. The share of women in the three groups employed in service occupations is also comparable, ranging from one-third of Jamaican and Mexican women to just under one-fifth of Filipino women. In addition, the three groups have a comparable share employed in sales and administrative support work. The sharpest differential between the three groups of foreign-born women occurred in the operator, fabricator, and laborer category. While one-quarter of Mexican women worked in those occupations, only 7 percent of Filipino women and 3 percent of Jamaican women were in them. An additional 4 percent of Mexican women worked as farm laborers.

The type of work performed by the foreign-born in the United States is often dependent upon where they live. Eighteen percent of Filipino women, for instance, worked in service occupations in the country as a whole, but 37 percent of them worked in those occupations if they lived in Hawaii. But most Filipino women lived in California (48 percent), compared with only 8 percent in Hawaii. The differences that occur between the occupational distribution of Filipino women in Hawaii and California stem from the social networks that channel migrants from the same origin country into different states and metropolitan areas to settle. This occurs because people tend to form social relationships with people similar to themselves.

Some jobs in America are increasingly defined as "immigrant" jobs. Table 6 identifies the 10 occupations most likely to be held by recent immigrant men and women in 2000. Although recent immigrants constituted only 5.0 percent of employed men and 3.4 percent of employed women in 2000, they had concentrations three to four times larger in the occupations listed in Table 6. While most of the overrepresented occupations were unskilled ones, there were two highly skilled occupations in which recent immigrant men were overrepresented: biological scientists and other natural scientists. Recent immigrant women were also overrepresented among biological scientists and other natural scientists, as well as among chemists and statisticians and actuaries.

Most of the occupations in which recent immigrants were overrepresented, however, were unskilled and low-wage occupations. For recent immigrant men, that group of occupations included taxi drivers and chauffeurs, parking attendants and auto service workers, laundry workers, plasterers, tailors, and waiters. Recent immigrant women, in contrast, were most overrepresented among employed women working as produce graders and packers, farm laborers, private household workers, meat cutters, tailors, and laundry workers. While these national statistics would allow for the inference that recent immigrants were doing jobs in 2000 that American workers preferred not to do, they also indicate that, with the exception of taxi driving and produce grading and packing, most unskilled jobs in 2000 were still being done by U.S.-born workers. The overrepresentation of recent immigrant men and women in highly skilled occupations would seem to be more a failing of America's education system to train sufficient workers for those jobs rather than an inherent distaste for high-paying jobs.

Self-Employment

Immigrants are often described as entrepreneurs and more likely than U.S.-born workers to set up a business. The growth of ethnic communities in America's largest cities, and their accompanying ethnic restaurants and shops, reinforces this impression. Moreover, there has

been a growth of chain firms in the food and hospitality industry that have ethnic themes, such as Chi-Chi's, Taco Bell, and Taco Maker. A simple Internet search identifies a wide range of entrepreneurial activities in which the foreign-born are engaged in the United States. While immigrants themselves have to take the initiative to set up small businesses, U.S. immigration policy encourages foreigners to invest in America. In 1990, Congress set up a new immigration category that authorizes up to 10,000 permanent residency visas annually to foreigners who commit to investing $1 million in a new commercial enterprise or at least $500,000 in a new enterprise in a targeted area of high unemployment.

Despite the widespread image of self-employed immigrants, when we look at the total foreign-born, there is very little difference between foreign-born and U.S.-born self-employed workers. Among people ages 25 to 59 who were employed at the time of the 2000 Census, 11 percent of the foreign-born and 10 percent of the U.S.-born declared themselves self-employed. Self-employment by nativity has converged since 1960, when 12 percent of the foreign-born and 9 percent of the U.S.-born were self-employed. When differentiated by sex, the picture changes. In 2000, U.S.-born men were slightly more likely than foreign-born men to be self-employed (12 percent versus 11 percent, respectively); and foreign-born women were more likely than U.S.-born women to be self-employed (9 percent versus 7 percent, respectively).

Self-employment rates vary greatly across foreign-born groups. In 2000, self-employment ranged from a low of 5 percent for Haitians to a high of 26 percent among Greeks (see Figure 17, page 294). Filipinos had the second-lowest rate of self-employment (6 percent), which is consistent with their heavy concentration in the health industry as professionals and technical workers. Laotians, an Asian group with refugee origins, also had a relatively low rate of self-employment. With these exceptions, the lowest rates of self-employment were concentrated among foreign-born groups from Mexico and the Caribbean Basin that include large numbers of unauthorized labor migrants.

Cubans had a self-employment rate slightly above the national average. The strong presence of Cubans in the Miami metropolitan area and the size of their economic enclave there undoubtedly opened up opportunities for entrepreneurship available to few other foreign-born groups. Nonetheless, given that the Mexican foreign-born population is almost 10 times larger than the Cuban population, it would be difficult to argue that size alone is a sufficient factor for entrepreneurship. A more likely explanation would build on the composition of Cuban refugees in the 1960s. The Cuban revolution disproportionately uprooted members of the upper-middle and middle classes. As such, entrepreneurs, managers, professionals, and other skilled Cubans predominated among the first generation of Cuban refugees. The high levels of human and real capital among these Cuban refugees, in turn, enabled them to build new businesses in Miami that turned that city within a couple of decades into the surrogate capital of Latin America.[62]

High rates of self-employment are largely concentrated among foreign-born groups from Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Among the 10 countries shown in Figure 17 with the highest rates of self-employment

Table 6

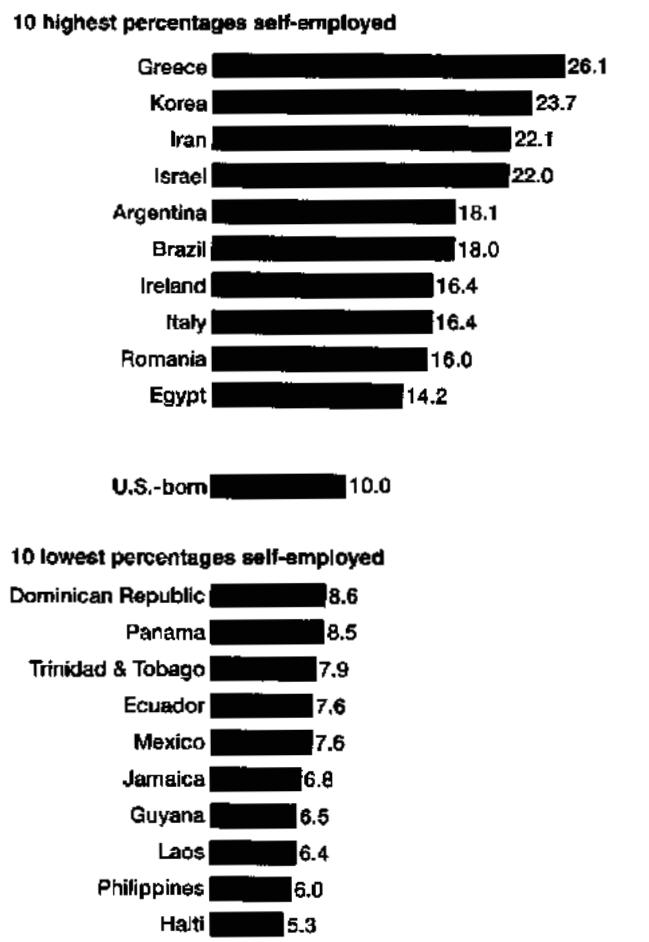
OCCUPATIONS IN WHICH RECENT IMMIGRANTS ARE OVERREPRESENTED, 2000

Employed men			Employed women		
Occupation	% recent immigrants	Total number employed (1,000)	Occupation	% recent immigrants	Total number employed (1,000)
Biological scientists	19	79	Produce graders & packers	24	14
Taxi drivers, chauffeurs	19	130	Other natural scientists	19	65
Farm laborers	18	314	Biological scientists	19	65
Parking attendants, auto service workers	17	64	Farm laborers	16	97
Laundry and dry-cleaning workers	16	79	Private household workers	14	673
Other natural scientists	16	140	Meat cutters, except slaughter-house workers	13	44
Plasterers	15	32	Chemists	13	28
Tailors	15	19	Tailors	12	51
Service workers (not private households)	14	449	Statisticians and actuaries	12	14
Waiters	14	181	Laundry and dry-cleaning workers	11	121
All employed	5	49,544	All employed	3	43,445

Note: Data refer to employed men and women ages 25–54 and show recent immigrants as a percent of total employment in each occupation by sex. Recent immigrants are those arriving since 1990. Rankings are limited to occupations that employed at least 10,000 men or women.

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

Figure 17
PERCENT SELF-EMPLOYED FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN, 2000



Note: Includes Americans ages 25–59 who were employed at time of the census. Military personnel excluded. Origin groups shown had the 10 highest and 10 lowest percentages self-employed among the 44 largest foreign-born groups.

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

in 2000, four were European. The largest share of European self-employed operated businesses in the construction sector. This pattern of self-employment in construction holds for both sexes.

The popular image of the immigrant entrepreneur is of a man and his wife and perhaps their children operating a small family-based restaurant or grocery store in an ethnic neighborhood. There is some basis for that image for some origin groups, such as Greeks and Italians in the restaurant business. While Chinese and Japanese do not have exceptionally high rates of self-employment, if they are self-employed they are likely to be restaurant owners (26 percent and 22 percent, respectively). The food industry attracts large numbers of foreign-born—14 percent of the foreign-born worked in that industry in 2000, compared with 7 percent of U.S.-born. Koreans stand out as a group that has both relatively high levels of self-employment (24 percent) and a high concentration in the food industry.[63]

Foreign-born groups from the Middle East also have high rates of self-employment—more than 14 percent of the foreign-born from Israel, Iran, and Egypt. Other Middle Eastern groups with high rates of self-employment include Syrians (30 percent) and Jordanians (20 percent), but those groups are not shown in Figure 17 because they are not among the 44 largest groups.

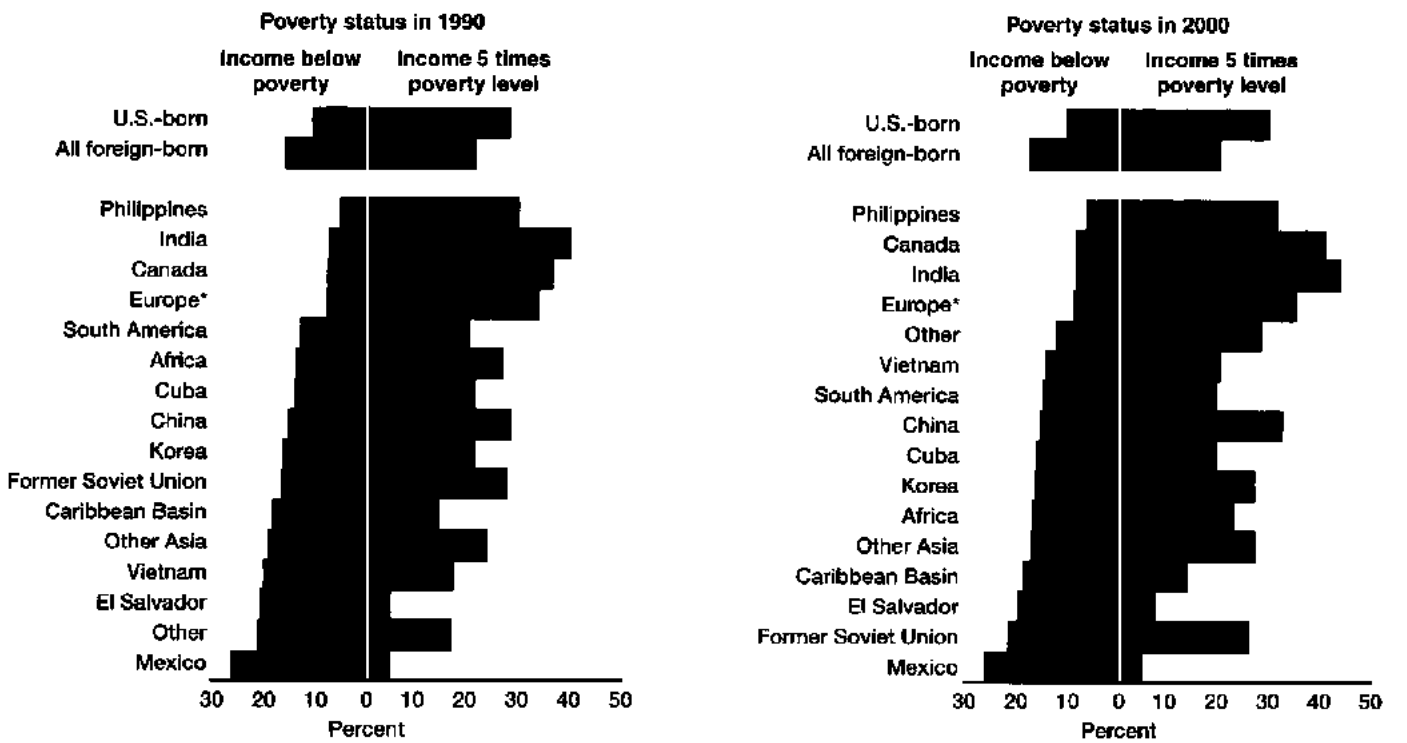
Economic Status

The economic status of foreign-born households in the United States can be expected to vary significantly given the diversity across origin groups. Diversity in economic status across origins can be assessed by comparing groups in terms of the extent to which their family incomes fall below or exceed the poverty line. The percentage of U.S.-born and foreign-born families with incomes more than five times the poverty line in 1990 and 2000 are represented by bars to the right of the vertical line in Figure 18, while those with incomes below the poverty line are shown to the left of the vertical line. Poverty is measured using 1990 threshold levels and is adjusted for inflation for 2000. Data are shown for the 10 largest foreign-born groups in 1990 and 2000, and for all other foreign-born aggregated by their region of origin. The "Other" category includes foreign-born from the South Pacific, stateless persons, and unclassified others.

Between 1990 and 2000, the poverty status of the U.S.-born remained unchanged. In both periods, 27 percent to 29 percent of the U.S.-born had incomes more than five times above the poverty line, and 10 percent were below. Poverty levels among the foreign-born also remained constant during the two periods at about 17 percent. Mexicans were more likely than any other foreign-born group to be in poverty in both decades, but their share in poverty (26 percent) did not increase in the 1990s even though the Mexican foreign-born grew by 43 percent. Only the foreign-born from the former Soviet Union experienced a sharp increase in poverty in the 1990s, rising from 16 percent to 21 percent. That increase probably occurred because that recent immigrant flow from the former Soviet Union included large numbers of refugees and children who would have been eligible for refugee assistance. However, that group is also relatively well educated, and thus their poverty disadvantage should diminish in the years ahead. A small increase in poverty occurred for the African and South American regional groupings. On the other hand, while Other Asians, Vietnamese, and the heterogeneous "Other" category experienced decreasing poverty levels in the 1990s, the poverty status of most groups remained unchanged.

Figure 18

POVERTY STATUS OF FOREIGN-BORN AND U.S.-BORN BY SELECTED COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, 1990 AND 2000



* Except former Soviet republics.

Note: Includes persons age 19 or older not living in group quarters. Recent immigrants are those who arrived in the decade preceding the census year given. Caribbean Basin includes all countries, except Mexico, that border the Caribbean Ocean, plus Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, and El Salvador.

Source: Authors' calculations using the 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) from the 1990 and 2000 censuses.

At the other extreme, many foreign-born groups had percentages of households with incomes more than five times the poverty level. In both 1990 and 2000, four groups—Europe, India, Canada, and the Philippines—had higher percentages than did the U.S.-born. In 2000, almost 20 percent of all foreign-born had household incomes of this magnitude. If Mexicans are excluded from the calculation, the percentage of foreign-born with incomes more than five times the poverty level rises to 26 percent, fairly close to the 29 percent of U.S.-born. Between 1990 and 2000, the percent of U.S.-born households with this level of income increased by just under 2 percentage points and reached 29 percent. Eight of the 16 foreign-born categories also had increases of 2 points or greater. Three groups—the former Soviet Union, Africa, and Cuba—experienced declines of at least 2 points; while five—Mexico, Caribbean, South America, Europe, and the Philippines—experienced little change in the proportion of households with relatively high income.

While jobs are a core reason why many foreigners come to America, many foreign-born were out of the labor force at the time of the 2000 Census. This raises questions about the survival strategy of unemployed adults. Do they live with relatives who support them? Do they live off retirement income or investments? Table 7 (page 296) provides data on income sources and activities of nonworking men and women ages 21 to 65 by nativity status in 2000. If U.S.-born men were not working, they were likely to be receiving Social Security or other retirement income (47 percent) or to be in a household that had other members working (49 percent). Nonworking foreign-born men, in contrast, usually lived in households that had other members working (65 percent). Only 17 percent of foreign-born men received Social Security and 10 percent received some other form of public assistance or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), compared with 16 percent of U.S.-born men. In addition, 15 percent of nonworking foreign-born men were in school, compared with 7 percent of U.S.-born men. The relatively high levels of school attendance among foreign-born men are consistent with the presence of large numbers of nonimmigrant resident

Table 7

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR PERSONS NOT EMPLOYED IN THE YEAR BEFORE THE CENSUS, BY NATIVITY AND GENDER, 2000

	Men		Women	
	U.S.-born	Foreign-born	U.S.-born	Foreign-born
Looking for work (%)	7	9	4	5
Receiving any investment income (%)	17	7	10	4
Receiving public assistance or SSI (%)	16	10	13	9
Receiving Social Security or other retirement income (%)	47	17	23	9
Attending school (%)	7	15	6	9
With other household members working (%)	49	65	65	80
With other household members receiving public assistance or SSI (%)	8	9	5	5
With other household members receiving investment income (%)	12	10	22	16
With other household members receiving Social Security or other retirement income (%)	15	8	14	7
Median age (years)	48	40	46	41

Note: Statistics are based on population ages 21–65 and not residing in group quarters. School and unemployment status are at the time of the census rather than the prior year. SSI refers to Supplementary Security Income.

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

students in the United States. Only a small percentage of foreign-born and U.S.-born men who were not employed at the time of the census said they were looking for work—9 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

Among nonworking adult women, both U.S.-born and foreign-born women were about 15 percentage points more likely than their male counterparts to live in a household where another member worked. Whereas U.S.-born women were only half as likely as U.S.-born men to be receiving Social Security or other retirement income, they were more than twice as likely as foreign-born women to have income from that source. Nevertheless, regardless of nativity, nonworking women were less likely than men to be receiving Social Security income or investment income or attending school. Moreover, nonworking U.S.-born and foreign-born women were more likely than their male counterparts to be in a household where another household member received investment income, but just as likely as men to live in a household where another member received Social Security or other retirement income. Only a small share of women not in the labor force said they were looking for work.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Immigration has been and continues to be a significant force in building and changing America. But the forces that drive immigration today differ greatly from those that shaped earlier waves. While immigration used to be driven by America's need to populate its empty lands and obtain workers for its growing industries, immigration is now increasingly driven by forces that extend beyond America's borders and stem from growing interdependencies between countries. The forces shaping migration today are complex, as are the processes by which the growing foreign-born population is altering America's social landscape. This complexity is reflected in the growing diversity of immigrants' origins; in the presence of large numbers of highly educated migrants alongside equally large numbers of poorly educated migrants; and in the widening range of social, economic, and political scenarios emerging as the foreign-born settle and disperse throughout the United States.

A theme sounded throughout this report is that some immigration to the United States, possibly even a growing volume of immigration, will continue because international migration is now an integral element of international commerce, politics, and society. The number of foreigners who come to the United States to live or work (in particular, as nonimmigrant residents) is likely to continue to grow in number, as will the number of foreigners who seek admission because they have become an immediate relative of a U.S. citizen. Increases in the latter will occur because immigration law allows U.S.-born Americans and naturalized citizens to bring in their immediate family members. It is unlikely that this policy will change, nor should it change. Thus, as interactions between Americans expand both in the United States and abroad, marriages ensue and help build immigration momentum.[64] While permanent immigrants and unauthorized migrants also want the right to bring in their immediate family members, their right to do so is likely to remain restricted.

Other foreigners will need to be admitted to America in the years ahead for humanitarian reasons. In a

world awash in civil and ethnic conflicts, international military actions, and nation-building, and if U.S. involvement in these international affairs continues, there will likely be more and more refugees, and some will have to be resettled in America. Given the leadership role and engagement of the United States in political conflicts throughout the world, it will be necessary to open our doors to foreigners whose lives have become endangered because of their political support for or military service to the United States.

If U.S. immigration is to be altered or reduced, more control must be exerted over unauthorized migration. A hot debate exists among immigration experts, however, regarding whether it is possible or even desirable to control unauthorized migration. Critics of regulation often argue that unauthorized migration from Mexico cannot be controlled because of the history and geography that binds Mexico to the United States. NAFTA and other integration efforts between North America, Mexico, and other countries in the Caribbean and Latin America are likely to strengthen and to generate increased demand for migration among countries in the region. Douglas Massey argues that the United States should recognize the special relationship between Mexico and the United States and set up a temporary worker program to admit Mexicans to work in the United States.[65] According to his argument, it is better to bring that movement into the open in order to reduce its negative effects on migrants and the economy. He also argues that increased efforts to deter unauthorized migrants in dense urban areas at the Mexican border are ineffective and only shift flows to remote rural areas where the risks to migrants are greatly increased. Other proponents of this view point to the social networks between unauthorized migrants and their homelands that recruit new migrants, and they argue that increased government efforts to control these flows will drive migrants further underground and increase their exploitation.[66]

Experts who believe that unauthorized migration should be controlled make three points. First, for a democracy built on law and order, it is inconsistent to ignore either the implications that large numbers of unauthorized migrants have for the economy and society or the potentially discriminatory effects of unauthorized status on the migrants themselves. A correlate of this argument is that prospective immigrants from other origins are encouraged to join the flow of unauthorized migration to America, since deportation is unlikely if they successfully make it past America's borders.

Second, opponents point to the economic effects of maintaining a large pool of unauthorized workers willing to work for low wages on the wage rates and employment levels of U.S.-born unskilled workers in general and U.S.-born minorities in particular. Nonetheless, while economic theory suggests that negative labor market effects should occur, empirical studies of the impact of immigrant workers have produced inconsistent findings. One reason may be that U.S.-born workers adjust by migrating out of metropolitan labor markets that receive large numbers of unauthorized migrant workers.[67]

Third, those who advocate immigration control argue that unauthorized migration could be controlled through serious policy reforms. The lack of political will to do something about unauthorized migration, in turn, these analysts argue, is reinforced by lobbying efforts from a diverse group of well-organized political constituencies. One group that has lobbied effectively for benign neglect consists of agricultural and other employers who benefit from the presence of foreign workers. While some employers argue forcefully that American workers are unavailable for the low-wage jobs that foreigners are willing to fill, other employers argue that highly skilled migrants are needed to keep America's science and technology industries competitive. Strong lobbying against stricter immigration control also comes from a range of political and advocacy groups who believe that foreigners already here should be permitted to stay if they are gainfully employed and not disturbing the peace. Some groups think in terms of how immigration might affect political alignments over the long run.[68] Politicians hesitate to act because of concern over how immigration policy reform will affect the next election. Together, these forces have led to a strong political alignment against change in immigration policy that crosscuts traditional liberal and conservative ideologies and party lines.

Immigration experts of all persuasions agree that border deterrence has been ineffective as a means of controlling unauthorized immigration. Therefore, if unauthorized migration is to be slowed, the options that remain would be to try to reduce unauthorized immigration through improved internal enforcement. The development of secure national identity cards and a system to allow employers to verify work eligibility are essential elements of improved enforcement. While momentum is building in the United States for some form of temporary worker program, skeptics point to the experience of Europe in the 1960s and 1970s. As Western Europe recovered from World War II, countries in that region set up temporary worker programs to meet labor demands. However, when their economies slowed in the early 1970s, the countries that had those programs found that temporary workers had become permanent and that large-scale deportation of foreign workers was inconsistent with their liberal democracies. Thus, the temporary workers stayed in Europe and Europe's immigration stock has continued to grow through family reunification.

Future policy directions will play an important and perhaps even decisive role in determining the directions that immigration to America will take. Although immigration policy is difficult to formulate, legislate, and successfully implement, it is nonetheless clear that immigration to the United States throughout its history has been exten-

sively shaped by a series of federal policies, and continues to be shaped during the Globalization Wave by a growing and often contradictory set of policies. Given the controversy that surrounds immigration policy discussions, now may be the time to set up another bipartisan commission to look at U.S. immigration trends and policies. The last comprehensive review of U.S. immigration policy was undertaken by the bipartisan U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform a decade ago. That commission came down strongly on the side of continued legal immigration, noting the contributions that immigrants have made to American society and the opportunities that immigration presents for the nation. While another commission would have to build on the policy changes made by Congress since then and address increased concerns over national security, the critical questions to be addressed today are the same ones asked by the 1990 commission:

- How do we ensure that immigration is based on and supports broad national economic, social, and humanitarian interests rather than the interest of those who would abuse our laws?
- How do we gain effective control over our borders while still encouraging international trade, investment, and tourism?
- How do we maintain a civic culture based on shared values while accommodating the large and diverse population admitted through immigration policy?[69]

These questions remain unanswered. The last commission did lay out a number of measures that would regain control over immigration, and those recommendations should be looked at again as the United States decides what direction its immigration should take. At the same time, it has to be recognized that the world has greatly changed since 9/11. More people now recognize that the government needs to do a better job of monitoring who enters and exits the country and for what purposes. While this recognition is linked to security concerns rather than to specific concerns over the desired size and composition of immigration, measures taken for national security reasons have implications for immigration policy and thus become an important part of the picture.

As long as concern continues over national security at home, technologies, staffing, and policies for managing the entry and exit of foreigners are likely to become more sophisticated, even though the exact form of evolving controls remains to be determined. Should biometric data be used to manage immigration? Should there be secure identity cards for Americans and foreigners in America? Does America's tolerant attitude toward unauthorized migration compromise efforts to enhance security? Will measures taken to increase control of America's borders reduce American's civil liberties?

As momentum and pressure for immigration continue to grow, it has become increasingly important to address these issues in order to reach consensus on the future direction of immigration to America.

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Immigration and Fading Color Lines in America

By Frank D. Bean, Jennifer Lee, Jeanne Batalova, and Mark Leach

INTRODUCTION

In 1965, after 40 years of relatively low immigration, Congress passed the Hart-Celler Act, eliminating national origin quotas and reopening the nation's doors to increased flows of immigrants. One of the most dramatic and ongoing consequences of this legislation has been the diversification of the racial and ethnic landscape of the United States, a shift that has occurred for two primary reasons. First, immigrants coming to the United States over the past three to four decades, unlike those who arrived in the early years of the 20th century, have been mainly non-Europeans. During the 1980s and 1990s, for example, more than four of five came from Asia, Latin America, or the Caribbean, with only about one in seven originating in Europe or Canada. Second, the absolute number of newcomers settling in the country has been sizable. For example, 34 million foreign-born people lived in the United States in 2002 (after adjusting for the census undercount), with the size of the U.S.-born second generation numbering around 32 million, so that immigrants and their children together totaled almost 66 million people, or about 23 percent of the U.S. population.[1] Demographers expect the numbers of foreign-born who are non-European to remain high. As a result, according to National Research Council projections, Latinos and Asians could triple their shares of the U.S. population by the year 2050, growing to about 25 percent and 8 percent of total population, respectively.

These new immigrants have changed a largely biracial black-white nation with a very large white majority into a society composed of several racial and ethnic groups. Some observers find the arrival of contemporary immigrants a cause for concern, seemingly because of worries that the nonwhite population has been growing so rapidly. In a country where the black-white color line has historically constituted a sharp and impenetrable divide, those who assume that such fault lines are part of the natural order of things may worry about the growth of the nonwhite population, particularly if they perceive nonwhite newcomers as more similar to the black population than the white population. If matters of race (and most specifically black-white relations) have constituted the most intractable domestic difficulty the country has faced in its history, some may presume that an influx of mostly nonwhites will cause such problems to persist long into the future.

But immigrant newcomers from Latin America and Asia are neither black nor white. Their arrival and presence calls into question the relevance of the traditional U.S. black-white model, which reflects the legacy of slavery including its contemporary forms of discrimination and resultant socioeconomic disadvantages.[2] Because most of today's immigrants are nonwhite, they could be helping to break down the old black-white color line, challenging the very meaning of race in the United States and moving the nation beyond the traditional bipolar demarcation that has plagued the country. This fault line was famously forecast a century ago by the prominent African American social theorist W.E.B. DuBois when he noted that the "problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color-line."[3] Writing in 1903, itself a time of substantial immigration, DuBois could hardly have anticipated that America's racial and ethnic makeup would, as a result of immigration, so drastically shift by the late 20th century.

If the arrival of unprecedented numbers of Asians and Latinos is rendering a black-white portrait of America anachronistic, what is emerging to take its place? Is the old line disappearing altogether? Are new

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lines emerging? If so, where are they being drawn? Or are shifts toward relatively easy boundary crossings occurring for some groups but not others? These questions are fraught with theoretical and social significance. Their answers are critical for social scientists and policymakers seeking to understand today's demographic scene and the changing nature of America's color lines.

This report seeks to ascertain whether today's immigrants are helping to blur racial and ethnic boundaries generally in the United States, whether immigrants are causing new color lines to emerge, or whether some of America's newcomers (but not others) are simply more easily able to traverse old color lines without eradicating them.[4] How are immigration and the experiences of immigrants in the United States changing both the racial and ethnic composition of the United States and ideas about race and ethnicity in America? The answers draw on current theories, recent research findings, and new data from the 2000 Census. We examined the volume and racial or ethnic composition of recent immigration and key aspects of immigrant economic and sociocultural incorporation, and focused on immigrant-group job quality and mobility, annual earnings, intermarriage, and multiracial identification.

Our analysis of recent immigration trends and patterns points to shifts in America's color lines.

Themes of Changing Diversity

The central issue—the implications of immigration for changing racial and ethnic diversity in the United States—can be parsed into four closely related themes:

- How the concept of race has been historically measured in the U.S. Census. Several factors have influenced its change over time, including immigration patterns and trends.
- How immigration has affected both the nation's population growth and its racial and ethnic composition over the past 30 years or so. Furthermore, how have these patterns and trends varied in different parts of the country?
- Whether, given that most of today's immigrants are nonwhite, it is harder for them to become part of mainstream America than it was for earlier European immigrants. Some observers think this may be the case because nonwhite racial or ethnic groups in this country typically exhibit lower levels of education and earnings than whites. If the lower education and income levels occur because immigrants generally start out at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder and are working their way up, one would expect to find considerable job mobility among recent immigrants to the United States. If the lower education and income levels are due to racial or ethnic discrimination, one would expect to find considerably less mobility.
- Whether immigration is leading to changing ideas about race and color in America. Is it possible that immigration and immigrant incorporation may be modifying the very notions of how we view race and ethnicity, moving them from the relatively immutable categories of the past to much more dynamic and fluid notions today? The changes in racial identification that have moved many ethnic groups from nonwhite to white, or almost white, vividly illustrate that race is a cultural (rather than biological) category, one that has expanded over time to include new immigrant groups.

If racial and ethnic boundaries have stretched in the past and are continuing to do so now, questions emerge about the degree to which racial and ethnic divides are now fading, persisting in relatively unchanged form, or changing for some of today's immigrants but not others. While it is difficult to predict where new racial or ethnic boundaries are being drawn, demographic trends in intermarriage and reports of multiracial identities can provide a sense of the directions in the changes that the color lines appear to have taken up to this point in time.

Evolving Notions of Race

Such concepts as "nonwhite" and "race" have a complex and changing nature. For example, determining exactly who is a member of the nonwhite population is difficult, not only because the concept of race is problematic (and its measurement ambiguous and always changing), but also because nonwhites are hardly a monolithic group. Moreover, race must be recognized as a social and cultural rather than a biological category. To this end, contemporary social science research has documented the processes by which ethnic and racial boundaries have changed throughout this nation's history. For instance, previous immigrant groups—such as Irish, Italians, and Eastern European Jews—came to be viewed as white, often by deliberately distinguishing themselves from blacks. Historians such as Noel Ignatiev and Matthew Freye Jacobson describe how European ethnics (initially viewed as nonwhite) went to extreme measures to distance themselves from black Americans in order to achieve whiteness.[5]

Irish, Italians, and Eastern European Jews are not the only groups to have changed their status from nonwhite to white. Asian national origin groups also changed their racial status from nonwhite to almost white. James Loewen, for example, documents how Chinese Americans in the Mississippi Delta made conscious efforts to change their lowly status by achieving eco-

nomic mobility, emulating the cultural practices of whites, intentionally distancing themselves from blacks, and rejecting both Chinese who married blacks and their Chinese-black multiracial children.[6] Paul Spickard notes a similar process of change among Japanese Americans, who were once with blacks at the bottom of the racial group ladder at the beginning of the 20th century but whose status had improved dramatically three-quarters of a century later.[7]

Many social scientists have noted that the very fact that Irish, Italians, and Jews were not subject to the same type of systematic legal discrimination as African Americans illustrates that they were on a different plane to begin with, a standing that facilitated their eventual racial treatment as whites. Moreover, the disappearance of national origin differences among European ethnics and the discontinuation of tendencies to view such differences not only in racial terms but in rigid black-white terms contributed to the development of the idea that, for many European immigrants, race could be modified rather than being fixed forever. But this was likely because such people were viewed as nonwhite rather than black. In the early 20th century's rigidly compartmentalized black-white world, governed by the "one-drop rule" of ancestry (which emphasized pure whiteness versus everything else), not being white did not mean actually being black, but it was perhaps often like being black. Thus, it is not surprising that certain national origin groups were sometimes treated as nonwhite. However, because in fact they were not black (in the sense of being the descendants of African origin who had been slaves), their status was eventually allowed to change, thus hastening the evolution and acceptance of the idea that at least some racial categories—maybe all except black—could be modified. That racial and ethnic boundaries have changed in the past (and will likely continue to stretch) illustrates that race is a dynamic rather than a fixed concept.

Something akin to a tripartite racial classification system has emerged in the United States, at least in a *de facto* sense. There are people who consistently report being white. There are people who consistently report being black. And there also are people who are not black but who do not appear to place themselves in the white category, at least not at the moment. Many of the recent Hispanic and Asian immigrants seem to be in this nonwhite category. A mixed-race class is also emerging, one that is formed by people crossing these tripartite group boundaries. The formation of this group indicates that it is much easier to cross the nonwhite to white line than it is to move out of the black class. It also implies that a new diversity in America is eroding color lines, although less for blacks than for others, and that the matter of race in America may be more dynamic than ever.

Measuring Race in the Census

In order to assess how immigration has affected the racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. population over the past 35 years, one must understand how race and ethnicity have been measured by the census. The U.S. Constitution mandates an enumeration of the country's population every 10 years for the purpose of congressional apportionment. Since its inception in 1790, the census has been used to determine a national system of taxation, the number of U.S. representatives from each state, and the boundaries of congressional districts. Along with gender and age, the census has always counted the U.S. population by race, although in 1790, "color"—and not "race"—was the primary term of classification.

However, even before the first census was completed, Congress had to decide who should be counted, and in particular whether slaves should be counted as the equivalent of free people for the purposes of taxation. While Northerners contended that slaves should be the equivalent of free persons, Southerners argued that they should be counted as only a fraction of free persons. In 1783, Congress decided on a compromise, approving a motion to count states' slave populations at a ratio of three-fifths of their free populations.[8] Slavery was based on the system of racial hierarchy and oppression, and the counting of slaves as three-fifths of free people significantly marked the legitimization and institutionalization of the black-white color line in government policy and practice. Throughout the nation's history, color or race has been a central organizing principle of political, social, legal, and economic life, and census practices have often mirrored this emphasis.

Today, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) largely determines which racial and ethnic categories the federal government uses in its statistical systems. In 1977, OMB standardized racial and ethnic categories to allow for consistent reporting and recording of federal data.[9] This classification scheme provides a basis for assessing compliance with civil rights directives and legislation on the part of both the public and private sectors, including the U.S. government. Thus, the main purpose of classifying the U.S. population by race and ethnicity does not stem from an interest in categorizing the population along these lines, but rather from one seeking to conform to the Constitution and to monitor and enforce civil rights laws.

Classification

The task of discerning how immigration has changed the nation's racial and ethnic landscape over time is complicated because the racial categories themselves have not remained constant. Although the U.S. government has collected data on race for more than two centuries, the way that race has been measured and even the racial cat-

egories themselves have undergone considerable change over time. Categories have been added, dropped, and altered throughout the history of the U.S. Census, so much so that only three racial categories—white, Chinese, and Japanese—consistently appeared on the census enumeration forms in the 20th century.[10] The category involving blacks in the United States has changed considerably. For example, in an attempt to accurately measure the black mixtures in the population, the census added the category mulatto in 1850 and the categories quadroon and octoroon in 1890. However, quadroon and octoroon were removed in 1900 because of inconsistencies in accurately measuring these populations. By 1918, the nation's mulatto population had grown so rapidly that the Census Bureau estimated that at least three-fourths of all blacks in the United States were ancestrally mixed; thus, the Census Bureau concluded that the mulatto category provided clearer data on the population with mixed blood than on the black population.[11] By 1930, however, the Census Bureau had dropped attempts to measure the mulatto population, eliminating the category altogether, partly because mulattos were so numerous and partly because they were not necessarily physically distinguishable from either the black or white populations. Furthermore, the laws of much of the country, with the census following suit, had come to follow the one-drop rule for assigning race.

Even the black category did not remain consistent in the censuses of the 20th century. For example, in 1900 and 1910, the Census used the category black, but in 1920 Negro replaced black and was used in the next four censuses. In 1970, Negro or black appeared as an option, and in the year 2000, the census listed black, African American, or Negro as a racial category. Other racial categories have similarly changed throughout the history of the census. For instance, in 1930 (and in this year alone) Mexican was listed as a possible response to the color or race question. However, the category was dropped from subsequent censuses because the Mexican government and Mexican Americans (at least the elite) strongly objected to the label—they did not consider themselves a separate racial group. Rather, Mexican Americans saw themselves as white and therefore did not want a distinct color or race category.

Census categories also expanded to reflect the arrival of new groups to the nation's shores, such as Asian origin groups that migrated after the mid-19th century. For example, in 1870, the census introduced Chinese as a color category and in 1890 added Japanese as an option. The migration of Filipinos, Hindus, and Koreans led to the addition of these categories in the 1920 Census. These categories remained distinct until 1977, when OMB merged the disparate Asian origin categories under the umbrella category of Asian/Pacific Islander, racializing the Asian national origin groups. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, racial categories came under scrutiny once again, and changes in the measurement of race (prompted in part by the Civil Rights Movement) eventually led to one of the most significant shifts in the political context and purpose of racial categorization. Debate spread that Americans should be able to mark their own race to identify themselves and their children rather than leaving this task to census enumerators. Before self-enumeration, a census taker would designate an individual's race upon visual inspection. Self-enumeration gave individuals control over their own racial identification. Taking into consideration public sentiment and cost, the 1970 Census replaced enumerator identification with self-enumeration, and for the first time the census was taken by mail.

At that time, special interest groups asserted that the racial categories should accurately reflect America's demographic diversity; these groups lobbied for new categories, the disaggregation of the white category, and the substitution of the term "ethnic" for the term "race." One unintended consequence of self-enumeration was the unexpected increase in the number of American Indians who had previously been identified by census enumerators as white. The American Indian population grew from 827,000 in 1970 to almost 2 million in 1990—growth far in excess of natural increase. The population increase reflected changes in identification among those who were previously identified as another race (largely white) and also reflected a greater willingness of respondents to claim the American Indian part of their mixed heritage.[12]

Hispanic Origin

With the introduction of self-enumeration in 1970, the census allowed Americans to choose from one of many color or race categories. Responding to criticism in the 1960s from the U.S. Interagency Committee on Mexican-American Affairs, and because of the growth of the Hispanic population due to the influx of immigrants from Latin America (primarily Mexico), the Census Bureau also added a question about Hispanic origin. However, because the short form of the 1970 Census was already in production, the Hispanic origin question was added only to the long form and administered to only about one in five households. This change signaled that Hispanics were to be recognized as a distinct group.[13] The 1970 Census asked whether a person's origin or descent was Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, Other Spanish, or none of the above. By not listing Hispanic origin under the color or race question, the U.S. Census distinguished Hispanic origin or descent from color or race, effectively treating Hispanic as a set of national origins rather than as a race. In other words, one could mark a specific Hispanic origin and choose among the census race categories, meaning that Hispanics could be of any race. For the first time, this type of group identity was not racialized in its measure-

ment. Whether intentional or not, because the Census Bureau did not treat Hispanic as a race, the racial boundaries have not been as rigid for Hispanics as they have been for blacks in the United States.

On the 1980 Census, the Hispanic origin question was included on the short form (which goes to all households), a change that coincided with a 60 percent increase in the Hispanic population during the decade. This substantial growth reflected not only improved coverage in the 1980 Census but also the significant expansion of this population resulting from new waves of immigration.[14] In 1980, the census substituted a question about a person's ancestry for the more costly and complicated questions about parental birthplace that had been used previously. This allowed for rough identification of the members (or partial members) of earlier arriving immigrant groups. Only the racial and Hispanic origin groups, however, enjoyed official statistical representation. Gaining such representation had two benefits: a category on the census that increased the count of the group, and opportunities for racial or ethnic minorities to qualify for federal programs for disadvantaged minorities.

As various ethnic groups sought statistical representation during this period, it was clear that America's demography was rapidly changing with the arrival of immigrants, especially those from Latin American and Asian countries. The growth in the Asian population prompted the census to add the categories Vietnamese, Asian Indian, Guamanian, Samoan, Eskimo, and Aleut to the 1980 Census. In 1990, the U.S. Census Bureau modified the racial categories so that the Asian/Pacific Islander category included those whose ethnic origins were Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, Asian Indian, Samoan, and Guamanian. But it was not the growth of the Asian population that led the Census Bureau to add the long list of Asian origins as races. Race questions proposed by the Census Bureau in the 1980s consistently had one check box for all Asians and a space for the individual to write his or her specific Asian race or ancestry. Rep. Robert Matsui, D-Calif., insisted that the 1990 Census address Asian origins, and President Reagan accepted his recommendations.

In addition to the race options, Americans also had the option of marking "other race" and printing the race of their choice. As in the 1970 and 1980 censuses, the Hispanic origin question came after the race question in the questionnaire. And, like the previous decennial censuses, the 1990 Census directed Americans to "fill ONE circle for the race that the person considers himself/herself to be," again with the explicit instruction to choose only one race. In both the 1980 and 1990 censuses, the fastest-growing category was "other race," chosen by almost 10 million Americans in the 1990 Census, 97 percent of whom were Hispanic. Furthermore, 40 percent of Hispanics chose this category, compared with only 1 percent of the non-Hispanic population,[15] but Census Bureau coding rules were partly responsible for this. A person who checked "other race" and wrote Irish or German (for example) was recoded into the white category. A person who wrote any phrase that denoted a Spanish origin remained in the Other race category. But also, Hispanics are more likely than any other group to choose this option, because Hispanics tend to see themselves as more than one race, with an interracial legacy that dates back to the mixing of Spaniards and the indigenous peoples of South and Central America. This long-standing and widespread history of racial mixing has created hybrid or *mestizo* backgrounds among many Hispanics, especially Mexicans, and that involves mixtures of earlier racial groups. Other Americans who marked the Other race option in 1990—a quarter of a million people—often reported multiracial designations, such as black/white, Eurasian, or Amerasian.[16]

One or More Races

During the early 1990s, new advocacy groups with different agendas arose. These groups criticized OMB for not accurately measuring the diversity in the country brought about by increases in immigration, interracial marriage, and growth in the multiracial population. They pressed OMB to reconsider the race and ethnic categories in the 2000 Census; in response, OMB set out to assess the adequacy of the existing categories, created principles to govern any revisions in categories, and solicited recommendations for changes. In 1994, OMB established a federal interagency committee that, over the next three years, conducted seven congressional subcommittee hearings, three national tests, and numerous focus groups and workshops to assess the needs of those who use federal data on race and ethnicity. The committee also heard the oral testimonies of 94 witnesses and reviewed nearly 800 letters.

Most prominent among OMB's critics were such groups as the Association for Multi-Ethnic Americans (AMEA) and Project RACE (Reclassify All Children Equally), which pressed the OMB to adopt a multiracial category. Susan Graham from Project RACE and Carlos Fernandez from AMEA argued that, in the interest of accuracy and fairness, OMB should add a multiracial category to the racial options and noted that the absence of this category undermined the accuracy of other racial data. Moreover, Graham and Fernandez asserted that it is an affront to force multiracial people or their children to choose only one race; they argued that forced monoracial identification was not only inaccurate because it denied the existence of interracial marriages but was also discriminatory. They proposed that multiracial should be a sixth category and that the five existing categories could be listed underneath, so that Americans could first check "multiracial" and then all that apply from the existing five racial categories.

Not everyone, however, was in favor of adding a multiracial category or allowing Americans to mark more than one race on government forms. For example, civil rights groups (including the National Coalition for an Accurate Count of Asians and Pacific Islanders, the National Council of La Raza, the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, the Urban League, the National Council of American Indians, and the NAACP) opposed adding a multiracial category. These groups feared that those who would otherwise be counted as Asian, Hispanic, black, or American Indian would now choose to identify as multiracial, thus diminishing the count of specific minorities in the census. They thought that the shift could adversely affect enforcement of the Voting Rights Act, blur the categories of antidiscrimination and affirmative action programs, and potentially undermine the size and effectiveness of state and federal programs aimed at helping minorities. In addition, social scientists, OMB and Census Bureau officials, and representatives from other federal agencies cautioned against adopting a multiracial designation on the grounds that statistical categories should be discrete, few in number, capable of generating consistent responses, and comparable with past categories. Final hearings took place in July 1997, at which time the interagency committee recommended to the OMB that the census allow Americans to select multiple responses from the race categories, but recommended against adding multiracial as a sixth category. While representatives from AMEA accepted this recommendation, those from Project RACE were dissatisfied.

In October 1997, OMB announced its decision that all people would have the option to identify with one or more races starting with the 2000 Census and extending to all federal data systems by the year 2003. Hence, the racial options on the 2000 Census included white, black, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Other, and allowed people to mark more than one category. While Latino or Hispanic was not a racial category on the 2000 Census, OMB mandated two distinct questions regarding a person's racial or ethnic background: one about race and a second about whether a person was Spanish/Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 1). Since someone who self-designated as Spanish/Hispanic/Latino could be of any race, the census asked both questions in order to identify the Hispanic population in the United States. While OMB also reviewed a proposal that would group Hispanics into one race, it eventually decided against making Hispanics a separate race since this would result in fewer people being classified in the Hispanic category and in fewer whites being classified as white.[17] (Hereafter, the terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably.)

OMB's decision to allow Americans to mark one or more races is a landmark change in the way the U.S. Census Bureau collects data on race, reflecting the growth of intermarriages and multiracial births. Population projections suggest that the multiple-race segment of the population will increase by 2 to 3 percentage points each decade for the next century. Based on these assumptions, by the year 2100, 95 percent of the American Indian population, 70 percent of the Hispanic population, 43 percent of the Asian population, 37 percent of the black population, and 35 percent of the white population could be of multiple-race origin.[18]

Figure 1
QUESTIONS ON RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN, CENSUS 2000

→ NOTE: Please answer BOTH Questions 5 and 6.

5. Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino? *Mark ☒ the "No" box if not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.*
☐ No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino ☐ Yes, Puerto Rican
☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano ☐ Yes, Cuban
☐ Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino – *Print group.*

6. What is this person's race? *Mark ☒ one or more races to indicate what this person considers himself/herself to be.*
☐ White
☐ Black, African Am., or Negro
☐ American Indian or Alaska Native – *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.*

☐ Asian Indian ☐ Japanese ☐ Native Hawaiian
☐ Chinese ☐ Korean ☐ Guamanian or Chamorro
☐ Filipino ☐ Vietnamese ☐ Samoan
☐ Other Asian – *Print race.* ☐ Other Pacific Islander – *Print race.*

☐ Some other race – *Print race.*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 questionnaire.

The option to mark more than one race gave official status and recognition to people who see their backgrounds as having involved racial mixing—an acknowledgment that speaks volumes about how far the country has come since the days of the one-drop rule. In essence, by allowing Americans to mark more than one race, OMB has rejected the premise of mutual exclusivity in racial categorization in the United States, has signified that race is no longer conceived as rigidly as in the past, and has perhaps indicated that the old racial divides may be fading.

CODING RACE AND ETHNICITY

Because the 2000 Census allowed people to record themselves in more than one racial category, we found it necessary to recode race and ethnicity in the 2000 data in order to study trends and patterns in immigration and race and ethnicity over the past few decades. This new categorization combines information on race

and ethnicity, forcing mutual exclusivity among racial and ethnic categories and allowing comparative analyses of trends over time. This recoding has a hierarchy of rules that assign each individual to one of five groups:

- White.
- Black.
- Asian/Pacific Islander.
- Latino.
- AINLOR (American Indian or Non-Latino Other Race).

First, for all four censuses starting with 1970, people who indicated they were Latino were counted in the Latino group. Because of the multiple-race option in the 2000 Census, different criteria were used for the 2000 data than for data from the previous three censuses. In the 1970, 1980, and 1990 data, non-Latinos were categorized into one of the other four race groups according to the race category they selected, as described above. Due to the relatively small number of cases in the 1 percent sample, American Indians and Alaska Natives were grouped into the "Other" category. For 2000 Census data, non-Latinos who indicated multiple races were grouped into the largest racial minority with which they identified. Using this methodology, people reporting themselves as black, regardless of any other racial identification, were classified as black. If black was not indicated but Asian was, the person was classified as Asian. Someone who checked American Indian or "some other race" was classified as AINLOR. Finally, someone who checked only white was categorized as white.

We studied Hispanics as a separate group, even though the census does not treat them as a distinct racial or ethnic category. This approach was used for two reasons. First, many Latinos see themselves as a separate category, as indicated by the fact that so many chose "other race" in the census. Second, they have been legally treated as a separate group and often as a racial or ethnic minority group that qualifies for and benefits from federal programs designed to assist disadvantaged minorities, such as affirmative action programs. Latinos have also been protected by civil rights legislation and the Voting Rights Act, both of which are aimed at helping racial or ethnic minorities. That is, not only do Latinos see themselves as a separate category (although not necessarily a separate racial category), they are also treated as a separate category by the U.S. government.

Charting Population Changes

The considerable change that has occurred over the past 30 years in the ways the U.S. government measures race and ethnicity in its official surveys and censuses makes it a challenge to assess shifts over time in the racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. population. But by applying certain rules to the ways that have been used to measure race or ethnicity, it becomes possible to chart changes in the relative sizes of racial or ethnic groups in the country. The most striking result is that in 2000 there were almost as many Latinos in the country as blacks (around 35 million each), even after counting as black all people listing black and one or more other races. Latinos constituted 13 percent of the population in 2000, as did blacks, reflecting the continuing substantial immigration from Latin America during the 1990s. Since shortly after the 2000 Census, the size of the Latino population has surpassed that of the black population. In 2000 almost all people reporting some other race were Latinos (more than 97 percent). Among the other notably sized racial or ethnic groups in the country in 2000 were Asians (12 million) and people in the residual race category (5 million, which includes those identified as AINLOR). As these results make clear, the United States can no longer be described in racial and ethnic terms as consisting almost entirely of black and white people.

However, this does not mean that America's white population is insignificant; more than 75 percent of the population still gave a white identification in 2000. Excluding those whites who also reported they were Latino (about 6 percent of the population), 69 percent reported themselves as non-Latino whites—just a little more than two of every three people. This ratio is down from three in four in 1990, from four in five in 1980, and from five in six in 1970 (see Table 1, page 309). The 14 percentage point decline in the non-Latino white population in the United States since 1970 means that there would have been about 40 million more whites in the country in 2000 if whites had been as relatively numerous in 2000 as they were in 1970. While the percentage of whites declined, Asians and Latinos increased. The former increased their share of the population by 4 percentage points, and the latter by 8. Non-Latino blacks and others increased their shares by a modest 1.6 and 1.2 percentage points, respectively. Thus, the major gains in share of the U.S. population since 1970 have taken place among Asians and Latinos, the groups that made up most of the shift in the composition of immigrants coming to the country since 1965, when the National Origin Quota Act was abolished.

Immigration's Contribution

Examining the racial and ethnic composition of immigrants over the past 30 years reveals the contribution of immigration to changes in the racial/ethnic composition of the U.S. population over this period. In 1970, the foreign-born population of the country was still predominantly non-Latino white, among both men and women (see Table 2, page 309). No other major racial or ethnic group, except the Latinos, constituted substantial

Table 1

POPULATION BY FIVE MAJOR CENSUS RACIAL/ETHNIC CATEGORIES, UNITED STATES, 1970–2000

Race/Ethnicity[a]	1970 Number (millions)	1970 Percent	1980 Number (millions)	1980 Percent	1990 Number (millions)	1990 Percent	2000 Number (millions)	2000 Percent
Total	203.3	100	226.5	100	248.0	100	281.4	100
White	169.7	83	180.3	80	188.1	76	194.4	69
Black	22.1	11	26.2	12	29.1	12	35.3	13
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.5	1	3.6	2	7.0	3	11.9	4
Latino	9.1	4	14.7	6	21.7	9	35.2	13
AINLOR[b]	0.9	0	1.7	1	2.1	1	4.6	2

[a] Numbers are derived from Census questions on race and ethnicity. All people who identified themselves ethnically as "Hispanic" are classified Latino. All others are classified by race. Thus, Latinos are included only in the Latino group and may be of any race.
In the 2000 Census, non-Latinos reporting multiple races were classifed as belonging to the largest of the racial groups with which they identified.

[b] American Indian, Alaska Native, and non-Latino Other racial groups.

Source: Authors' calculations based on the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), 2003.

Table 2

FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION BY GENDER AND FIVE MAJOR RACIAL/ETHNIC CATEGORIES, UNITED STATES, 1970 AND 2000

Race/ethnicity[a]	1970 Female Number (millions)	1970 Female Percent	1970 Male Number (millions)	1970 Male Percent	2000 Female Number (millions)	2000 Female Percent	2000 Male Number (millions)	2000 Male Percent
Total	5.3	100.0	4.5	100.0	15.6	100.0	15.4	100.0
White	3.9	73.8	3.2	72.0	3.7	23.5	3.2	20.5
Black	0.1	2.3	0.1	2.3	1.1	7.1	1.0	6.4
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.3	5.1	0.3	5.8	3.9	25.1	3.5	22.7
Latino	1.0	18.1	0.9	19.1	6.6	42.5	7.5	48.6
AINLOR[b]	—	0.6	—	0.8	0.3	1.7	0.3	1.8

[a] Foreign-born excludes U.S. citizens born in outlying territories and persons born abroad to U.S. citizens.

[b] American Indian, Alaska Native, and non-Latino Other racial groups.

— Less than 500,000.

Source: Authors' calculations based on the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), 2003.

shares of the foreign-born population at that time; even then, however, the percentages of Asians who were foreign-born started to foreshadow the changes that were just beginning. Over the next 30 years, these changes would exert their cumulative impact ever more forcefully. In 1970, for example, 6 percent of foreign-born males and 5 percent of foreign-born females were Asian, percentages that were three to seven times the percentage of Asians in the total population, hinting at the dramatic growth in the Asian population yet to come. The percentages of foreign-born males and females who were Latinos were 19 percent and 18 percent, respectively, about three to four times the concentration of Latinos in the total population, again suggesting the growth to come.

In 1970, just a few years after implementation of the 1965 reforms opening U.S. doors to non-European immigration, these percentages were similar for males and females. In fact, except among whites, the percentage of foreign-born males within the various racial and ethnic groups tended to slightly exceed that for females. By 2000, however, the percent female exceeded the percent male in three of the four largest racial and ethnic groups. Only among Latinos were there fewer females than males (43 percent and 49 percent, respectively). This gap reflects the fact that so much Latino immigration involves low-skilled and often single unauthorized Mexican migrants coming to the United States to work. In other words, the labor migration of Latinos is more selective of men than the kinds of migration occurring from other countries, which tend to be more selective of women. Whatever such national origin differences, the much higher fractions of foreign-born among Asians and Mexicans in 2000 than in 1970 shows the cumulative importance of immigration for the growth of these two populations in the country.

New Diversity States

The growth in the nonwhite population over the past 30 years has been not only dramatic but also diverse in terms of both race and ethnicity and geographic location. The increase in the nonwhite population has tended to involve several racial or ethnic groups, with each increase largely fueled by immigration, and it has disproportionately occurred only in some places. The major recent racial and ethnic composition shift in the country is at once highly conspicuous (especially in those places where it is taking place most rapidly, thus sometimes exacerbating fears about a growing nonwhite population) and nonmonolithic (which, if better understood, would probably lessen anxieties about racial or ethnic relations and conflict). The most nonwhite state in the country is Hawaii, whose population is 77 percent nonwhite; and the least is Maine, whose nonwhite population is 3 percent.

But this nonwhiteness departs from the black-white pattern that once traditionally characterized the country. If the data from the states with the 20 largest nonwhite populations are broken down into the four major nonwhite components of black, Latino, Asian, and Other (see Table 3), three patterns emerge. First, the old black-white bipolar pattern is still somewhat in evidence, but only in Southern states such as Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, and Mississippi—states referred to as black-white states. By 2000, several places were showing a new bipolar pattern of mostly whites and Latinos, such as Arizona, Nevada, and New Mexico—states referred to as Latino-white states. These states add a different dimension to the county's old bipolar racial division. Second, several states have populations containing at least three major racial or ethnic groups, each with relatively sizable percentages of the state's total population (defined here as consisting of 10 percent or more of the overall state population): California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, and Texas. These states are designated new diversity states. Under a criterion of three groups, each with at least 7 percent of a state's population, five more states (and the District of Columbia) would also qualify: Connecticut, Hawaii, Nevada, Oklahoma, and Washington (see Figure 2, page 311). Third, the states with the most racially and ethnically diverse populations are also among the country's most populous and highest income places. Thus, increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the United States appears to characterize large and relatively prosperous states.

Similar patterns of bipolar concentration and diversity are also evident in metropolitan areas containing the largest nonwhite populations in the country (see Table 4, page 311). Of the 20 largest such metro areas, 60 percent (12) are places where at least three racial or ethnic groups are represented in their populations. Located in new diversity states, these urban locales are the centers of the country's new racial and ethnic diversity: Anaheim (Calif.), Fresno (Calif.), Houston, Jersey City (N.J.), Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Oakland (Calif.), Riverside-San Bernardino (Calif.), San Francisco, San Jose (Calif.), and Stockton (Calif.). Only eight of the top 20 nonwhite metro areas are bipolar places: five are Latino-white (El Paso, McAllen, and San Antonio, all in Texas; Bakersfield, Calif.; and Albuquerque, N.M.); two are black-white (Memphis, Tenn., and New Orleans), and one is Asian-white (Honolulu). Clearly, diversity is the emerging touchstone of the new racial and ethnic structure in the United States. California leads the coun-

Table 3

PERCENT OF POPULATION IN SELECTED NONWHITE CATEGORIES IN U.S. STATES WITH AT LEAST 20 PERCENT NONWHITE RESIDENTS, 2000

State	Total Nonwhite	Black	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Latino	AINLOR*
Black-white states					
Mississippi	39	36	1	2	1
Maryland	38	29	5	4	1
Georgia	37	29	2	5	1
Louisiana	37	33	1	2	1
South Carolina	34	30	1	2	1
Virginia	30	20	4	5	1
North Carolina	30	22	2	5	2
Alabama	30	26	1	2	1
Delaware	27	20	2	5	1
Arkansas	22	16	1	3	2
Michigan	22	15	2	3	2
Tennessee	21	17	1	2	1
White-Latino or white-AINLOR states					
Arizona	36	4	2	25	6
Alaska	33	4	6	5	19
Colorado	26	4	3	17	2
Diversity states					
Hawaii	77	3	66	7	1
District of Columbia	72	60	3	8	1
New Mexico	55	2	1	42	10
California	54	7	12	32	2
Texas	48	12	3	32	1
New York	38	16	6	15	1
Florida	35	15	2	17	1
Nevada	34	7	6	19	2
New Jersey	34	13	6	13	1
Illinois	32	15	4	12	1
Oklahoma	25	8	2	5	11
Connecticut	23	9	3	9	1
Washington	21	4	7	8	3

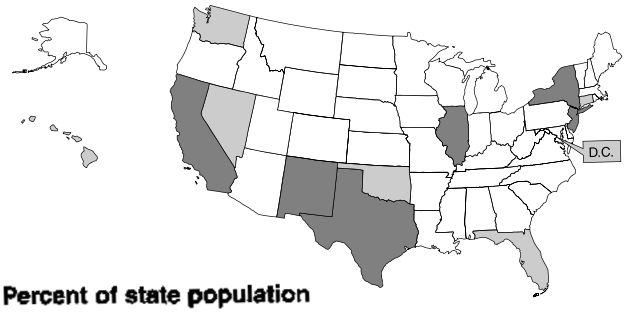
Note: Includes states with populations that are at least 20 percent nonwhite or Hispanic. In Diversity states, at least three ethnic groups (including whites) each accounted for 7 percent to 10 percent of the total population. Black-white states are nondiversity states in which blacks account for at least two-thirds of the nonwhites. Latino-white or white-AINLOR states are nondiversity states in which Latinos or AINLOR account for two-thirds of nonwhites.

* American Indian, Alaska Native, and non-Latino Other racial groups.

Source: Authors' calculations based on the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), 2003.

Figure 2

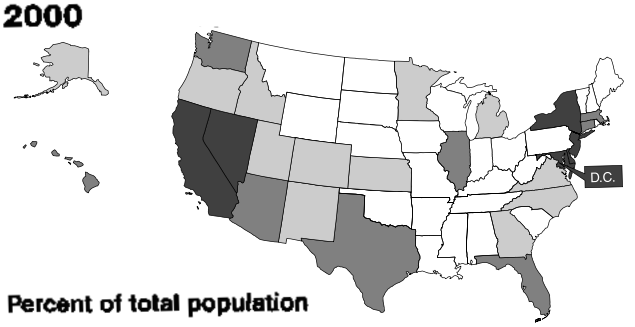
NEW DIVERSITY STATES, 2000



Source: U.S. Census 2000.

Figure 3

PERCENT FOREIGN-BORN, UNITED STATES, 2000



Source: U.S. Census 2000.

try in having the most metro areas with such populations, with eight of the 12 most diverse metropolitan areas.

While there is clearly an association between diversity and overall population size, there is also an association between diversity and high immigration. The most diverse states have relatively large foreign-born populations (see Figure 3).[19] Among the top 20 states with large foreign-born populations, six also have at least three racial or ethnic groups making up at least 10 percent of the population. Similarly, among the top 20 metro areas in terms of foreign-born population, 10 are high-diversity places. Thus, immigration is contributing substantially both to population growth and to the emergence of racial and ethnic diversity in this country.

Asian and Latino Growth

Immigration clearly accounts for much of the unusually rapid growth of the Asian and Latino populations in the United States and is the most important reason for these groups' increased shares of the population in 2000. There are two sources of population growth: immigration and the balance of births and deaths, or net natural increase. If one group has more births or fewer deaths than another group, its rate of population increase will be higher.

How much has immigration contributed to population growth among the major racial and ethnic groups in the country? Immigrants contribute to U.S. population growth in two ways. First, they contribute simply by coming to the United States. This is part of net immigration and constituted about 40 percent of overall U.S.

Table 4

PERCENT IN VARIOUS RACIAL/ETHNIC CATEGORIES IN THE 20 U.S. METROPOLITAN AREAS WITH GREATEST PERCENT NONWHITE, 2000

Metropolitan areas, state(s)[a]	Total Non-White	Black	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Latino	AINLOR[b]
Black-white					
Memphis, TN/AR/MS	67.4	61.8	1.1	3.9	0.6
New Orleans, LA	55.0	45.9	3.0	5.1	1.1
Latino-white					
McAllen-Edinburg-Pharr-Mission, TX	88.7	0.2	1.0	87.4	0.1
El Paso, TX	83.7	2.7	1.3	79.3	0.5
Bakersfield, CA	50.9	6.3	3.3	38.8	2.6
Albuquerque, NM	49.8	2.8	2.2	40.5	4.3
Asian/Pacific Islander-white					
Honolulu, HI	78.3	2.8	68.6	6.2	0.8
Diversity metros					
Miami-Hialeah, FL	80.7	19.8	1.2	59.1	0.6
Jersey City, NJ	63.9	12.2	9.6	39.9	2.2
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	68.9	10.0	13.0	44.3	1.6
New York-Northeastern NJ	63.5	25.2	10.0	26.5	1.8
Fresno, CA	60.1	5.7	9.8	42.3	2.3
San Jose, CA	56.8	3.0	27.3	25.1	1.4
Riverside-San Bernadino, CA	54.5	9.5	5.1	38.1	1.8
San Francisco, CA	53.9	6.0	27.8	18.4	1.9
Houston-Brazoria, TX	53.8	17.6	5.5	29.6	1.0
Stockton, CA	52.9	6.4	14.3	29.9	2.3
Oakland, CA	52.7	12.9	19.1	18.9	1.7
Anaheim, CA	49.6	1.9	15.3	30.8	1.6
San Antonio, TX	64.4	7.2	2.3	53.8	1.1
Non-metro areas	20.3	9.3	1.8	7.2	2.0

[a] Metropolitan Statistical Areas.

[b] American Indian, Alaska Native, and non-Latino Other racial groups.

Note: Diversity metro areas have three or more racial/ethnic groups that each account for at 7 percent of the population.

Source: Authors' calculations based on the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), 2003.

Table 5

NET IMMIGRATION AS PERCENT OF RACE/ETHNIC GROUP POPULATION GROWTH BY DECADE, UNITED STATES, 1970–2000

Racial/ethnic group	1970-1980		1980-1990		1990-2000	
	Foreign-born	Foreign-born plus their U.S.-born children[a]	Foreign-born	Foreign-born plus their U.S.-born children[a]	Foreign-born	Foreign-born plus their U.S.-born children[a]
White	13	24	18	34	35	55
Black	11	15	21	31	14	23
Asian & Pacific Islander	74	89	78	99	65	89
Latino	40	61	56	83	48	76
AINLOR[b]	10	14	10	17	11	16

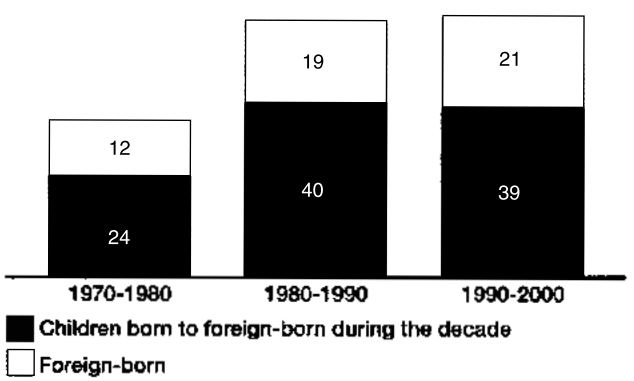
[a] This includes net gain of foreign-born persons plus any children born in the U.S. during the decade to foreign-born persons.

[b] American Indian, Alaska Native, and non-Latino Other racial groups.

Source: Authors' calculations based on the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), 2003.

Figure 4

IMMIGRATION AS PERCENT OF POPULATION GROWTH BY DECADE, UNITED STATES, 1970–2000



Source: Authors' calculations based on the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), 2003.

population growth during the 1980s and 1990s (see Table 5). Second, they have children after they come here. In a strict sense, the number of births immigrants have during the decade of their arrival is attributable to fertility and is a part of natural increase during that decade. This part of natural increase, however, would not have occurred without the immigration taking place, so it is reasonable to view this component as deriving from immigration, even if it represents part of the natural increase component.

The average percent increase in the populations of the major racial and ethnic groups in the country attributable to immigration per se and to the fertility of immigrants during the decade for each of the three decades since 1970 are shown in Figure 4. Immigration per se constituted a fairly small fraction of population growth in the cases of the white, black, and other groups in each of the three decades since 1970 (although immigration made up a third of population growth among whites during the 1990s, a decade that saw a resurgence of white immigration from Eastern Europe and Russia in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989). By contrast, the percent of population growth due to immigration among Asians and Latinos was much higher. In the case of the former group, immigration accounted for most of the population growth, ranging from about 74 percent in the 1970s to 78 percent in the 1980s to 65 percent during the 1990s. The fertility of Asian immigrants during the decade accounted for only a slight bit more, so that immigration-related growth accounted for almost all the population growth of Asian Americans over the 30-year period.

The case of Latinos represents a striking contrast to that of Asians. Immigration constituted anywhere from about 40 percent to more than half of this group's total population growth during these decades. In addition, births to Latino immigrants during the decade added about half again as much to their immigration-related total. Thus, during the 1970s immigration and births accounted for three-fifths of Latino population growth in the country, a figure that grew to more than 80 percent during the 1980s and almost the same level during the 1990s. Two points are important to underscore here. One is that the Asian and Latino populations have both grown for largely immigration-related reasons over the past 30 years. The second is that among Latinos a much larger part of this growth results from births to immigrants after they arrive in the country than is the case among Asians.

Immigrant Economic Incorporation

Americans have always been ambivalent about immigration, concerned that immigrants might erode national identity and cohesion but responding positively to the economic benefits and inexpensive labor immigrants provide. Much of the contemporary anxiety about immigration may stem from the fact that the new immigrant groups are largely nonwhite. The new immigrants, however, are far from uniform in national origin and in racial or ethnic identification. They are rapidly increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of the United States, which may be more of an asset than a liability for many aspects of the country's well-being. One way to gauge the plausibility of this argument is to examine immigrant economic incorporation and, more specifically, the work and job mobility experiences of immigrants. This information helps discern whether the immigrants are best considered as newcomers to the society who have yet to complete their upward paths of movement into the economic mainstream, or whether they are best considered as discriminated-against members of racial or ethnic minorities who remain stuck in dead-end work situations long after they arrive here. Considerable upward job mobility among the new immigrants would suggest that the former view is more accurate, implying that fears about too much and the wrong kinds of immigration have often been exaggerated. Little job mobility and persistent disadvantage would suggest that the latter view is more accurate, implying that immigration is contributing to a growing underclass and the perpetuation of the problem of racial and ethnic inequality in the United States.

Whatever the country's historical ambivalence about immigration, the latter half of the 1990s in the United States witnessed a widening recognition that immigrants were playing an important and increasingly prominent role in the U.S. economy. Eleven percent of the country's total population was foreign-born in 2000, and 14 percent of the total was between the ages of 18 and 64, the prime employment years.[20] Among people in that age group actually working, the foreign-born percentage was even higher. Furthermore, the percentage of children in the population who were either immigrants or the children of immigrants was over 20 percent, indicating that the nation's future workforce will be even more dependent on immigration than today.[21]

Whether newcomers to the United States can experience upward mobility depends on important economic trends that affect the structure of opportunities for advancement. Over the past three decades, the role of immigrants in the nation's workforce has grown while employment structures have changed. The country has experienced a relative decline in manufacturing employment (especially high-wage union jobs), a relative increase in service-industry employment, declining or stagnant real earnings at the middle and the bottom of the income distribution, growing numbers of working-age males (especially young African Americans) who are dropping out of the labor force, and narrowing gaps in pay between men and women with similar levels of education.[22] These trends suggest that opportunities to improve one's economic position may not be as numerous as they once were and that growth in the number of middle-class jobs may not have kept pace with population growth.

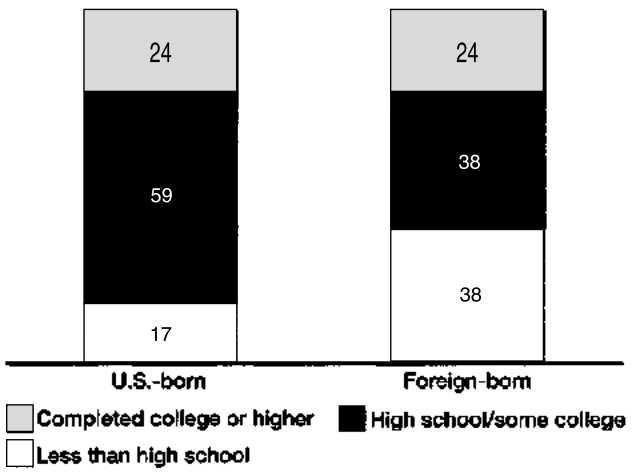
The characteristics of the new immigrants mirror this possibility. For example, the new immigrants have tended to have either high levels of education (college degrees) or low levels (less than high school). In 2000, 24 percent of adult immigrants had at least a college degree, a figure about the same as that for the U.S.-born population. At the same time, 38 percent of all adult immigrants had not completed high school, compared with only 16 percent of U.S.-born adults. Immigrant adults were less likely to have a middle level of education (a high school diploma but not a college degree) than were U.S.-born adults (see Figure 5). This "hollowed-out" educational distribution reflects the pattern of change in the labor market in recent years, one that involved substantial growth in the numbers of high- and low-end jobs, with much lower increases in the number of middle-range jobs.

The substantial growth in low-education immigrants is puzzling. This migration has continued even as pay levels for workers without college degrees have stagnated and the employment opportunities for disadvantaged U.S.-born racial or ethnic minorities, especially blacks, have stalled. Because of the relative disappearance of factory jobs in cities (where many blacks live) and the movement of many middle-class black professionals to the suburbs, blacks in the central parts of American cities have become even more disadvantaged than they were previously.[23] Given this, and given that many new immigrants settle in the central parts of cities, how does one explain the growth in low-education immigrants? Why should larger numbers of less-skilled Mexican migrants come to the United States when the need for less-skilled labor appears to be declining? Part of the answer is the relative lack of jobs in Mexico, a deficiency still severe enough to make even the worst jobs and limited employment prospects in the United States attractive to many migrants. Moreover, social networks among low-educated immigrants foster further migration and confer recruitment and hiring advantages to immigrants (over comparable African American workers at the low end of the wage scale).[24]

The chances for low-education migrants to experience upward mobility in the United States are affected

Figure 5

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR U.S.-BORN AND FOREIGN-BORN AMERICANS AGE 24 OR OLDER, 2000



Source: Authors' calculations based on the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), 2003.

by the role that race and ethnicity plays in the U.S. labor market. Does the new immigration, in particular its low-education component, represent something negative or something positive for the wage and job prospects of other low-skilled workers, including low-skilled U.S.-born minorities, earlier-arriving immigrants, and the recently arrived immigrants themselves? Over two decades, social science research on the labor market impacts of immigration has found that U.S.-born workers are not appreciably negatively affected overall, although this research has also shown that increased immigration of low-education workers does somewhat limit employment options for other low-education workers, especially previously arrived low-education immigrants.[25] Does this mean that the prospects for moving up the job ladder into the economic mainstream are diminishing for today's immigrants? Are opportunities for low-education immigrants also lessening because economic restructuring is losing middle-level jobs, leaving fewer pathways to upward mobility? To what degree is this worrisome possibility exacerbated by the fact that so many new immigrants are nonwhite and thus presumably subject to racial or ethnic discrimination?

In recent decades, the structure of job opportunities in the United States appears to have increasingly taken an hourglass or U-shaped form.[26] That is, there are relatively more jobs at the top and bottom of the job hierarchy than in the middle. The decline in the manufacturing sector of the economy (which shifted from employing 33 percent of private-sector workers in 1970 to 17 percent in 2000) may have resulted in fewer jobs that provide middle-class lifestyles, especially for people without college educations. To the extent that the overall structure of the economy is becoming more U-shaped, opportunities for upward mobility in the United States may have been declining, particularly for those without higher education. Discrimination in hiring, pay, and promotion on the basis of such characteristics as race and ethnicity, nativity, and gender are harder to overcome under conditions of declining opportunities, especially for people at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Their chances for betterment depend on the number and kind of midrange employment opportunities as well as on the nature and strength of barriers to achievement. Research indicating that racial and ethnic groups, especially minority women, are concentrated at the bottom of the job distribution heightens concerns that emerging hourglass structures of employment may limit job mobility for new immigrants.

This is the context in which we assess the prospects for new immigrants. They are not only newcomers in American society but also members of racial or ethnic groups whose prospects for mobility may be impeded by treatment as racialized minorities (people whose race or ethnicity constitutes a basis for substantial discrimination). Evidence of upward mobility among low-end immigrants would suggest that immigrant status may not constrain opportunity to the degree that perspectives focusing on the discriminatory effects of race and ethnicity alone, without taking nativity into account, would imply. It is thus crucial to examine jobs for the foreign-born and U.S.-born separately, and to ascertain differences between men and women, given that immigrant women may start out in very low-level jobs.

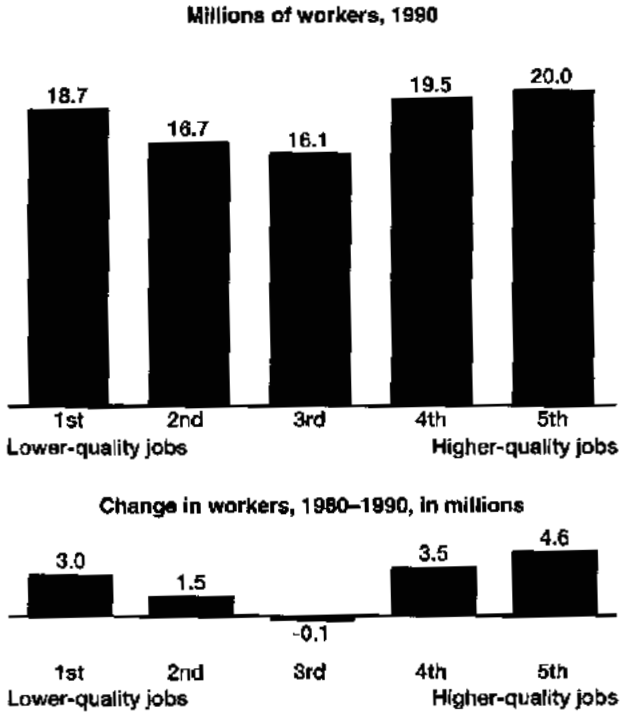
We define job quality in terms of the relative earnings of jobs involving combinations of occupation and industry in 1980, 1990, and 2000, and we divide the resulting occupation-industry categories into segments based on pay. The occupation-industry combinations are arrayed into quintiles, from high to low, based on thresholds.[27] Because sizable numbers of people are in jobs at the various pay thresholds, the percentages in each segment do not exactly equal 20 percent (people on the threshold were placed in the higher fifth). These quintiles describe jobs as "good," "somewhat good," "middle," "somewhat bad," and "bad."

Changing Job Quality

Ascertaining whether racial and ethnic discrimination worsens the chances of upward mobility for today's low-skilled immigrants requires disentangling the effects of race and ethnicity in America from the effect of immigration. This, in turn, requires considering the extent to which theories about immigrants joining the economic mainstream emphasize that immigrants see themselves and are viewed by others as racialized minorities in America. Existing theories offer essentially optimistic (in the case of assimilation perspectives) or pessimistic (in

Figure 6

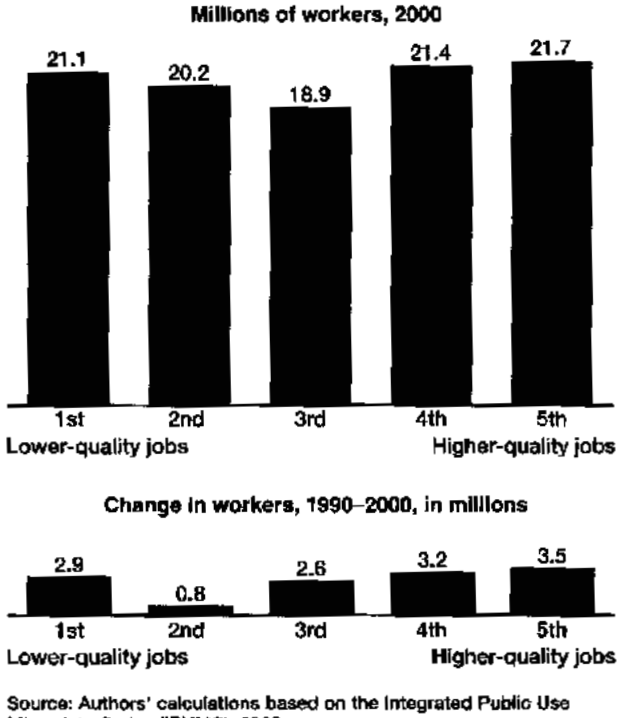
DISTRIBUTION AND CHANGE IN NUMBER OF FULL-TIME WORKERS BY JOB QUALITY QUINTILES, UNITED STATES, 1980s



Source: Authors' calculations based on the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), 2003.

Figure 7

DISTRIBUTION AND CHANGE IN NUMBER OF FULL-TIME WORKERS BY JOB QUALITY QUINTILES, UNITED STATES, 1990s



Source: Authors' calculations based on the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), 2003.

the case of ethnic disadvantage perspectives) pictures of the process, or a mixture of the two (in the case of segmented assimilation views). Which view best applies to a given immigrant group depends substantially, if not always explicitly, on whether the group was treated as a racialized disadvantaged minority group. Ethnic disadvantage perspectives tend to see immigrant groups as nonwhite minorities subject to discrimination. Assimilation perspectives tend to view them less in racial and ethnic terms than in nativity terms. Nonetheless, upward economic mobility depends on the extent to which the new immigrant groups become disadvantaged racialized minority groups in the United States.

Our analysis of job growth from 1980 to 2000 examines shifting patterns of employment by job quality in the United States during the 1980s and 1990s, focusing on results examined simultaneously by nativity, race or ethnicity, and gender, as well as on changes over time in job quality among immigrants. To a certain extent, the basic pattern of employment in the United States reveals a U-shaped structural form in 1990 and 2000. Some hollowing-out of the number of people holding midlevel jobs characterized the job quality distribution of the United States at the end of the 1980s. In 1990 about 20 million full-time workers were employed nationally in high-quality jobs and 18 million in the lowest-quality jobs, with only about 16 million in the middle. The change during the decade definitely reduced the middle of the distribution (see Figure 6), indicating that processes of economic restructuring and technological change were at work during the course of the 1980s. A similar structure emerges in 2000 (see Figure 7). The structural shift during the economic boom of the 1990s did not eliminate (and possibly reinforced) an hourglass job pattern, resulting in disproportionate growth in both good and bad jobs. In other words, the numbers of people holding such jobs rose to a greater degree than did the numbers of people holding midlevel jobs.

The chances for immigrant upward mobility depend on the economy generating increases in higher-quality jobs as well as on the degree of immigrant upward mobility experienced over time. Assessing racial or ethnic group involvement in the growth of the five job quality categories during the 1990s requires separating the findings for men and women, because immigrant employment varies by gender and varies by group. Men and women from different racial or ethnic groups are concentrated disproportionately at lower and higher points in the U.S. job structure. As shown in Figure 8, Latino women appear to contribute more to the pattern of low-end job growth than Latino men do, and Asian men contribute disproportion-

ately to growth at the high end. Together, these patterns are consistent with the fact that low-end job growth disproportionately involves the members of society with the lowest education and least experience (racial or ethnic minorities and immigrants, especially women).

It is important to determine the extent to which immigrants constitute a disproportionate share of this growth because immigrants may be more likely to start at low-end jobs because they are inexperienced newcomers, not because they are seen as members of racialized minority groups. To the degree that this is the case, their labor market outcomes might disproportionately improve as they gain more job experience. Figure 8 also indicates the degree to which immigrants have been involved in employment growth by job quality quintile in the United States. Variation in immigrant employment change across job quintiles indicates growth at both the high and low ends of the distribution. Thus, immigrants do appear involved in the emergence and maintenance of a U-shaped job pattern, representing from one-third to one-half of the growth in the extreme tails of the job quality distribution among males. But immigrants are not responsible for the U-shaped pattern, because the same tendency characterizes changes in job quality for U.S.-born workers.

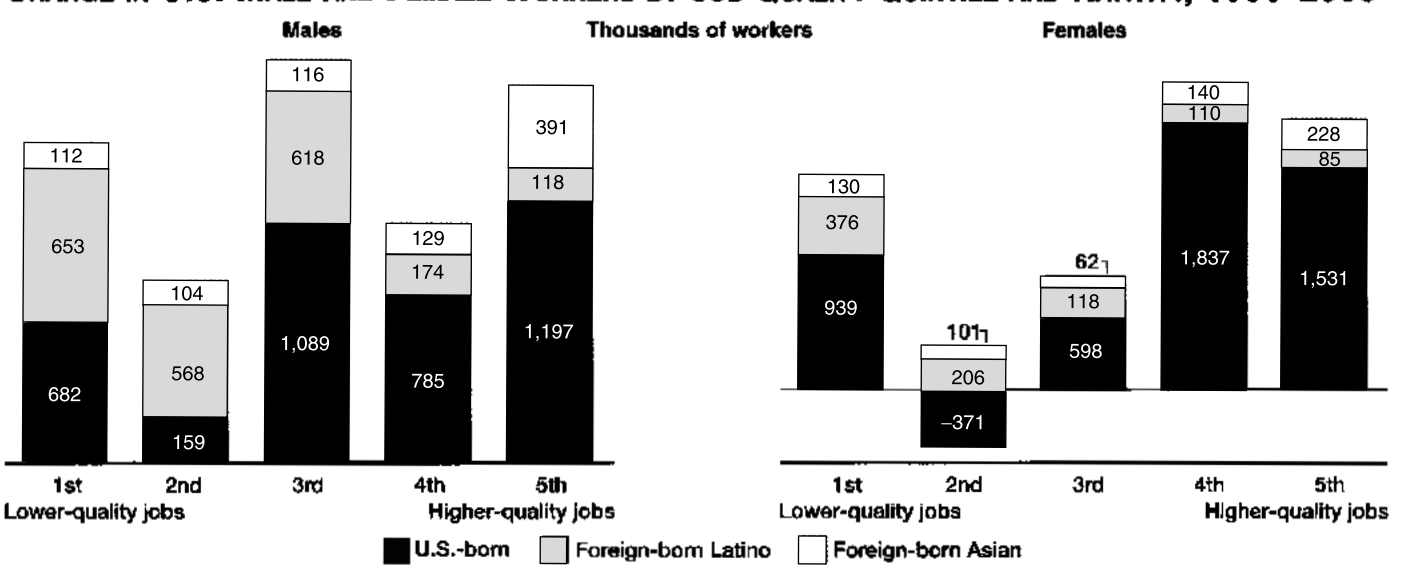
Immigrant males also contribute substantially to growth in the middle part of the distribution, accounting for about half of the middle-quintile job increases. In fact, distinct differences among men and women characterize job quality dynamics when immigrants are compared to U.S.-born workers. Foreign-born males account for appreciable fractions of employment growth in the high and middle parts of the distribution (about one-third and two-fifths, respectively), but foreign-born females account for a large fraction (about one-third) of the growth only in the lower part of the distribution. The U-shaped distribution of job quality growth thus involves distinctive gender and nativity patterns, with both immigrant men and women accounting for the largest single nativity-gender component of low-end growth and immigrant men almost the largest component of high-end growth. In addition, immigrant men account for almost half the growth in the middle.

Immigrant Job Mobility

These results illustrate why it is important to consider the possibility that newcomer dynamics as well as racialized minority group dynamics may play an important role in affecting immigrants in the labor market. Specifically, the extent to which immigrants experience mobility in the labor market is germane to inferring whether the incorporation experiences of Latinos and Asians reflect those of other newcomers to American society more than those of members of racialized minority groups who undergo considerable labor market discrimination (such as African Americans). If immigrants are similar to African Americans in experiencing prejudice and discrimination in the labor market, then as long as such discrimination continues, little upward mobility among low-education immigrants is likely. On the other hand, if immigrants are more like newcomers who need experience and familiarity in the labor market, then immigrants can expect better prospects for job mobility. This

Figure 8

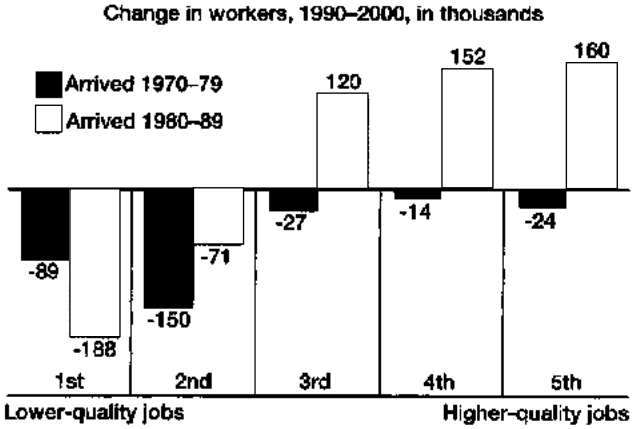
CHANGE IN U.S. MALE AND FEMALE WORKERS BY JOB QUALITY QUINTILE AND NATIVITY, 1990–2000



Source: Authors' calculations based on the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), 2003.

Figure 9

IMMIGRANT COHORT MOBILITY IN JOB QUALITY QUINTILE BY DECADE OF ARRIVAL, UNITED STATES, 1990-2000



Source: Authors' calculations based on the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), 2003.

would not mean that problems of discrimination in the labor market against Latinos and Asians are nonexistent, only that they are sufficiently different in kind and degree from those experienced by African Americans that their newcomer status might matter more than their racial or ethnic status.

Of course many U.S.-born and immigrant workers earn more as they mature and gain job experience. But for immigrants, years of working experience can be separated into total working experience, which often begins in the home country, and the years of working experience gained after entering the U.S. labor market. Upon arrival, many immigrants lack language and U.S.-specific job skills that improve over time and are rewarded with better jobs and earnings. Research on earnings is extremely nuanced, but it generally supports the assertion that the new immigrants earn less than U.S.-born workers who have equal years of work experience. But even after two decades of U.S.-specific experience, immigrants generally fail to catch up to the earnings levels of similarly skilled U.S.-born workers. Lacking longitudinal data, a fully adequate test of the earnings incorporation process is not possible, and one cannot adequately distinguish between mobility due to total working experience and that due to U.S.-specific experience.

Immigrant job quality mobility can be approximated by tracking cohorts over time. We grouped immigrants according to the decade they report arriving in the United States, and we examined two recent arrival cohorts (the 1970-1979 cohort and the 1980-1989 cohort). To the degree that job quality mobility occurs, immigrants in these arrival cohorts should shift into higher-quality jobs during the 1990s, a period marked by an economic boom.

First, the percentage was calculated of each arrival cohort's members who were employed in each of the five job quality categories. Then the percentage distribution in 1990 was subtracted from the percentage distribution in 2000, resulting in the percentage-point change across the time period (see Figure 9). This change was then converted to absolute numbers of workers in order to show the numbers of people involved in the change. The number of workers in the 1980s cohort in the highest job quality category increased by over 150,000 people during the 1990s. At the same time, the number in the 1970s cohort in the highest job quality category decreased slightly, reflecting the influence of attrition (retirement, emigration, and mortality). But the overall pattern of change is one of upward mobility, with the 1980s cohort showing the strongest employment losses in lower-quality jobs and the strongest gains in higher-quality jobs. But even the arrivals of the 1970s experienced substantial mobility out of lower-end jobs during the decade of the 1990s.

These findings indicate that the overall pattern of job quality change among immigrants mirrors that of the country as a whole, with some tendency toward a hollowing-out of the middle of the job distribution occurring in recent decades. However, considerable upward job mobility among immigrants has also been taking place during this time, indicating that the nonwhite racial or ethnic status of immigrants does not appear to represent an ironclad impediment to economic incorporation. This conclusion is buttressed by the fact that many Asian males start their job experience in the United States in the top part of the job distribution, not in the lower. Hence, the worry that recent immigrants are likely to constitute a drag on the American economy because they start out at the bottom of the job ladder and are likely to remain there without much prospect for improvement seems unwarranted. In fact, substantial mobility occurs even in the immigrant generation. What happens to the members of the immigrant group after the immigrant generation is also relevant to the question of the degree to which the members of immigrant groups are handicapped by their racial or ethnic status. In the United States, Asians do not appear to be particularly handicapped in the labor market, leaving Latinos as the group to whom such questions pertain most compellingly.[28] How are U.S.- and foreign-born Latinos, the groups most represented at the bottom of the job distribution, distributed across major industry categories, compared with majority U.S.-born whites? If U.S.-born Latinos tend to resemble U.S.-born whites more than they resemble foreign-born Latinos, improvement among immigrants in the United States would seem to be taking place across generations as well as in the first generation.

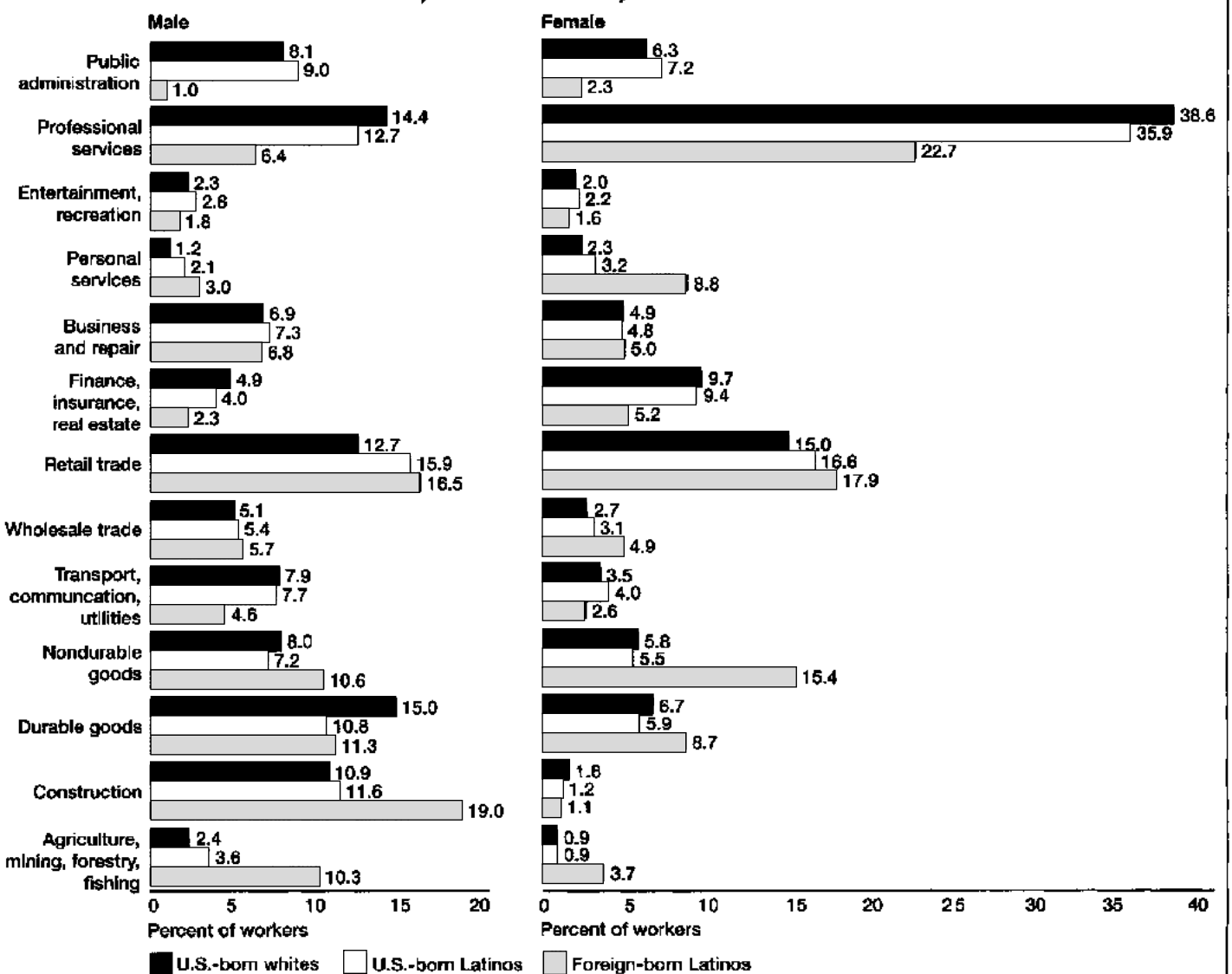
Figure 10 shows the distributions of male and female Latinos by nativity across major industry categories in the United States in 2000, along with that of

U.S.-born whites. In five of the 12 male categories, the differences among the three groups are not large, indicating that neither immigrant nor U.S.-born Latinos tend to be over- or underrepresented in that part of the economy. (The groups might hold different occupations within the sector, but this discussion focuses on industry differences.) In six categories, however, nativity differences emerge, with U.S-born Latinos being much closer to U.S.-born whites than to Latino immigrants in public administration, professional services, transport/communication/ utilities, nondurable goods manufacturing, construction, and agriculture/mining/forestry/fishing. The first three categories generally involve higher fractions of better-paying jobs; the latter three generally involve lower-paying jobs and substantial concentrations of the foreign-born. Only two industry categories show an ethnic difference: retail trade, in which the concentration of Latinos exceeds that of whites irrespective of nativity; and durable goods manufacturing, in which the concentration of whites exceeds that of Latinos irrespective of nativity. The concentrations of females in these industries reveal a similar tendency for nativity differences to predominate over ethnic differences, with the U.S.-born far more represented than the foreign-born in relatively higher-paying sectors.

These results suggest that failing to consider nativity when examining labor market outcomes of Latino immigrants often gives a misleading picture of the

Figure 10

INDUSTRY DISTRIBUTION OF FULL-TIME MALE AND FEMALE WORKERS, U.S.-BORN WHITES AND U.S.-BORN AND FOREIGN-BORN LATINOS, UNITED STATES, 2000



Source: Authors' calculations based on the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPMS), 2003.

degree of their economic accomplishment, thus generating confusion about whether the evidence offers more support to the assimilation or the ethnic disadvantage perspective. This is particularly problematic in the case of the Mexican origin population, whose members start out in the United States at lower employment levels than any other Latino immigrant group.

Observers of the rise in the importance of the Mexican origin population have often been uncertain how to characterize their experiences and their incorporation in the United States. Even though Mexican immigrants are diverse in terms of their migration status and modes of entry into the United States, they are often judged according to the prior experiences of either European immigrants or African Americans. An assimilation perspective views Mexican origin people primarily as an immigrant group whose members have mostly come to the United States only recently and whose incorporation may mirror that of earlier groups. In this view, natural incorporation processes need only run their course, usually over three or four generations. The alternative perspective tends to see them as members of a disadvantaged minority group whose progress toward full economic parity with other U.S. groups is retarded by discrimination. In this view, substantial progress is not likely to occur without policies that both help eradicate discrimination and compensate for its past effects.

Analysts influenced by these two ways of looking at the Mexican origin experience tend to organize economic statistics differently in seeking to shed light on the group's economic incorporation. Because the ethnic disadvantage viewpoint sees all members of the group as subject to discrimination, its adherents tend to marshal data on income and jobs and other indicators based on the entire national origin group, regardless of nativity status. Observers who treat Mexican origin people as members of an immigrant group, by contrast, tend to distinguish the foreign-born from the U.S.-born on the grounds that the experience of those of Mexican origin vary so much by nativity that data on this group must be disaggregated. For example, rather than arguing that discrimination shapes immigrants' experiences in the labor market, these observers hold that such outcomes as immigrant wages and employment are influenced more by English-language proficiency, human capital variables, and U.S. work experience. From this perspective, the examination of labor market outcomes or other variables that include data on both foreign-born and U.S.-born people is likely to yield misleading assessments of the economic achievements of many members of immigrant groups, especially Mexican origin people.

Each viewpoint has some evidence to support its ideas. On the one hand, research suggests that people of Mexican origin often face job discrimination, though not as much as African Americans. Nonetheless, it is also evident that not disaggregating data by nativity generates an incomplete picture of the accomplishments of those of Mexican origin. For example, the annual earnings among U.S.-born white males exceeded those of Mexican-origin males by almost 30 percent in 2000, irrespective of education level. Earnings of white females exceeded comparably educated Mexican origin females by about 13 percent to 18 percent. These are substantial differences, and such earnings gaps stated in terms of ethnic group differentials give considerable weight to the argument that race or ethnicity plays a prominent role in earnings patterns. However, when U.S.-born Latinos and whites are compared, these differences shrink considerably (by about a fourth in the case of males and by almost a third in the case of females), although the gap is not eliminated (see Table 6).

Table 6

MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS OF FULL-TIME WORKERS BY RACE/ETHNICITY, NATIVITY, GENDER, AND EDUCATION, UNITED STATES, 2000

	Males			Females		
Racial/ethnic group	Less than high school	High school	Any college	Less than high school	High school	Any college
Non-Latino white						
U.S.-born	$28,000	$34,000	$48,000	$18,000	$23,000	$33,000
Mexican origin						
Total	20,000	25,000	35,000	15,000	20,000	28,000
U.S.-born	22,000	27,000	38,000	16,000	22,000	29,000
Foreign-born	20,000	23,000	30,000	14,000	18,000	25,000
Percent difference						
White–all Latinos	28.6	26.5	27.1	18.3	13.0	15.2
White–U.S.-born Latinos	21.4	20.6	20.8	11.1	4.3	11.8

Source: Authors' calculations based on the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), 2003.

These patterns illustrate that substantial earnings increases occur when immigrants are compared with subsequent generations. In fact, recent research on generational differences shows that these gaps close even more substantially when later-generation Mexican origin people are compared to non-Latino whites.[29] Results that group all Mexican origin people together miss these patterns. Gaps in education and earnings between immigrant and U.S.-born members of the same group clearly have more to do with origin-country differences in economic development than with discrimination. Bias resulting from the aggregation of nativity data is likely to be especially severe in times of high immigration, as in the 1990s, when immigration, particularly from Mexico, rose because of the legalization programs associated with the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act and because of an economic crisis in Mexico.[30]

Some scholars argue that several new immigrant groups risk the kinds of outcomes that disadvantaged blacks have often experienced. Efforts to sort out the degree of economic progress among immigrant groups must break down racial or ethnic groups by nativity or (preferably) generational status. While this may seem like a banal observation, it bears repeating, as Rebecca Raijman and Marta Tienda have also emphasized, because it continues to be overlooked.[31] Understanding what is happening among new immigrant groups requires recognizing that even as incorporation may be occurring in regard to economic factors, it may be moving in opposite directions in regard to some sociocultural factors (immigrants may be moving up the economic ladder even as they identify more strongly with many of the symbols of their ethnicity, such as food or celebration of holidays). Thus, neither perspective may fully characterize the experiences of many new immigrant groups, who not only have distinctive historical backgrounds but experience different modes of reception after they arrive in the United States.[32]

Sociocultural Incorporation

While studying trends in job mobility and earnings provides a window into the economic incorporation processes among today's immigrants, other important indicators of immigrant incorporation involve sociocultural patterns—namely intermarriage and multiracial reporting. Trends in intermarriage are significant because social scientists view racial or ethnic intermarriage as a measure of decreasing social distance, declining racial or ethnic prejudice, and changing racial or ethnic group boundaries.

Perhaps the most apparent trend is that over the past four decades—a time coinciding with the rise of the new immigration—intermarriage has increased substantially. For example, more than 30 percent of Asian or Latino individuals had a spouse of another race or ethnicity by the late 1990s, with the vast majority married to a white partner.[33] Similarly, more than 50 percent of third-generation Asian or Latino marriages during the 1990s (defined as those with at least one spouse being a member of the racial or ethnic group in question) included a white spouse.[34] Such rises in intermarriage have in turn led to a sizable and growing multiracial population. Currently, one in 40 people self-identifies as multiracial, and this figure is twice as high among those under the age of 18.[35] Population projections suggest that the multiple origin population will increase by 2 to 3 percentage points each decade for the next century; by the year 2050 as many as one in five Americans could claim a multiracial background.[36]

America's Newcomers

The process of sociocultural incorporation of new immigrant groups in the United States leads to various theories about the nature and degree of assimilation processes. The first is the classic "straight-line" model of assimilation, with its many variants. This model predicts that newcomers will both affect and be affected by the fabric of American life so that after several generations, the immigrant minorities and the majority become ever more indistinguishable from one another. Born of the predominantly European origin migration taking place at the beginning of the 20th century, the straight-line model emerged from how European immigrants established a foothold and gained economic mobility in the United States.

Milton Gordon canonized the view that there is one unidirectional pathway to successfully assimilating into the nation's economic and social structure and that acculturation not only preceded but was necessary for structural incorporation.[37] In the assimilation process, immigrants lose their ethnic distinctiveness; become ever more indistinguishable from the host society; intermarry with members of the host society; and eventually adopt an American identity, thereby marking the final stages of assimilation.

Gordon's model has two shortcomings: its imperfections in depicting the experiences of European migrants and its inability to explain the experience of either African Americans or today's immigrants. For example, white European groups continue to manifest aspects of ethnic distinctiveness despite their substantial structural incorporation—a phenomenon that cannot be accounted for with the straight-line assimilation model. Researchers have demonstrated, however, that much of the ethnic revival of this period was symbolic, giving rise to the concept of "symbolic ethnicity" for white ethnics.[38] The failure of the classic straight-line assimilation

model to account for the experience of blacks in the United States is more fundamental. In the latter two decades of the 20th century, while black customs, practices, and ideals had come to mirror those of the larger population to a considerable degree—indicating their high level of acculturation—complete economic incorporation was still missing. The prevailing view at this time was that the removal of legal barriers would quickly lead to substantial structural incorporation among African Americans. By the 1980s, however, it was plain that the elimination of such barriers had resulted in only partial economic improvements for blacks.[39] Furthermore, despite the high level of acculturation among African Americans, the rate of intermarriage between blacks and whites remained and continues to remain low.

The straight-line model also fails to accurately characterize the incorporation pathways of America's newest immigrants, such as Asians, Latinos, and West Indians. Today, social scientists conceive of many different paths of incorporation for America's newcomers, a perspective first articulated in Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou's seminal article on segmented assimilation.[40] They posited three possible pathways of immigrant incorporation: straight-line assimilation into the white middle class (for example, light-skinned Cubans in Miami); assimilation into the minority underclass in inner-city poverty and culture (for example, Haitians in Miami); and selective assimilation, in which immigrants remain immersed in their ethnic community and preserve the immigrant community's values and solidarity (for example, Punjabi Sikh Indians in Northern California). Many of today's new Asian and Latino immigrants adopt a path of selective acculturation or accommodation without assimilation.[41] Social scientists have also documented that acculturation is no longer the surest path to successful economic incorporation, as the straight-line model suggests. For example, immigrants and their children who adopt a path of selective assimilation (assimilating along some dimensions but not others) use the resources within the immigrant ethnic community and maintain a strong sense of ethnic identity to shield themselves from the spiral of downward mobility in the face of economic disadvantage. In fact, among West Indians in New York and Vietnamese in Louisiana, casting off one's immigrant identity can lead to downward mobility—a concept that directly challenges the dominant sociological paradigm of straight-line assimilation.[42] Thus, if cultural accommodation facilitated structural incorporation in the past, it does not seem apparent or necessary for many of today's newcomers, illustrating the frequent decoupling of the traditional linkages thought to exist between acculturation and economic mobility.[43] In the path of selective assimilation, ethnicity acts as a resource to upward mobility and appears less constraining than previously presumed, becoming more useful, flexible, and nonbounding than emphasized by the straight-line model.

Intermarriage

At the beginning of the 20th century, intermarriage between white ethnics was rare and nearly caste-like, especially between "old" white ethnics and newer arrivals from Eastern and southern Europe.[44] Today, white ethnics intermarry at such high rates that only one-fifth of whites have a spouse with an identical ethnic background, reflecting the virtual disappearance of boundaries among white ethnic groups.[45] By contrast, marriage across racial groups, while on the rise, is still relatively uncommon between some groups, and all groups continue to intermarry at rates lower than would be predicted at random. For example, more than 90 percent of white and black marriages were endogamous in 1990, while about 70 percent of Asian and Hispanic and 25 percent of American Indian marriages were. Moreover, even though these percentages had increased by 2000, they remained relatively low.[46]

In one sense, it not surprising that interracial marriage is not as common as white interethnic marriage, given that it was illegal in 16 states as recently as 1967 when the U.S. Supreme Court (in Loving v. Commonwealth of Virginia) overturned the last remaining antimiscegenation laws. The ruling, along with the civil rights revolution, contributed to the rise in interracial marriage, which increased tenfold within a 30-year period (from 150,000 in 1960 to 1.6 million in 1990), far beyond what would be predicted by population growth alone.[47] Today, about 13 percent of American marriages involve people of different races, a considerable increase over the 35 years.[48] While the rise in interracial marriage might initially appear to indicate that racial boundaries are eroding, closer examination of recent findings indicates that not all racial or ethnic groups are equal partners in this growth. For instance, among the 30 percent or so of married U.S.-born Asians and Latinos who have a spouse of a different racial background, most spouses are white (see Table 7). Among young (25 to 34 years of age) U.S.-born Asians and Latinos, the intermarriage figures are even higher; nearly two-thirds of married Asians and two-fifths of Latinos outmarry, again mostly with whites.[49] By contrast, less than one-tenth of young blacks marry someone of a different racial background.[50]

While the rate of black-white intermarriage more than doubled in the 1970s and 1980s, on the whole the intermarriage rates for whites and blacks remain relatively low.[51] Even by 2000, of all marriages involving at least one white person, only 7 percent were exogamous; the comparable figure for blacks was 13 percent. The comparatively higher rates of intermarriage among U.S.-born Asians and Latinos indicate that as these groups incorporate into the United States, not only do they

Table 7

PERCENT OF MARRIED COUPLES WITH SPOUSE OF DIFFERENT RACE/ETHNICITY, BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 1990 AND 2000

Race/ethnicity	1990	2000
Total	4.4	6.4
White	4.7	7.0
Black	8.4	12.6
Asian	31.5	30.9
Latino	32.5	29.3
AINLOR[a]	74.8	70.7

[a] American Indian, Alaska Native, and non-Latino Other racial groups.

Source: Authors' calculations based on the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), 2003.

become receptive to intermarriage, but whites also perceive them as suitable marriage partners.

Three distinct trends are emerging in interracial marriage in the United States. First, intermarriage for all racial groups has increased dramatically over the last 35 years and will probably continue to rise. Second, intermarriage is not uncommon in the cases of newer immigrant groups such as Asians and Latinos (particularly among the young U.S.-born populations). Third, compared to Asians, Latinos, and American Indians, intermarriage is still relatively uncommon among blacks.

The differential rates of intermarriage among nonwhite racial groups suggest that racial and ethnic boundaries are more prominent for some groups than for others. The significantly higher rates of intermarriage for Asians and Latinos indicate that racial or ethnic boundaries are more fluid and flexible, and racial or ethnic prejudice less salient. By contrast, the lower rates of intermarriage among blacks suggest that racial boundaries are more prominent and that the black-white divide is more salient than either the Asian-white or Latino-white divides. Thus, while boundaries are fading, boundary crossing among racial groups is not unconditional, and race is not declining in significance at the same pace for all groups.

Multiracial Population

The rise in interracial marriage has resulted in the growth of the multiracial population in the United States. This population became highly visible when the 2000 Census, for the first time in history, allowed Americans to select one or more races to indicate their racial identification. Brought about by a small but highly influential multiracial movement, this landmark change in the way the United States measures racial identification reflects the view that race is no longer conceived as a bounded category.[52] In 2000, 7 million people, or 2 percent of Americans, identified themselves as multiracial—about one of every 40 people. While these figures may not appear large, a recent National Academy of Sciences study noted that the multiracial population could rise to 21 percent by the year 2050 when—because of rising patterns in intermarriage—as many as 35 percent of Asians and 45 percent of Hispanics might claim a multiracial background.[53] The growth of the multiracial population provides a new reflection on the nation's changing racial boundaries.

Because the multiracial population will clearly continue to grow, the phenomenon has begun to receive systematic attention in social science research. For example, several studies have examined the question of how interracial couples identify their multiracial children, revealing that about 50 percent of American Indian-white and Asian-white intermarried couples report a white racial identity for their children.[54] Other studies have examined the ways in which multiracial individuals self-identify, but often based on small samples that generate conflicting findings.[55] For example, Nelly Salgado de Snyder and colleagues found that 70 percent of multiracial children in California with one Mexican origin parent identified as Mexican, a rate much higher than Cookie White Stephan and Walter G. Stephan found for multiracial Hispanic college students in New Mexico, where only 44 percent adopted a Hispanic identity.[56]

Previous research indicates that several important variables affect the choice of racial identification among children of interracial unions, such as generational status, bilingualism, and proximity to a nonwhite community. For example, in their studies of biracial children with one Asian parent, Rogelio Saenz and colleagues and Yu Xie and Kimberly Goyette found that nativity and generational status matter.[57] First-generation biracial Asian children are more likely to be identified as Asian than are subsequent generations. However, the third generation is more likely to be identified as Asian than their second-generation counterparts. While this finding appears to contradict the classic assimilation model—which predicts fading ethnic identification with each successive generation—Xie and Goyette argue that choosing to identify one's child as Asian does not necessarily signify a stronger sense of racial identification. Rather, they posit that the racial identification of multiracial Asian children is to a large extent optional, likening it to the ethnic options available for whites. Providing further support for this claim, David Harris and Jeremiah Joseph Sim found in their study of multiracial youth that when asked to choose a single race, Asian-white youth are equally likely to identify as Asian or white, demonstrating that the racial identification of Asian-white multiracial individuals is largely a matter of choice.[58]

A second consistent finding is that speaking a language other than English at home significantly increases the likelihood that biracial children will adopt a nonwhite identity, supporting the thesis that language maintenance is critical in ethnic identity formation.[59] A third finding is that neighborhood context matters, and

exposure to the minority parent's culture increases the likelihood that biracial children will adopt a nonwhite identity. For example, living among a large co-ethnic community or residing in a Public Use Microdata Area that is greater than 20 percent Asian positively affects the degree to which interracially married Asians and whites identify their multiracial children as Asian.[60] Furthermore, Stephan and Stephan posit that the higher rates of multiracial identification of the Japanese in Hawaii (73 percent) compared to the Hispanics in New Mexico (44 percent) reflect the greater multicultural milieu in Hawaii, including a variety of locally available labels for the multiracial or multiethnic population.[61] Karl Eschbach also discovers vast regional differences in the choice of an American Indian identity for American Indian-white multiracial individuals—ranging from 33 percent to 73 percent.[62]

Patterns of Multiracial Identification

About one in 40 Americans reported a multiracial background in the 2000 Census. Of these, 93 percent reported exactly two races, 6 percent reported three races, and only 1 percent reported four or more races. While most individuals who report a multiracial identification list exactly two races, the selection of these races is not evenly distributed across all racial groups. As Table 8 illustrates, groups with a high percentage of multiracial people as a percentage of the total group include Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native, Other, and Asian. In both 1990 and 2000, slightly more than 97 percent of those who checked Other were Latinos.[63]

Also shown in Table 8, the groups with the lowest proportion claiming a multiracial background in 2000 were whites and blacks. However, because whites account for over three-fourths of the total U.S. population, most individuals who report a multiracial identity also claim a white background. More specifically, while 5 million whites report a multiracial background, this accounts for only 3 percent of the total white population. Like whites, the proportion of blacks who claim a multiracial background is also small, accounting for only 5 percent of the total black population. These figures stand in sharp contrast to those among American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, who show the highest percentage of multiracial reporting as a proportion of their populations. Asians and Latinos fall in between (14 percent and 17 percent, respectively), with significantly higher rates of multiracial reporting than blacks or whites, but lower rates than American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander.

Expressed as a percentage of the total black, Asian, and Latino populations, the rates of black-white, Asian-white, and Latino-white multiracial combinations are 2 percent, 7 percent, and 5 percent, respectively (see Table 9). Compared with the black-white combination among blacks, the Asian-white multiracial combination is about three and a half times more likely to occur among Asians, and the Latino-white combination is more than two and a half times more likely to occur among Latinos. Mirroring trends in intermarriage, three conclusions can be drawn from the patterns of multiracial identification.

Table 8
AMERICANS IDENTIFYING WITH ONE OR MORE RACES, 2000

Race	Millions identifying with race: Total[a]	This race alone[b]	This race and other race(s)[c]	Percent multiracial
White	216.9	211.5	5.5	2.5
Black	36.4	34.7	1.8	4.9
Asian	11.9	10.2	1.7	14.3
Other	18.5	15.4	3.2	17.3
American Indian, Alaska Native	4.1	2.5	1.6	39.0
Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander	0.9	0.4	0.5	55.6

[a] Racial/ethnic group totals do not sum to the total U.S. population because multiracial persons are counted in more than one group.

[b] Totals do not sum to the total U.S. population because multiracial persons are excluded.

[c] Multiracial persons are counted in each racial group with which they identified.

Source: U.S. Census 2000.

First, the multiracial population seems likely to continue to grow in the foreseeable future as a result of increasing intermarriage. Second, multiracial identification is not uncommon among the members of new immigrant groups, such as Asians and Latinos (particularly for those under the age of 18). Third, at only 5 percent, multiracial identification remains relatively uncommon among blacks.

Why blacks are far less likely to report a multiracial background is particularly noteworthy, considering that the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that at least three-quarters of the black population in the United States is ancestrally multiracial.[64] In other words, although at least 75 percent of black Americans have some mixed ancestry (mostly white) and thus could claim multiracial identities on that basis, less than 5 percent choose to do so. The tendency of black Americans to be less likely to report multiracial identifications undoubtedly owes to the legacy of slavery, including lasting discrimination, the formerly *de jure* and now *de facto* invocation of the one-drop rule that emerged to protect slavery and legitimize Jim Crow segregation, and the force of black pride,

Table 9

PERCENT OF AMERICANS IDENTIFYING WITH TWO RACES BY RACE, UNITED STATES, 2000

	Additional racial identity				
Race/ethnicity	White	Black	Asian	American Indian	Other
Whites[a]	—	0.3	0.4	0.5	1.1
Blacks[a]	1.9	—	0.3	0.6	1.1
Asians[a]	7.0	0.8	—	1.5	2.2
American Indian[a]	25.5	4.6	4.1	—	2.4
Other race[b]	11.9	2.2	1.3	0.5	—
Latinos[c]	4.9	0.8	0.4	0.5	5.1

[a] Non-Latino.

[b] May be Latino or non-Latino reporting the other racial category alone or in combination with the white, black, Asian, or American Indian categories.

[c] Latino respondents reporting a dual racial identity involving the column race and any one other race.

Source: U.S. Census 2000.

which may prefer not to dilute black identification by invoking other identifications. For no other racial or ethnic group in the United States and in no other country does this rule so influence a group's identity choices.

While the historical legacy of the one-drop rule still strongly affects identity options among black Americans, F. James Davis posits that blacks are aware that their racial ancestry is mixed.[65] He also notes that while the rule served to protect a rigid racial hierarchy, blacks may be reluctant to insist on changing it. In fact, he argues that many blacks have taken the rule for granted, but more important, they may also feel they have a stake in maintaining it because it provides a strong basis for ethnic unity, pride, and political power. Ironically, then, although the rule is arbitrary, socially constructed, and fundamental for implementing certain practices of racial oppression, abandoning it could weaken black identity and political strength as well as possibly undermine the credibility of some of the strongest black community leaders.

However, recent studies reveal that not all multiracial blacks feel compelled to adhere to the one-drop rule, and that younger black-white multiracial people, in particular, feel less constrained to adopt an exclusively black monoracial identity. For example, Kathleen Odell Korgen's study of 40 black-white adults reveals that only one-third of her sample under the age of 30 exclusively identified as black.[66] Moreover, David Harris and Jeremia Joseph Sim's study of multiracial youth shows that 17 percent of black-white adolescents chose white as the single race that best describes them.[67] While younger blacks are less likely to report an exclusively black monoracial identity than are older black cohorts, blacks overall are still far less likely to report multiracial backgrounds than are Asians or Latinos.

The absence of a one-drop rule for labeling among multiracial Asians, Latinos, and American Indians has left them more room for exercising discretion in selecting racial or ethnic identities. Higher rates of multiracial reporting among Latinos and Asians, both as a proportion of the total Latino and Asian populations and when compared with blacks, indicate that racial boundaries are less constraining for these groups than for blacks.

In addition, because a significant proportion of Latinos and Asians in the United States are either immigrants or the children of immigrants, their understanding of race, racial boundaries, and the black-white color divide is shaped by a different set of circumstances than those of African Americans. Most important, experiences of Latinos and Asians in the United States are not rooted in the same historical legacy of slavery, with its systematic and persistent patterns of legal and institutional discrimination and inequality from which the tenacious black-white divide was born and cemented. Unlike African Americans, who were forcibly brought to this country as slaves, the migration experiences of today's Latino and Asian newcomers are quite distinct from those of African Americans. The subjugation of black Americans in this country makes the black-white racial gap qualitatively and quantitatively different from the Latino-white or Asian-white racial divides. Thus, while boundary crossing may be more common for all groups, it appears that the legacy of institutional racism in the country more forcefully constrains identity options for blacks than for other nonwhite groups.

In fact, some research indicates that racial boundaries among Latinos, Asians, and American Indians are beginning to assume the fluidity and mutability of ethnicity. For example, in their longitudinal study of high school students, Karl Eschbach and C. Gomez note that only 68 percent of the more than 6,500 students interviewed between 1980 and 1982 consistently identified as Hispanic.[68] They suggest that the change in racial and ethnic identification points to a process of transformation from ascribed to optional ethnicity. Similarly, Karl Eschbach, Khalil Supple, and C. Matthew Snipp note that the American Indian population grew from 827,000 in 1970 to almost 2 million in 1990, positing that the change in racial identification from white to American Indian signifies the flexibility of racial boundaries for this group.[69] Furthermore, the racial identification for Asians has changed over time from almost black to almost white, pointing to the mutability of boundaries for at least some Asian ethnic groups. Thus, recent findings suggest that at least for some Asians, Latinos, and American Indians, race is adopting the optional and symbolic character of white ethnicity.

Shifting Geographic Boundaries

Another way of assessing America's changing racial and ethnic boundaries is to unearth where these boundaries are shifting most rapidly. Patterns of multiracial identification reveal that areas with high immigrant populations evince larger multiracial populations. The foreign-born population and the multiracial population are clustered in several cities and states. In fact, 64 percent of those who report a multiracial identification reside in just 10 states—California, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Texas, and Washington—all of which have relatively high immigrant populations.[70] In essence, high-diversity states (as reflected in the percent of the population other than non-Hispanic whites and blacks) boast much larger multiracial populations than less racially diverse states. On the opposite end of the diversity spectrum are states like Maine and West Virginia, which have low racial minority populations and thereby exhibit very low levels of multiracial reporting. States like Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina, however, have relatively large black populations but nevertheless evince low levels of multiracial reporting. In these Southern states, the strong traditional dividing line between blacks and whites appears to constrain multiracial identification, leading people to identify monoracially as either white or black rather than adopting a multiracial identity.[71]

These patterns suggest that multiracial reporting is more likely in areas with greater levels of racial and ethnic diversity, which in turn have largely been brought about by the post-1965 wave of immigrants, particularly Latinos and Asians. This theory is consistent with much prior work in sociology. Racial and ethnic diversity implies both the presence of many racial and ethnic groups and the relative absence of statistical predominance on the part of any single group. Thus, the more a single racial or ethnic group dominates the population of some social, political, economic, or geographic group or area, the less the diversity; conversely, the greater the number of groups and the more equally they are distributed within an area, the greater the diversity. As used here for racial and ethnic groups, diversity is equivalent to the idea of heterogeneity as it is often more broadly invoked in sociology. All else equal, greater diversity should lead to increased multiracial reporting, because increased diversity (or heterogeneity) tends to promote more frequent intergroup associations and greater tolerance, results often found and noted in the sociological literature.[72]

In fact, it is precisely the lack of racial and ethnic tolerance in the Deep South that has tended to constrain the reporting of multiracial mixing. In general, increased tolerance and flexibility should generate increased multiracial reporting. Immigration increases the likelihood of multiracial identification because the greater diversity it fosters loosens racial or ethnic boundaries and allows more flexibility in the identity options for multiracial people. The geography of multiracial reporting indicates that the rate varies widely across the country, with the highest levels in areas that exhibit the greatest racial and ethnic diversity brought about by the arrival of immigrants to these areas. Thus, while national patterns in interracial marriage and multiracial identification indicate a loosening of racial boundaries, particularly for Latinos and Asians, these shifts appear to be taking place more rapidly in certain parts of the country and among certain groups.

Linking Diversity to Multiracial Identification

What kinds of research results might be further evidence of a connection between growing diversity and the breakdown of racial or ethnic color lines? Multiracial identifications are more likely among Asians and Latinos than among either black African-origin immigrants or U.S.-born blacks, as a consequence of both higher rates of intermarriage among the former groups and greater tendency for them to see themselves in multiracial terms. Places with more immigration may also have larger relative sizes of racial or ethnic minority groups (at least in the cases of Latinos and Asians) and increased diversity, with the latter loosening racial or ethnic boundaries and increasing the likelihood of multiracial self-identification.

But a minority group that is growing in size may also increase perceptions of threat in the majority group.[73] Under conditions of continuing immigration, a constant influx of new members of a given racial or ethnic group into a concentrated area will not only add to the group's relative size but it may also reinforce the group's distinctive behavioral and cultural patterns. This may heighten the group's distinctive sense of ethnicity, foster ethnic insularity, and tighten racial or ethnic boundaries. It may also make it less likely that the members of such groups will either come from multiracial backgrounds (due to declines in intermarriage) or come to perceive themselves in multiracial terms. In short, while larger relative group size may foster multiracial identification through one pathway, it may diminish intermarriage and multiracial identification through others.

Metropolitan-level data on multiracial identification can be used to assess the effects of relative group size and diversity on multiracial reporting. For example, Table 10 presents basic data for metropolitan areas on multiracial identification and racial and ethnic composition.

Many of the metropolitan areas with the highest percentages of multiracial residents are located in the Pacific West, and rank high on the diversity score. Many of those with low multiracial percentages are in

the South and Midwest. Some of these also rank high on the diversity score, but they tend to be areas where blacks are the dominant minority group and where there are few Asians. In a multivariate analysis of a complete data set for metropolitan areas (not shown here), we confirmed that the effects of racial and ethnic diversity on multiraciality is more positive for metropolitan areas with a sizable proportion of Asians than for areas with relatively large black populations. This supports the idea that increasing racial and ethnic diversity loosens these traditional group boundaries in the United States, apparently more so for Asians and Latinos than for blacks.[74]

Blending and Fading

Increases in intermarriage and the growth of the multiracial population reflect a blending of races and the fading of color lines. Because interracial marriage and multiracial identification indicate reduced social distance and racial prejudice, these patterns offer an optimistic portrait of weakening racial boundaries. For example, interracial marriage was illegal in 16 states as recently as 1967, but today about 13 percent of American marriages involve people of different races. At the end of the 19th century, rates of intermarriage among Asians in this country were close to zero, but today

Table 10
Highest and Lowest Percent Multiracial U.S. Metropolitan Areas, 2000

Metropolitan areas, state(s)	Multiracial persons (thousands)	Percent of metro population multiracial	Percent of metro population nonwhite	Diversity score*
Most multiracial				
Honolulu, HI	96.8	16.7	78	0.48
Stockton, CA	34.6	6.1	53	0.66
Jersey City, NJ	35.7	5.9	64	0.69
Oakland, CA	134.3	5.6	53	0.69
San Francisco, CA	61.2	5.5	54	0.67
Tacoma, WA	38.8	5.5	25	0.42
Vallejo-Fairfield-Napa, CA	28.4	5.5	47	0.65
Modesto, CA	23.7	5.4	43	0.57
Sacramento, CA	88.9	5.4	36	0.55
San Jose, CA	90.6	5.4	57	0.68
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	490.6	5.2	69	0.68
New York-Northeastern NJ	441.1	5.1	64	0.72
Riverside-San Bernadino, CA	136.2	5.1	55	0.64
San Diego, CA	143.1	5.0	46	0.61
Tulsa, OK	34.8	5.0	25	0.42
Least multiracial				
Sarasota, FL	8.2	1.4	15	0.27
Melbourne-Titusville-Cocoa-Palm Bay, FL	6.4	1.4	15	0.27
Canton, OH	5.4	1.3	9	0.17
Richmond-Petersburg, VA	7.5	1.3	39	0.51
Cincinnati OH/KY/IN	10.6	1.3	29	0.42
Pittsburgh-Beaver Valley, PA	18.1	1.2	14	0.25
Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, SC	8.6	1.2	38	0.53
Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	14.4	1.2	17	0.30
Harrisburg-Lebanon-Carlisle, PA	7.6	1.2	14	0.25
Greensboro-Winston Salem-High Point, NC	14.9	1.2	28	0.44
Dayton-Springfield, OH	6.2	1.1	23	0.37
Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, PA	6.6	1.1	5	0.10
Baton Rouge, LA	6.2	1.0	36	0.49
Birmingham, AL	5.3	1.0	45	0.53
Memphis, TN/AR/MS	4.9	0.9	67	0.51
Jackson, MS	2.7	0.6	47	0.52
Non-metro areas	2,367,456	1.9	20	0.35

* Diversity score is defined as one minus the sum of squared proportions of the population in each racial or ethnic group. A score of zero would mean that all residents belong to just one group; a score of 0.75 would mean equal proportions of the population in each of four groups.

Source: Authors' calculations based on the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), 2003.

more than a quarter of all U.S.-born Asians and Latinos marry someone of a different racial background, mostly whites. These figures are even higher among younger Asians and Latinos and are likely to increase in future generations.

The rise in intermarriage has led to a visible and growing multiracial population that could easily account for one-fifth of the nation's population by the year 2050. Nowhere are these changes more apparent than in the West, where 40 percent of the multiracially identified population resides, most prominently in California—the state that leads the country with the highest level of multiracial reporting and the only state with a multiracial population exceeding 1 million. Multiracial individuals account for 5 percent of California's population, or one in 21 Californians, compared with one in every 40 for the country as a whole. Among Californians under the age of 18, one in every 14 (7 percent) reports a multiracial identification. At first glance, these statistics appear to indicate that boundary crossing is becoming more common and that racial divides are fading for all groups. But intermarriage and multiracial identification are fairly high among Asians and Latinos (especially among the younger cohort), and are far less common among blacks.

Before assessing the implications of these patterns for America's color lines, it is crucial to know how one interprets the findings on intermarriage and multiracial identification for Latinos and Asians. For instance, given the perspective that Latinos and Asians are racialized minorities, and thus fall closer to blacks than whites along some scale of social disadvantage, then the high levels of interracial marriage and multiracial identification among these groups suggest that boundaries are not only fading for these groups but also for all nonwhites, including blacks. Such a conclusion would support the sanguine view that the long-standing black-white divide is breaking down and that racial prejudice and boundaries are fading for all groups. However, this interpretation risks attributing signs of integration to blacks that are in fact more the province of Latinos and Asians, thus inviting overly optimistic conclusions about the breadth of boundary dissolution.

If, on the other hand, Latinos and Asians are better represented as new immigrants whose disadvantage stems from not having had sufficient time to join the economic and social mainstreams, then their high levels of intermarriage and multiracial reporting signal that their experiences may be different from those of blacks altogether. Such a conclusion would support a more pessimistic view that the experiences and situations of Latinos and Asians do not imply similar improvements and results among blacks. That is, what may at first suggest a dissolution of color lines for all racial and ethnic groups may simply constitute less rigid boundaries among new immigrant groups transitioning toward incorporation. This distinction is critical, and helps to differentiate whether color lines are shifting for all racial and ethnic minorities or whether they are mainly accommodating new nonblack immigrant groups.

Our analysis affirms that racial boundaries are not eroding at the same pace for all groups. The nature of these divergent patterns indicates that the color line is less rigid for Latinos and Asians. Although the color line may be shifting for blacks, this change is occurring more slowly, placing Asians and Latinos closer than blacks to whites and demonstrating the tenacity of the black-white divide. In essence, while boundary crossing may be rising, and the color line fading, a shift has yet to occur toward a pattern of unconditional boundary crossing or a declining significance of race for all groups.

It appears that Latinos and Asians may be accepted as almost white or even white, and consequently may participate in a new color line that is still somewhat exclusionary of blacks, especially if they do not have college degrees. If much of America's racial history has revolved around who was white and who was not, it is important to strive to ensure that the next phase in this story does not revolve around who is black and who is not. While rising rates of intermarriage and patterns of multiracial identification clearly indicate that immigration is breaking down barriers, the fact that boundary dissolution is neither uniform nor unconditional indicates little basis for complacency about the degree to which prospects are good for all racial and ethnic groups in America.

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Who Chooses to Choose Two?

By Sonya M. Tafoya, Hans Johnson, and Laura E. Hill

Prior to Census 2000, most Americans were accustomed to selecting a single racial response on state and federal forms. But with an ever more racially diverse population and an increasing rate of intermarriage, the U.S. Census Bureau created a new format for the race question on the 2000 Census: Respondents could now mark one or more races. This change was welcomed by some as an overdue acknowledgement of their multiracial identity and criticized by others who feared its consequences.

In the 1990 Census, even though the instructions indicated that only one box should be checked, almost half a million people filled in more than one race box. After the 1990 Census, estimates of the U.S. multiracial population ranged as high as 6.6 percent, so that many scholars anticipated that at least 4 percent to 6 percent of the American population would be counted as multiracial in 2000. In the end, Census 2000 counted only about 7 million multiracial people, about 2.4 percent of the population. Clearly, not all who could have claimed a multiracial identity chose to. Yet, despite their relatively small share of the total population, multiracial Americans generated a great deal of interest. Given the significance of race in America, understanding this new population is relevant not only because it builds on our historical understanding, but also because it provides insight into the future significance of race in America.

The multiracial Americans counted in Census 2000 are not aptly described with any one summary of their characteristics. To understand this group we must understand the specific multiracial combinations encompassed by this broad category. In this report we describe the diverse demographic, geographic, social, and economic profiles of multiracial Americans. We draw on what is well known about the social and economic status of the single-race groups and present data to show the extent to which multiracial Americans occupy a status in between that of their component single-race groups.

For some people, responses to questions of race and ethnic identity are not static. Their response to a particular inquiry about racial identity may vary with the context in which it is asked—at home or school, in the presence of others, or without observers.[1] Furthermore, racial identity can develop and change as a person matures. An individual's racial/ethnic identity can be influenced by age, family member's racial identity, friends, community composition, or even society at large.[2] Many multiracial Americans are so identified by their parents. Almost half of multiracial Americans are children. However, not all mixed-race couples choose to identify their children as multiracial. Within the family context, the racial identity of parents influences their children's racial identity. And even though intermarriage has increased substantially, the fact that some parents do not identify their children as multiracial suggests that for many of today's adults, single-race categories may be more salient.

Although the new enumeration of multiracial Americans has certainly complicated the traditional working definition of race in America, 98 percent of all Americans continue to identify themselves as only one race.[3]

History and Politics of Census Race Categories

For the first time in U.S. census history, the 2000 Census allowed residents to check more than one racial category. This change in the reporting of race is only the latest in a long history of census changes in collecting and reporting racial data. In fact, the Census Bureau has never used the same race categories for more than three consecutive censuses.

Table 1 (page 333) shows that in the very first census, in 1790, enumerators were asked to distinguish among free

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Table 1

CENSUS RACIAL CATEGORIES, 1790–2000

Year	Race values
1790-1810	Free Whites, All Other Free Persons, Slaves
1820	Free Whites, Free Colored Persons, Slaves, All Other Persons (except Indians not taxed)
1830-1840	Free Whites, Free Colored Persons, Slaves
1850	White, Black, Mulatto
1860	White, Black, Mulatto, Indian
1870-1880	White, Black, Mulatto, Chinese, Indian
1890	White, Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon, Chinese, Japanese, Indian
1900	White, Black, Chinese, Japanese, Indian
1910	White, Black, Mulatto, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Other
1920	White, Black, Mulatto, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Hindu, Korean, Indian, Other
1930	White, Negro, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Hindu, Korean, Mexican, Other
1940	White, Negro, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Hindu, Korean, Other
1950	White, Negro, American Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Other race
1960	White, Negro, American Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Part Hawaiian, Aleut, Eskimo, Other
1970	White, Negro or Black, American Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Korean, Aleut, Eskimo, Other
1980	White, Black or Negro, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, American Indian, Asian Indian, Hawaiian, Guamanian, Samoan, Eskimo, Aleut, Other
1990	White, Black or Negro, American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, Asian Indian, Samoan, Guamanian, Other Asian or Pacific Islander, Other race
2000	White; Black, African American, or Negro; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian Indian; Chinese; Filipino; Japanese; Korean; Vietnamese; Other Asian; Native Hawaiian; Guamanian or Chamorro; Samoan; Other Pacific Islander; Some other race

whites, other free persons, and slaves. And since 1850, enumerators were provided with instructions for properly assigning race. For example, in 1860 enumerators were instructed to "insert the letter 'B' in all cases where the person is black without admixture" and "if a mulatto, or of mixed blood, write 'M'." Over the 200-plus years of census taking, various racial categories have appeared and disappeared. For example, "free colored person" appeared as a race in 1820, but was subsumed by black and mulatto in 1850. In 1890, variations of mulatto appeared, but by 1930, Negro was added as a category and black, mulatto, and similar categories were omitted. In 1930 "Mexican" was added as a race category, but by 1940 census enumerators were given instructions to consider Mexicans white unless they were "definitely Indian or some other race other than White." By 1970, Hispanics could indicate their ethnicity on a separate question, but still had to indicate a race from the choices of white, black, Indian, Asian, or some other race. Since 1970, the dual questions of race and ethnicity have been a consistent feature on the census questionnaire.

The appearance of the multiracial option in 2000 can best be understood in reference to recent changes that occurred during and after the civil rights era.[4] The Civil Rights acts of 1964 and 1968, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and many programs associated with Lyndon Johnson's Great Society program were aimed squarely at ending racial discrimination and disenfranchisement. Because racial and ethnic data was paramount for monitoring legislative compliance and allocating grants-in-aid, civil rights activists embraced racial and ethnic categorization, and looked to the census as a tool for redressing inequalities. Official recognition of racial groups by the Census Bureau in this new context both conferred political and economic advantages for racial and ethnic minority groups and raised the stakes on accurate and scientifically defensible racial statistics.

In this new context, the Census Bureau was drawn into contentious legal debates that continue to this day.[5] The debates span the issues of respondent confidentiality, differential undercount of racial minorities, reapportionment of Congress, and the working definition of race itself. In response to the 1980 and 1990 census categories, many lobbying groups began to challenge the categorization system petitioning for inclusion within a group (Native Hawaiians in the American Indian group), exclusion from a group (Arab Americans as separate from whites), establishment of new groups (multiracial advocates), and even the deletion of the race and ethnic questions altogether. In an attempt to resolve many of the problems associated with the 1980 and 1990 censuses, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) called for a comprehensive review of the racial and ethnic classification system that had guided the Census Bureau since 1977.

The results of this intensive review have been codified in a 1997 OMB document entitled "Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity," which outlines the following minimum race categories:

- American Indian or Alaska Native.
- Asian.

- Black or African American.
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.
- White.

The Census Bureau is the most visible agency that employs these categories, although all federal data collection efforts must comply with OMB guidelines. Unlike other federal agencies, however, the Census Bureau also employs the residual category "some other race" to capture respondents who would not otherwise respond to the minimum standard categories. Under its exemption, the Census Bureau included the "some other race" category on the 1980, 1990, and 2000 censuses. In 1990, the Census Bureau tallied more than 250,000 respondents who used the Other race category to express their multiracial heritage. These respondents either wrote in several race categories, or used terms such as "Eurasian." Because Census 2000 allowed respondents to check one or more races, the "some other race" category is no longer the preferred category for multiracial respondents, but rather is more commonly used by those of Hispanic origin.

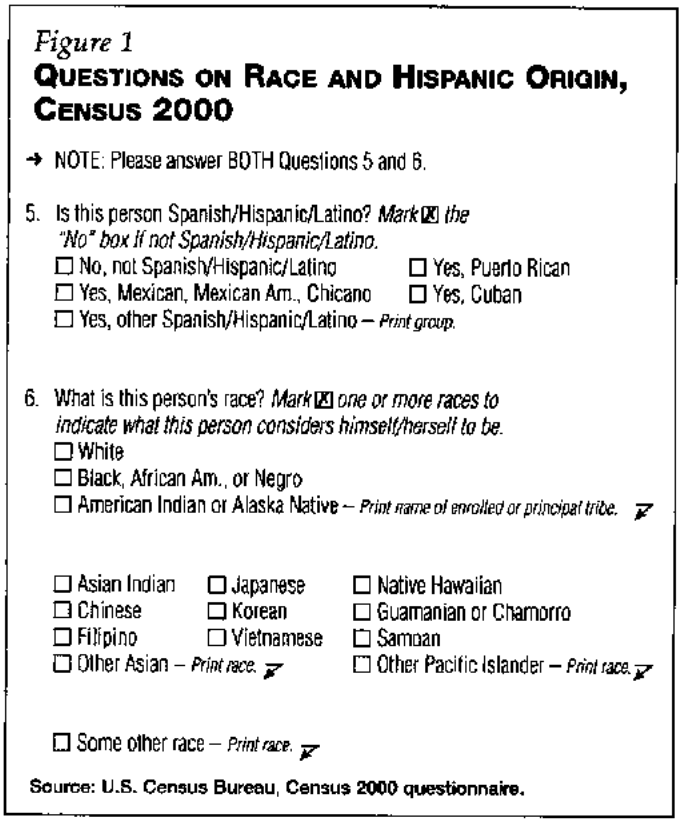
As in the past, the OMB and consequently the Census Bureau view Hispanic origin as an ethnic identity rather than a race. Collection of data on Americans of Hispanic ethnicity is required to fulfill the obligations of Public Law 94-311, passed in 1976 to remedy discrimination suffered by those of Hispanic origin. The result of this distinction is a data collection method that consists of two related questions: an Hispanic ethnicity question and a race question. Hispanics may identify with any racial group or combination of groups.

Given that race and ethnic data are used to monitor civil rights, and that much of the legislation predates the 2000 Census with its proliferation of multiracial categories, the OMB has issued a set of rules for the purposes of civil rights monitoring and enforcement:

- Responses in the five single-race categories are not allocated.
- Responses that combine one minority race and white are allocated to the minority race.
- Responses that include two or more minority races are allocated as follows: If the enforcement action is in response to a complaint, allocate to the race that the complainant alleges the discrimination was based on. If the enforcement action requires assessing disparate impact or discriminatory patterns, analyze the patterns based on alternative allocations to each of the minority groups.

Although the OMB outlines five minimum race categories, there were actually 15 boxes on the census form (see Figure 1). For example, Asians are subdivided into Asian Indians, Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Koreans, Vietnamese, and Other Asians. While there is no indication on the census form that someone who selects both

Figure 1
QUESTIONS ON RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN, CENSUS 2000



→ NOTE: Please answer BOTH Questions 5 and 6.

5. Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino? *Mark ☒ the "No" box if not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.*
   ☐ No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino
   ☐ Yes, Puerto Rican
   ☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
   ☐ Yes, Cuban
   ☐ Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino – *Print group.*

6. What is this person's race? *Mark ☒ one or more races to indicate what this person considers himself/herself to be.*
   ☐ White
   ☐ Black, African Am., or Negro
   ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native – *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.*

   ☐ Asian Indian
   ☐ Japanese
   ☐ Native Hawaiian
   ☐ Chinese
   ☐ Korean
   ☐ Guamanian or Chamorro
   ☐ Filipino
   ☐ Vietnamese
   ☐ Samoan
   ☐ Other Asian – *Print race.*
   ☐ Other Pacific Islander – *Print race.*

   ☐ Some other race – *Print race.*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 questionnaire.

Filipino and Japanese will not be tabulated as multiracial, such respondents are officially tabulated as monoracial Asian. If someone checked the boxes indicating Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, and Other Pacific Islander, they would not be counted as belonging to four race groups, but rather would be tallied as monoracial Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

For official use, only combinations of the broad race categories count in multiracial tabulations. Based on the five broad groups plus the additional "some other race" residual group, there are six possible monoracial choices and therefore 15 unique biracial combinations, 20 unique three-race combinations, 15 four-race combinations, six five-race combinations, and one final combination of six races. All combined, there are 63 possible unique racial identities. If we consider Hispanic ethnicity and assign respondents to two categories, Hispanic or non-Hispanic, we have 126 unique race-ethnic categories (63 race categories multiplied by two ethnicity categories).

Finally, the questionnaire does not specify how write-in responses will be treated. For example, if a respondent writes an ethnic identity in the space below "some other race" (SOR), that response is often recoded into a specific race group (see Box 1, page 335). The rule employed by the Census Bureau is that if at least 90 percent of an ethnic group typically identifies with a single-race group, the write-in ethnic response will be recoded as a standard race category. Thus, a write-in response of "Jamaican" would be coded as black or African Ameri-

Box 1

ABBREVIATIONS AND USAGE

In this report, the following terms and symbols are used:

White = white
Black = black or African American
Asian = Asian
AIAN = American Indian and Alaska Native
NHOPI = Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
SOR = Some Other Race

Multiracial = Person belonging to more than one of the above six groups.
Biracial = Person belonging to two of the above six groups

Hispanic or Latino are used interchangeably.

A "+" sign denotes individuals identified as more than one race. For example, a person who marked the box for white and the box for Asian is referred to in this report as Asian+white.

A "/" denotes the racial identification of married couples. For example, a couple in which one partner is black and the other partner is Asian is described as a black/Asian couple. If one partner is multiracial, Asian+black, and the other partner is white, the couple is described as Asian+black/white.

can because 90 percent of Jamaicans typically identify as black. On the other hand, a write-in response of "Mexican" would be coded as SOR, since fewer than 90 percent of Mexicans identify as white. This rule explains the preponderance of Hispanics in the SOR category, a topic addressed later in this report.

WHO ARE MULTIRACIAL AMERICANS?

Who are the 6.8 million Americans who were counted as more than one race in Census 2000? Overwhelmingly they are Americans who identified as members of two racial groups (see Table 2). The most common combinations are:

- SOR+white, non-Hispanic (SOR+white).
- SOR+white, Hispanic (SOR+white, Hispanic).
- AIAN+white, non-Hispanic (AIAN+white).
- Asian+white, non-Hispanic (Asian+white).
- Black+white, non-Hispanic (black+white).

It is important to place these findings in the context of the American population as a whole. According to the 2000 Census, the share of the nation's population that identified as non-Hispanic white was 69 percent, Hispanics (of any race) and non-Hispanic blacks each

Table 2

TOTAL POPULATION BY NUMBER OF RACES REPORTED IN CENSUS 2000

Number of Races	Total	% of total	% of total two+ races
Total Population	281,421,906	100.0	(X)
One race	274,595,678	97.6	(X)
Two+ races	6,826,228	2.4	100.0
Two races	6,368,075	2.3	93.3
Three races	410,285	0.1	6.0
Four races	38,408	<0.1	0.6
Five races	8,637	<0.1	0.1
Six races	823	<0.1	<0.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Redistricting Data Summary File: table PL1.

made up about 12 percent of the population; Asians represented nearly 4 percent; and the remaining 3 percent identified as American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (NHOPI), or SOR. Given that the nation has nearly six times as many non-Hispanic whites as it does Hispanics or blacks, it should not be surprising that most (about four-fifths) biracial responses included white as one of the racial choices.[6] This preponderance of biracial Americans who identify as white and another race is a direct result of the relative population sizes of the single-race groups.

Of the 15 possible biracial combinations, only two—SOR+white and AIAN+white—have population counts over 1 million (see Table 3). The racial combination most frequently selected is that of SOR+white (2.2 million respondents, or 35 percent of all biracial responses). The inclusion of the SOR category among the single-race categories allows the Census Bureau to enumerate those who do not identify with the standard racial categories. The majority of those who selected SOR alone were Latino.[7] Thus, in trying to understand the SOR+white biracial group, one confronts several issues. First, two-thirds of these respondents also identified as ethnically Latino. And in a separate census question that elicits ancestry, the non-Latino third of this group reported an array of different ancestries including Greek, Italian, Irish, Russian, Ukrainian, Albanian, Egyptian, Iranian, and Arab. For these respondents, their identity may reflect mixed parentage, an understanding of race at odds with census categories, or an ancestry that is nominally white but an experience in the society at large as only marginally white.

The second most frequent racial combination was AIAN+white (1 million respondents). Unlike the SOR+white respondents, this group was almost entirely non-Hispanic (90 percent). The high rates of out-marriage among AIAN and the difficulties in determining legitimate American Indian identity have been well documented.[8] In this case, the addition of a biracial group of AIAN+whites compounds the level of difficulty in classifying American Indians.

The two next-largest groups—Asian+white and black+white—each have counts greater than half a million but less than 1 million. These two combinations are made up primarily of non-Hispanics. Ninety-three percent of all Asian+white respondents were non-Hispanic as were 89 percent of black+white respondents. These two groups account for about one-quarter of the biracial population. These groups are much more likely to arise from intermarriage of the standard single-race categories than SOR+white Hispanics.

There are six groups whose populations are between 100,000 and 500,000, and together they account for nearly 20 percent of the entire biracial population: SOR+black, Asian+SOR, AIAN+black, NHOPI+Asian, NHOPI+white, and Asian+black. The first two combinations have the largest share of Latinos: the SOR+black group is nearly 40 percent Latino, and the Asian+SOR group is one-quarter Latino. The vast majority of the respondents in the remaining combinations are non-Latinos (more than 89 percent).

The last few biracial combination groups make up less than 5 percent of the entire biracial population, with fewer than 100,000 people in each category. The two biracial categories that include SOR, AIAN+SOR and NHOPI+SOR, each have a large share of Latinos, 77 percent and 68 percent respectively.

Even though fewer than 500,000 Americans (or less than 0.2 percent of the population) were enumerated as members of three or more racial groups, some triracial groups merit attention. Whereas national figures show that 93.3 percent of multiracial respondents are biracial, in the state of Hawaii 68 percent of multiracial people are biracial, and 28 percent are triracial. In fact, slightly more residents of Hawaii answered that they were NHOPI+Asian+white (55,189) than answered that they were biracial Asian+white (55,028). Of the nearly 90,000 NHOPI+Asian+white respondents counted nationally, 62 percent resided in Hawaii. The only other triracial group that numbered over 50,000 was the AIAN+black+white group. Nationally they numbered 112,207. About 17 percent of this group resided in California, 9 percent in New York, and 10 percent in Ohio and Michigan combined. Less than 1 percent of multiracial Americans identified as of four or more races.

In the remainder of this report, we focus on the five most common biracial combinations.

Demographic Characteristics

To understand multiracial Americans, we need to examine their demographic characteristics, which vary by the particular racial combination. Multiracial and monoracial Americans have similar sex ratios. Forty-nine percent of the monoracial population is male, while 50 percent of the multiracial population is male. There are no appreciable differences for any of the major biracial combinations.

The foreign-born are somewhat more likely to identify as more than one race than are the U.S.-born (6 percent versus 2 percent). However, this appears to be due largely to the popularity of the SOR+white combination among both non-Hispanics and Hispanics (see Table 4, page 337). For all other biracial combinations, the percent foreign-born is much lower than we might expect based on the percent foreign-born found among each single-race group.

Early analysis of the multiracial population has shown that multiracial individuals, as a group, are

Table 3

BIRACIAL POPULATION BY HISPANIC ETHNICITY, 2000

	Biracial		Non-Hispanic, biracial		Hispanic, biracial		Hispanic share of total biracial population
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	
Population of two races	6,368,075	100.0	4,257,110	100.0	2,110,965	100.0	33.1
SOR+white	2,206,251	34.6	731,719	17.2	1,474,532	69.9	66.8
AIAN+white	1,082,683	17.0	969,238	22.8	113,445	5.4	10.4
Asian+white	868,395	13.6	811,240	19.1	57,155	2.7	6.5
Black+white	784,764	12.3	697,077	16.4	87,687	4.2	11.1
SOR+black	417,249	6.6	255,966	6.0	161,283	7.6	38.6
SOR+Asian	249,108	3.9	185,754	4.4	63,354	3.0	25.4
AIAN+black	182,494	2.9	168,022	3.9	14,472	0.7	7.9
NHOPI+Asian	138,802	2.2	129,130	3.0	9,672	0.5	6.9
NHOPI+white	112,964	1.8	100,702	2.4	12,262	0.6	10.8
Asian+black	106,782	1.7	99,513	2.3	7,269	0.3	6.8
AIAN+SOR	93,842	1.5	21,477	0.5	72,365	3.4	77.1
AIAN+Asian	52,429	0.8	43,052	1.0	9,377	0.4	17.8
NHOPI+SOR	35,108	0.6	11,288	0.3	23,820	1.1	67.8
NHOPI+black	29,876	0.5	27,479	0.6	2,397	0.1	8.0
NHOPI+AIAN	7,328	0.1	5,453	0.1	1,875	0.1	26.0

Source: Authors' tabulations of Census 2000 Redistricting Data Summary File.

Table 4

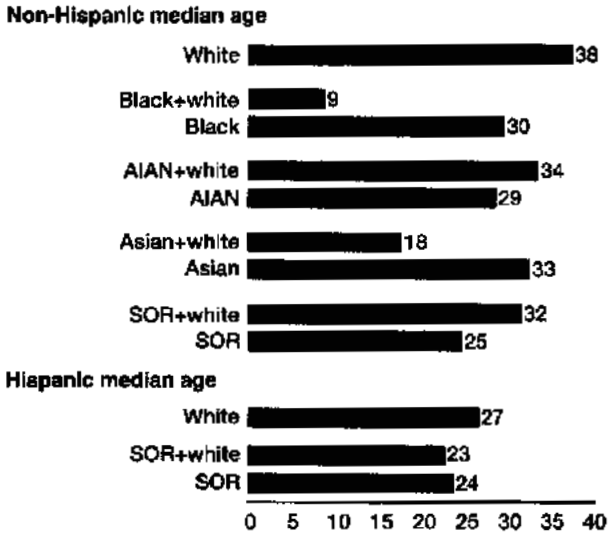
PERCENT FOREIGN-BORN FOR BIRACIAL AND MONORACIAL GROUPS, 2000

Group	Percent foreign-born
Non-Hispanic	
White	4
Black+white	2
Black	5
AIAN+white	1
AIAN	1
Asian+white	19
Asian	69
SOR+white	42
SOR	31
Hispanic	
White	39
SOR+white	37
SOR	44

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

Figure 2

MEDIAN AGE OF BIRACIAL AND MONORACIAL GROUPS, 2000



Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

younger than their monoracial counterparts. Of the 6.8 million Americans who reported more than one race, 42 percent were under the age of 18 compared to only 25 percent for monoracial Americans.[9] Figure 2 shows the median age for the most common biracial groups as well as their corresponding monoracial groups.

The most striking age difference is the relative youth of black+white Americans as compared with either monoracial blacks or monoracial whites, suggesting that multiracial identities among this group are being taken up primarily by the very young, perhaps chosen by their parents. Asian+white biracial individuals are also quite young relative to both white and Asian monoracial groups. Both AIAN+white and SOR+white median ages are in between those of each monoracial groups. Hispanics as a group are relatively young, and because SOR+white Hispanics are the largest multiracial group (1.5 million), they contribute strongly to the overall age structure of the broader multiracial population. Age differences by gender within each biracial category are few and small, but females appear to be the same age or a year or two older on average than their male multiracial counterparts. These differences are examined more closely in age and sex profiles for the biracial groups whose median age differs dramatically from their component monoracial groups (see Figure 3).

Black+white individuals are significantly younger than either single-race whites or blacks, and much younger than the other multiracial groups. Asian+white individuals are also significantly younger than Asians or whites. For AIAN+white and SOR+white groups, age and sex profiles appear to be an average of the component monoracial group age profiles.

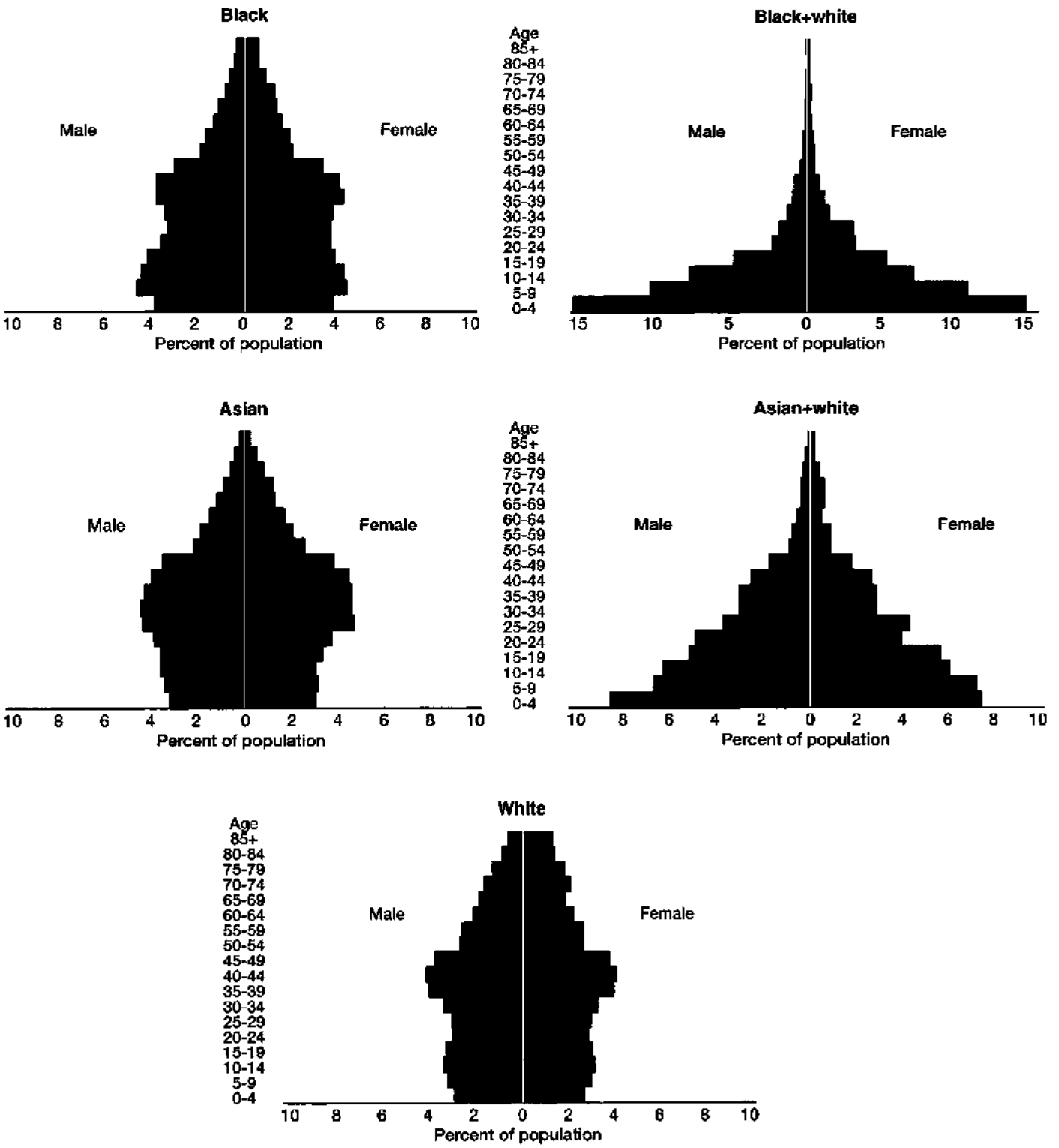
Reasons for the relative youth of the multiracial population are explored later in this report. However, two merit note here. First, to the extent that interracial couples are more common recently, the biracial offspring of these couples will be relatively young. Second, younger individuals might feel less constrained by racial boundaries that have historically forced people to choose a single racial identity. For example, multiracial black/white marriages have increased over time, making the pool of potential black+white individuals larger now than ever before. In addition, younger black+white individuals may be more likely to identify as such than older cohorts, who are more likely to choose only one race.

The relative youth of the multiracial population raises an important caveat about census data collection. Since data are collected by household, generally one person in each home provides information on all household members. Thus, while 42 percent of the multiracial population may be under the age of 18, the probability that these youths actually filled out the census form themselves is exceedingly low. Census follow-up studies have shown that less than 4 percent of those who fill out the census are 18 or younger. It is a parent, and likely a mother, who completes the census form for minors in the household.[10]

The multiracial population is not evenly distributed across the nation. The greatest share (40 percent) of multiracial Americans lives in the West. Another 27 percent live in the South, 18 percent in the Northeast, and the remaining 15 percent in the Midwest.[11]

Figure 3

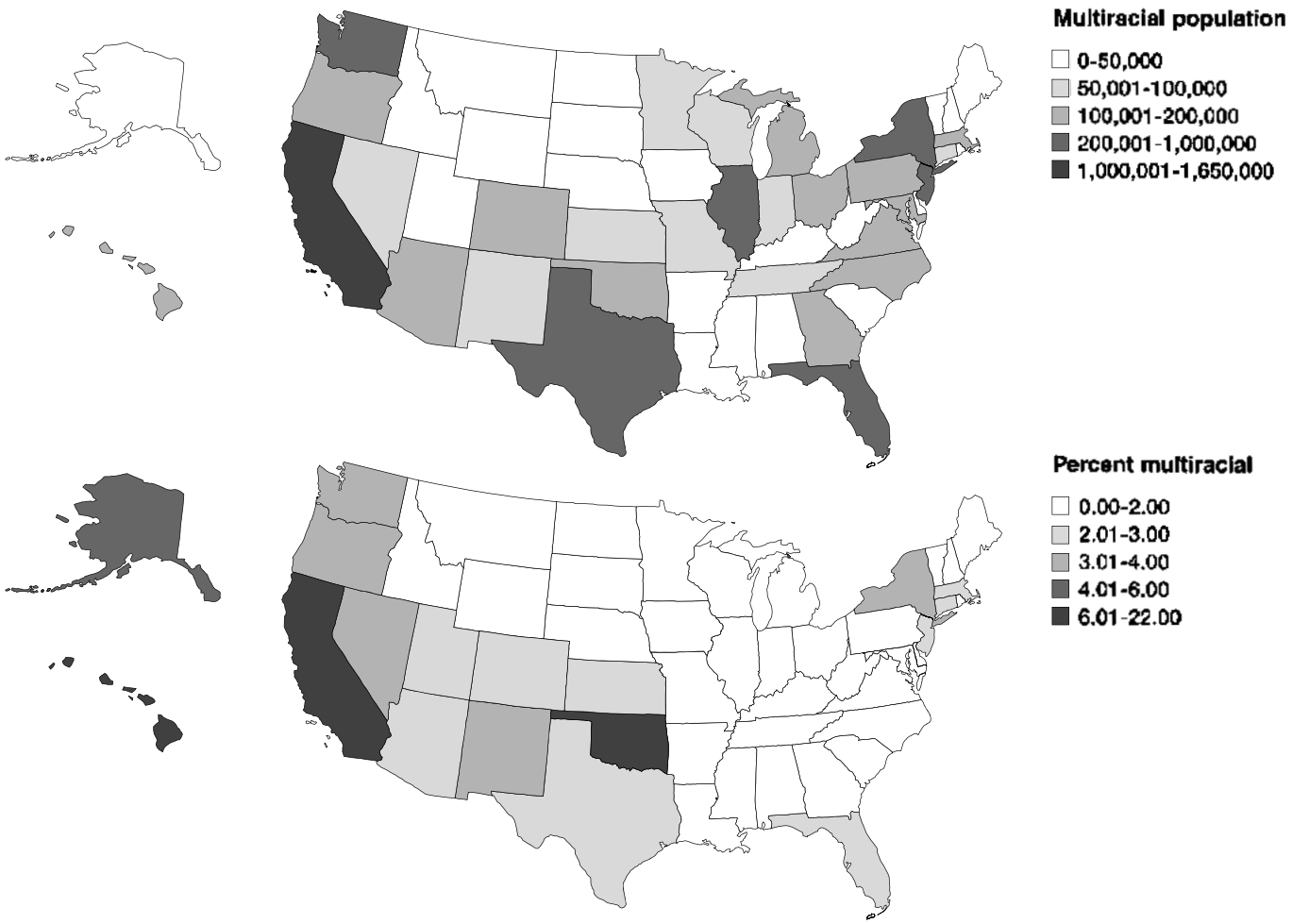
AGE AND SEX PROFILES FOR SELECTED MONORACIAL AND BIRACIAL GROUPS, 2000



Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

Figure 4

MULTIRACIAL POPULATION BY STATE, 2000



Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

Although Hawaii has the largest share of multiracial persons (21 percent), the more populous states have the largest numbers of multiracial persons (see Figure 4). The three most populous states, California, Texas, and New York, each have more than a half-million multiracial residents. California is the only state with over 1 million multiracial residents. Hawaii, Illinois, New Jersey, and Washington all have greater than 200,000 multiracial residents.

Because one-third of all biracial Americans are also Hispanic, the geographic distribution of Hispanics has an influence on the overall distribution of biracial Americans. Over one-third (37 percent) of biracial Americans in the West are also Latinos. This differs most notably from the Midwest, where only 19 percent of biracial Americans are also Latino.

Historically, answers to the race question have been complicated for Latinos, and an examination of their multiracial combinations at the regional level sheds light on this complexity. The choice of SOR+white is the most common biracial response, and is particularly common in the West (see Table 5). The second most-common biracial combination for Latinos is the SOR+black combination. It is most common in the Northeast, where Puerto Rican and Dominican national origin groups compose a large share of the regional Latino population (53 percent). Puerto Ricans and Dominicans are more likely than other national origin groups to identify as racially black.[12]

Evidence from California suggests that people who identify as multiracial are less likely to live in ethnic and immigrant enclaves than in other kinds of neighborhoods.[13] Because many immigrants arrive in the United States already married, or speak a language other than English, marriage with a co-ethnic is a more common occurrence for the foreign-born than the U.S.-born. In metropolitan areas of the nation, multiracial Americans are the least segregated of any minority group.

Table 5

MOST COMMON BIRACIAL COMBINATIONS FOR U.S. HISPANICS, BY REGION, 2000

Hispanic combination	Percent distribution				
	Northeast	Midwest	South	West	Total
SOR+white	16	10	28	46	1,493,986
SOR+black	40	9	26	25	161,643
AIAN+white	9	13	21	57	110,721
AIAN+SOR	13	8	25	54	83,125
Asian+SOR	13	5	21	61	80,937
Black+white	41	14	22	24	80,348
Asian+white	13	6	19	61	49,917
Other 2-race combination	21	8	21	50	82,168

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

Socioeconomic Characteristics

If biracial Americans were simply a combination of their monoracial counterparts, we would expect their socioeconomic characteristics to fall between those measured for their monoracial counterparts. For most measures and groups, this is the case.

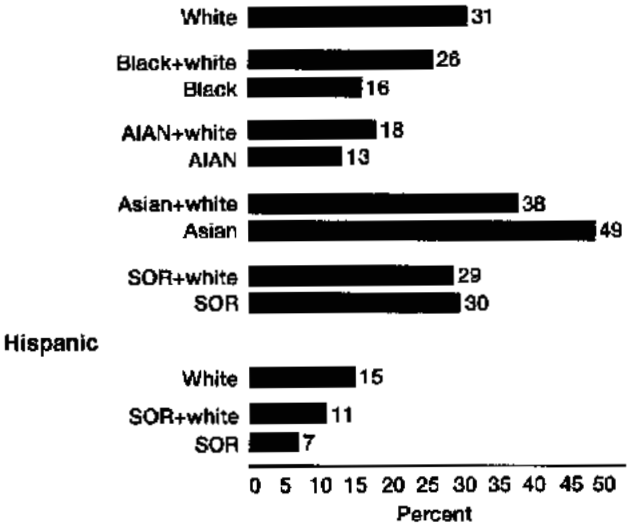
The level of educational attainment for most biracial American adults is intermediate when compared with their component monoracial groups (see Figure 5). While this is generally true at all levels of education, Figure 5 shows only the percent in each group with a bachelor's or higher degree.

For example, the largest non-Hispanic biracial combination is AIAN+white, and in comparison to whites alone and AIAN alone, the biracial group is intermediate. The percentage of these populations with a bachelor's or higher degree is 31 percent for whites, 18 percent for AIAN+whites, and 13 percent for AIAN. The same pattern prevails when comparing white, black+white, and black groups. Whites show the highest educational attainment, black+white biracials are intermediate, and the black group has the lowest educational attainment. In the comparison of whites with Asian+whites and Asians, the biracial groups are again intermediate; however, the monoracial Asian group has the highest level of educational attainment, while whites have the lowest educational attainment of the three groups.

The final two sets of bars in Figure 5 show comparisons of whites with SOR+white and monoracial SORs. The first comparison shows that non-Hispanic SOR+whites do not exhibit a clear pattern relative to either monoracial group. But among Hispanics, those who identify as white have the highest educational attainment, those who identify as SOR have the lowest educational attainment, and those who identify as Hispanic SOR+white are intermediate in their educational attainment.

Figure 5

BIRACIAL AMERICANS WITH A BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER DEGREE, AGES 25–54, 2000



Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

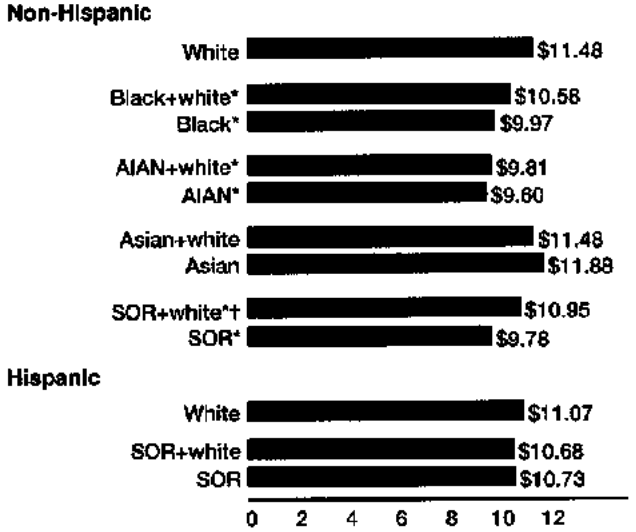
In comparisons of hourly wages, we restrict our analysis to males only since their labor force histories are generally continuous, while those of women are often punctuated by interruptions in labor force participation due to childbearing. The general absence of labor force interruptions among males makes the modeling and interpretation of results more straightforward.

In this analysis, we limit the sample to U.S.-born men, ages 25 to 54, who were neither in the military nor enrolled in school and worked full-time 40 or more weeks in the prior year. Because the age structure and educational attainment levels vary considerably among each race/ethnic group and combinations of groups, hourly wages are estimated after controlling for age, educational attainment, and region of the country.

Once age, educational attainment, and region were controlled for, black+white biracial men's wages were not significantly different from black-alone men's wages, but were significantly lower than white-alone men's wages (see Figure 6, page 341). Likewise, Aisan+white men's wages and Hispanic SOR+white men's wages were not significantly different from their monoracial men's component groups. AIAN+white biracial men's wages were significantly less than white men's wages, but not significantly different from American Indian men's wages. For biracial men who identified as non-Hispanic SOR+white, wages were significantly higher than those of non-Hispanic men who identified as SOR, but significantly lower than those who identified as white alone. These differences reflect many factors, including but not limited to employment discrimination. For example, a biracial man

Figure 6

ESTIMATED AVERAGE HOURLY WAGES FOR U.S.-BORN MEN, 2000



Note: These wage estimates are based on a statistical model that controls for differences in age and education between groups. The estimates above are for a 25-year-old high school graduate living in the West. Statistically significant differences between wages for a group and whites are denoted by an asterisk (*), and between a multiracial group and a monoracial group by a cross (†).

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

who appears "very white" might be seen as white by employers, and thereby benefit. Other sources of wage differentials between the groups could arise from school quality or major, work history, and local labor market effects.

Political Attitudes and Participation

While several groups advocated for recognition in the 2000 census, without a doubt multiracial groups were the most successful. Does this recognition reflect an engaged and highly political population? Because the census does not include questions about political participation or beliefs, a telephone survey of 2,000 randomly selected California adults sheds light on the political views and activities of the multiracial population.[14] In addition to being asked to identify themselves as belonging to one of the standard race categories, the survey respondents were also asked to indicate if they had ever identified as mixed race. Of the 2,000 surveyed adults, approximately 14 percent indicated that they had "ever identified" as multiracial. For these individuals, we know not only if they have ever identified as multiracial, but also with which race they primarily identify when forced to choose just one.

Using the survey results to compare multiracial adults to monoracial adults, there are few differences in political attitudes and participation. Those small differences that do stand out tend to suggest that the multiracial population is slightly more likely to be registered as Democrats and Independents, less likely to be registered Republicans, more likely to not be registered at all, and less likely to say that they "always" or "nearly always" vote than are adults who have never identified as multiracial. These small differences do not suggest that the multiracial population is dramatically different in any way than the monoracial population.

At the national level, the Kaiser Family Foundation conducted a similar study in which 1,709 adults were surveyed.[15] In this survey, the results were similar to those in California. They found that biracial adults (here defined to be those with parents of different races, 169 adults in total) were slightly more likely to be Democrats, less likely to be Republicans, and less likely to be registered to vote.

Returning to the California survey, we examine the association between multiracial identity and two indicators of political participation. We examine party affiliation and self-reported voter participation, holding age, education level, and nativity constant. The multiracial population is not uniform in their political views or their political participation. While mixed-race individuals are slightly less likely to be registered Republicans, the greatest variation occurs between the different monoracial groups. For example, blacks who have "ever" identified as multiracial are more similar to monoracial blacks than to other multiracial groups.

When asked how often they vote, most respondents answered "always" or "nearly always." Relative to their monoracial counterparts, multiracial respondents were slightly less likely to answer "always" or "nearly always." However, these differences were not statistically significant. In general, rather than being a politically engaged force, multiple-race individuals in this survey were not more likely to vote or unified in their party affiliation. While the respondents in this survey were slightly more likely to be liberal leaning overall, these differences were hardly universal.

MULTIRACIAL IDENTITY FORMATION

The formation of a multiracial identity takes place within the broader historical context of race and ethnic ideas in the United States. The significance of race in society has changed over time and racial boundaries have become more blurred. These changes occur not only as the population composition changes, but also as political, social, and cultural attitudes evolve. For example, some changes occur as new immigrants arrive with different concepts of race and ethnicity. Increased intermarriage

also leads to changes in the racial composition of the population. Political uses of racial data and purposes for collection of data have also changed across time, from primarily serving as a means of exclusion to more recently serving as a means of inclusion. Within this larger context, families and broader social networks influence racial and ethnic identity formation.

Not only have racial boundaries and categories changed throughout history, but there is also considerable evidence that racial and ethnic identity can change over an individual's life course and in different contexts. Indeed, the Census Bureau's own validation study found that just six months later, some 40 percent of the multiracial population of Census Day 2000 was identified as monoracial using the very same question. In contrast, 99 percent of the monoracial population identified with only one race when asked again in September.[16] Why do these identities change for some individuals over such a short time period?

Previous research on racial and ethnic identity suggests a role for age, particular multiracial combination, family, school, neighborhood, peers, and general societal views about particular races or ethnicities. Some combinations of multiracial/ethnic identity are more consistently reported among individuals with multiple racial/ethnic backgrounds: white+Asian and white+black multiracial individuals were the most likely to be identified the same way in both the Census and the Census Quality Survey,[17] and in school and home surveys of adolescent youth.[18]

Research on ethnic identification, as distinct from racial identification, has a long tradition and informs the question of racial identity. Ancestry identification for whites changes with age: Older people are more likely to choose a single ethnic identity than are younger people, although those still living with their parents are more likely to maintain multiple ethnic identities into their late twenties.[19]

Research on adolescents' self-identification may prove to be the most informative in helping predict who might maintain a multiracial/multiethnic identity into adulthood. Harris and Sim find that the adolescent multiracial population is somewhat fluid.[20] Youth who self-identify as more than one race at school do not always identify as being more than one race at home where an interviewer poses the question, possibly in front of other family members. Their estimates of the multiracial population of adolescent youth range from 4 percent to 11 percent, depending on the context of the interview.

In families with multiple ethnic or racial backgrounds, the father's racial or ethnic identity may be a more important predictor of the child's identity than the mother's. This suggests that surname is important, not only in terms of self-identification, but also in the way in which one is perceived by society at large.[21] However, consistency of multiracial reporting is higher among multiracial adolescents who do not live with both biological parents.[22] It is possible that each parent views his or her child's identity differently.

An analysis of matched birth and death certificates for children who died prior to reaching 1 year of age found dramatic inconsistencies in racial identification. Inconsistencies among white (1 percent) and black infants (4 percent) were small in comparison with the over 40 percent of infants of other races who were classified with a different race at death than at birth.[23] In theory, immediate family members should have reported the race of the infant on both the birth and death certificate; however, the family members may be different in each case or unrelated individuals may have made the racial classification.

Among groups with large immigrant populations, language usage is clearly important in forming identity. Adolescent children of immigrants from Latin America are more likely to self-identify as Hispanic (as opposed to American or hyphenated Americans) if they have poor English skills[24] or speak Spanish.[25] Among children with one Asian and one non-Asian parent, those who use a language other than English are more likely to identify as Asian than those who do not.[26]

Community context also plays a role in determining the racial and ethnic identification of youth. Studies have shown that youth who consistently identify as Hispanic are more likely attend school with greater numbers of Hispanics, live in urban areas, and live in areas with other Hispanics.[27] Similarly, youth with one Asian parent are more likely to identify as Asian if they live in neighborhoods with high concentrations of other Asians.[28] However, the importance of neighborhood may depend on the immigrant generation.[29] Consistently identified multiracial adolescents are more likely to live in racially diverse neighborhoods, neighborhoods with a higher concentration of Hispanics, and neighborhoods with more nonpoor residents.[30] These findings do not apply universally to all multiracial combinations. Consistently self-identified black+white adolescents are more likely to live in predominantly white neighborhoods than those black+white youths who do not consistently identify as multiracial.[31] This suggests the importance of neighborhood and English-language ability in ethnic or racial identity over the life course.

The context for multiracial identification is changing with the new census choices.[32] Many people with multiracial backgrounds may have seen their new race options for the first time in April 2000 when they filled out the census form. In 2010, many more may avail themselves of the option to choose more than one race. Furthermore, discussions of the prevalence of multiracial/ethnic populations in the 2000 Census are likely to cause others who have not previously chosen a multiracial/ethnic identity to consider doing so if they are already aware of their ancestry, and may even spark

interest in learning about one's diverse ancestry. Similarly, the popularity of particular ancestries and racial identities may wax and wane over time. Many scholars have noted the increasing popularity of American Indian identification since 1960.[33] Among whites, English and Irish ethnic identifications are considerably more popular than others, such as German and Polish, among those who could claim any or all of those combinations,[34] and the population of Americans who claim Irish ancestry far exceeds those who could do so based on ancestry.[35] And particular national origin groups within the Asian category are more likely to identify as simply Asian. For example, Chinese and Japanese are more likely to also say they are Asian than those who identify ethnically as Filipino, Indian, or Korean.[36]

This report has taken the Census 2000 results at face value; however, racial identity can be fluid, and consistency varies by race category. After each recent decennial census, the Census Bureau conducts follow-up surveys to both evaluate the data quality in the current census, and to inform planning for the upcoming census. One such study, the Census Quality Survey (CQS), conducted one year after the 2000 Census, reveals much about which categories are most fluid.

Census data show that 99 percent of non-Latinos who reported one race in the census also reported one race in the CQS. For non-Latino monoracial white, black, and Asian respondents, there was an extremely high degree of consistency in racial reporting. Non-Latino white, black, and Asian Americans accounted for 85 percent of the nation's population in 2000. It is the combination of this measure of consistency as well as the sheer size of this segment that leads us to conclude that, for most Americans, standard racial categories are alive and well in the United States.

On the other hand, among non-Latinos who reported two or more races in Census 2000, only 40 percent responded by offering the same response in the CQS. Rather, 60 percent selected only one race in the CQS follow-up. The single race most often selected was white. This choice is not surprising since 75 percent of non-Latino biracial Americans identify as at least partly white.

Census 2000 showed that 48 percent of Latinos identified as white alone, 42 percent as SOR alone, and 6 percent as more than one race. With certainty one can say that white, SOR, and SOR+white are the preferred racial responses for Latinos; however, individual's responses shift considerably among these choices. Of Latinos who reported only one race in Census 2000, 94 percent also reported one race in the CQS. But the single-race choices changed for many monoracial Latinos between the two surveys. For example, among Census 2000's white Latinos, 49 percent also said they were white in the CQS, but 45 percent gave the response SOR in the CQS. Of those Latinos who said they were SOR in Census 2000, 27 percent said they were white in the CQS. Of those who selected more than one race, 70 percent selected white and SOR in Census 2000. However, of those who reported more than one race, only 22 percent also reported two or more races in the CQS. More than 29 percent selected SOR alone, and even more (43 percent) selected white alone.

Multiracial Unions and Births

Interracial unions have the potential to dramatically increase the numbers and proportion of the multiple race/ethnic population. Over time, intermarriage rates have been increasing and births to parents of different races have been increasing.

The level of out-marriage varies tremendously by race or ethnic group. American Indians, Hispanics, and Asians have the highest out-marriage rates, while blacks and whites have the lowest.[37] Within mixed-race pairings, outmarriage varies by gender as well. For example, black men are much more likely to be married to nonblacks than are black women.[38] The opposite is true for Asians; women are much more likely to marry non-Asians than are men.[39] Among the race/ethnic groups with large immigrant populations (Asians and Hispanics), out-marriage is inversely related to the number of people in the group—Hispanics and Asians in states with small populations of those groups are most likely to marry outside their group.[40] These patterns are also affected by immigrant generation. Out-marriage increases by immigrant generation for Asians and Hispanics, but declines by generation among whites and blacks (see Table 6).[41]

We consider another measure of mixed-race couples by using birth records from California. California has a relatively long history of collecting data on parents' race and ethnicity on birth records.[42] That data allow us to examine 20-year trends in multiracial births—children born to parents of different races—in one of the most diverse states in the country. From 1980 to 2000, California experienced a dramatic change in its population. In 1980, two-thirds of the state's population was non-Hispanic white, and by 2000 no racial or ethnic group represented a majority of the state's population. Over roughly the same period, the number and percentage of multiracial births in California grew tremendously. By 2001, one in every 14 births in California was to parents of different racial groups (see Figure 7).

During this time period, the percentage of multiracial births to foreign-born mothers has stayed relatively low, hovering around 4 percent or 5 percent. Foreign-born mothers are generally less likely to have a spouse or partner of a different race than U.S.-born mothers, because many women arrive in the United States already married, and even those who arrive single are less likely to marry out of their race or ethnic group due to cultural and language differences. On the

Table 6

ESTIMATED INTERMARRIAGE RATES BY POPULATION GROUP AND GENERATION, 2000–2100

Group	All	Percent intermarried by generation		
		First	Second	Third+
AIAN	40	20	30	50
Asian	20	13	34	54
Black	10	14	12	10
Hispanic	30	8	32	57
White	8	10	9	8

Source: B. Edmonston et al., "Recent Trends in Intermarriage and Immigration and Their Effects on the Future Racial Composition of the U.S. Population," in *The New Race Question: How the Census Counts Multiracial Individuals* (2002).

other hand, over the last 20 years multiracial births to U.S.-born women have risen from one in 18 to one in 11.

Group size is also an important determinant of multiracial births. Groups with relatively few members are much more likely to have spouses or partners of a different race, since by chance alone their social networks are more likely to include people of another race. In contrast, those belonging to majority groups can easily form large social networks among members of their own group. American Indians for example, represent less than 1 percent of California's population and are especially likely to have multiracial children. Seventy-six percent of AIAN mothers gave birth to multiracial children in 2001 (see Figure 8); only 6 percent of non-Hispanic white mothers gave birth to multiracial children.

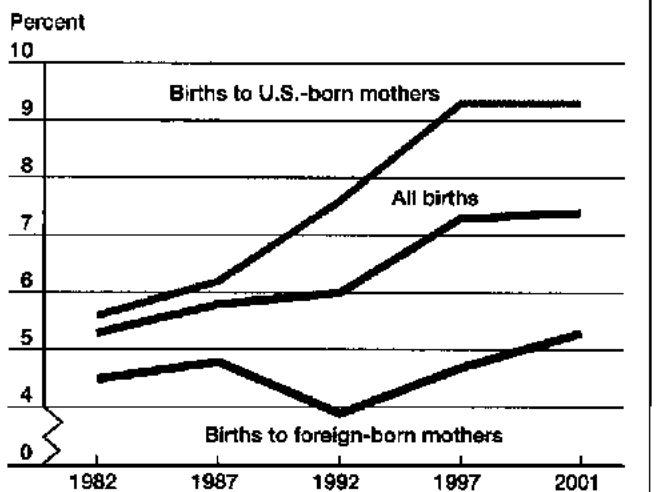
Group size is not the only determinant. Although populations of Asians and African Americans are of similar sizes in California, Asian mothers are much more likely to have a child with a spouse or partner of another race than are African American mothers. However, as shown in Figure 8, the percentage of multiracial births to black mothers has more than doubled since 1982. This pattern is consistent with patterns in intermarriage and clearly is not exclusively a function of group size. Despite these differences, multiracial births are becoming more common for parents of all races and ethnic groups in the state.

Models of Multiracial Identity

To examine the determinants of multiracial identity in the 2000 Census, we developed statistical models (regression models) to identify the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics most strongly associated with multiracial identity. We report findings from two sets of models. In the first set, we restrict our analyses to the person in each household who responded to the census (the "householder" in census terminology), and developed separate models for each multiracial group in addition to a model for all groups together. Restricting

Figure 7

MULTIRACIAL BIRTHS IN CALIFORNIA, 1982–2001

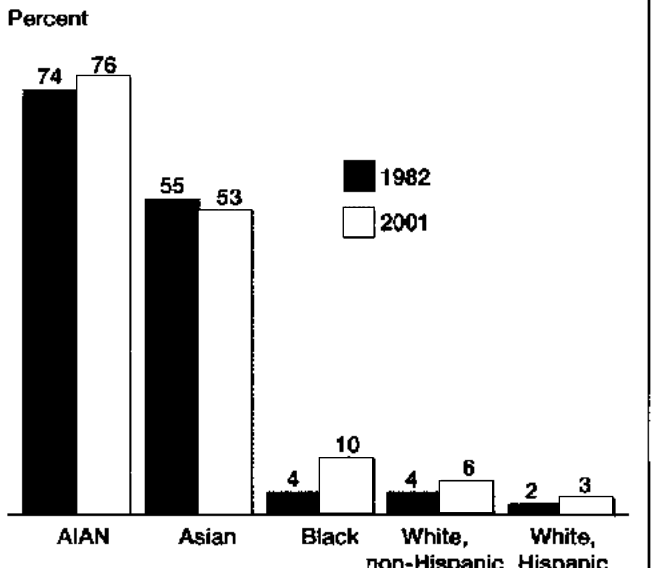


Source: Authors' tabulations of California's birth certificate data (various years).

the analysis to the person in each household who responded to the census allows us to examine how individuals self-identify, rather than how respondents identify the race of other members of the household. In the

Figure 8

MULTIRACIAL BIRTHS IN CALIFORNIA BY MOTHER'S RACE, 1982 AND 2001



Note: Predicted percentages based on authors' regression models.

Source: Authors' tabulations of California's birth certificate data (various years).

second set, we examine how parents of different races identify the race of their children, again running separate models for each multiracial group. In this set of models, we consider how and why some multiracial couples identify their children as multiracial and why some do not. Both sets of models allow us to develop a deeper understanding not only of who chooses to choose two, but also how racial identity is formed and established.

Multiracial Identity Among Householders

Even after controlling for differences in age, region of the United States, education, nativity, and gender, we find that black householders are less likely to identify as multiracial than any other group of respondents to the 2000 Census (see Table 7). That blacks would be less likely to identify as more than one race is not unexpected, especially among older segments of the population. Prior to the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, legislation sought to harden the boundary between white and black America. For example, census enumerators for the 1930 Census were instructed to classify any person of white and Negro blood as Negro, no matter how small the percentage of Negro blood. This practice became known as "the one-drop rule." Antimiscegenation laws and Jim Crow statutes were widespread and meant to separate blacks from whites.

Although the civil rights era in the United States marked a turning point in American race relations, recent studies still show that blacks are the most segregated racial group in the United States.[43] Even among those identifying with more than one race, multiracial black+whites are more segregated than other multiracial combinations. Intermarriage rates between blacks and other groups are substantially lower than among Asians, American Indians, and Latinos.

Age is also a strong predictor of multiracial identity. Multiracial respondents to the 2000 Census tend to be younger than their monoracial counterparts. This is especially the case for multiracial blacks, but it is also true for multiracial Asians and multiracial SOR+white respondents as well. Twenty-year-old black householders are nine times more likely to report a multiracial identity than 60-year-old blacks, and 20-year-old Asian householders are almost twice as likely to identify as multiracial as 60-year-old Asians. This age pattern is undoubtedly a reflection of increasing rates of intermarriage over time. Younger individuals are more likely to have been born to parents of different races than older individuals. In addition, younger adults developed their own racial identities in very different social, political, and cultural settings than older adults, and might feel less restricted by traditional monoracial categories.

Multiracial identification also varies across regions of the United States. These regional patterns illustrate the importance of group size and social networks in multiracial identity. Racial groups that are concentrated geographically and have large populations are less likely to have social contacts and networks that include people of other races. Blacks in the South are especially unlikely to report more than one race, whereas blacks in the West are the most likely to do so (six times the rate in the South). Blacks are a greater share of the population of the South than in any other region, and are least represented in the West. Thus, blacks in the West are more likely to have social networks and parents of different races than blacks in the South. In contrast, Asians and American Indians in the West are least likely to report a multiracial identity. Relatively high concentrations of American Indians and Asians in the West result in relatively low proportions of those groups identifying as multiracial. In the West, Asian populations are concentrated in Hawaii and a few large metropolitan areas. For similar reasons, American Indians in nonmetropolitan areas—places that include reservations—are less likely to identify as multiracial.

Table 7
HOUSEHOLDERS IDENTIFYING AS MULTIRACIAL, 2000

Householder	Percent
Black	0.4
American Indian	35.1
Asian	3.1
SOR, non-Hispanic	73.3
SOR, Hispanic	8.8

Note: Predicted percentages based on authors' regression models.
Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

Immigrants to the United States are less likely to identify as multiracial than U.S.-born residents. For the same reasons that intermarriage is less common among immigrants relative to the native born, so too is multiracial identity. Many immigrants come to the United States from countries with less racial diversity than the United States (many Asian countries, for example) or with racial typologies that are different from those in the United States and do not lend themselves to multiracial identity in the United States. One exception to this pattern is among non-Hispanic foreign-born individuals of other races, who are more likely to report a multiracial identity than their single-race counterparts.

Household living arrangements are another indication of the social networks and contacts that could have implications for the determination of racial identity. Among blacks, American Indians, and other-race Latinos, single mothers are less likely to identify as multiracial than women who are married. Interactions with a spouse of a different race could change an individual's own conception of race, leading her to be more likely to identify

as of more than one. Of course, it is also possible that single mothers are less likely to have parents of different races, or that multiracial women are more likely to be married, or both.

Multiracial Identity of Children of Mixed-Race Couples

Racial identity in the United States is first established within the context of families. In the census, parents report the racial identity of their children. To what extent do parents of different races identify their children as multiracial? Do patterns of multiracial reporting depend on the specific race of each parent? In the most common intermarriage case where one parent is white and one is nonwhite, does reporting depend on whether it is the mother or the father who is nonwhite?

One of the most striking results of the 2000 Census is that most interracial couples do not report their children as multiracial. Overall, we estimated that less than half (44 percent) of children living with parents of different races are identified as multiracial. The proportions are especially low for two of the largest biracial groups, with only 13 percent of American Indian/white couples and only 3 percent of Latino SOR/white couples identifying their children as biracial (see Table 8).

The likelihood of reporting a child as multiracial depends very much on the specific racial combination of the parents. Children of Asian/white and black/white interracial couples are far more likely to report their child as multiracial than American Indian/white, non-Latino SOR/white, and Latino SOR/white parents. However, even among Asian/white and black/white couples, only about half report their children as multiracial. Among black/white couples, most who do not report their children as multiracial report them as black. Among Asian/white and Latino SOR/white couples, most who do not report their children as multiracial report them as white. American Indian/white couples are about evenly divided between reporting their children as only American Indian or only white. Just as the levels of multiracial reporting vary between the racial combinations of the parents, we believe that the reasons for multiracial reporting are particular to each combination of multiracial parents.

The very low levels of multiracial reporting among American Indian/white couples may be due to the nature of the American Indian population in the United States. That population includes a large number of people of mixed ancestry with varying degrees of strength in an AIAN identity.[44] Those who strongly identify as American Indian are likely to report their children as monoracial American Indian, even if one parent is white. Most American Indian tribes allow as members individuals who have only one "full-blooded" grandparent.[45] Thus, an AIAN parent who has strong ancestral connections to a tribe is likely to report his or her child as American Indian regardless of spouse ethnicity. Those who do not strongly identify as AIAN, an apparently large and perhaps growing share of the AIAN population in the United States, and who have a child with a white spouse, report the child as white.

Table 8
CHILDREN IDENTIFIED AS MULTIRACIAL, BY PARENT'S RACE, 2000

Parent's race	Percent
Black/white parents	49
AIAN/white parents	13
Asian/white parents	52
SOR, Hispanic/white parents	3
Both parents multiracial	83

Note: Predicted percentages based on authors' regression models.
Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

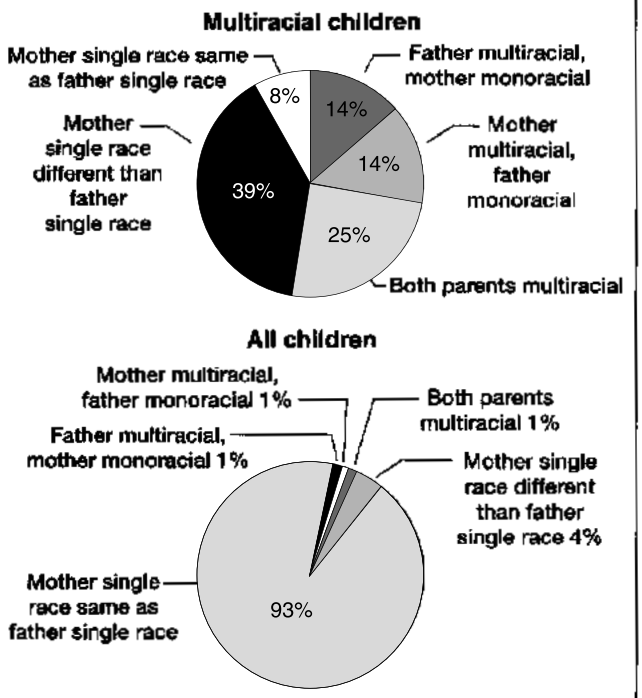
The low levels of multiracial reporting among Latino mixed-race SOR/white couples can be attributed to the prominence of Latino identity rather than racial identity. For many Latinos, the racial categories on the census are not meaningful. Large proportions of Latinos respond that they are SOR, and even slightly larger proportions respond that they are white. A large majority of Latinos would prefer to have "Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin" added to the list of racial categories used in the census.[46] For many Latinos, the choice between SOR and white is somewhat arbitrary. Choosing both identities for their children would be superfluous, since the Latino identity is most salient.

Couples most likely to identify their children as multiracial are those in which both parents are multiracial: 83 percent of such couples report their children to be more than one race. Although such couples are a small share of all married couples, their children represent a substantial share of all multiracial children. Indeed, 25 percent of multiracial children in the United States have parents that both identify as multiracial. In contrast, only 1 percent of all children in married-couple households have two multiracial parents (see Figure 9, page 347). Even having only one multiracial parent leads to a relatively high probability of a child being identified as multiracial. Altogether, over half of multiracial children have at least one multiracial parent.

Multiracial reporting of children is extremely uncommon among parents of the same race. Overall, only 0.3 percent of parents of the same single race identify their child as multiracial. Because the vast majority (93 percent) of children in married-couple households have two parents of the same race, even this low rate of multiracial reporting among such couples' children results in a substantial number of multiracial children (120,000 children, or 8 percent of all multiracial chil-

Figure 9

DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN BY PARENT'S RACE, 2000



Note: Restricted to children living in households with married-couple parents.

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

Table 9

PERCENT OF CHILDREN IDENTIFIED AS BIRACIAL, BY PARENT'S RACE, 2000

	Parent's race		
Children	Black/ white	AIAN/ white	Asian/ white
Overall	49	13	52
Age 1	57	11	54
Age 17	42	12	50
South U.S.	46	10	40
West U.S.	52	20	61
Mother black	41	na	na
Father black	52	na	na
Mother AIAN	na	15	na
Father AIAN	na	11	na
Mother Asian	na	na	53
Father Asian	na	na	51
Both parents college grads	54	13	58
Both parents less than h.s.	35	12	49

na = Not applicable

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

dren). Couples in which both partners are non-Hispanic SOR are the most likely to report their children as multiracial, but even among those couples only 1.5 percent of their children are identified as multiracial.

Gender also matters in the assignment of racial identity to children of mixed-race couples. Multiracial identity is more commonly selected for children of a mixed-race black/white couple if it is the father who is black rather than the mother. Black men are more likely to be married to whites than are black women.[47] If these marriage patterns continue, the population of black+white children may grow more rapidly than if there were no gender imbalance in rates of black outmarriage. The opposite pattern prevails among American Indians; multiracial identity is chosen more often if the mother in a mixed-race marriage is AIAN than if the father is AIAN.

When a multiracial identity is not chosen for the child, the father's race is more commonly selected. That is, if the father is black and the mother is white and only one race is chosen for the child, the choice is more often black than white. If the father is white and the mother is black, the choice is more often white when only one race is selected for the child. Similar results are found for Asian/white couples.

Mixed-race couples with young children are more likely to identify that child as multiracial than mixed-race couples with older children. This age pattern is especially pronounced for children with one black parent and one white parent (see Table 9). For those children, well over half of 1-year-olds are identified as multiracial black+white, whereas only 42 percent of 17-year-olds are so identified. The pattern is also found among Asian and white parents, though it is much less pronounced.

There are several reasons for this age pattern. First, parents with older children had those children many years ago when the only categories available on most forms and surveys were monoracial categories. Those parents are less likely to adopt the multiracial format for reporting their children's racial identity precisely because they have become accustomed to reporting their children as monoracial. Second, older children might be more likely to have a say in the reporting of their racial identity by their parents. Those older children might have had experiences that have led them to strongly identify with only one racial identity. Those experiences could include facing discrimination directed at a monoracial group, identifying with a set of monoracial peers, or education that has raised an individual's ethnic or cultural awareness. Third, the finding could be measurement error, as older children are less likely to be the biological child of both parents in the household.[48]

Regionally, mixed-race parents in the West are most likely to identify their child as multiracial, while those in the South are least likely to do so. Probabilities in the

Northeast and Midwest are generally midway between the low levels in the South and the high levels in the West. These differences persist even when we control for regional differences in age, parent's education, and whether or not the family lives in a metropolitan area. The pattern is particularly strong for children of an Asian/white couple and an American Indian/white couple but is also evident for black/white couples.

Why are interracial couples in the West more likely to report multiracial identity for their children and those in the South less likely to do so? Social attitudes undoubtedly play a role. Interracial couples in the West tend to live in the most socially liberal states of the West (California, Hawaii, and Washington) where social norms and histories are less pronounced than in the South. In addition, the West has lower levels of segregation of both monoracial and multiracial residents than other regions.

Finally, college-educated mixed-race couples are more likely to identify their children as multiracial than less-educated parents. More-educated parents might be more savvy with respect to census forms than other parents, and are probably more likely to have followed debates and discussions about changing racial and ethnic understandings and categories.

Because the census reports the relationship of a child to the householder and not to the householder's spouse, we cannot determine if a child is biologically related to the householder's spouse. In our sample of married parents of different races, children may be the stepchildren or adopted children of the householder's spouse, but are reported to be the biological children of the household head. Since we cannot exclude the nonbiological children of the householder's spouse, our estimates of the share of married parents of different races who identify their children as multiracial may be biased.

However, it is unlikely that the bias is large. In order to estimate the size of this bias, we assume that the same share of children are step and adopted for the spouse of the householder as for the householder (8 percent of all children of the householder).[49] A liberal estimate of the bias assumes that all multiracial children are the biological children of both parents, which would increase the overall estimate of mixed-race couples that identify their children as multiracial from 44 percent to 48 percent.

Rates and Bridges: Challenges for Data Users

Beyond the social and political dimensions of multiracial identity discussed above, changes to the federal system of race classification have major implications for social scientists and demographers who use these data. The following are two examples of challenges faced by data users.

Using Census Data to Estimate Base Populations

Many social scientists and health researchers use census data to provide denominators in the calculation of race-specific rates—including birth rates, death rates, rates of morbidity, crime rates, and arrest rates. However, combining data from one set of data with census data can be problematic, especially for multiracial individuals for whom the reporting of racial identity may not be consistent.

For example, measures of fertility for multiracial women vary depending on the data set(s) used. Administrative data from California birth records suggest that AIAN+white women have substantially higher fertility than whites. These rates are derived from a single data source, and therefore do not involve inconsistent measures of race between numerators and denominators. Measures of fertility are very different, however, when we combine birth records with census data to estimate total fertility rates in California. These results suggest that AIAN+white women in California have astonishingly low levels of fertility, with a total fertility rate of 1.0 (lower than the total fertility rate for women in any country in the world).

Of course, both results cannot be correct. It is probable that many women who identified as AIAN+white on the 2000 Census were not identified that way when they gave birth in California. Thus, combining administrative data on births with census data on populations understates fertility rates for this group.

Special care must also be taken in working with the SOR category. The census found substantially more SOR+whites than did the Census Supplementary Survey (C2SS), a survey conducted at the same time as the census. Though the content was identical in the two questionnaires, the formatting was different. In the C2SS, it was much more difficult to locate the SOR category, as it was not offset as in the census questionnaire. Overall, the C2SS places the SOR population at 10.6 million, compared to 15.2 million in the census. The number of multiracial SOR+whites among Latinos (1,468,000) was more than half again as large in the census as the C2SS (962,000), and the number of non-Latino SOR+whites was more than four times as large in the census (841,000) as in the C2SS (200,000).

Bridging Issues and Civil Rights Monitoring

Because racial categorizations between the 1990 and 2000 censuses are not consistent (with the addition of the ability to choose more than one race in 2000), ana-

lyzing changes in racial populations from one census to the next is difficult. The same problem exists in other data sets, such as the Current Population Survey, which has modified its racial and ethnic categories to allow more than one race beginning in 2003. The severity of the problem depends on how many people choose to identify as more than one race and the extent to which those people are different from monoracial respondents. For non-Latino whites, the problem is not so severe. The proportion of multiracial whites among all whites is small: less than 2 percent; and the characteristics of those multiracial whites are not so different from monoracial whites. For American Indians, the problem is severe. The most important and basic temporal measure of any population—changes in its size—is in serious doubt. The 2000 Census counted 2.1 million non-Latinos who identified only as American Indian, and 3.4 million who identified either as American Indian alone or as American Indian and another race. The higher count suggests that the American Indian population almost doubled from 1990 to 2000, while the lower count suggests the increase was only 15 percent. Characteristics of the American Indian population in the U.S., including measures of economic well-being, depend on whether we choose to include multiracial American Indians, who tend to be better educated and have higher wages than monoracial American Indians.

Demographers have devised several alternative methods of bridging categories across censuses. These methods range from counting multiracial people as fractions of persons for each race checked—for example, a black+white individual would add one-half to the black population and one-half to the white population—to counting multiracial people as whole individuals for each race checked (essentially doublecounting for biracial people).

Box 2

California's Racial Classification Initiative

California, home to the largest number of multiracial Americans and the third-highest percentage of multiracial Americans, recently voted on an initiative that would have prevented the state from classifying individuals on the basis of race and ethnicity. This was the first time citizens in any state had been asked to vote on the collection of racial and ethnic data.

The initiative, known as Proposition 54 ("Classification by Race, Ethnicity, Color, or National Origin") appeared on the Oct. 7, 2003, ballot. It would have prevented the state from using such categories for the purposes of public education, public contracting, public employment, and other government operations. The only exemptions would have been those data collection efforts needed to comply with federal law; for certain law enforcement activities; for medical research; and for the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing to collect certain race-related information through 2014.

The initiative's proponents argued that the initiative signaled America's "first step toward a color-blind society." Opponents argued that demographic information "helps us make smart choices."

California voters rejected the initiative by 64 percent to 36 percent. Support for the initiative varied substantially among California's racial and ethnic groups. According to a Los Angeles Times exit poll, 38 percent of non-Hispanic whites, 13 percent of blacks, 25 percent of Latinos, and 28 percent of Asians voted in favor of the initiative.

The Future of Race in America

There are two extreme views of the future of racial categorization in the United States. In one view, racial categories would no longer exist—the Census Bureau and other government agencies would cease to collect and disseminate data on the basis of race. Proponents of this view argue that racial categorization has no scientific basis and only serves to promote divisive identity politics. In California, this view was put to the voters in October 2003 (see Box 2). In the other extreme view, there will be an ever-expanding list of groups seeking and gaining inclusion in the federal statistical system.[50]

The 2000 Census, the first ever to allow respondents to choose more than one race, could be seen as a step toward this second view. But relatively few Americans responded as multiracial. In fact, the number who responded as multiracial was much lower than the potential number who could do so. One accounting prior to the 2000 Census suggested that between 3.1 and 6.6 percent of the U.S. population was likely to respond as multiracial, yet only 2.4 percent of the population did so.[51] Not even a majority of mixed-race couples identified their children as multiracial, and the single largest multiracial group in America is Latino SOR+white. If we exclude that group, only 1.6 percent of Americans identified as multiracial.

Race still matters in America. In particular, the divide between blacks and whites, while narrowing, is still large. With respect to wages, for example, blacks still earn significantly less than whites even after controlling for age, education, and occupation.[52] Nonetheless, racial disparities have been reduced. The collection of racial data by government agencies has allowed us to measure this improvement. Indeed, the U.S. Supreme Court has affirmed the salience of these categories, and census results show that the vast majority of Americans identify with a single race. And the government has

issued guidelines for civil rights monitoring that largely rely on monoracial categories.

The large and growing Latino population is just as likely as the multiracial population to pose a challenge to the current racial paradigm. Many Latinos do not identify with the traditional monoracial categories and place themselves in the category that the Census Bureau uses to collect residual racial responses. Indeed, a Current Population Survey of racial identities found that a large majority of Latinos would prefer that Hispanic or Latino be listed as a racial category.[53]

Racial categories will change. Since the first decennial census in 1790, no more than three consecutive censuses have used the same racial categories. The multiracial population is of great interest not only because it is a newly recognized racial identity but also because of what it tells us about race in America.

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Latinos and the Changing Face of America

By Rogelio Saenz

Latinos Are US

Over the last 100 years, few racial or ethnic groups have had as great an impact on the demography of the United States as Latinos. In 1900, there were only slightly more than 500,000 Latinos.[1] Today, the national Latino population numbers more than 35 million and represents one of the most dynamic and diverse racial/ethnic groups in the United States.

The most dramatic impact of the Latino population on the demography of the nation has taken place over the last few decades. The number of Latinos in the United States more than doubled between 1980 and 2000, accounting for 40 percent of the growth in the country's population during that period. And in 2003 the U.S. Census Bureau designated Latinos as the nation's largest minority group, an amazing event given that in 1980 the Latino population was only slightly more than half the size of the African American population.

The rapid growth of the Latino population has been due to various demographic factors. First, the Latino population is significantly younger than the general population, signifying that a relatively large proportion of Latinas (females within the Latino population) are in or approaching the childbearing ages. Second, the Latino population has higher levels of fertility compared with other groups. Third, more immigrants arriving in the United States originate from Latin America than from any other region. Given these trends, Latinos will undoubtedly continue to have an impact on the composition of the U.S. population. Indeed, population projections suggest that the Latino population could increase its share of the overall U.S. population from 13 percent in 2000 to 33 percent in 2100.[2]

The Latino population has had an impact not only on the demography of the U.S. population, but also on other aspects of U.S. society. This can be seen, for example, in the increasing popularity of Latin American food and music and in the prevalence of Spanish-language signage, advertisements, and media. In addition, the business community has discovered the economic clout of the Latino population. It has been estimated that the disposable income of the Latino population will surge nearly fourfold to $1,014 billion in 2008 from $222 billion in 1990.[3] The increase in buying power of the Latino population over this 18-year period is expected to be greater than that of the white, African American, American Indian, and Asian populations. Politicians increasingly recognize the political muscle of the Latino population, especially with the group's concentration in the most populous states in the nation. The growing presence of the Latino population has already caused a rethinking of racial and ethnic relations in the United States, a country that has commonly examined race and ethnicity from the perspective of blacks and whites.

Despite the growing interest in Latinos, there is relatively limited knowledge of this population. The emergence of panethnic (broad, inclusive) terms such as "Latinos" and "Hispanics" has fostered a view of this population as a monolithic group, despite the diverse nature of the groups making up the Latino population.[4] These groups exhibit different histories, demographic characteristics, and patterns of social and economic integration. The U.S. Latino population includes segments that can trace their roots in the United States over numerous generations and others that have recently arrived. Alejandro Portes and Cynthia Truelove describe this great diversity within the Latino population:

> "Under the same label, we find individuals whose ancestors lived in the country at least since the time of independence and others who arrived last year; we find substantial numbers of professionals and entrepreneurs, along with humble farm laborers and unskilled factory workers; there are whites, blacks, mulattoes, and mestizos; there are full-fledged citizens and unauthorized aliens; and finally, among the immigrants, there are those who came in search of employment and a better economic future and those who arrived escaping death squads and political persecution at home."[5]

Their great diversity presents challenges in understanding the rate and extent of Latino groups' integra-

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tion into mainstream U.S. society. Educators, policymakers, businesspeople, and others in the United States require knowledge about the Latino population and the groups within it to more effectively understand and serve the particular needs of Latino populations. This is particularly true now that the Latino population has expanded geographically beyond its traditional hub areas into places that have historically had few Latinos.

This report examines the contemporary demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the diverse groups that form the Latino population, as well as the changes that these groups experienced over the last decade (1990-2000). It reviews the factors that have contributed to the growth of the Latino population in the United States, discusses how U.S. Latinos are faring, and outlines the challenges to improving the social and economic conditions of Latinos in the coming decades.

Coming to America

For the last several centuries, Latinos have made their way to the United States, a movement that continues today. Yet the timing of their movement and the reasons for it differ, as do their experiences here.

War and Political Turmoil

For some Latino groups, the initial entrance into the United States was associated with the outcome of war. For example, the U.S. victory over Mexico in the Mexican-American War, ending with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, resulted in Mexico ceding approximately half of its territory to the United States; most of the relatively small number of Mexicans living in this territory—estimates range between 75,000 and 86,000[6]—became U.S. citizens in the process. Similarly, the U.S. victory in the Spanish-American War resulted in the United States gaining control of Puerto Rico in 1898; the passage of the Jones Act in 1917 eventually granted U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans, who continue to enjoy the ease of moving back and forth between the island and the U.S. mainland.[7]

Short of war, other political developments have boosted Latin American immigration to the United States. For example, in response to a period of political turmoil and revolution in Mexico, approximately 678,000 Mexicans immigrated to the United States legally between 1911 and 1930. Similarly, the rise to power of Fidel Castro in Cuba in 1959 was immediately followed by the first major flow of Cuban immigrants to the United States.

Nearly 209,000 Cubans immigrated to the United States legally between 1961 and 1970.[8] The U.S. government, with its opposition to communism and Fidel Castro, embraced Cuban exiles, many of them drawn from the middle and upper classes of Cuba, and seeking refuge in the United States.[9]

Political instability and large-scale violence in the Dominican Republic from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s led to major flows of Dominicans to the United States. From 1961 to 1970, nearly 209,000 Dominicans came to this country legally.[10]

Box 1

The Free Flow of Goods and People

The last couple of decades have seen important developments related to Latino immigration. These changes have enlarged the economic, social, familial, and political worlds of Latino immigrants.

For example, Latino immigrants continue to maintain ties with their home countries and communities. Many regularly send money to family members remaining behind. Roberto Suro estimates that some 6 million Latin American immigrants in the United States sent nearly $30 billion in remittances to Latin American and Caribbean countries in 2003.[18] These funds are extremely important for the families and home communities of immigrants.

In addition, many Latin American immigrants are transnational migrants that move back and forth between the United States and their home countries for varying lengths of time. Many are part of transnational families, with some immediate family members living in the United States and others in the country of origin. The number of transnational migrants is not known; transnational migrants who were in the United States on April 1, 2000, and who were enumerated are part of the census data reported here; those who were back in their home countries at that time are not included in this analysis.

The increase of women as immigrants has even resulted in rising levels of transnational motherhood, with immigrant women working in the United States while their children remain behind in the home community under the care of relatives or friends.[19] Such living arrangements give rise to mixed-status families, in which some family members are U.S.-born citizens; others, U.S. naturalized citizens; and still others, undocumented immigrants.[20] These arrangements lead to variations within the family in access and entitlement to societal resources, services, rights, and benefits. Mixed-status families illustrate the blurring of boundaries between the nation's U.S.- and foreign-born populations.

During the 1990s, more Latin American countries recognized dual nationality, allowing people to hold nationality in more than one country. While only El Salvador, Panama, Peru, and Uruguay recognized dual nationality prior to 1990, an additional six countries—Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Mexico—did so during the 1990s.[21] The recognition of dual nationality has important implications for sustaining transnational migration, as well as for the incorporation of immigrants in the United States.

The late 1970s and early 1980s saw major political turmoil and civil wars in Central American countries including El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, complete with U.S. intervention.[11] Nearly 603,000 Central Americans immigrated to the United States legally between 1971 and 1990.[12]

The Refugee Act of 1980, which allowed for the admission and incorporation of political refugees on humanitarian grounds, provided entry to 125,000 Cuban refugees. Known as *Marielitos* due to the location from which they departed Cuba (Mariel Bay), they sought sanctuary from repression and fled when Castro temporarily lifted restrictions against leaving the island. Compared with their compatriots who had arrived in the United States earlier, *Marielitos* were more likely to be black and of lower- and working-class origins;[13] their reception in the United States was colder than that extended to earlier Cuban refugees.[14]

Economic Factors

Economic and demographic forces have also played a significant role in the movement of Latin Americans to the United States. Operation Bootstrap, which was initiated in 1947 to industrialize Puerto Rico by opening it up to U.S. investors, uprooted many Puerto Ricans from rural areas, some of whom moved to urban areas of the island and others to the U.S. mainland. Latin American countries experienced major population growth beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, making it difficult for them to provide adequate employment opportunities for their people. The high unemployment rates and low wages resulting from population pressures and from regional economic difficulties spurred immigration from Latin America to more favorable economic conditions in the United States.

U.S. Immigration Policy

While the proximity of Latin Americans to the United States has played a role in increased immigration flows, U.S. policies also have helped Latin American immigrants enter the country. When the United States established immigration quotas to stem the tide of immigration from southern and Eastern Europe and from Asia, Mexicans and other Latin Americans were exempted from quotas and from related entry requirements.[15] Moreover, World War II brought labor shortages that caused the United States to establish the Bracero Program, allowing Mexicans to work in the United States as contract laborers. The program was so popular among U.S. employers, especially those in agriculture, that it was extended until 1964. Approximately 4.8 million Mexicans worked as part of this program between 1942 and 1964.[16]

The liberal Hart-Cellar Act of 1965, which abolished the national quotas system that restricted immigration from southern and Eastern Europe and lifted the ban on immigration from Asia, also provided for family reunification; naturalized citizens, many of them Latinos, were allowed to petition to have their close relatives immigrate to the United States.

The bulk of immigration from Mexico and other Latin American countries has occurred since the 1960s. During that period, a total of nearly 11 million people from Latin American countries, including 5 million from Mexico alone, entered the United States legally. In each decade since 1960, Latin Americans have accounted for between 45 percent and 47 percent of all legal immigrants to this country. Yet these numbers do not accurately reflect the much larger volume of immigration from Latin America because they do not include undocumented immigrants.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 contained an amnesty provision that allowed undocumented immigrants who had been living in the United States continuously since 1982 (for at least 90 days working in agriculture since 1985 in the case of seasonal workers) to become permanent residents and eventually naturalized citizens. Roughly 3 million people—about three-fourths of them Mexican—gained legal status through IRCA.[17]

The various groups that make up the Latino population in the United States differ significantly in the forces that have brought them to the United States, the timing of their entrance, and the length of their stay. For some Latino groups, such as Mexicans, a significant share of the population has had family living in the United States for several generations, while another noticeable portion has arrived just in the last few years. Indeed, U.S.-born Latinos who are third generation or higher—especially Mexicans—are often overlooked in current discussions and debates regarding Latinos. For other Latino groups, the overwhelming majority of members of their populations were born outside the United States. The various Latino groups have distinct experiences in the United States and differ in socioeconomic status.

Demographic Profile

Gathering information on how Latinos are faring in the United States first requires some understanding of the term "Latino." The emergence of groups described as Hispanics and Latinos has taken place over the course of the last quarter-century in the United States.

From Many to One—to Many

People throughout Latin America generally identify themselves on the basis of their nationality—for example, Cubans, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, or Salvadorans—rather

than as Hispanics or Latinos. Accordingly, prior to the late 1970s, Latinos living in the United States commonly viewed themselves by their (ancestors') national origin. For instance, people of Mexican origin tended to view themselves as Mexican or Mexican American.[22]

On May 12, 1977, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued OMB Directive 15, which declared that, for data collection on the U.S. population, there would be two ethnic categories: the panethnic label of "Hispanic," and non-Hispanic.[23] This decision occurred several years after President Nixon, responding to pressures from the U.S. Interagency Committee on Mexican American Affairs, requested that the 1970 census include an item to count Hispanics.[24] The request came too late for the Hispanic item to be included in the 1970 Census short-form questionnaire, but was included in the 5 percent sample long-form questionnaire.

The Hispanic label, according to OMB Directive 15, referred to people of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin.[25] Despite much debate over the federal government using this term to identify such diverse groups, the term became increasingly popular. Much of this popularity was stimulated by the dissemination in the media of statistics for the Hispanic population after the 1980 Census. In addition, Hispanic politicians, leaders, and political organizations increasingly used the panethnic term and forged coalitions across national origin groups.[26] Hispanic leaders trumpeted the 1980s as the "decade of the Hispanic."[27]

Nonetheless, by the mid-1980s many people who had never accepted the Hispanic term began to mount efforts to replace it. These individuals asserted that the U.S. federal government had imposed the label on the ethnic group and that the label emphasized the Spanish element of the panethnic group while neglecting its indigenous roots.[28] Opponents of the Hispanic identity put forth the term "Latino," a label that they saw as more inclusive of the experience of Latin American groups in the United States.[29] The newer term has gained popularity among ethnic leaders and the media. This does not mean, however, that the Latino identity has completely replaced the Hispanic identity. Indeed, there is a significant segment of the ethnic community that continues to prefer the Hispanic label.[30] In sum, the Latino label emerged in reaction to the Hispanic term, and both panethnic terms have their roots in the United States. Latin American immigrants coming to the United States soon realize that these labels are used to describe them.

Indeed, collection of demographic data on people of Latin American descent depends on their identifying themselves in the census using these labels. For this analysis, data on Latinos come from the responses of people who answered that they were "of Spanish/Hispanic origin" in the 1990 Census and "Spanish/Hispanic/Latino" in the 2000 Census.

Changes occurred between the 1990 and 2000 censuses in the manner in which people were asked about their ethnic origin. The 1990 and 2000 questionnaires allowed only Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans to indicate their specific Latino group directly. Latinos not belonging to these three groups had to indicate that they belonged to the residual category of "Other Spanish/Hispanic" (1990 Census) or "Other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino" (2000 Census). They were also asked to print their specific group. However, the 1990 Census questionnaire presented a set of examples of specific groups—for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on—which helped prompt respondents to indicate their specific Latino group. These examples were dropped from the 2000 Census questionnaire. The outcome of this change appears to be that people were less likely to print their national-origin group in 2000 than in 1990.[31] Therefore, it is likely that individuals who classified themselves as Dominican, Central American, or South American in 1990 ended up in the residual Other Latino group in 2000. The Other Latino group as used in this analysis is a catchall category that includes Spaniards, individuals who view themselves in distinct terms that are unavailable on the census questionnaire (for example, Californios, Hispanos, or Tejanos), and people who failed to provide their specific national-origin group. Hence, caution is in order in interpreting the patterns associated with this group.

For much of the analysis presented below, the focus is on seven Latino groups: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans, Central Americans, South Americans, and Other Latinos. Non-Latino whites and non-Latino African Americans are the primary groups used for comparison in the analysis. (In the 2000 Census, people could select more than one race. For the analysis that follows, based on the 2000 Census, non-Latino whites include those who selected only the white racial category, and non-Latino African Americans include those who chose only the black or African American racial category.)

Population Change and Distribution

During the 1990s, the Latino population marked its dominance as the ethnic group most responsible for population growth in the United States. The Latino population expanded from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000, a growth rate of 58 percent (see Table 1). The growth rate of the Latino population was nearly 4.5 times greater than that of the total U.S. population and more than six times that of the non-Latino population in the country. By 2000 Latinos accounted for one in eight people in the United States, compared with one in 11 people in 1990.

Among Latinos, it was Mexicans and members of the Other Latino group that experienced the fastest

growth rates between 1990 and 2000, with Puerto Ricans and Cubans increasing at a moderate pace. Mexicans continue to represent the largest segment of the Latino population; 60 percent of Latinos are Mexican. Nevertheless, each of the three major Latino groups—Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans—saw its relative share of the Latino population slip during the decade, while people in the Other Latino group expanded its share from 23 percent of the total Latino population in 1990 to 28 percent in 2000.

The five major national origin groups making up the Other Latino group in 2000 included Dominicans, Salvadorans, Colombians, Guatemalans, and Ecuadorians. It is likely that the population estimates for these groups are artificially low due to people from these groups being more likely in 2000 than in 1990 to label themselves as Other Latino instead of providing information on their specific national origin.

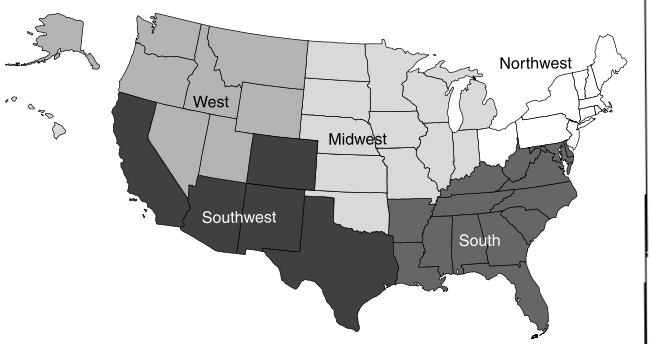
Regional Clustering

The Latino population is clustered in specific parts of the country. Because of the unique geographic distribution patterns of Mexicans, the largest Latino group, five regions, rather than the Census Bureau's four regions, are used in this analysis. Five states where Mexicans are concentrated—Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas—are grouped in this analysis to form the Southwest region. As such, the South as defined here excludes Texas, while the West excludes Arizona, California, Colorado, and New Mexico (see Figure 1).

Comparison of the regional distributions of the overall U.S. population and the overall Latino population shows that Latinos are disproportionately concentrated in the Southwest (see Table 2, page 357). While nearly 25 percent of people in the United States made their home in the Southwest in 2000, close to 60 percent of Latinos were located in this region. Latinos make up nearly a third of residents of the Southwest. This geographic preference for the Southwest is particularly true for Mexicans. In contrast, Puerto Ricans are primarily clustered in the Northeast; Cubans are principally concentrated in the South; and the Other Latino population is located predominately in the Southwest and Northeast.

Despite the continued concentration of Latinos in certain parts of the country, their regional distribution shifted between 1990 and 2000. For example, Mexicans were less likely to live in the Southwest in 2000 than

Figure 1
FIVE REGIONS OF ANALYSIS FOR GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF LATINOS



Source: Author's analysis of 2000 Census data.

Table 1
GROWTH OF LATINO POPULATION BY ETHNIC GROUP AND OF NON-LATINO POPULATION BY RACE, 1990–2000

Group	1990	2000	Change 1990-2000	% change 1990-2000	% of U.S. population 1990	% of U.S. population 2000	% of U.S. population growth 1990-2000
Total U.S. population	248,709,873	281,421,906	32,712,033	13.2	100.0	100.0	100.0
Latino	22,354,059	35,305,818	12,951,759	57.9	9.0	12.5	39.6
Mexican	13,495,938	20,640,711	7,144,773	52.9	5.4	7.3	21.8
Puerto Rican	2,727,754	3,406,178	678,424	24.9	1.1	1.2	2.1
Cuban	1,043,932	1,241,685	197,753	18.9	0.4	0.4	0.6
Other Latino	5,086,435	10,017,244	4,930,809	96.9	2.0	3.6	15.1
Non-Latino*	226,355,814	246,116,088	19,760,274	8.7	91.0	87.5	60.4
White	188,128,296	194,552,774	6,424,478	3.4	75.6	69.1	19.6
African American	29,216,293	33,947,837	4,731,544	16.2	11.7	12.1	14.5
American Indian and Alaska Native	1,793,773	2,068,883	275,110	15.3	0.7	0.7	0.8
Asian and Pacific Islander	6,968,359	10,476,678	3,508,319	50.3	2.8	3.7	10.7
Other race	249,093	467,770	218,677	87.8	0.1	0.2	0.7

* Non-Latino groups are single-race groups.

Sources: Author's estimates using Census 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF1) and Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF1).

they were a decade earlier, and they were more likely to be found in the South, where their number more than tripled between 1990 and 2000.

Similarly, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Other Latinos increasingly shifted from the Northeast to the South. The percentage of Puerto Ricans living in the South increased 1.5 times between 1990 and 2000. The Northeast actually experienced a drop of 8 percent in the number of Cubans during this period. By 2000, 72 percent of Cubans were located in the South. Finally, Other Latinos shifted from the Northeast and increasingly to the Southwest and South.

All regions were significantly affected by the growth in their Latino populations. The Latino population more than doubled in the West and South, while it almost doubled in the Midwest. Its growth was more modest in the Southwest and the Northeast. The Latino population expanded at a significantly faster pace than the overall population in all the regions, accounting for a disproportionate share of the overall population change in each: 62 percent of the people added in the Southwest; 54 percent in the Northeast; 30 percent in the Midwest; 24 percent in the West; and 23 percent in the South.

The shift in the regional distribution of Latinos is consistent with changes in regional employment patterns. Indeed, the South (excluding Texas) and West (excluding Arizona, California, Colorado, and New Mexico) experienced the greatest employment growth between 1990 and 2000—16 percent and 26 percent, respectively. In contrast, the Northeast and California (the largest state in the Southwest) experienced much slower employment growth from 1990 to 2000—2 percent and 5 percent, respectively. The shift of Latinos from the Northeast and Southwest reflects movement in response to job opportunities.

Destination States

The Latino population is concentrated in particular states. The 10 states with the largest Latino populations in 2000 were home to slightly more than 80 percent of U.S. Latinos (see Figure 2). These states represent traditional hub areas for Latinos, with all but one (Washington) being among the top-10 most populous Latino states in 1990 as well. California and Texas alone accounted for one of every two Latinos in the United States.

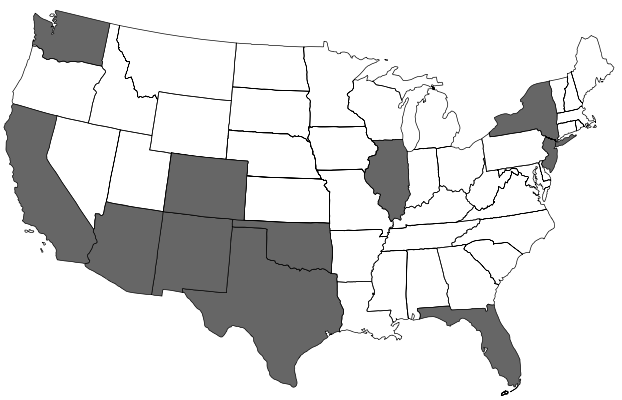
The growth in the Latino population between 1990 and 2000 was also concentrated in specific states. The 10 states that experienced the largest absolute growth in the Latino population during this period—the same as those shown in Figure 2 but with Georgia and North Carolina substituting for Washington and New Mexico—accounted for three-fourths of the nearly 13 million Latinos added to the U.S. population between 1990 and 2000. Most of the 10 states are traditional enclave areas for Latinos. Indeed, three states accounted for slightly more than half of this growth—California, Texas, and

Table 2
LATINO AND TOTAL POPULATION BY REGION, 1990 AND 2000

	Northeast		Midwest		South		West		Southwest	
Group	**1990**	**2000**	**1990**	**2000**	**1990**	**2000**	**1990**	**2000**	**1990**	**2000**
Population (millions)										
Total population	50.8	53.6	59.7	64.4	66.5	79.4	14.6	18.1	55.2	66.0
Latino	3.8	5.3	1.7	3.1	2.4	4.9	0.7	1.6	13.7	20.4
Mexican	0.2	0.5	1.2	2.2	0.5	1.5	0.5	1.1	11.2	15.4
Puerto Rican	1.9	2.1	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.2	0.3
Cuban	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.9	0.1	0.2	1.0	0.1
Other Latino	1.5	2.5	0.3	0.6	0.9	1.9	0.3	0.4	2.2	4.7
% distribution										
Total population	20.4	19.0	24.0	22.9	27.5	28.2	5.9	6.4	22.2	23.4
Latino	16.8	14.9	7.7	8.8	10.9	13.9	3.2	4.5	61.4	57.9
Mexican	1.3	2.3	8.5	10.7	3.4	7.2	3.5	5.4	83.3	74.5
Puerto Rican	68.6	60.9	9.4	9.6	13.3	20.3	1.7	2.1	6.9	7.2
Cuban	17.6	13.6	3.5	3.6	68.7	72.1	1.1	1.8	9.1	8.8
Other Latino	30.0	25.3	5.5	5.5	17.6	18.5	3.7	3.7	43.2	47.0
% of regional population										
Latino	7.4	9.8	2.9	4.9	3.5	6.2	5.0	8.7	24.8	31.0
Mexican	0.3	0.9	1.9	3.4	0.7	1.9	3.3	6.1	20.3	23.3
Puerto Rican	3.7	3.9	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.9	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4
Cuban	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1	1.0	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
Other Latino	3.0	4.7	0.5	0.9	1.3	2.3	1.3	2.1	4.0	7.1

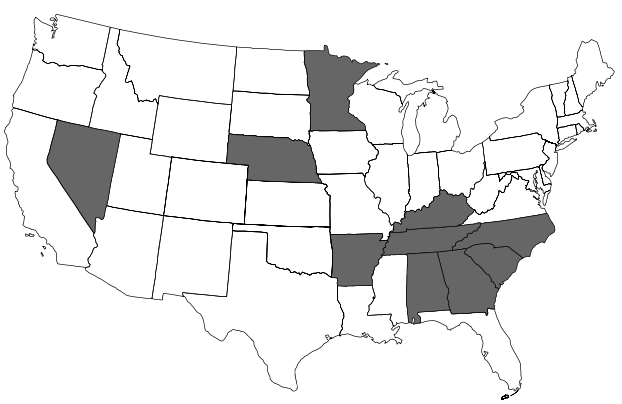
Sources: Author's estimates using Census 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF1) and Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF1).

Figure 2
TEN STATES WITH THE LARGEST LATINO POPULATIONS, 2000



Sources: Author's estimates using Census 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF1) and Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF1).

Figure 3
TEN STATES WITH THE FASTEST GROWTH IN LATINO POPULATION, 1990–2000



Sources: Author's estimates using Census 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF1) and Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF1).

Florida. However, Georgia and North Carolina represent new destinations for Latinos, who have been drawn by jobs in construction, services, agriculture, and meat and poultry processing.

The Latino population has grown quite rapidly in states that have traditionally had relatively few Latinos (see Figure 3). Among the 10 states with the most rapid growth in the Latino population, the percentage increases ranged from a low of 155 percent in Nebraska to 394 percent in North Carolina. This growth has primarily been associated with the restructuring of the meat-processing industry and the expansion of low-wage jobs in the South and the Midwest,[32] primarily in nonmetropolitan areas.[33] Nevada stands apart from the other nine states. Drawn by a dynamic economy dominated by service jobs and the gaming industry, Nevada's Latino population tripled between 1990 and 2000.

International migrants (people who lived abroad in 1995) and interstate migrants (people who lived in different U.S. states in 1995 and 2000) contributed to this state-by-state growth in the Latino population. Seventy-one percent of the 3 million Latinos who came to the United States from abroad between 1995 and 2000 headed to eight states that have traditionally attracted Latino immigrants: California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, New Jersey, Arizona, and Georgia. These "gateway" states are places where Latino immigrants can tap into social networks that help them adjust to life in the United States.

As the name gateway implies, however, these states are both a destination and a point of departure. In the interstate migration of Latinos between 1995 and 2000, five gateway states experienced net losses of Latinos. That is, they lost more Latinos to other states than they gained from these states. This group included California, New York, Illinois, New Jersey, and Texas. The remaining three gateway states—Florida, Arizona, and Georgia—each experienced net gains of interstate Latino migrants between 1995 and 2000. Five other states had net gains of Latino interstate migrants exceeding 20,000 during the five-year period: Nevada, North Carolina, Colorado, Indiana, and Minnesota.

The Latino population and the national-origin groups within it grew significantly from 1990 to 2000. Although Latinos continue to be concentrated in particular parts of the country, there was a shift in their regional distribution, with the South, in particular, experiencing an increase in its share of the Latino population. It is clear that Latinos continue to move to different parts of the country, largely in response to job opportunities.

Age Structure

The relatively fast pace at which the Latino population grew during the 1990s is due in part to its age structure (see Figure 4, page 359). Latinos (whose median age is 25) are younger than African Americans (median age 30) and much younger than whites (median age 38) in the United States. The age and sex profiles reveal a few important features related to the Latino population: The long bars at the youngest ages reflect a high fertility rate; the long bars at the prime working ages (20 to 44) indicate the presence of foreign-born people who have moved to the United States in search of employment; and the longer bars associated with males in the primary working-age groups hint at the greater relative presence of males than females among Latin American, especially Mexican, immigrants to the United States.

Approximately 30 percent of Latinos were younger than age 15 in 2000, compared with 26 percent of African Americans and 19 percent of whites. In contrast,

older people (ages 65 and older) accounted for only one in 20 Latinos compared with one in 12 African Americans and one in nearly seven whites. The Latino population is also more heavily male (with a sex ratio of 111 males per 100 females) than the African American (90) and white (96) populations.

Among Latino groups, Mexicans and Other Latinos, in particular, have the youngest populations (see Figure 5) . The median age of members of these two groups is 24, with about 33 percent being younger than age 15. In contrast, Cubans, with a median age of 40, represent the oldest Latino group. Approximately 20 percent of the Cuban population is age 65 or older, while people younger than 15 make up slightly less than 15 percent of the group's population. The Central American and South American populations are heavily dominated by people in the prime working ages, with relatively low percentages of children under the age of 15 (approximately 20 percent) and older people (3 percent to 5 percent). This reflects the relatively recent arrival of Central Americans and South Americans in the United States compared with other Latino groups.

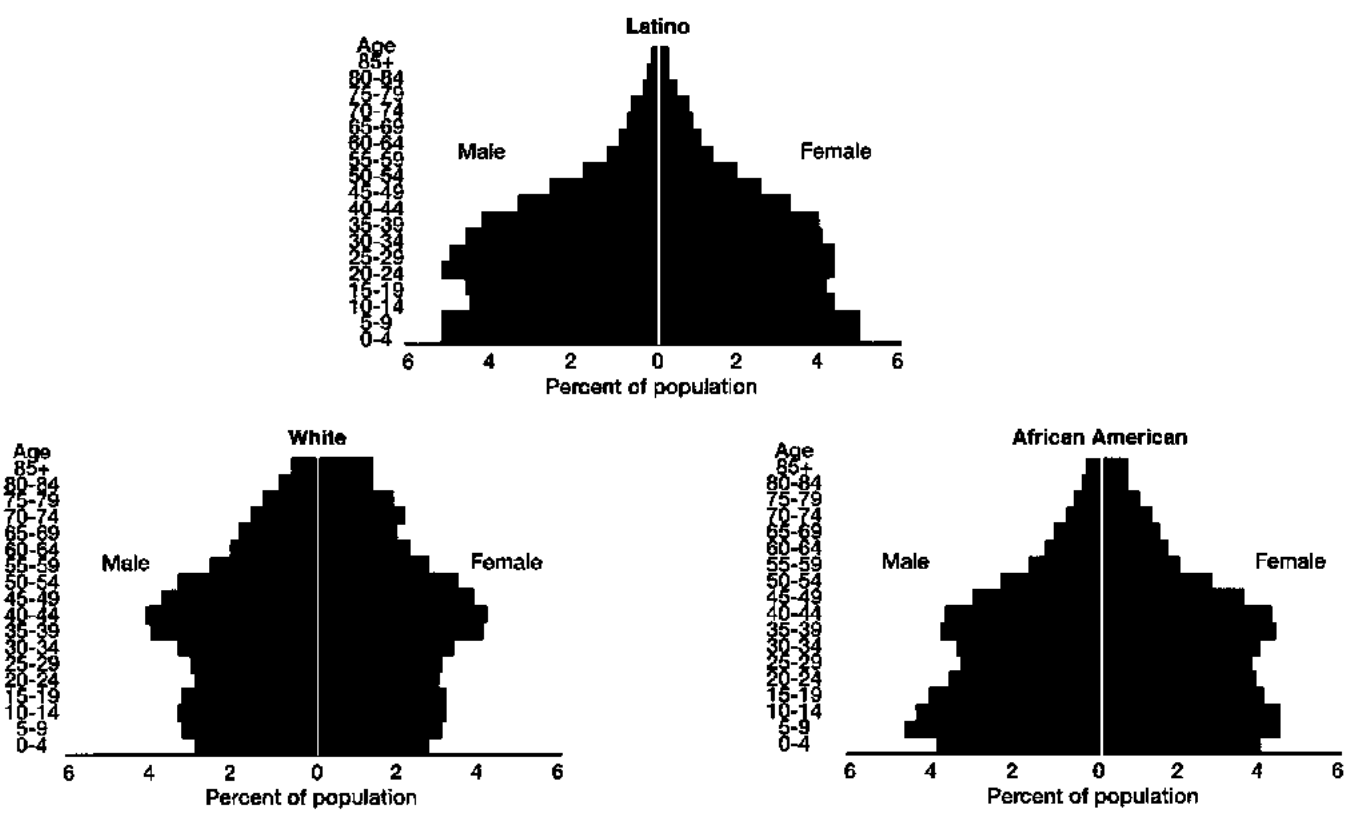
While there is significant variation in the age and sex profiles of the Latino groups, the groups are similar in one important respect: The U.S.-born population is significantly younger than the foreign-born population. The median age of U.S.-born Latinos ranges from 9 among Central Americans to 19 among Other Latinos. In contrast, the median age of Latinos born outside of the United States varies from 31 among Mexicans to 50 among Cubans. These distinctions are associated in part with differences in the immigration histories of the different groups. One of the main reasons for the relationship between place of birth and median age is that the U.S.-born children of foreign-born Latinos are part of the native population, resulting in the relatively low presence of young children among the foreign-born population.

Citizenship

As noted, Latino groups vary tremendously with respect to their immigration histories and timing of arrival in the United States. These differences affect the share of each population that is foreign-born—segments whose socioeconomic progress may not keep track with that of their U.S.-born counterparts—and the rate at which members of each group have become U.S. citizens.

Figure 4

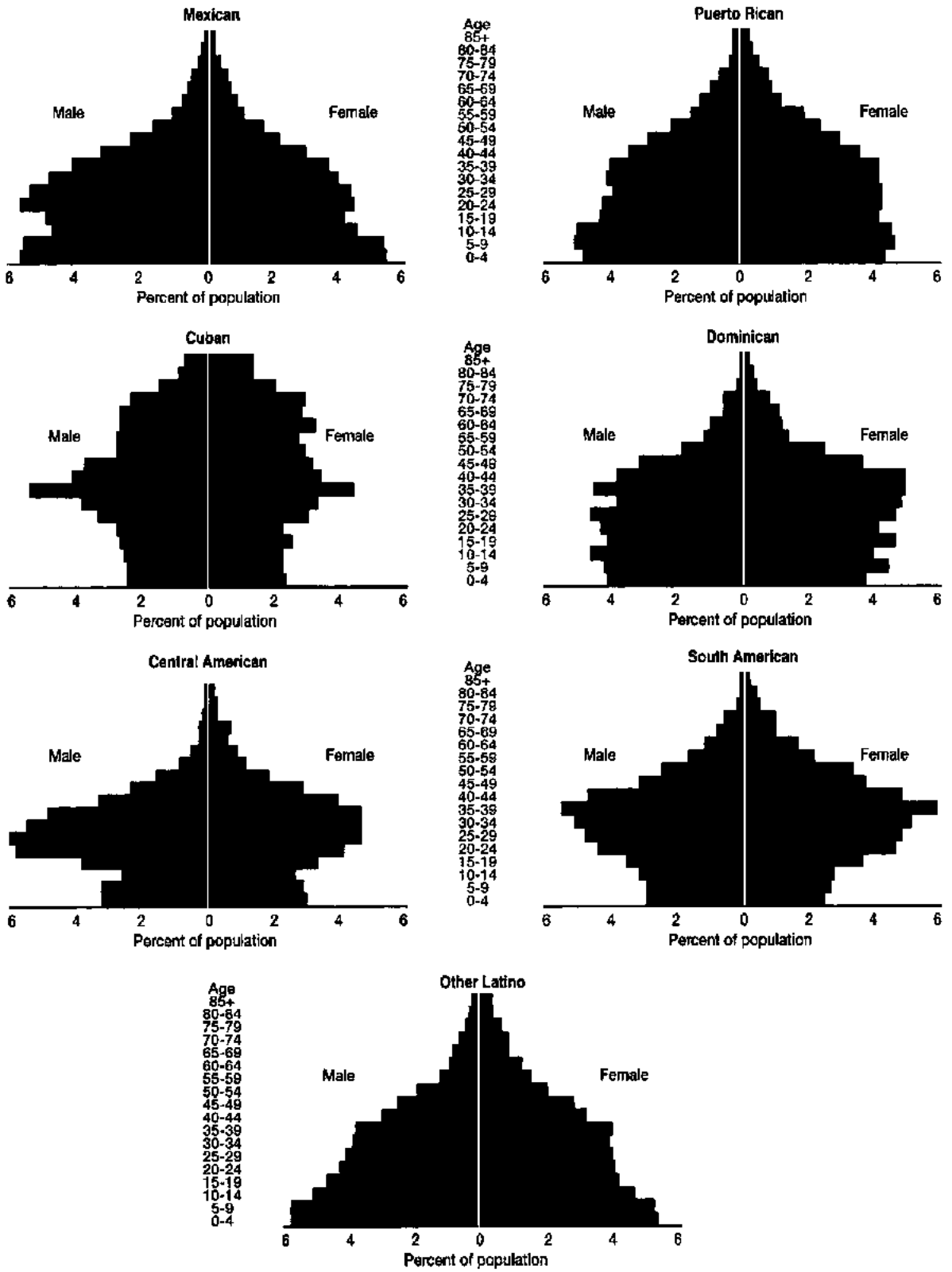
AGE AND SEX PROFILES FOR LATINOS, WHITES, AND AFRICAN AMERICANS, 2000



Sources: Author's estimates using Census 1990 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and Census 2000 1% PUMS.

Figure 5

AGE AND SEX PROFILES FOR SELECTED LATINO GROUPS, 2000



Sources: Author's estimates using Census 1990 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and Census 2000 1% PUMS.

Table 3

SHARE OF AND CITIZENSHIP STATUS AMONG FOREIGN-BORN LATINOS BY ETHNIC GROUP, 1990 AND 2000

	% foreign-born		% naturalized citizens	
Group	1990	2000	1990	2000
White	3.3	3.5	60.3	54.8
African American	4.1	5.5	33.5	44.6
Latino	35.7	40.1	26.2	27.7
Mexican	33.1	41.3	22.4	22.1
Puerto Rican	1.3	1.4	36.4	38.8
Cuban	71.3	68.9	50.4	60.6
Dominican	70.0	69.1	26.4	35.0
Central American	79.0	76.1	18.4	26.5
South American	75.1	76.6	28.3	36.4
Other Latino	21.1	27.7	37.6	32.7

Sources: Author's estimates using Census 1990 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and Census 2000 1% PUMS.

Because Puerto Ricans born in Puerto Rico are automatically U.S. citizens, only slightly more than 1 percent of Puerto Ricans were foreign-born in 2000 (individuals who have Puerto Rican parents but were themselves born outside of the U.S. mainland and Puerto Rico). Nonetheless, 40 percent of Puerto Ricans were born outside of the U.S. mainland. In addition, Other Latinos and Mexicans had moderate portions of their members born outside of the United States (28 percent and 41 percent, respectively), as a result of a long presence in the United States and continued immigration (see Table 3).

In contrast, the groups that have most recently immigrated to the United States—Central Americans and South Americans—had approximately three-fourths of their members born outside of the United States; Cubans and Dominicans had percentages of foreign-born nearly as high.

Comparison of the percentages of people who were foreign-born in 1990 and 2000 indicates that the foreign-born group increased its share of the overall Latino population, rising from 36 percent in 1990 to 40 percent in 2000. The relative increase of the foreign-born was most prominent among Mexicans and Other Latinos, while the relative presence of this segment of the population declined slightly among Cubans and Central Americans.

Less than a third of foreign-born Latinos were naturalized citizens in 2000 (see Table 3). Cubans have the highest naturalization rate due to the relatively long presence of Cuban immigrants in the United States and their status as political refugees. The naturalization rates of whites (55 percent) and African Americans (45 percent) surpass those of the other Latino groups. Although the naturalization rate of the overall Latino population remained fairly stable in 1990 and 2000, the naturalization rates of Cubans, Dominicans, Central Americans, and South Americans rose noticeably during this period. Mexicans and Central Americans have the lowest naturalization rates of any of the groups, likely reflecting the increasing presence of foreign-born individuals within these groups between 1990 and 2000.

Marriage, Family, and Living Arrangements

The Latino population is commonly depicted as a family-centric group, with stable marriages and living arrangements that include members of the extended family. It is commonly believed that such features of family and household life decline with length of residence in the United States.

Prevalence of Marriage

Latinos are commonly thought to have high rates of marriage. In fact, in 2000, Latino men and women ages 25 to 44 were slightly less likely than whites but more likely than African Americans to be married (see Table 4). Latinas (females within the Latino population) and white females were more likely than their male counterparts to be married, while the opposite was true among African Americans. Mexicans were the most likely and Puerto Ricans the least likely of the Latino groups to be married.

In the 25-to-44-year-old group, foreign-born people were more likely to be married than their U.S.-born counterparts in 2000. The high rate of marriage among foreign-born Mexican females—75 percent—is likely due to the imbalanced sex ratio (more males than females) among foreign-born Mexicans in the United States. Foreign-born Latinas also tended to have higher marriage rates than males, the exceptions being women from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

These marriage patterns have implications for other aspects of family life and living arrangements, as well as for the socioeconomic standing of the different Latino groups.

Female-Headed Families

Slightly more than one-fifth of Latino families had spouseless females as householders in 2000 (see Table 5, page 363). By way of comparison, Latino families were almost twice as likely as white families to be headed by single females, but half as likely as African American families to have such family household arrangements.

In 2000, the highest rates of female headship occurred among Dominicans and Puerto Ricans, groups with low rates of marriage. In contrast, single females headed less than 20 percent of Cuban and South American families. The U.S.-born had a higher prevalence of female-headed families than did the foreign-born for all Latino groups except Dominicans and South Americans, with Mexicans registering the greatest difference by place of birth.

Table 4

MARRIAGE RATES OF LATINO MEN AND WOMEN BY ETHNIC GROUP AND NATIVITY, 1990 AND 2000

	Percent of people ages 25-44 who are currently married			
	Male		Female	
Group	1990	2000	1990	2000
White	66.0	62.3	70.1	67.3
African American	44.4	46.2	38.4	37.7
Latino	62.2	61.7	63.2	64.0
Mexican	65.2	64.6	67.4	68.3
U.S.-born	59.7	55.6	62.7	59.1
Foreign-born	70.5	69.3	73.4	74.6
Puerto Rican	53.7	51.6	48.9	48.6
Mainland-born	51.2	49.5	49.2	47.7
Non-mainland-born	55.6	54.2	48.7	49.6
Cuban	58.5	58.8	63.9	67.3
U.S.-born	50.5	54.3	55.6	62.0
Foreign-born	60.4	60.4	66.0	69.5
Dominican	58.6	57.5	51.5	52.6
U.S.-born	44.7	43.6	50.7	50.2
Foreign-born	59.8	59.4	51.5	52.9
Central American	59.7	58.5	60.0	61.9
U.S.-born	49.8	48.3	55.2	53.1
Foreign-born	60.4	57.1	60.3	62.6
South American	62.9	59.7	65.4	67.3
U.S.-born	50.3	44.9	52.7	60.5
Foreign-born	64.0	62.0	66.5	68.4
Other Latino	55.9	59.5	61.0	59.5
U.S.-born	54.4	55.0	59.0	54.3
Foreign-born	59.7	65.2	66.3	66.7

Sources: Author's estimates using Census 1990 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and Census 2000 1% PUMS.

Living Arrangements of Children

Marriage and female headship patterns are related to the extent to which children live in married-couple families. Slightly more than 60 percent of Latino children under age 18 were living in such families in 2000, a percentage that is somewhat lower than that of whites but significantly higher than that of African Americans.

South American, Cuban, and Mexican youngsters were most likely to be part of married-couple families. In contrast, Puerto Rican and Dominican children were the least likely to be part of such families. There are not great differences between U.S.- and foreign-born groups regarding the portion of children living in married-couple families, with the largest differences occurring in the Central American and Other Latino populations. The lack of differences on the basis of nativity reflects the blurring of nativity, especially among children. Children of a given family may be in different nativity categories, with some being born in the United States and others being foreign-born.

Overall, children were slightly less likely to be living in married-couple families in 2000 than a decade earlier across the Latino groups and the white and African American populations.

Extended-Family Households

For many families with limited economic resources, extended households represent a survival strategy to maximize resources. Roughly 12 percent of Latinos were members of extended family households in 2000, a level that is comparable to that of African Americans. In contrast, Latinos were nearly four times more likely than whites to be living in an extended family household arrangement.

Latino groups with high rates of immigration and limited economic resources were the most likely to be part of extended-family households. More than 12 percent of Central Americans, Dominicans, and Mexicans were living in the households of relatives in 2000, with Puerto Ricans being the least likely group to be in such living arrangements. With the exception of Puerto Ricans, foreign-born people had a higher prevalence of residing in extended family households than U.S.-born individuals. Foreign-born Mexicans, in particular, were the most likely to be living with relatives. In contrast, U.S.-born South Americans and U.S.-born Cubans had the lowest tendency to be part of extended-family households.

Between 1990 and 2000, the extended family rates of Latinos increased slightly. In contrast, those of whites and African Americans remained fairly stable.

Marriage, family, and living arrangement patterns differentiated the various Latino groups in 2000. Mexicans, South Americans, and to a certain extent Cubans tended to have relatively high rates of marriage, low rates of female headship, and high rates of children living in married-couple households; Puerto Ricans and Dominicans tended to exhibit contrasting patterns. In general, foreign-born groups tended to have high rates of marriage and lower female headship rates. And immigrant groups with limited resources tended to rely most heavily on extended-family households for economic survival.

Acculturation and Assimilation

Latino groups differ significantly on a variety of factors that are commonly associated with acculturation and assimilation. These factors include length of residence in the United States, level of education, and structural factors such as the size of the ethnic group and the volume of immigration from the home country. Acculturation and assimilation are measured in a variety of ways, including language patterns, racial identification, and interracial marriage.

Language Patterns

Sociologists have observed that ethnic groups do not completely shed their cultures, but may develop new ones that incorporate segments of their own ethnic culture and parts of the mainstream culture. Latino groups vary enormously in the extent to which they retain their ethnic cultures and absorb that of the United States. Two items from the census—language spoken at home and fluency in English among those that speak a language other than English—are used to assess the language patterns of Latinos and place them in language categories:

- Monolingual English (person speaks English at home);
- Monolingual Spanish (person speaks a language other than English at home and speaks English "not well" or "not at all"); and
- Bilingual (person speaks a language other than English at home and speaks English "well" or "very well").

Bilingualism was the most common language form among Latinos (see Table 6). In contrast, whites and African Americans were almost exclusively monolingual English speakers.

Similarly, bilingualism was the most prevalent language form among the different Latino groups in 2000, ranging from 48 percent of Mexicans to 71 percent of Puerto Ricans. The one exception was foreign-born Mexicans, most of whom were monolingual Spanish speakers.

The degree to which Latinos are fluent in English can be gauged by aggregating bilingual and monolingual English language forms. The majority of U.S.-born Latinos were fluent in English in 2000, with the range extending from a low of 94 percent among Central Americans to a high of 99 percent among Cubans. Among the foreign-born, the variation in English fluency is greater. More than 70 percent of non-mainland-born Puerto Ricans, foreign-born South Americans, and foreign-born Cubans were fluent in English. In contrast, only 48 percent of foreign-born Mexicans were fluent in English.

Table 5

LATINO FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS BY ETHNIC GROUP AND NATIVITY, 1990 AND 2000

	% of families with female householders		% of children under age 18 living with two parents		% of people living in extended-family households	
Group	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
White	11.8	12.5	80.5	77.2	3.0	3.1
African American	43.1	44.6	37.1	34.5	10.3	10.0
Latino	21.5	21.6	64.2	62.3	10.1	11.7
Mexican	18.1	17.5	67.9	65.8	10.5	12.8
U.S.-born	21.4	23.1	68.1	65.8	7.9	9.4
Foreign-born	14.2	13.7	66.4	66	15.8	17.5
Puerto Rican	36.4	37.0	45.3	43.7	7.8	8.1
Mainland-born	35.4	38.8	45.5	43.9	8.5	8.2
Non-mainland-born	36.9	35.7	44.5	42.9	7.0	8.0
Cuban	16.2	15.9	70.4	67.3	9.1	9.8
U.S.-born	19.9	17.9	70.5	66.6	7.7	7.2
Foreign-born	15.8	15.5	70.0	70.7	9.7	11.0
Dominican	41.3	39.5	44.9	43.8	12.1	13.6
U.S.-born	31.4	38.6	44.5	44.4	9.9	9.8
Foreign-born	41.9	39.6	45.9	42.3	13.0	15.3
Central American	22.9	21.7	61.3	58.4	15.0	14.3
U.S.-born	19.5	24.2	64.7	60.1	9.0	10.4
Foreign-born	23.1	21.6	57.2	53.8	16.5	15.5
South American	18.3	19.3	71.7	69.9	9.8	11.1
U.S.-born	16.6	16.7	73.3	70.2	5.9	6.5
Foreign-born	18.4	19.5	68.4	69.3	11.1	12.4
Other Latino	20.6	25.3	64.4	61.1	7.4	9.7
U.S.-born	21.7	27.8	64.3	60.7	6.1	8.0
Foreign-born	17.2	21.6	65.3	65.9	12.2	14.4

Sources: Author's estimates using Census 1990 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and Census 2000 1% PUMS.

Comparison of the distribution of language patterns between 1990 and 2000 shows some changes. For Latinos as a whole, the percentage of monolingual Spanish speakers rose by nearly 5 percentage points over the decade, while the percentage who were bilingual or were monolingual English speakers slipped by the same level. This combination of changes is likely due to the increasing relative presence of the foreign-born in the Latino population in 2000 compared with a decade earlier.

Nonetheless, across Latino groups there were some differences. For example, the increasing prevalence of the monolingual Spanish pattern between 1990 and 2000 was driven primarily by foreign-born Mexicans, foreign-born Cubans, and foreign-born Other Latinos. Several U.S.-born groups experienced rising percentages of bilingual speakers—Cubans, Dominicans, Central Americans, South Americans, and Other Latinos. Finally, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and foreign-born Dominicans experienced slight gains in the percentage of individuals in their populations that spoke only English.

The census data on language usage is quite limited, however, and does not capture the dynamic nature of language. People may speak English at home but still be fluent in Spanish. In addition, people may vary their language use depending on social context. Furthermore, many Latinos engage in code switching (the simultaneous use of two languages when speaking), a form of speech commonly referred to as "Spanglish." Moreover, many Latino entertainers—for example, singers, actors, and comedians—have made a transition to the English language or have combined Spanish and English. Finally, the Spanish language has become more prevalent in the United States and continues to be by far the most popular foreign language taught in colleges and universities throughout the United States.[34]

Table 6

LANGUAGE PATTERNS OF LATINOS BY ETHNIC GROUP AND NATIVITY, 1990 AND 2000

	Percent of people ages 25-44					
	1990			2000		
Group	Monolingual Spanish	Bilingual	Monolingual English	Monolingual Spanish	Bilingual	Monolingual English
White	0.5	4.3	95.2	0.6	5.3	94.1
African American	0.7	5.2	94.1	0.8	6.2	93.0
Latino	23.7	56.6	19.7	28.6	53.2	18.2
Mexican	25.1	54.2	20.7	33.5	48.2	18.4
U.S.-born	3.5	60.5	36.0	3.2	56.9	40.0
Foreign-born	48.8	47.2	4.0	51.7	43.0	5.3
Puerto Rican	12.6	71.9	15.5	8.9	70.7	20.4
Mainland-born	2.9	69.6	27.5	2.6	67.7	29.7
Non-mainland-born	20.0	73.6	6.4	17.0	74.5	8.5
Cuban	16.2	71.7	12.2	20.9	66.7	12.5
U.S.-born	2.5	60.7	36.9	0.9	68.1	31.0
Foreign-born	19.5	74.4	6.2	28.7	66.1	5.2
Dominican	43.2	51.6	5.2	36.2	58.2	5.7
U.S.-born	20.8	57.8	21.4	2.1	85.3	12.7
Foreign-born	45.0	51.1	3.9	40.8	54.5	4.7
Central American	42.9	50.5	6.6	39.3	54.9	5.8
U.S.-born	9.1	47.9	43.0	6.7	59.7	33.6
Foreign-born	45.2	50.7	4.1	41.7	54.5	3.7
South American	26.0	65.7	8.3	24.7	67.4	7.8
U.S.-born	6.2	51.1	42.7	3.3	66.0	30.7
Foreign-born	27.8	67.1	5.2	28.0	67.7	4.3
Other Latino	8.4	45.4	46.2	18.4	53.0	28.6
U.S.-born	2.6	37.8	59.6	2.5	52.5	44.9
Foreign-born	23.2	65.3	11.6	39.7	53.6	6.7

Note: The entries for the "monolingual Spanish" column for whites and African Americans refer to any language other than English—rather than only Spanish—spoken at home. It is assumed that, among Latinos, those speaking a language other than English at home speak Spanish.

Sources: Author's estimates using Census 1990 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and Census 2000 1% PUMS.

The language patterns of Latinos are likely related to other forms of acculturation and assimilation, as well as to Latinos' access to the mainstream labor market.

Racial Identification

The large majority of Latinos in the United States are offspring of the racial mixing of the various groups that met in Latin America beginning in the late 15th century. In particular, many Latinos are products of the intermixing of a combination of Africans, Indians, and Spaniards. Although race has commonly been associated with physical characteristics of people, our understanding of race has been enhanced by the view that race is socially constructed.[35] That is, racial classifications are the product of human beliefs and ideas regarding group differences.

The concept of race is particularly interesting in the case of U.S. Latinos. The Census Bureau does not treat Latinos/Hispanics as a racial group but as an ethnic group. Therefore, Latinos are free to place themselves in the varying racial categories that the Census Bureau provides. Most Latinos label themselves as "white" or "other" in the census. While it is tempting to place these terms on different poles on a continuum, white being associated with ethnic assimilation and other with ethnic retention, this is difficult to justify because people may choose between these terms for many different reasons—for example, assimilation, rejection of the white racial classification, lack of understanding of the concepts, ancestry, and the like.[36]

Moreover, it is also likely that U.S.- and foreign-born individuals have different notions about race. For example, many foreign-born Latinos in the United States were not members of minority groups in their home countries. In addition, Latin American societies typically view race as a continuum with a significant amount of fluidity—Brazil, for instance, has more than 140 racial categories[37]—while those in the United States view race in a more restricted and static fashion.[38] Furthermore, upward mobility in Latin America allows dark-skinned individuals to become "white," although it is clear that blacks and indigenous people in Latin America remain at the bottom of the stratification system. Finally, a change in the ordering of the race and Hispanic/Latino items took place in the census questionnaire in 2000. In an apparently unsuccessful attempt to get more Latinos to choose a race besides "other," the race item was placed after the Hispanic/Latino item in 2000, while the opposite order was used in 1990. The change in the ordering of these items could affect comparisons in the racial identities of Latinos between 1990 and 2000.

As a group, Latinos were split between the white and other racial classifications in 2000 (see Table 7). In addition, about 6 percent considered themselves multiracial, while a very small portion classified themselves as black.

Among Latino groups, however, there is considerable variation, with four general patterns emerging. The first pattern describes the situation of Cubans, who showed a heavy preference (85 percent) for the white racial category in 2000. Only 7 percent of Cubans selected the other racial category, with an even smaller percentage seeing themselves as multiracial or black.

The second pattern is associated with South Americans, a group that also showed a clear preference (60 percent) for the white racial classification in 2000, although 30 percent preferred the other racial category.

The third pattern is associated with Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Other Latinos. These groups favored the white racial identification by a slight margin over the other racial category in 2000. The diverse nature of the Puerto Rican population is apparent even within this pattern, in that about 8 percent viewed themselves as multiracial and 6 percent classified themselves as black. A significant portion (9 percent) of Other Latinos also classified themselves as multiracial.

The fourth pattern describes Dominicans and Central Americans. For these groups, the other racial term was the preferred racial category in 2000. Nonetheless, Dominicans and Central Americans differed significantly in some respects. For instance, Dominicans were much more likely to prefer the other racial category than were Central Americans, while Central Americans were much more likely to see themselves as white than were Dominicans (40 percent compared with 23 percent, respectively). Among all Latino groups, Dominicans were the most likely to see themselves as black.

Comparison of U.S.- and foreign-born people on the basis of their preferences for racial categories also shows some noteworthy patterns. First, there were significant variations in the racial classification of these groups in the case of Mexicans and Other Latinos in 2000. In each of these cases, U.S.-born individuals were more likely to prefer the white racial category, with their foreign-born counterparts being more likely to choose the other racial classification. Second, Puerto Ricans born outside of the U.S. mainland were more likely to prefer the white racial term compared with those born on the mainland. The same pattern exists among Cubans; indeed, approximately 88 percent of foreign-born Cubans saw themselves as white. Third, foreign-born Dominicans and Central Americans were more likely to prefer the other category and somewhat less likely than their U.S.-born counterparts to select the white racial category.

Because the ways in which racial classification data were collected in 1990 and 2000 are not comparable, it is difficult to make direct comparisons between years. Nonetheless, some general patterns are evident in how Latinos classified themselves. On the whole, the percentages of Latinos classifying themselves as white, black, and other declined somewhat between 1990 and 2000. It is likely that these declines, at least in part, are

associated with the multiracial option that was available to respondents in 2000.

In addition, major shifts took place in how Dominicans classified themselves racially. Overall, the share of Dominicans viewing themselves as black dropped by close to 19 percentage points between 1990 and 2000. In contrast, the percentage of Dominicans reporting themselves racially as other increased by about 15 percentage points over the decade, and in 2000 close to 9 percent of Dominicans classified themselves as multiracial. While some of the change may be due to the distinct ways in which racial information was collected in 1990 and 2000, the differences are large enough to suggest that a more interesting set of social dynamics may be responsible for the observed changes. One such dynamic may involve a conscious decision to distance themselves from blacks.[39] This may be a strategy adopted by more upwardly mobile individuals. However, this is only speculation that requires further study.

Finally, a similar pattern exists in the case of Other Latinos. The percentage of these individuals viewing themselves as white dropped by 16 percentage points between 1990 and 2000, while the percentage selecting the other racial category rose by 15 percentage points. Furthermore, approximately 9 percent of Other Latinos reported themselves as multiracial in 2000. It should be noted, however, that some of this change among Other Latinos might reflect the inclusion of Dominicans, Central Americans, and South Americans in 2000 in this residual category.

Census data provide only hints about how Latinos view themselves racially. In reality, the construction of race is much more complex and dynamic. For instance, Latinos may shift their racial identification in varying contexts and circumstances. In addition, the salience of race as an identifier is likely to vary significantly among groups of Latinos.

Intermarriage

The choice of a spouse represents one of the most intimate decisions that people make. Sociologists have viewed the crossing of racial and ethnic lines in the selection of a spouse as the primary indicator of assimilation.[40] Individuals who have been in the United States for a longer period of time are more likely to be married outside their racial/ethnic groups. The percentage of

Table 7

RACIAL SELF-CLASSIFICATION OF LATINOS BY ETHNIC GROUP AND NATIVITY, 1990 AND 2000

	% white		% black		% other race		% multiracial
Ethnic group	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	2000
Latino	52.2	47.8	2.9	1.8	43.2	42.6	8.4
Mexican	50.4	47.3	0.9	0.7	47.4	45.4	5.2
U.S.-born	53.5	49.8	1.1	0.9	43.8	41.5	6.1
Foreign-born	44.1	43.7	0.6	0.4	54.8	51.0	3.9
Puerto Rican	45.8	47.0	5.9	5.8	47.2	38.4	7.8
Mainland-born	45.6	45.3	6.8	6.8	45.8	36.9	9.7
Non-mainland-born	46.0	49.6	4.7	4.3	48.7	40.5	4.9
Cuban	83.6	84.5	3.8	3.6	12.2	7.2	4.3
U.S.-born	81.8	77.6	5.9	5.7	11.6	8.6	7.3
Foreign-born	84.3	87.6	3.0	2.7	12.5	6.5	2.9
Dominican	28.2	22.5	27.3	8.8	43.2	58.6	8.7
U.S.-born	31.2	25.0	25.1	10.4	42.3	54.1	9.5
Foreign-born	26.9	21.3	28.3	8.1	43.6	60.6	8.4
Central American	44.2	40.4	5.3	3.0	49.3	47.8	7.8
U.S.-born	49.0	40.7	7.6	3.8	41.7	43.6	10.6
Foreign-born	43.0	40.3	4.7	2.7	51.3	49.1	6.9
South American	64.6	59.4	1.5	0.8	32.9	30.2	8.6
U.S.-born	68.2	59.8	1.7	1.2	28.6	27.2	10.8
Foreign-born	63.5	59.3	1.4	0.7	34.3	31.2	7.9
Other Latino	61.1	44.9	4.8	2.1	26.6	41.5	9.4
U.S.-born	63.9	46.9	3.9	2.1	26.6	39.2	9.6
Foreign-born	50.5	39.6	8.3	2.0	26.4	47.5	8.8

Note: The white, black, and "other" racial categories for 2000 are based on individuals who chose a single race.

Sources: Author's estimates using Census 1990 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and Census 2000 1% PUMS.

married Latinos having a non-Latino spouse is used to measure intermarriage. Due to data restrictions associated with the three aggregate Latino groups (Central Americans, South Americans, and Other Latinos), the Latina/o boundary is set broadly, resulting in marriage among members of different Latino groups being treated as "in-marriage" rather than "intermarriage."

Overall, less than 20 percent of married Latinas/os were married to a non-Latina/o in 2000, with females being more likely to be in such marriages than males (see Table 8, right-most columns). However, there is much variation across Latino groups on the prevalence of intermarriage. In general, Puerto Ricans, Central Americans, South Americans, and Other Latinos were the most likely to have a non-Latina/o spouse in 2000. In contrast, Mexicans, Cubans, and Dominicans were the least likely to go outside of the Latino group in selecting a spouse.

U.S.-born individuals are more likely to be intermarried than the foreign-born. The greatest tendency for marriage outside of the Latino group existed among three U.S.-born groups in 2000: Central Americans, South Americans, and Cubans. In contrast, foreign-born Mexicans were the least likely to be wed to non-Latinos, followed by foreign-born Dominicans and Cubans.

Comparison of the intermarriage rates of Latinos between 1990 and 2000 shows a declining tendency to marry outside of the Latino group. This may be due to the relatively larger presence of foreign-born people in the Latino population in 2000 compared with a decade earlier, many of whom are married to people from the same ethnic group. Indeed, background analysis (not shown) reveals that in-married Latinas/os were more likely to consist of foreign-born individuals in 2000 than in 1990, the percentage increasing from 56 percent to 66 percent among Latino men and from 54 percent to 64 percent among Latinas.

This trend held regardless of place of birth. For example, 19 percent of U.S.-born Latino men were married to a foreign-born Latina in 2000 (compared with 15 percent in 1990), while 23 percent of U.S.-born Latina

Table 8

MARRIAGE CHARACTERISTICS OF LATINO MEN AND WOMEN BY ETHNIC GROUP AND NATIVITY, 1990 AND 2000

	% of currently married Latinas/os with a co-ethnic spouse*				% of currently married Latinas/os with a non-Latina/o spouse			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
Ethnic group	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Latino	81.5	84.4	79.9	81.5	18.5	15.7	20.2	18.5
Mexican	81.6	81.7	80.7	80.3	16.0	13.3	16.9	15.1
U.S.-born	72.4	68.0	72.1	65.1	25.4	27.8	25.7	30.4
Foreign-born	91.2	89.7	91.1	90.6	5.7	4.9	6.1	4.9
Puerto Rican	66.0	59.7	67.6	60.7	22.4	25.2	21.5	25.1
Mainland-born	48.5	44.5	51.0	47.3	40.3	40.1	37.3	37.6
Non-mainland-born	74.0	69.4	76.3	70.5	14.3	15.8	13.1	15.9
Cuban	72.7	68.5	76.6	72.8	14.9	16.7	15.3	16.9
U.S.-born	30.1	33.1	37.0	35.3	53.9	49.6	48.1	47.5
Foreign-born	77.1	74.2	81.5	80.1	10.8	11.5	11.2	10.9
Dominican	76.8	70.0	73.0	67.9	7.3	5.3	8.4	12.1
U.S.-born	43.8	42.7	52.6	37.1	28.8	22.7	23.1	21.6
Foreign-born	79.2	72.1	74.9	71.1	5.7	4.0	7.1	11.1
Central American	72.9	62.9	63.1	56.7	11.5	10.3	18.6	17.7
U.S.-born	29.8	28.2	21.3	16.5	55.1	50.1	59.8	60.2
Foreign-born	75.4	65.1	65.6	59.2	8.9	7.9	16.1	15.0
South American	65.2	62.6	60.1	54.6	19.6	17.2	26.2	29.1
U.S.-born	25.0	34.4	23.2	25.3	59.5	45.8	58.4	57.9
Foreign-born	67.8	65.1	62.5	57.7	17.0	14.7	24.1	26.0
Other Latino	50.5	61.9	47.2	55.7	40.9	22.3	43.3	26.1
U.S.-born	46.3	57.8	44.5	52.4	47.4	31.7	47.2	35.1
Foreign-born	62.0	67.4	54.4	60.0	23.1	9.8	33.1	14.2

* Co-ethnic spouse refers to cases where the husband and wife belong to the same specific Latino group (i.e., Mexican, Puerto Rican).

Sources: Author's estimates using Census 1990 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and Census 2000 1% PUMS.

women were married to a foreign-born Latino man in 2000 (compared with 19 percent in 1990).

These trends are even more magnified for Mexicans, the largest Latino group. While foreign-born people made up about half of all in-married Mexican spouses in 1990, 10 years later they accounted for nearly 70 percent of all in-married Mexican spouses. Moreover, 23 percent of U.S.-born Mexican men were married to foreign-born Latinas in 2000 (versus 17 percent in 1990), while 28 percent of U.S.-born Mexican women were married to foreign-born Latino men in 2000 (versus 22 percent in 1990).

The most pronounced declines in intermarriage rates between 1990 and 2000 occurred among Other Latinos and three groups of U.S.-born males: Dominicans, Central Americans, and South Americans. At least a portion of the declines among these groups may be associated with the greater presence of Dominicans, Central Americans, and South Americans in the residual Other Latino group in 2000.

A few groups, most notably U.S.-born Mexicans, experienced slight increases in their propensity to marry non-Latinos between 1990 and 2000.

The observed intermarriage patterns are undoubtedly related to structural factors such as the size of the group (especially true in the case of Mexicans) and sex ratios (number of males per 100 females) within Latino groups.[41] Overall, it is clear that Latino groups vary significantly on the indicators of acculturation and assimilation examined in this report. Place of birth is strongly related to language use, racial identification, and intermarriage.

In a broad sense, certain groups (for example, Cubans and South Americans) have experienced greater acculturation and assimilation. In contrast, Mexicans have generally experienced less acculturation and assimilation, a pattern that is likely to be associated with the large presence of recent immigrants in the population. The acculturation and assimilation patterns observed here influence the socioeconomic standing of Latino groups.

Socioeconomic Status

Research has consistently shown that, as a group, Latinos tend to occupy the lower rungs on the socioeconomic ladder of the United States. Historically, Latinos have had relatively low levels of education, high levels of unemployment, low levels of income, and high poverty rates. Nevertheless, significant variation exists within Latino groups. The standing of these Latino groups depends largely on factors such as the stock of human capital that people possess (for example, education, skills, training, and experience); characteristics of the labor markets where Latinos live; access to higher education; and, for immigrants, the resources that they bring with them to the United States. In general, U.S.-born Latinos and immigrants who have been in the country longer tend to fare better socioeconomically than the foreign-born and recently arrived immigrants.

Educational Attainment

Education represents the primary form of human capital in which workers can invest to maximize their economic returns in the labor market.

High School and College Completion

Overall, only a slight majority of Latinos ages 25 and older were high school graduates in 2000, and only about 11 percent were college graduates (see Table 9, page 369). The educational attainment levels of Latinos are below those of African Americans and far below those of whites. The high school completion rates of African Americans (72 percent) and whites (86 percent) were higher than that of Latinos in 2000. In addition, African Americans were 1.4 times and whites were 2.6 times more likely to hold a college diploma than were Latinos.

Still, Latino groups varied significantly in their educational attainment levels in 2000. For example, Mexicans and Central Americans were the least likely to be high school or college graduates in 2000. In contrast, South Americans had the highest rates of high school and college completion, with a noticeable share of Cubans also having such educational credentials. Only South Americans had a higher rate of high school completion than African Americans, while South Americans and Cubans were the only Latino groups more likely than African Americans to have finished college.

The educational attainment levels of U.S.-born Latinos surpassed those of the foreign-born in 2000. The high school and college completion rates of U.S.-born South Americans and Cubans tied or surpassed those of whites, while the college completion rate of U.S.-born Central Americans was also higher than that of whites.

Regardless of place of birth, however, Mexicans stand apart from other Latino groups in education. Mexicans rank at the bottom in the percentage holding a high school diploma and a college degree. For instance, Mexicans were the only U.S.-born group to have a high school completion rate less than 70 percent in 2000. U.S.-born Mexicans also had the lowest percentage of college graduates among all U.S.-born Latino groups and also were less likely to hold a college diploma than were foreign-born South Americans and Cubans. Foreign-born Mexicans were least likely to complete high school and college. The educational standing of U.S.-born Other Latinos was similar to that of U.S.-born Mexicans.

Comparison of the educational attainment levels in 1990 and 2000 reveals that Latinos as a whole made only slight improvements compared with whites and African Americans. For example, the Latino high school completion rate increased by a mere 3 percentage points, compared with 9 percentage points for African

Americans and 6 percentage points for whites. Similarly, the Latino college completion rate increased only slightly compared with that of whites and African Americans.

With few exceptions, however, almost all of the Latino groups experienced improvements in the percentages of group members completing a high school or college degree between 1990 and 2000. The greatest improvements in high school completion over the decade were recorded by U.S.-born Dominicans and non-mainland-born Puerto Ricans, both of whom increased their high school completion rates to a greater degree than did African Americans. In addition, U.S.-born Cubans and both U.S.- and foreign-born South Americans showed the greatest absolute improvement in college completion rates, with each of these groups showing greater gains than whites.

Dropout Rate

The educational patterns of late teens and young adults provide indications of the educational levels of Latinos in the near future. Nearly one-third of Latinos ages 16 to 24 were high school dropouts in 2000, a significantly higher share than for whites and African Americans. Indeed, Latino youth were approximately four times more likely than their white peers and nearly two times more likely than their African American counterparts to be high school dropouts in 2000.

Variations among the Latino groups on the basis of high school dropout rates mirror the educational attainment patterns described earlier. In particular, Central American and Mexican youth had the most elevated dropout rates in 2000, while Cubans and South Americans had the lowest rates.

Furthermore, foreign-born Latinos ages 16 to 24 were at least twice as likely as their U.S.-born counterparts to be high school dropouts, the one exception being Puerto Ricans, whose rate was similar to that of the mainland-born. Foreign-born Mexicans had the highest dropout rates in 2000, with the majority not having a high school diploma; nearly half of foreign-born Central Americans were in the same situation. It is likely that some of these young people are not really

Table 9

EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF LATINOS BY ETHNIC GROUP AND NATIVITY, 1990 AND 2000

	% of people ages 25 and older				% of 16-to-24-year-olds	
	High school graduates		College graduates		High school dropouts	
Group	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
White	79.1	85.5	22.0	27.0	10.3	8.7
African American	63.3	72.4	11.5	14.3	17.7	16.8
Latino	50.0	52.5	9.1	10.5	30.5	31.5
Mexican	44.5	45.8	6.3	7.6	34.3	35.9
U.S.-born	61.0	68.6	8.6	12.4	21.1	19.5
Foreign-born	24.8	30.0	3.5	4.3	53.0	55.4
Puerto Rican	53.5	63.2	9.5	12.2	26.0	23.6
Mainland-born	72.2	76.0	13.0	14.3	23.4	21.4
Non-mainland-born	44.8	54.3	7.9	10.7	31.4	29.2
Cuban	56.7	63.1	16.5	21.1	14.3	13.6
U.S.-born	81.0	85.2	26.3	35.9	9.8	9.2
Foreign-born	53.7	59.1	15.3	18.4	20.4	22.6
Dominican	43.1	51.6	7.8	10.3	26.3	19.6
U.S.-born	63.0	77.6	14.9	19.4	15.4	12.2
Foreign-born	41.7	49.1	7.3	9.5	31.8	23.7
Central American	45.5	45.8	8.8	9.5	35.7	38.7
U.S.-born	80.7	79.8	25.4	30.1	11.4	11.3
Foreign-born	43.3	43.6	7.8	8.2	40.1	45.6
South American	70.6	77.0	19.2	25.1	12.4	12.6
U.S.-born	85.7	87.7	34.7	40.6	6.2	6.2
Foreign-born	69.5	75.9	18.1	23.4	16.1	15.7
Other Latino	65.9	60.7	14.8	11.9	18.7	24.0
U.S.-born	69.2	70.7	13.6	12.9	16.9	18.8
Foreign-born	57.4	46.6	18.1	10.5	25.3	37.7

Sources: Author's estimates using Census 1990 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and Census 2000 1% PUMS.

"dropouts" because they never "dropped in" to schools in the United States. That is, they came to this country to work and never did enroll in school. In contrast, South American youth had the lowest dropout rate among foreign-born groups.

Finally, while the dropout rate of white and African American youth declined slightly between 1990 and 2000, the rate of Latino youth increased slightly. Although the dropout rates of most Latino groups remained fairly stable during the decade, the rates of foreign-born Dominican youth fell substantially, while those of foreign-born Other Latinos and foreign-born Central Americans increased noticeably. Again, interpreting the changes among these groups requires caution due to the greater presence of Dominicans, Central Americans, and South Americans in the residual Other Latino group in 2000.

As a group, Latinos do not fare well in educational attainment. However, low standing in education is particularly apparent in the case of Mexicans, with South Americans and Cubans faring much more favorably.

Work

The low educational levels of Latinos, especially Mexicans, determine the types of jobs that they hold.

Employment and Unemployment

Nearly 70 percent of Latino males 16 and older were in the labor force in 2000, a rate that was somewhat lower than that of white males, but significantly higher than that of African American males (see Table 10). However, Latina females had a substantially lower rate of labor force participation in 2000 than did African American and white females.

Central Americans and South Americans had the highest rates of labor force participation within the Latino population in each sex category, with nearly 75 percent of males and slightly below 60 percent of females being in the labor force. The rates of males from these groups surpass the labor force participation rate of white males, while those of females approximate those of white and African American females.

Table 10

LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS OF LATINO MEN AND WOMEN BY ETHNIC GROUP AND NATIVITY, 1990 AND 2000

	% of people ages 16 and older in the labor force				% of workers with earnings who are self-employed	
	Males		Females			
Group	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
White	75.1	72.5	56.4	57.8	10.2	10.7
African American	66.6	60.5	59.6	59.6	3.6	4.4
Latino	78.8	69.3	56.0	53.1	6.1	6.8
Mexican	80.3	71.3	55.3	51.9	5.5	6.2
U.S.-born	76.0	68.3	59.0	59.7	5.3	5.2
Foreign-born	85.1	73.4	50.2	44.8	5.8	7.1
Puerto Rican	71.3	63.4	50.7	55.0	3.9	4.5
Mainland-born	73.3	68.1	59.8	63.7	3.3	4.3
Non-mainland-born	69.9	58.9	44.8	47.2	4.4	4.8
Cuban	75.2	61.7	55.8	49.3	11.3	11.7
U.S.-born	73.1	68.2	67.6	66.1	6.0	7.3
Foreign-born	75.7	59.9	53.4	45.0	12.5	13.1
Dominican	75.0	65.6	53.4	53.9	6.1	7.8
U.S.-born	62.6	62.3	58.0	61.8	3.2	4.2
Foreign-born	77.0	66.2	52.8	52.6	6.5	8.5
Central American	84.8	74.7	64.1	57.2	6.2	7.9
U.S.-born	74.4	69.4	66.8	66.2	4.3	4.8
Foreign-born	85.7	75.2	63.9	56.3	6.3	8.2
South American	84.2	74.3	63.1	59.2	9.3	9.8
U.S.-born	71.5	75.0	68.4	68.8	5.2	5.0
Foreign-born	86.1	74.1	62.3	57.8	9.9	10.6
Other Latino	73.4	63.8	58.2	53.2	7.5	7.4
U.S.-born	72.6	64.7	58.3	57.3	7.1	6.2
Foreign-born	75.5	62.5	58.1	46.6	8.5	9.3

Sources: Author's estimates using Census 1990 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and Census 2000 1% PUMS.

In contrast, Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Other Latino men had the lowest rates of participation in the labor force, while Cuban and Mexican females were the least likely be part of the labor force. The relatively low labor force participation rates of Cubans are due to the group's relatively older age structure: Close to one-fourth of the Cuban working-age population 16 and older was age 65 or older in 2000.

There are clear distinctions in the labor force participation rates of females on the basis of nativity. In each of the seven Latino groups, U.S.-born females were significantly more likely than their foreign-born counterparts to be part of the labor force in 2000, with the nativity gap being the greatest among Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans. Five groups of U.S.-born Latinas had participation levels that surpassed 60 percent: South Americans, Central Americans, Cubans, mainland-born Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans. Among foreign-born females, South Americans and Central Americans had the highest levels of labor force involvement, with Mexicans and Cubans being the least likely to be part of the labor force. The low levels of participation in the labor force among foreign-born women, especially Mexicans, Other Latinas, and non-mainland-born Puerto Ricans, have important implications for the sustenance of families as well as for gender role changes. The difference in labor force rates between the sexes is greatest among foreign-born Mexicans.

In the case of males, nativity was not as important a distinguishing factor of labor force participation in 2000 as it was in 1990. In 1990, with only one exception (Puerto Ricans), foreign-born males had higher rates of labor force activity than U.S.-born Latino males. This changed in 2000, with the foreign-born labor force participation rates being higher than those of the U.S.-born in only three cases—Mexicans, Dominicans, and Central Americans. Four groups of males had labor force participation rates above 70 percent: foreign-born Central Americans, foreign-born and U.S.-born South Americans, and foreign-born Mexicans. In contrast, four other groups had rates lower than 63 percent: non-mainland-born Puerto Ricans, foreign-born Cubans, U.S.-born Dominicans, and foreign-born Other Latinos. Again, the low rate of Cubans reflects their older age structure. However, the low labor force participation rates of non-mainland-born Puerto Ricans and foreign-born Other Latinos among males and females places members of these groups in a vulnerable economic position. The labor force participation rates of U.S.-born Dominican males and females are quite similar, a pattern that parallels African Americans.

Comparison of labor force participation rates between 1990 and 2000 shows fairly consistent declines. The rates of Latino males dropped from 79 percent in 1990 to 69 percent in 2000, with the labor force participation rate of African American males also falling by 6 percentage points. While white males also experienced a decline in labor force participation, it was fairly modest. The labor force declines were greatest for foreign-born men in the following order: Cubans, Other Latinos, South Americans, Mexicans, non-mainland-born Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Central Americans.

Among U.S.-born males, Other Latinos and Mexicans experienced the steepest declines in labor force activity rates. U.S.-born South American males were the only group of males that experienced an increase in their labor force activity rates. The changes were more moderate among females.

The labor force participation rates of Latinas dropped only slightly, from 56 percent in 1990 to 53 percent in 2000, although the rate of white females increased slightly and that of African American females remained unchanged. The greatest declines in female labor force participation rates took place among three foreign-born groups: Other Latinas, Cubans, and Central Americans. However, there were some groups of women that actually experienced increases in their labor force participation rates—Puerto Ricans, U.S.-born Dominicans, U.S.-born Mexicans, and U.S.-born South Americans.

It is not clear what factors are associated with the significant drops in the labor force participation rates of Latino males, especially among the foreign-born. A series of background analyses failed to reveal any adequate explanation. One possibility that could have had some effect on the slippage of the labor force participation rates is a change that occurred in the census item asking people about their labor force activities. In 1990, the census asked (about all members of each household), "Did this person work at any time LAST WEEK?" In 2000, the form asked, "LAST WEEK, did this person do ANY work for either pay or profit?" It is possible that the addition of "for either pay or profit" may have caused some confusion or resulted in people responding differently than they would have if these words had not been part of the question.

Another potential reason could be that Latino workers, especially foreign-born males, dropped out of the labor force because of difficulties in obtaining employment. That is, they may have become discouraged workers who were not actively seeking employment at the time of the 2000 Census. There are some hints that this could have taken place.

For example, during the same 10-year period when the Latino male labor force participation rate dropped significantly, the unemployment rate of Latino males dropped from 10 percent in 1990 to 8 percent in 2000. The drop was less than a percentage point for Latina workers, whose rate was around 11 percent. Moreover, among four groups of Latino males—Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Central Americans—the foreign-born experienced greater declines in their unemployment rates between 1990 and 2000 than did the U.S.-born. Each of these groups of foreign-born males had relatively high

unemployment rates in 1990—foreign-born Dominicans, non-mainland-born Puerto Ricans, foreign-born Mexicans, and foreign-born Central Americans.

Yet another possibility for the significant decline in the labor force participation rate of Latinos is associated with the reduction in the undercount between the 1990 and 2000 censuses. If people who were not counted in 1990 were not well off socioeconomically, their enumeration in 2000 could possibly skew socioeconomic comparisons including labor force participation rates. Nonetheless, these potential explanations are tentative; they have not been subjected to empirical examination.

Type of Job

Despite changes in the levels of labor force involvement between 1990 and 2000, Latino workers continue to be clustered in particular types of jobs. Sixty-eight percent of Latino male workers worked in three occupational categories in 2000: production, transportation, and material moving; construction, extraction, and maintenance; and service. White and African American males were also clustered in certain occupations, albeit somewhat different ones: 70 percent of white men were employed in three occupations (managerial, professional, and related; production, transportation, and material moving; and sales and office); 67 percent of African American men were employed in three occupations (production, transportation, and material moving; service; and sales and office). Women were even more concentrated in a narrow set of occupations. For example, 81 percent of Latina workers worked in three occupations in 2000: sales and office; service; and managerial, professional, and related. White and African American women were even more concentrated in these same three occupations.

However, there are significant differences across Latino groups in the type of jobs that people perform. Among males, South Americans and Cubans have similar occupational profiles. U.S.- and foreign-born males from these groups, which have the highest levels of education, are the most likely to hold jobs in management, professional, and related occupations. Approximately one-third of U.S.-born South Americans, U.S.-born Cubans, and whites work in this category of occupations.

On the other hand, Mexican and Other Latino males, as well as foreign-born Central Americans, were the most likely to be working in blue-collar occupations: production, transportation, and material moving; and construction, extraction, and maintenance. African Americans, foreign-born Central Americans, foreign-born Mexicans, and foreign-born Dominicans, along with mainland-born Puerto Ricans, were the most likely to be employed in service occupations.

Among women, U.S.-born Cubans, South Americans, and Central Americans, as well as whites, were the most likely to hold management, professional, and related occupations. In addition, U.S.-born Latinas in all groups had the highest levels of work in sales and office occupations. In contrast, five groups of foreign-born Latinas (Central Americans, Other Latinas, Mexicans, Dominicans, and South Americans) were the most likely to be working in service occupations. A significant percentage of foreign-born Mexican, Dominican, Other Latina, and Central American women worked in production, transportation, and material-moving occupations.

The types of jobs that people hold are related to their place of birth, human capital resources, and gender. Certain occupations that offer low wages and limited benefits tend to be filled quite heavily by immigrant workers. Census data indicate that Latino immigrants are disproportionately involved in building, constructing, transporting, serving, cleaning, and taking care of the day-to-day needs of the U.S. public.

Self-Employment

When opportunities are limited in the general labor market, some workers may opt for self-employment.[42] Overall, about 7 percent of Latino paid workers worked for themselves in 2000, a rate that is lower than that of whites (11 percent) but somewhat higher than that of African Americans (around 4 percent).

Among Latinos, foreign-born groups with greater economic resources are more likely to pursue self-employment. Foreign-born Cubans and South Americans were the most likely to be working for themselves. In contrast, U.S.-born Dominicans, Central Americans, South Americans, and Mexicans, as well as mainland-born Puerto Ricans, were the least likely to be self-employed.

Overall, between 1990 and 2000, most Latino groups as well as whites and African Americans experienced relatively small increases in the percentages of their members who were self-employed.

The labor market patterns of Latinos show one commonality: declining labor force participation rates, especially among foreign-born males. This may reflect rising discouragement among workers, who then drop out of the labor force. Nonetheless, Cubans and South Americans had the most favorable labor market experiences across the different indicators examined. These groups were also the most likely to be self-employed. In contrast, foreign-born Mexicans, Central Americans, Dominicans, and Other Latinos were clustered in low-paying jobs with limited benefits that rely heavily on immigrant workers.

Income and Earnings

The educational and labor force experiences of Latinos are important in determining their earnings and household incomes. Being an immigrant is another determinant, tending to reduce earnings and income. Given the

differences among Latino groups in schooling, work, and nativity, their economic positions are apt to vary as well.

Median Hourly Wage

On average, Latino workers earned a median hourly wage of $10 in 1999, with the median hourly pay of whites and African Americans being noticeably higher (see Table 11). Latino workers earned 69 cents and 83 cents for each dollar that whites and African Americans earned in hourly wages, respectively.

The Latino groups differed noticeably, however, in their median hourly wages. Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and South Americans had the highest hourly wages in 1999, while Central Americans, Mexicans, and Dominicans had the lowest. In general, U.S.-born individuals earned higher wages than their foreign-born counterparts. Nonetheless, some foreign-born groups are included among the five groups with the highest median hourly wages: U.S.-born Cubans, U.S.-born South Americans, mainland-born Puerto Ricans, foreign-born Cubans, and non-mainland-born Puerto Ricans. Moreover, the median earnings of foreign-born South Americans surpassed those of three U.S.-born groups: Other Latinos, Dominicans, and Mexicans.

Four foreign-born groups had median hourly pay below $10 in 1999: Mexicans, Central Americans, Dominicans, and Other Latinos. Mexicans again ranked at the bottom of each nativity group on the basis of their median hourly wage. This ranking reflects the group's low level of education and its concentration in low-paying jobs, especially in the case of foreign-born Mexicans.

The median hourly wage of Latino workers remained unchanged between 1989 and 1999, while the median hourly wage of whites rose by 9 percent, and that of African Americans increased by more than 8 percent. Thus, Latino workers lost economic ground compared with both white and African American workers

Table 11

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF LATINOS BY ETHNIC GROUP AND NATIVITY, 1989 AND 1999

	Median hourly wages ($) of workers employed for at least 1,040 hours in		Median household income ($)		% of people in poverty	
Group	1989*	1999	1989*	1999	1989	1999
White	13.24	14.42	40,986	45,100	8.9	8.0
African American	11.09	12.02	25,635	29,200	29.1	24.6
Latino	9.98	10.00	31,149	33,800	25.0	22.4
Mexican	9.36	9.62	30,876	33,600	26.0	23.4
U.S.-born	10.63	11.06	32,554	36,100	24.2	21.6
Foreign-born	8.11	8.55	28,553	31,900	29.5	26.0
Puerto Rican	11.83	11.98	27,255	30,300	31.3	25.0
Mainland-born	12.12	12.02	32,447	35,000	31.5	24.9
Non-mainland-born	11.51	11.54	24,775	27,400	31.2	25.2
Cuban	11.68	12.12	36,083	36,900	14.3	14.6
U.S.-born	12.17	13.58	42,180	48,300	13.7	12.6
Foreign-born	11.58	11.72	35,042	34,600	14.6	15.4
Dominican	9.46	9.62	25,957	29,000	32.4	25.7
U.S.-born	10.04	11.13	31,149	35,000	37.9	28.8
Foreign-born	9.36	9.62	25,459	28,350	30.1	24.3
Central American	8.56	9.13	31,994	35,000	23.8	19.8
U.S.-born	11.63	11.43	40,705	40,000	20.1	21.9
Foreign-born	8.32	8.99	31,186	35,000	24.8	19.2
South American	11.23	11.54	39,195	40,320	14.2	15.3
U.S.-born	11.72	12.61	41,547	39,800	13.4	13.4
Foreign-born	11.23	11.30	38,936	40,710	14.5	15.9
Other Latino	11.23	10.49	33,095	33,100	19.8	21.0
U.S.-born	11.38	11.15	32,447	33,500	19.8	20.6
Foreign-born	10.92	9.62	36,335	33,000	19.7	21.9

*The 1989 median hourly wages and median household incomes have been adjusted to 1999 dollars using the Bureau of Labor Statistics' experimental Consumer Price Index (CPI-U-RS). The index for the 1947-2002 period is available at www.census.gov/hhes/income/income02/cpiurs.html.

Sources: Author's estimates using Census 1990 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and Census 2000 1% PUMS.

between 1989 and 1999. However, this is likely due to the larger presence of foreign-born people in the Latino population in 2000 compared with the earlier decade.

Indeed, in analyses by nativity, most Latino groups experienced increases in their median hourly wages between 1989 and 1999. Two U.S.-born groups, Cubans and Dominicans, recorded the greatest gains in earnings over the decade, surpassing even the level of wage increases of whites and African Americans. Among the four Latino groups that experienced declines in their earnings, foreign-born Other Latinos had the steepest fall in their wages. Again, caution should be used in interpreting this finding given the greater presence of Dominicans, Central Americans, and South Americans in the residual Other Latino group in 2000.

Median Income

The patterns related to household income are somewhat different from those based on the hourly wage. Latino households had a median income of $33,800 in 1999, compared with a median household income of $45,100 for whites and $29,200 for African Americans. Hence, the typical Latino household had about 75 cents for every one dollar that a white household possessed in 1999 and $1.16 for every one dollar held by an African American household. Yet Latinos lagged significantly behind both whites and African Americans when the focus was on median hourly wages. What could explain the different results? Put simply, the median hourly wage reflects the earnings of individual workers, while the median household income is based on the income of all household members. Latino households were more likely to contain three or more workers than were white and African American households. In 1999, 23 percent of Latino households had at least three workers, compared with 15 percent of white and 14 percent of African American households.

There are significant variations in the median household incomes of Latino groups. South Americans, Cubans, and Central Americans had the highest median household incomes in 1999, at $35,000 or higher. On the other hand, Dominicans and Puerto Ricans—the groups with the highest percentages of female-headed households—had the lowest median household incomes.

With only one exception (South Americans), households with U.S.-born householders had higher median incomes than those with foreign-born householders. Households headed by U.S.-born Cubans had a median income of $48,300 in 1999, a level that surpassed the median income of white households. Three other groups—foreign- and U.S.-born South Americans and U.S.-born Central Americans—had median incomes that were approximately $40,000. On the other side of the continuum, non-mainland-born Puerto Ricans, foreign-born Dominicans, and foreign-born Mexicans had the lowest median household incomes, with the median household incomes of the first two of these groups being lower than that of African Americans.

Between 1989 and 1999, the median income of Latino households rose by 8.5 percent. Nevertheless, the median incomes of African American and white households increased at a faster pace during the same period.

Most Latino groups saw increases in their median household incomes between 1989 and 1999. Households headed by U.S.-born Cubans experienced the sharpest rise, with their median income going up by more than 14 percent during the decade, outpacing the gains of white and African American households. Six other Latino groups had changes in their median household incomes that were greater than 10 percent: U.S.-born Dominicans, foreign-born Central Americans, foreign-born Mexicans, foreign-born Dominicans, U.S.-born Mexicans, and non-mainland-born Puerto Ricans. The median incomes of each of these groups increased at a slightly faster rate between 1989 and 1999 than did that of white households.

Poverty

Slightly more than 20 percent of Latinos were living in poverty in 1999, compared with 8 percent of whites and 25 percent of African Americans.

There is some variability in the poverty rate across Latino groups. The highest poverty rates in 1999 occurred among Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and foreign-born Mexicans—all with rates around 25 percent. The former two groups have relatively high rates of female-headed households, and the latter has a low average level of education. In contrast, less than 17 percent of South Americans and Cubans were impoverished. However, there does not appear to be an association between nativity and poverty rates. This is likely due to the young age structure of the U.S.-born population, which includes the U.S.-born children of foreign-born individuals.

The poverty rate of the overall Latino population declined by 3 percentage points between 1989 and 1999, compared with a drop of 1 percentage point among whites and 5 percentage points among African Americans (see Table 11, page 373). With few exceptions, most Latino groups experienced reductions in their poverty rates between 1989 and 1999 as well. The most impressive absolute declines in poverty rates during the decade took place among Dominicans (regardless of nativity), mainland-born Puerto Ricans, and foreign-born Central Americans. Each group experienced greater reductions in its poverty rate than did African Americans. Still, caution is in order in interpreting these changes because it is likely that some Dominicans and Central Americans were part of the residual Other Latino group in 2000.

Certain groups are especially likely to be in poverty. In particular, the risk of poverty is significantly higher

Table 12

POVERTY RATES FOR LATINO HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY TYPES BY ETHNIC GROUP, 1999

	Poverty rate of households with own children (%)		Poverty rate of children in household (%)	
Ethnic group	Married-couple	Female-headed	Married-couple	Female-headed
Latino	17.1	46.6	19.8	49.5
Mexican	19.6	46.8	22.3	50.0
Puerto Rican	11.1	49.0	13.1	52.0
Cuban	7.9	32.3	10.4	37.6
Dominican	14.5	51.0	17.3	54.7
Central American	13.7	44.7	15.5	45.3
South American	10.9	36.4	12.1	41.2
Other Latino	14.8	46.7	15.9	47.5

Source: Author's estimates using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

for female-headed families with children. Overall, about 47 percent of Latino families with children headed by females were in poverty in 1999, a rate that was nearly three times higher than that of Latino married-couple families (see Table 12). This pattern exists across the seven Latino groups, the gaps being especially great in the case of Puerto Rican and Cuban family households. The highest poverty rates among female-headed families occurred among Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and Other Latinos. This household form was most prevalent among Puerto Ricans and Dominicans.

Overall, one of two Latino children living in female-headed families were poor in 1999, compared with one of five Latino children who were part of married-couple families. Female-headed households are likely to have special needs—including the need for economic resources, child care, flexible work schedules, and health insurance. The poverty rates of Mexican married-couple families with children are also relatively high, with more than 20 percent of such families being poor.

The results of this analysis show some segments of the Latino population are doing well along many dimensions, in some instances having social and economic patterns that mirror those of the white population. South Americans and Cubans, in particular, consistently surpass their Latino counterparts socioeconomically. On the other hand, Mexicans, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and Other Latinos tend to fare worse on a variety of socioeconomic indicators. Across the different Latino groups, female-headed families with children are especially at risk for being in poverty.

The foregoing analysis did not consider the extent to which social and economic patterns vary by the length of time that immigrants have lived in the United States, or the degree to which the observed differences between U.S.- and foreign-born groups are associated with differences in age structure. These matters are taken up next, focusing on Mexicans, the largest Latino population.

THE SPECIAL CASE OF MEXICANS

For this analysis, Mexicans are divided into five categories: U.S.-born; immigrated before 1970; immigrated during the 1970s; immigrated in the 1980s; and immigrated in the 1990s. The focus is on several indicators: English fluency, U.S. citizenship status, high school completion, labor force participation, occupation, median hourly wage, and poverty.

One word of caution is that these data are cross-sectional, based on one point in time; thus, the data provide merely a snapshot of the social and economic standing of these groups at the time of the 2000 Census. It is impossible to know the social and economic characteristics of foreign-born Mexicans who had previously been in the United States but were not in the country at the time of the 2000 Census. To the extent that individuals who returned to Mexico fare poorly on social and economic characteristics, this analysis could potentially be overestimating the influence of length of time in the United States on the social and economic indicators of interest.

Overall, foreign-born Mexicans ages 25 to 44 who had been in the United States for a longer period fared better on a variety of social and economic dimensions than those who had been in the country for a shorter period of time (see Table 13). In some cases, those who immigrated before 1970 did as well or better than U.S.-born Mexicans. Mexicans who had been in the United States for a longer time were more likely to be fluent in English, to be U.S. citizens, to have higher wages, and to have lower poverty rates. They were also more likely to hold management, professional, and related occupations and less likely to be working in the other five occupations than were Mexican immigrants who had been in the country for a shorter period. In addition, Mexican women who had been in the United States longer were more likely to be in the labor force. However, length of residence was more modestly related to educational attainment and to men's labor force participation.

These findings augment the results presented earlier based on comparisons between U.S.- and foreign-born Mexicans. The cross-sectional results do not support accusations commonly leveled against Mexican immigrants that they fail to learn English, shun U.S. citizenship, and remain trapped at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. Nonetheless, longitudinal data are necessary to more fully examine the veracity of such claims.

Latinos and the Future U.S. Population

Over the last several decades, the racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. population has changed markedly. Minorities are increasing their presence in the United States and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The Latino population is driving these transformations. While today one of every eight residents of the United States is Latino, it is projected that Latinos could account for one of every five residents by 2035, one of every four by 2055, and one of every three by 2100. Latinos are already having a significant impact on the various societal institutions and on all segments of society in the United States. Although Latinos represented hardly a blip on the national radar screen only a few decades ago, demographic processes have made Latinos critical to the future social and economic direction of the United States.

Ongoing immigration has significantly affected the Latino experience in the United States. The continued flows of Latino immigrants ensure that the Spanish language and diverse Latino cultures will endure in the United States. The combination of established and newcomer Latinos in the United States further enhances the diversity that exists across and within Latino groups. The growth of the Latino population has led to a blurring of many boundaries. Transnational migration has blurred international and identity boundaries. Immigration has blurred the boundaries associated with nativity, even within families. The increasing use of Spanish through its dominance in foreign-language instruction in colleges and universities, its entrance into mainstream popular culture, and the bilingual context in which many Latinos operate have also blurred language boundaries.

The experiences of the various Latino groups in the United States have been quite different, and even the blurring of place and linguistic boundaries has not eliminated one important distinction. Mexicans and Puerto Ricans are the two groups that were initially incorporated into the United States through warfare. They have been viewed as "colonized groups."[43] Throughout their long history in the United States, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans have occupied a low position in the nation's social and economic hierarchy. As the analysis presented above has shown, even U.S.-born Mexicans and mainland-born Puerto Ricans occupy a low socioeconomic position among the various groups that constitute the Latino population. In contrast, other Latino groups have come to the United States as voluntary immigrants, either escaping political persecution or in search of economic opportunity. By and large, these groups have tended to fare better socially and economically, the exception being Dominicans and foreign-born Central Americans.

There are looming questions related to the future of Latinos in the United States. Will their experience in the United States be similar to that of European and Asian immigrants, or to that of African Americans? It is fairly clear that some segments of the Latino population are experiencing upward mobility, suggesting that they are

Table 13
Selected Social and Economic Characteristics of Mexicans Ages 25 to 44, by Nativity and Period of U.S. Entry, 2000

		% of foreign-born by period of U.S. entry			
Characteristic	U.S.-born	< 1970	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-2000
Percent speaking English well/very well	96.9	90.8	71.7	51.8	32.4
Percent U.S. citizens	100.0	67.9	47.1	25.6	6.5
Percent high school graduates	75.4	62.0	38.8	30.9	30.9
Percent in labor force					
Males	79.4	82.3	77.7	75.9	78.3
Females	71.6	68.8	59.4	49.2	42.6
Percent of workers by occupation					
Management, professional, and related	24.8	24.2	11.9	7.5	6.4
Service	16.3	17.3	18.4	23.3	27.3
Sales and office	28.8	25.3	18.7	11.6	10.1
Farming, fishing, and forestry	1.2	3.3	4.9	6.9	7.4
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	12.1	10.9	16.5	18.7	20.5
Production, transport, and material moving	16.7	19.1	29.7	32.1	26.3
Median hourly wage (1,040+ hours in 1999)	$12.02	$13.02	$10.94	$9.23	$7.69
Percent in poverty	13.4	14.4	17.2	23.7	29.5

Source: Author's estimates using Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

following the path of European and some groups of Asian immigrants. In particular, Cubans and South Americans lead the various social and economic hierarchies within the Latino population. With some exceptions, members of these groups have arrived in the United States with human capital and socioeconomic resources that have helped them achieve upward mobility. Moreover, especially in the case of Cubans, the development of ethnic business enclaves has provided opportunities for upward mobility for co-ethnics who lack English abilities to compete in the larger labor market.[44] In addition, Central Americans show evidence of some degree of upward mobility, suggesting that with the passage of time they could follow the social and economic paths of Cubans and South Americans and more generally of European immigrants.

It is less clear what path the remaining four groups (Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Other Latinos) will follow. This set includes groups viewed as colonized minority groups (Mexicans and Puerto Ricans) as well as groups that have a relatively high proportion of members who are black (Puerto Ricans and Dominicans). Because of its diverse nature and because of the potential methodological problems in identifying the group, it is difficult to draw any substantive conclusions or inferences about the Other Latino population. Furthermore, Latinos with darker skins and indigenous features fare worse in the United States, as they do in the Latin American countries from which they originate, thus adding complexity to the determination of the social and economic future of the diverse Latino groups.[45]

The case of the Mexican-origin population stands out. On many crucial socioeconomic indictors, Mexicans are ranked at the bottom among U.S.-born and foreign-born groups. Foreign-born Cubans and South Americans consistently fared better socioeconomically than did U.S.-born Mexicans. Particularly disturbing is that Mexicans represent the largest segment of the Latino population—nearly 60 percent—and that this is the group that has been in the United States the longest.

The extremely low educational attainment of Mexicans does not bode well. This trend is consistent with the research of Alejandro Portes and Ruben Rumbaut, who observe that Mexican youth are consistently at the bottom on educational achievement and aspirations as well as on self-esteem.[46] They observe that third- and higher-generation Mexican Americans are especially disadvantaged in these respects. They conclude:

> "This comparison offers no grounds for expecting that academic performance [of the third- and higher-generation Mexican Americans] will improve and dropout rates will decline over time."[47]

Given the ongoing population changes, the importance of lifting the educational attainment levels of Mexicans cannot be exaggerated. The challenge is made more difficult given that Mexican families and households have limited resources. David Lopez and Richard Stanton-Salazar point out that Mexicans "lack many of the resources that have allowed other recent groups of newcomers to thrive."[48] Although Mexicans face the biggest challenges, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans also have hardships, with high poverty rates and low median household incomes.

Measures to improve the social and economic standing of Mexican and other Latino groups need to be considered in the context of projected U.S. population changes. The major growth in the Latino population will occur among the school-age and working-age populations. The white population will continue to age and decline over the next several decades as baby boomers retire. The nation will increasingly have to rely on Latinos to provide the resources necessary to sustain an aging population.[49] It is imperative that Latino youth be prepared to participate effectively in an increasingly technological and global labor force. This is a massive task given the low socioeconomic resources and educational attainment levels of major segments of the Latino population.

To improve the educational standing of Mexicans and all Latinos, teachers, parents, and policymakers need to keep children in school. Many measures would help do this:

- Partnerships between local schools and universities that introduce high school students to future academic possibilities and ease the transition to college;
- Mentoring and internship programs that allow youth to learn from professionals in their fields of interest;
- Programs that integrate older immigrant children into academic life at the middle school and high school levels;
- Programs that integrate Latino parents into local schools; and
- Legislation that removes financial and legal barriers preventing noncitizen children who have been residing in the United States for a certain period of time from pursuing higher education.

The improvement of the social and economic conditions of Latinos will also require the elimination of discrimination and racism, which have historically hindered the progress of Latinos.

The Latino population needs to be seen as a valuable resource for this country. U.S. institutions will increasingly be affected by and dependent on Latinos in the coming decades. For example, the business community will increasingly rely on Latinos as entrepreneurs, employees, investors, and consumers. The bilingual and bicultural nature of the Latino population also makes Latinos a valuable resource as the U.S. business commu-

nity expands its consumer markets and business operations into Latin America. The higher education system will increasingly find Latinos among the ranks of potential students and educators. Political institutions will find that Latinos will play an increasingly powerful role in the outcome of elections, both as voters and as political candidates. Additionally, the health care system will increasingly see Latinos as health care recipients and providers. Religious institutions will find that their potential adherents and leaders will increasingly be Latinos. These trends are well underway in the largest states and at the national level; the rising dispersion of Latinos into parts of the country that traditionally have not had Latino populations suggests that all parts of the country will feel the impact of Latino growth.

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African Americans and the Color Line

By Michael A. Stoll

Continuing Debate

Almost 100 years ago, W. E. B. Dubois, the world-renowned scholar and political activist, declared that in America, "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line."[1] With 350 years or so of legalized slavery abolished just 40 years before, recent efforts at Reconstruction firmly defeated, and Jim Crow-style racial segregation taking hold in the South, where most blacks lived, few students of race relations at the time would have disputed DuBois' claim. Indeed, many would have agreed then that race was the most important, if not the sole, factor determining the life chances of African Americans in the United States.[2]

But much has changed in America's political economy in the 100 years since DuBois' prophetic declaration. Blacks' migration out of the South to the North, coupled with steady economic growth after the Great Depression and postwar periods, began to change the socioeconomic profile of African Americans. This change, in conjunction with the enduring struggle of the civil rights movement, which helped end de jure segregation and codify blacks' rights in the civic sphere in the 1960s, brought new hope that African Americans' dreams and aspirations for a better life could actually be realized.

Events in the late 1960s and early 1970s bolstered these aspirations. As a result of Great Society program efforts, strong federal enforcement of antidiscrimination laws, and expanding affirmative action programs, blacks made their greatest social and economic gains in the 20th century on a host of dimensions—both absolutely and especially relative to whites.[3]

The persistence of gains made during the 1980s introduced a new debate about the future prospects of African Americans. Some argued that, as a result of declining negative attitudes and behaviors toward African Americans, race was no longer the sole or even the most important determinant of African Americans' opportunities in the social and economic sphere. As evidence, many pointed to steady, absolute black progress on social and economic indicators and to the growth of a solid black middle class.[4] The implication of this argument is profound in the modern era, suggesting a declining need for government intervention to improve the lives of African Americans since social and economic mechanisms appear to be ensuring this progress.

Others, however, held that race was still an important influence in the life chances of blacks in the United States. They argued that persistent discrimination, coupled with a reduced federal role, continued to limit the potential economic and social gains of African Americans. As evidence they showed that, when viewed in relation to gains among whites, African Americans' progress on a host of dimensions either stalled or reversed during the 1980s, implying a continuing need for a government role in providing a level societal playing field and in securing continued black economic and social progress.[5]

This report advances the continuing discussion of African Americans' economic and social progress in America. Using the latest results from Census 2000 and other current data sources, it examines whether African Americans continued to make gains during the 1990s, especially relative to whites. Some would argue that a focus on black-white comparisons in this age of rapidly growing diversity is too narrow. The swift growth of other minority populations, in particular of Hispanics, in the last 20 years or so perhaps justifies a more dynamic comparison among racial and ethnic groups. Yet it is arguable that the racial division between blacks and whites shapes the unfolding racial and ethnic relations in the United States precisely because of the historically significant role of slavery, legalized segregation, and black-white conflict. In response to these concerns, this report focuses on comparisons between blacks and whites but does examine—where appropriate and where space permits—other groups that are growing rapidly, such as Hispanics and Asian Americans.

The African American experience since the beginning of slavery in the 16th century has been shaped by the fight to gain equal rights—the right to freedom, the right to own property, and the right to attend school. In the modern era, these fights have included movements to secure the right to vote, to enjoy public accommodations, and to choose where to live.

But since the 1960s, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, after civil rights were achieved at least on paper,

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African Americans' struggles for equality have increasingly moved to the economic sphere. This report focuses on blacks' relative gains during the 1990s in employment, earnings, family income, poverty reduction, and wealth. Except where noted, the analysis compares the non-Hispanic black population to the non-Hispanic white population. Also examined is the incarceration rate of African Americans.

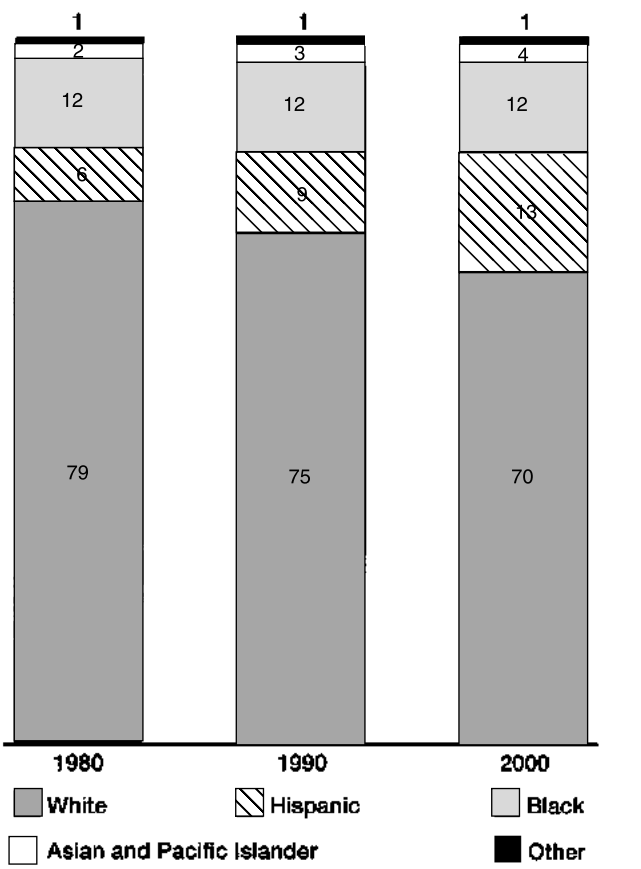
Population Change and Growth

The African American population in the United States grew over the 1990s in absolute terms but not as a percentage of the total population (see Figure 1). The black share of total population held steady in each decade from 1980 to 2000, while the shares of those with Asian and especially Hispanic ancestries grew. Indeed, the Hispanic share of total population nearly doubled. In contrast, the share of the total white population dropped by nearly 10 percentage points. The overall U.S. population grew from about 227 million in 1980 to about 281 million in 2000.

The rate of growth of racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. population during the 1990s exceeded that of the country over this period (13 percent). The black population increased by 16 percent, or from about 30 million to 36 million, while the Hispanic population increased a phenomenal 58 percent, from 22.4 million to 35.3 million. With this rate of growth, the Hispanic population surpassed the black population in the United States as the nation's largest ethnic minority group in the early 2000s; this was true even if black Hispanics were counted as black. (The 2000 Census was the first to allow respondents to describe themselves as being of more than one race. The total shown here for blacks includes those who reported black only, as well as those who reported black and one or more other race. "Hispanic," as discussed in Box 1, is an ethnic, rather than a racial, designation.) On the other hand, the white population grew by only 6 percent, from about 199 million to 211 million.

Recent evidence on racial differences in age structure and in fertility rates suggests that the growth of the black, Hispanic, and Asian populations will continue to outpace that of whites, at least in the very near future. The age composition of populations strongly influences their future growth rates. On average, younger populations grow faster than older ones because most births occur among younger females. Census 2000 data show that the median age of the black population is significantly younger than that of whites. In fact, in 2000 black men were about nine years younger than white men, on average, while black women were nearly seven years younger than white women, on average. The Asian and Hispanic populations were younger still than whites.

Figure 1
Racial and Ethnic Distribution of the U.S. Population, 1980, 1990, and 2000



Note: Totals may exceed 100 percent due to rounding.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau data (www.censusscope.org/us/chart_race.html, accessed June 2, 2003).

The fertility rate of blacks is also higher than that of whites. Data from the National Center for Health Statistics indicate that in 1999 there were 70 births per 1,000 black women and about 65 births per 1,000 white women.[6] Thus, the older age of the white population and the lower fertility rate of white women suggest slower population growth of this group relative to blacks in the near future. This prediction is tempered, however, by the higher mortality rates of blacks, especially of black men, reflected in their lower life expectancy. In 2000, the average life expectancy of black men was 68 compared with 75 for white men, and 75 for black women compared with 80 for white women. Although the life expectancy for both blacks and whites has improved over the last 20 years, the racial gap has yet to close; and, at least for men, the racial gap widened over this period.[7]

Box 1

'Multiracial' Blacks in 2000

Census 2000 for the first time permitted respondents to describe themselves using more than one racial category. In previous censuses, respondents were allowed to mark only one box for race—white, black, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, or Other. Given the opportunity to mark more than one racial category, about 1.4 million non-Hispanic blacks reported more than one race in 2000. This represents about 4 percent of the total non-Hispanic black population of 35 million. However, non-Hispanic blacks under the age of 18 were much more likely to report more than one race (7 percent) than those over 18 (3 percent).[1]

Although the reasons for the difference between older and younger individuals in reporting more than one racial background are not yet well understood, they are likely to include an increasing number of children from interracial marriages, and greater openness and awareness of the diversity of racial backgrounds among younger generations.[2]

What other racial backgrounds were blacks likely to identify in the 2000 Census? Among non-Hispanic blacks who reported more than one race, a near majority (49 percent) indicated they were "black and white," 18 percent "black and some other race," 12 percent "black and American Indian," and 7 percent "black and Asian." These data are consistent with interracial marriage rates of blacks; most of those who marry outside their race marry whites.[3]

The 1990 and 2000 censuses allowed respondents to identify whether they were of Hispanic ancestry in addition to providing their racial background. Thus, in the census, Hispanic is not considered a racial group. However, as noted, individuals who are of Hispanic origin can report their racial background. Thus, race and ethnicity are considered two distinct concepts by the federal system. That is, Hispanics may be of any race, and blacks can be Hispanic or non-Hispanic. In Census 2000, about 1 million blacks reported being of Hispanic ancestry, the majority from the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

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Box 2

The Growing Diversity of the Black Population in the United States

The diversity of the black population in the United States grew rapidly over the 1990s. A report on black diversity shows that the number with origins in the Caribbean (from places such as Jamaica, Haiti, and Guyana) increased by over 60 percent. The number of black Americans with recent roots in sub-Saharan Africa (from places like Nigeria and Ghana) more than doubled during the 1990s.[1] Blacks in the United States with recent Caribbean roots number over 1.5 million; blacks from Africa numbered over half a million in 2000. Combined, these groups represented only about 6 percent of the total black population in 2000, but they accounted for nearly 25 percent of the growth of the black population between 1990 and 2000.

In some major metropolitan regions, these "new" black groups represent about 20 percent or more of the total black population. For example, Afro-Caribbeans are heavily concentrated on the East Coast. Six out of 10 live in the New York, Miami, and Fort Lauderdale, Fla., metropolitan regions. Moreover, more than half of blacks in Miami are Haitian. Haitians are also well represented but outnumbered by Jamaicans in New York and Fort Lauderdale.

America's African population, on the other hand, is much more geographically dispersed. The largest numbers are in Washington, D.C., and New York. In both places West Africans predominate, with the largest groups from Ghana and Nigeria. Ethiopians and Somalis are the other main groups.

The social and economic profile of Afro-Caribbeans and Africans is somewhat better than that of African Americans, in part because migrants from these places tend to be well educated and relatively well-off. Still, like African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans and Africans are highly segregated from whites.

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Thus, the American population over the 1990s became increasingly diverse. During this time, the white share of the U.S. population declined by almost 10 percentage points. To put this change in perspective, in the recent past it took nearly 40 years for the white share of the U.S. population to decline by 10 percentage points, from 90 percent to 80 percent between 1940 and 1980. Certainly, the growth in the African American population has contributed to these changes, and blacks' younger age and higher fertility rates relative to whites suggest blacks' numbers will continue to grow absolutely in the United States. But to what extent the African American share of the total population will continue to grow rests crucially on the population growth rates of Hispanics and Asians, which have been phenomenal in recent years.

Diversity within the African American population also will grow in the next decade. Interracial marriage rates and births will continue to increase as they did over the 1990s, thus increasing the number and percentage of multiracial blacks in the United States. And the continuing and perhaps increasing flow of black immigrants from the Caribbean, Africa, and elsewhere will increasingly change the profile of the African American population in the United States (see Box 2, page 382).

These trends raise a number of important questions about the future of race relations and politics in the United States. These include whether multiracial blacks will adopt racial identities that are neither black nor white, or whether the historically significant "one-drop rule," in which those with at least one drop of African blood are considered black, will continue to dominate any alternative definition or concept of race that may emerge with mixed-race status. The continued growth of immigrant black populations in the United States raises the question of whether their socioeconomic progress will diverge from that of the U.S.-born black population, or whether the machinery of race in America will ensure convergence of outcomes.

Whether we will have answers to these questions will depend on continued consensus on the merits of collecting information about race. In California, for example, attempts were made as part of the Racial Privacy Initiative to keep private information about individuals' racial background during public data collection efforts.

Rising Educational Attainment

The African American fight for equal schooling has a long history. Even during the period of slavery, personal accounts tell of slaves learning to read and write (many times with the help of benevolent slave-owning families) despite the dreadful consequences of being found out. In the post-slavery era, education has also been an important pathway pursued to combat discrimination and poverty in the United States. Indeed, besides the black church, many of the first black institutions built in the post-slavery period were schools and institutions of higher learning, such as the Tuskegee Institute, some with assistance from white philanthropists (such as Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, which was built before slavery ended) and from state and federal governments (such as North Carolina Central University). And in the recent past, it was the fight over the integration of segregated schools in the landmark court case of Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 (in which African Americans and their major civic organizations played a prominent legal and political role) that helped fuel the civil rights movement in America.

Education has also played a key role in social mobility in the United States. For many marginalized and immigrant groups, education has been one of the few institutions available for social advancement. But over the past few decades, the importance of education in society appears to have accelerated, especially in the labor market. With the rise of, and rapid changes in, technology in the workplace and the continuing specialization of work, jobs require ever-more skills and credentials. Many of these skills are learned in places of higher education, such as colleges and universities. Perhaps in part for these reasons, rates of college attainment have grown rapidly over the past 20 to 30 years for most racial and ethnic groups.

For all these reasons, it is critically important to examine how the educational attainment of blacks changed over the 1990s, especially the degree to which blacks made advances in college attainment, because of its growing importance in economic mobility. Before doing this, it is important to point out that, since the 1960s, blacks have made tremendous gains relative to whites in educational attainment in primary and secondary education. Blacks have significantly closed the racial gap in high school completion since the 1960s.[8]

Black men have made steady progress in educational attainment (see Figure 2). The share of black men who earned a college degree or more rose by 3 percentage points from 1980 to 2000, while the share who did not earn a high school degree fell dramatically.[9] Also, the percentage of black men who attained at least some college education rose rather dramatically over this period, although the increase was more pronounced in the 1980s than in the 1990s.

The gains made by black men relative to whites in the 1980s in the attainment of a college degree or more stalled in the 1990s. In 1980, the black/white ratio in the attainment of a college degree or more was 0.41. This fraction rose to 0.44 in 1990, suggesting that black men attained this educational level at a faster rate than

whites during the 1980s, thus narrowing the racial gap in this measure. However, during the 1990s, and although black men's college attainment improved, the black/white ratio in this measure remained at 0.44, indicating that black men made no gains relative to white men in college attainment.

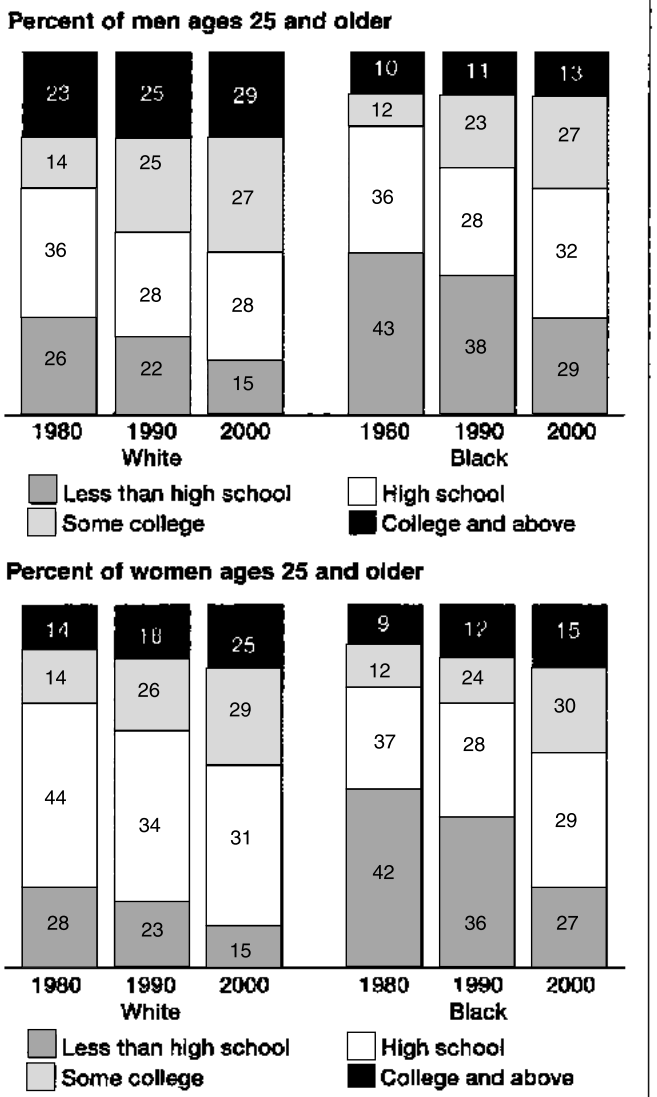
The story among women is somewhat different. Like black men, black women have made steady progress in educational attainment since the 1980s. The percentage of black women who did not earn a high school degree fell by over 15 percentage points from 1980 to 1990, while the percentage of black women who earned a college degree or more rose by 6 percentage points during this period. The rise in college attendance by black women and men is attributed to a number of factors, including the improvement in primary and secondary schools that blacks attend, affirmative action in college, and increasing academic preparedness.[10] Black women also made dramatic gains in the attainment of some college education, although again the increase was more dramatic in the 1980s than in the 1990s.

Unlike black men, black women made no gains relative to white women in the 1980s or 1990s in the attainment of a college degree or more. In fact, they lost ground over this period, as the black/white ratio in attaining at least a college education dropped from 0.66 in 1980 to 0.62 in 2000. Recent research has yet to address the reasons for these declines in racial equality in educational attainment, especially in the attainment of a college degree during the 1990s. However, a variety of factors—including the somewhat lower high school graduation rates and academic preparedness of blacks as compared with whites—account for the racial gap in college attendance over the 1980s. The socioeconomic status of families, particularly parents' educational attainment, also influences college attendance, and blacks have both lower socioeconomic levels and parents with lower levels of educational attainment than do their white counterparts. Rising college costs are also likely to be identified as a major explanation of the racial gap in educational attainment, with blacks less able to afford college than whites.[11]

Thus, over the 1990s, black men and women made absolute gains in educational attainment. The dramatic decline in the percentage of high school dropouts observed for blacks over the 1970s and 1980s continued through the 1990s, and so did the attainment of a college degree or more. To the extent that blacks attend schools that are inferior to those of whites, improvements documented here could overstate the extent to which blacks are reaching educational parity with whites. Standardized test scores, however, show that blacks have narrowed the gap with whites (despite claims of test bias), although this narrowing was more significant in the 1980s than 1990s.[12] Moreover, research by psychologist Claude Steele shows that blacks' test scores are likely

Figure 2

DISTRIBUTION OF U.S. POPULATION BY HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND BY RACE, 1980, 1990, AND 2000



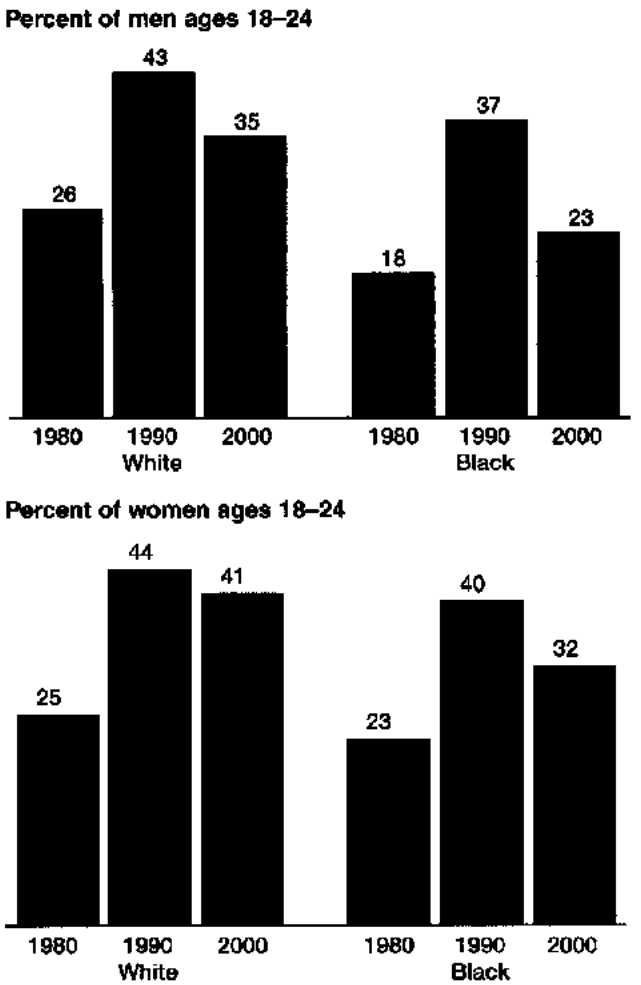
Note: Totals may exceed 100 percent due to rounding.
Source: Author's estimates using the Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

biased downward because of poorer performance on tests than what blacks' ability suggests.[13]

Despite these causes for optimism, other trends raise concern about racial equality in educational attainment. Blacks either lost or made no ground relative to whites in the attainment of a college degree or more. This concern is magnified in light of the recent Supreme Court ruling (in the case against the University of Michigan Law School) on the uses and limits of affirmative action in higher education. The limits on affirmative action imposed by the Supreme Court will affect highly com-

Figure 3

COLLEGE ENROLLMENT BY RACE, 1980, 1990, AND 2000



Note: Totals may exceed 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: Author's estimates using the Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

petitive and very prestigious institutions the most. Since attending these institutions confers numerous benefits and privileges, such as higher earnings and greater access to elites, increasing barriers to African Americans' admission to these schools will surely harm African Americans' social and economic mobility.

Another concern is that black women have surpassed black men in the level of college attainment. This reordering first occurred in the 1980s, but rose more dramatically in the 1990s. Over the 1980s and 1990s, college attainment rose by 31 percent for black women but by only 19 percent for black men. To the extent that women in the United States tend to marry men with higher educational attainment levels, this trend is likely to contribute to the decline in marriage among blacks.

College enrollment rates of 18-to-24-year-olds with at least a high school degree give an even clearer picture of changes in college attendance (see Figure 3). On first inspection, the rates for 1990 and 2000 appear to contradict the finding that college attainment rose over the 1990s for all groups. The apparent inconsistency, however, is largely explained by the fact that the college enrollment data reflect choices at one point in time, whereas the college attainment figures reflect events and choices made over the decade.

So, for example, in 2000, wages and salaries were relatively high because the economy was booming and the labor market was tight. During periods such as these, one should expect college enrollment rates to decline as people choose to enter the labor market rather than go to school because current earnings opportunities appear strong. College attendance rates rose over the 1990s, as previously stated, despite declines in college enrollment in 2000.

College enrollment among all groups jumped sharply and nearly equally between 1980 and 1990, changing the black-white difference in these measures only slightly. However, between 1990 and 2000, the decline in college enrollment for blacks was much sharper than for whites. As a result, the racial difference in college enrollment for both men and women jumped steeply over the 1990s.

Whether to view the increase in the racial difference in college-going among the young as a social concern depends on the factors that drove the decline. It is plausible that young black men and women who were eligible for college entered the labor market at greater rates than whites because of increased employment opportunities. It is well known that young blacks face more difficulties in the labor market than others as a result of discrimination and other barriers, and thus their employment opportunities improve greatly during tight labor markets. To the extent that such young black men and women attain employment, remain employed long enough to gain significant human capital and skills, or return to college if employment prospects weaken, the dramatic drop in their college enrollment perhaps should be not viewed with concern. But to the extent that human capital formation does not take place, those with employment difficulties do not to return to college, or this pattern becomes a long-term trend, there may be cause for concern.

Still, the enrollment rates confirm the trend of black women entering college at greater rates than black men. Even in 2000, when college enrollments dropped for both, the share of young black women enrolled in college was nearly 10 percentage points higher than the share of black men. No doubt these trends have deep implications, especially in the marriage market. Again, to the extent that women tend to marry those with equal or higher levels of education, the imbalance in college attainment between black men and women will reduce

the pool of marriageable black men. More research is needed to fully understand these changes and their educational and social consequences.

Uneven Employment Changes

Blacks' fight for justice in the contemporary period includes the right to employment. The right to jobs is key because most families rely on employment as their main source of income and economic stability. Before industrialization in the United States, most blacks lived in the South, where agricultural work was readily available, albeit at extremely low pay. With the movement of blacks from Southern to Northern cities in response to industrialization, blacks, especially black men, began to experience significant employment problems that have persisted to this day (see Box 3).

The 1990s saw the biggest economic expansion in the United States in the last 30 years, significantly and positively influencing most Americans' economic outcomes. But because African Americans have typically fared relatively poorly on a host of economic dimensions in the United States, whether blacks' labor-market outcomes and general economic standing improved during the economic boom is an open question.

Two measures aid in answering that question. One is the unemployment rate, the standard measure used by the federal government to report the extent to which individuals are employed. It is calculated as the percentage of the labor force that is unemployed. The other measure is the employment-to-population ratio, also known as the employment rate, the fraction of the population under study that is employed. The unemployment rate is based on the labor force, which is composed of individuals who are employed and those who are unemployed—that is, those who have been actively searching for work within the past six months but not working. The employment rate takes into account people who are in and people who are out of the labor force; in other words, it includes potential workers—those who are not in the labor force but are willing to work. These individuals, usually referred to as discouraged workers, have abandoned the search for work and dropped out of the labor force as a result of not receiving suitable job offers. Blacks make up a larger share of

Box 3

The Characteristics of Jobless Men

Census 2000 allows a close-up look at the characteristics of men, especially African American men, who experienced long periods of unemployment. This inquiry is particularly relevant given the low employment rates of African American men. The inability of many black men to secure employment, even during the economic boom of the 1990s, raises the question of who these men are.

The table provides some data from Census 2000 on the characteristics of men (ages 18 to 64) who never worked in the previous year, 1999. First, according to the census, a much larger percentage of black than white men never worked in 1999, a finding consistent with the data on employment-to-population ratios. Indeed, the share of black men who never worked (28 percent) is over twice that of white men (12 percent). Of those who never worked in 1999, black men are younger and more likely to have dropped out of high school. Moreover, these black men are also less likely ever to have been married than white men who did not work in 1999.

Not working could be related to physical conditions that limit work, or to incarceration, which prevents individuals from realizing an opportunity to work. Census 2000 provides data on both of these statuses. The disability data indicate that white men who never worked in 1999 were more likely than their black counterparts to report that they had employment (from a work-related injury), physical, or mental disabilities. On the other hand, the data indicate that black men who never worked in 1999 are nearly three times more likely than their white counterparts to be incarcerated.

Men Ages 18–64 Who Never Worked in 1999 by Race

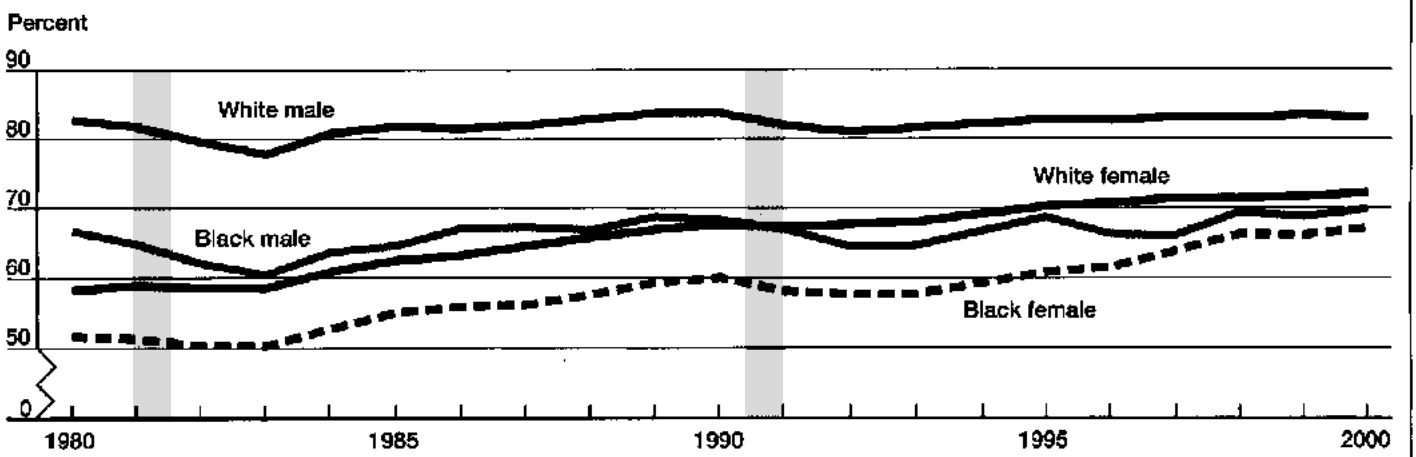
	White	Black
Never worked in 1999 (%)	12	28
Characteristics		
Average age	40	35
No high school degree (%)	41	53
Enrolled in school (%)	28	26
Never married (%)	45	57
Disabilities (%)		
Employment	24	19
Physical	17	14
Mental	26	19
Currently incarcerated (%)	6	16
Looking for work (%)	9	17

Source: Author's calculations using the Census 2000 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

Thus, the data suggest that black men are much more likely to be jobless than their white counterparts and that the factors associated with this joblessness may be different for these groups. White men seem to be limited from work more by disabilities, while the factors associated with a lack of work for black men appear to be more connected to nonphysical disadvantages. These conclusions are supported by the table: Black men who never worked in 1999 are nearly two times more likely than their white counterparts to be looking for work.

Figure 4

EMPLOYMENT BY RACE AND SEX, 1980–2000



Note: Employment is for workers ages 18–64. Shaded area indicates recessionary period.
Source: Author's estimates using the Current Population Survey (March outgoing rotation group files).

Box 4

DOES RACE STILL MATTER IN THE LABOR MARKET?

A number of recent studies document that racial discrimination continues to be a significant barrier to employment, especially for black men. Reynolds Farley, Harry Holzer, Sheldon Danziger, and Ted Mouw have all shown that black men in the Detroit area were less likely to get jobs, especially blue-collar jobs in manufacturing, than were similar white men. A recent audit study in Milwaukee by sociologist Devah Pager found similar results. Most strikingly, in this study, white men who admitted being incarcerated for cocaine possession with intent to distribute were more likely to be recruited for low-skill jobs than identical black men who had never been incarcerated. Finally, a recent study by economists Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan showed that employers were less likely to interview applicants with black-sounding names like Lakisha than those with white-sounding names like Emily.

Increasingly, the racial discrimination against black men in the labor market occurs on the basis of perceived criminality. In a recent study in Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, and Los Angeles, Harry Holzer, Steven Raphael, and Michael Stoll found that black men were significantly less likely to be hired for jobs that did not require a college degree because employers perceived the men as being criminally prone, although most were not. Employers are averse to hiring ex-offenders for a variety of reasons and use social markers like race to infer criminality. Hiring on this basis discriminates against black men who have never been incarcerated.

Discrimination against blacks also occurs at other stages in the employment process. Economists Marta Elvira and Christopher Zatzick found that blacks were less likely to be promoted and more likely to be laid off at firms than similar whites, even after a variety of important factors were controlled for, including firm and job characteristics. However, monitoring personnel decisions and actively enforcing affirmative action policies reduce this discrimination, as has been shown elsewhere.[1]

Reference

1. For all these studies, see Reynolds Farley, Sheldon Danziger, and Harry J. Holzer, *Detroit Divided* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2001); Ted Mouw, "Job Relocation and the Racial Gap in Unemployment in Detroit and Chicago, 1980 to 1990," *American Sociological Review* 65, no. 5 (2000): 730-53; Devah Pager, "The Mark of a Criminal Record," *American Journal of Sociology* 108, no. 5 (2003): 937-75; Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan, "Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination," *Working Paper* #W9873 (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2003); Harry Holzer, Steven Raphael, and Michael A. Stoll, "Perceived Criminality, Criminal Background Checks, and the Racial Hiring Practices of Employers," *Discussion Paper* 1254-02 (Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin, 2002); and Marta M. Elvira and Christopher D. Zatzick, "Who's Displaced First? The Role of Race in Layoff Decisions," *Industrial Relations* 41, no. 2 (2002): 329-61.

discouraged workers than whites. Thus, for many blacks, the employment rate is a more comprehensive measure of employment.

An analysis of employment rates by race and sex from 1980 to 2000 reveals two clear patterns (see Figure 4). First, there is a large and persistent racial gap in employment for both men and women, consistent with that observed since the 1960s. These gaps range from 10 percentage points to 20 percentage points among men, and from 5 percentage points to 10 percentage points among women.

Second, the employment rate for blacks is much more sensitive to business-cycle fluctuations than that of whites, consistent with the practice of "last hired, first fired." That is, for a variety of reasons, blacks are last to be hired during an upswing in the economy and are first to be let go during a downswing. While the employment rate for white men was virtually unchanged from 1980 to 2000, that of white women increased steadily (consistent with trends in their employment), despite fluctuations in the economy. Black women's employment rate also rose absolutely over this period, from about 50 percent to 66 percent, but was slightly more affected by changes in the economy than that of white women. After dropping dramatically in the early 1980s, the rate for black men rose only modestly: The boom of the late 1990s raised their employment rate only to prerecession 1989 levels.

Despite these gains, the black-white employment gap was only slightly smaller in 2000 than at the beginning of the 1980s or the 1990s. By 2000, black women reduced the employment gap with white women to 5 percentage points (down from a high of about 10 percentage points in the recessionary early 1990s), with much of this reduction occurring during the economic boom of the late 1990s. But the racial gap in employment among men improved only slightly during this period and remained virtually the same in 2000 (at 12 percentage points) as it had been in 1995, before the boom began.

Thus, African Americans' employment rate did rise over the 1990s, but the increase was much more pronounced for black women than for black men. Even so, the inclusion of all adult men in this figure masks the employment problems of young black men over this period. Research by economists Harry Holzer and Paul Offner has shown that the employment rate of young black men actually declined over the 1990s, despite the boom.[14] Given that black women's employment rate rose at a slightly faster rate than that of white women, the racial gap in employment among women actually narrowed by the end of the decade. Black men, however, gained virtually no ground relative to their white counterparts in employment over this period, leaving the racial gap in employment for men in 2000 almost as big as it was at the beginning of the decade (see Box 4).

Modest Earnings Gains

Equal pay for equal work has been a central concern for African Americans. Yet African Americans' lower educational attainment relative to whites—despite significant black progress on this dimension over the past century—limits the extent to which blacks are able to command similar wages. So, too, could discrimination and other factors.

The rising employment rates over the 1990s surely must have affected workers' earnings and the racial divide therein. This is because employers must offer higher wages to attract job candidates as it becomes more and more difficult for them to find workers, let alone qualified ones. During the economic boom of the late 1990s, as labor markets became tighter than they had been in almost 30 years, earnings paid to workers rose. An important question is whether the earnings of African Americans rose over the 1990s, and whether they did so enough to narrow the historic racial gap in earnings.

Black men and women have enjoyed substantial gains in earnings relative to whites since the early 1900s. But the magnitude of these gains and their persistence over time depend on the measure used. Research that focuses on hourly wages has shown that black workers have made substantial progress in catching up with whites, while research using annual earnings indicates that this progress has been less significant.

Why? These conclusions are driven partly by how the different earnings measures are defined. Weekly or annual earnings measures factor in both the wages that individuals earn per hour and the amount of time they spend working. Thus, these measures can fluctuate in response to changes in compensation rate or to changes in the number of hours spent working.

On the other hand, hourly earnings can change only with changes in compensation. Of course, changes in compensation can reflect either changes in the human capital or skills that individuals bring to the job, or changes in how tight labor markets are. Individuals may therefore receive vastly different weekly or annual earnings depending on how many hours of work they put in during the relevant time frame, even though they may receive the same hourly wage rate.

These differences in earnings measures have important implications. Blacks are much more likely to suffer a bout of unemployment and to experience a longer period of unemployment once unemployed than whites; they are therefore likely to work less time during a particular period than whites. This fact makes the hourly wage rate a more conservative measure of racial inequality in earnings.

Blacks' wages, like overall wages in the United States, stagnated in the mid-1970s. The wages of black men, especially those of young black men, actually fell from 1975 through the late 1980s. These trends led to a stalling

of black-white wage convergence since the 1970s and, on some dimensions, relative losses through the 1980s.

Hourly earnings for most race and sex groups declined from the late 1980s to about 1994 (see Figure 5). White women saw their hourly earnings remain relatively constant during this period, and black women's earnings began to rise earlier, around 1991. Hourly earnings then began to rise for all groups in 1996, just as the economic boom began to take hold. Indeed, wages of black men rose fairly rapidly, from about $10.50 per hour in 1996 to nearly $12 per hour in 1999, nearly a 15 percent gain. Black women also experienced steady wage gains and saw them start to rise earlier than those of black men. Black women's wage gains began at the end of the early 1990s recession in 1994 and increased by nearly $2 to $10 per hour by 2000.

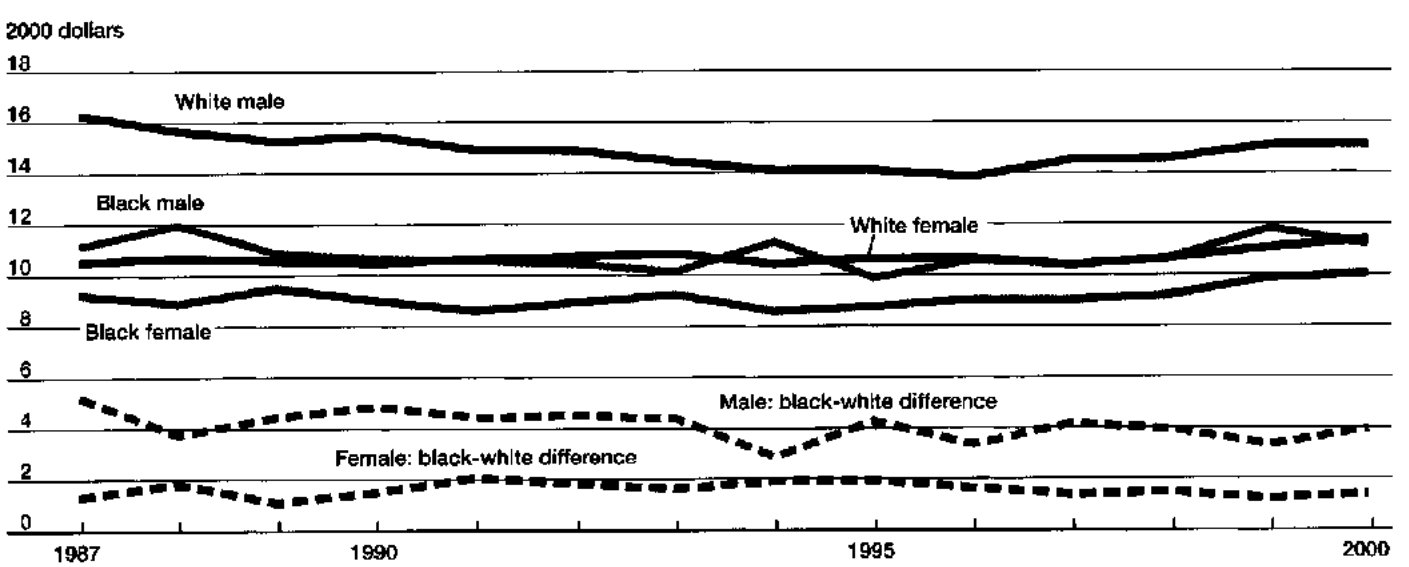
Despite these wage gains made by black men and women over the 1990s, in 2000 the racial gap in earnings still remained. For women, the racial gap remained fairly constant from the early to the mid-1990s at about $2 per hour, but declined somewhat to nearly $1.75 per hour by 2000. So, over the 1990s some progress was made in reducing racial earnings inequality for women. However, the racial gap in earnings for men remained as large in 2000 (at nearly $4 per hour) as it was in 1988, despite the significant wage gains made by black men in the late 1990s.

In fact, the gap was likely much bigger. As noted earlier, the hourly wage rate is a conservative measure of racial wage inequality because it does not take into account earnings that accrue from additional hours worked. And blacks work fewer hours per year than whites in large part because blacks experience more bouts of joblessness that last a significantly longer time than those of whites. Thus, other earnings measures such as annual earnings are likely to provide a gloomier picture of racial inequality than that shown here.

But the degree of racial inequality in hourly earnings shown above is underestimated for other reasons as well. This is because the hourly earnings are only measured for those in the labor force who were employed. A significant share of black men (nearly 5 percent) who were incarcerated during this time (see section on incarceration) and a large and growing fraction of black men who were not in the labor force (but not incarcerated) were missing from these data. Had these men been included in the data presented here, they would likely have driven black men's median hourly earnings downward. This is because the characteristics of those who are incarcerated and not in the labor force—such as being young, disproportionately high school dropouts, and so on—suggest that these men would likely earn wages closer to the bottom of blacks' wage distribution if they became employed. This factor would significantly increase the racial gap in earnings between back men and white men.[15]

Similarly, among women, there is a racial difference in the composition of those not in the labor force that

Figure 5
MEDIAN HOURLY EARNINGS BY RACE AND SEX, 1987–2000



Note: Earnings are for workers ages 18 to 64 who were not in school. The median is shown rather than the mean to avoid skewing by extreme values.
Source: Author's estimates using the Current Population Survey.

leads to an underestimation of the racial differences in hourly earnings. Among white women, those out of the labor force are disproportionately married women in high-income households (relative to black women).[16] Relative to white women, black women who are out of the labor force are disproportionately poor women with children (and this was truer before the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, or PRWORA, which put time limits on welfare receipt). Because such black women would likely earn significantly lower wages than such white women if both entered the labor force, the true racial gap in earnings is wider than that shown here. These same factors also apply to the interpretation of employment-to-population figures shown earlier for men and women; the racial difference in employment between whites and blacks is likely understated because of the high incarceration and labor force dropout rates of black men and the racial differences in the composition of women not in the labor force.

Many explanations of the racial gap in employment and earnings have been offered. These can be most conveniently organized into supply- and demand-side explanations. Supply-side explanations refer to the characteristics, behaviors, and choices of the individuals themselves, while demand-side explanations include the characteristics, behaviors, and choices of employers.

The most prominent supply-side explanations include skills and education, cultural or urban underclass behavior, crime, and—in the case of women—government dependency. The skills and education argument holds that blacks have accumulated less education, fewer skills, and less productive social networks than whites. This, combined with observations that skill requirements for jobs are quickly rising in the modern economy, suggests a persistent racial gap in employment and earnings. However, though education and skills explain a large chunk of these differences as should be expected, even when education and skills are taken into account, blacks are still relatively less likely to be employed and are likely to earn lower wages than whites.[17]

The urban underclass hypothesis argues that blacks, especially those who are poor, are more likely than others to exhibit qualities that are unattractive to employers. These "soft skills" include low motivation and aspirations and "ghetto" styles of dress, presentation, and language. These kinds of behaviors are argued to be products of living in neighborhoods that are characterized by extreme poverty and racial concentration, and that are typically isolated from mainstream society. Blacks are more likely than others to grow up and live in such neighborhoods, and thus these behaviors are learned and reinforced through contact with neighborhood peers.

These same neighborhood effects are argued to extend to criminality and welfare dependence among blacks, especially young blacks. Poor neighborhoods that also have high concentrations of criminal activity such as petty drug dealing serve as employment alternatives to the formal labor market, especially for young black men. The landmark study of sociologist William Julius Wilson documents that poor, jobless neighborhoods also have high concentrations of welfare use, so much so that such use is seen as the norm and thus influences young women's decisions to choose welfare over work, at least until welfare reform in 1996.[18]

On the demand side, prominent explanations of blacks' employment problems include racial discrimination, spatial mismatch (discussed below), aggregate demand, and job-competition hypotheses, among others. The racial discrimination argument holds that employers discriminate against blacks in hiring and/or in wages either through statistical discrimination or racial animus. Statistical discrimination refers to employers' use of real or perceived information about groups when making hiring or recruiting decisions. If, for example, employers view blacks as a group as less desirable workers—as untrustworthy, unmotivated, or prone to crime—employers may be reluctant to hire any individual black that applies, even if the black individual is the most qualified. This is particularly true if employers cannot access full information about individuals. Or employers may use recruitment methods that bias the applicant pool toward nonblacks; examples of these include advertising for workers in community newspapers based in white neighborhoods, or recruiting through white employees.

The final demand-side explanations are closely linked. The aggregate demand hypothesis states that blacks' employability and earnings are much more sensitive to the strength of the overall economy than that of other groups, as presented above. This is because blacks, in the eyes of employers, may be a least-preferred group of workers on average. If this is true, then blacks are likely to be hired at greater rates only when there is a tightening in the labor market, which occurs when the economy is in a boom cycle and there are fewer workers available for employment. Similarly, the job-competition hypothesis holds that other demographic groups, in particular women and immigrants, compete with blacks for employment and are preferred by employers. In this scenario, blacks are pushed lower down the hiring ladder as a consequence of these labor substitutes and employer preferences.[19]

In sum, the economic expansion during the late 1990s had different effects on different groups. The expansion drew both black and white women into the labor force, increased their employment, and—at least in the late 1990s—increased employment faster for black women than for white women. It also led to increases in both groups' real earnings, with earning gains coming slightly faster for black women than for white women at the end of the decade. For men, especially black men, however,

such unambiguous improvements were not realized. This same economic expansion did not significantly increase the employment of white or black men. This is particularly troubling for black men since so many of them were out of the labor force over the 1980s and 1990s. The expansion did raise the wages of employed black men, though not enough to close the racial gap in wages.

Rising Family Income

The following examination of African Americans' employment and earnings trends suggests that blacks' family income should have risen modestly over the 1990s. This is because wages and salaries make up roughly three-fourths of total family income and, as just seen, these rose steadily over the 1990s. Family income is an important part of understanding racial inequality because it is the most common measure of the nation's standard of living.[20] It reflects all income resources available to the family—wages and salaries, interest and dividends, government transfer payments, alimony and child support, and disability payments.

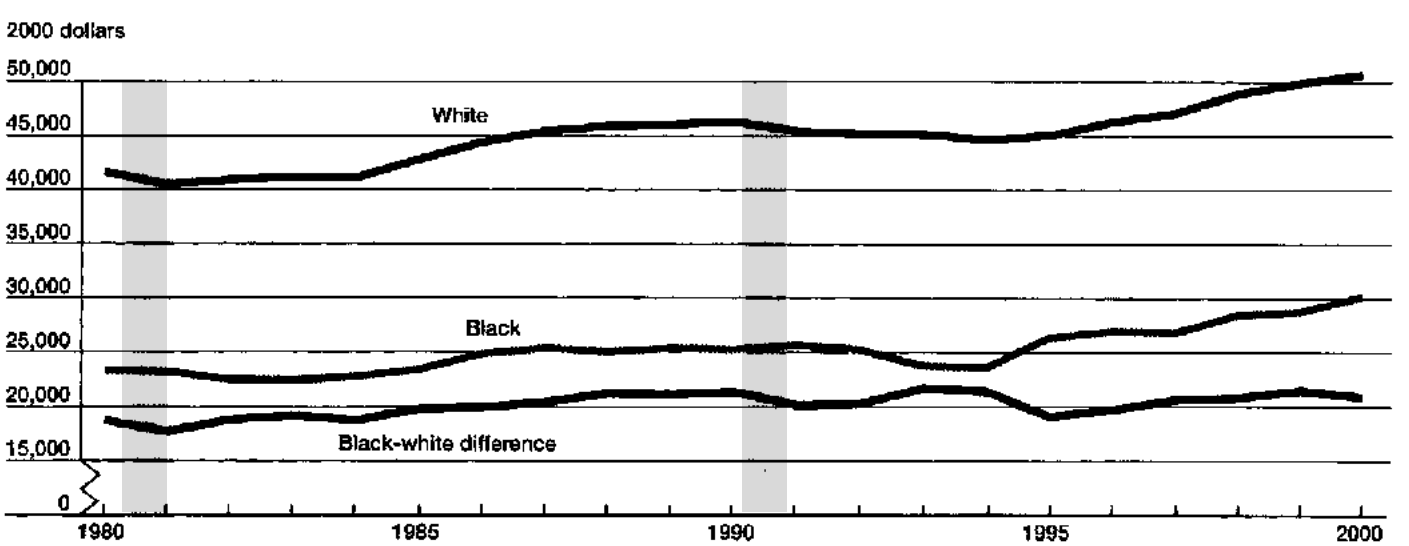
Historically, median family income levels have followed trends in the national economy. After World War II, when the economy expanded rapidly for nearly 20 years, family income grew steadily as well. From 1947 to about 1959, median income grew by about 40 percent and then grew about another 40 percent between 1959 and 1969. However, after 1973 when the oil-shock-induced recession took hold, year-to-year increases in family income came to a halt. Family income stagnated between 1973 and 1979, rising only somewhat during the economic recovery of the early 1980s.

Black family incomes, relative to those of whites, remained virtually unchanged from 1949 to the mid-1960s. However, because of the civil rights movement, antidiscrimination laws, affirmative action programs, and a tight labor market, blacks made real gains relative to whites in family income from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s. From this point, with the national recession firmly rooted, black family income gains relative to whites stalled and on many accounts reversed through the mid-1980s.[21]

Two clear patterns emerge in median family income during the 1990s. First, the median family income of whites and blacks over this period followed trends in the general economy (see Figure 6). Median family income for whites and blacks rose modestly during the economic expansion of the late 1980s and declined somewhat during the early 1990s recession. However, blacks and whites made strong gains in family income during the late 1990s economic expansion. Both whites' and blacks' family income was at its highest level at the end of the expansion in 2000. From 1994 to 2000, whites' family income grew from nearly $45,000 to $53,000, a gain of $8,000, or about 17 percent. Blacks' family income grew over this period at an even stronger rate, 24 percent, from nearly $25,000 to $31,000, a gain of about $6,000.

Second, relative to whites, blacks' family income levels still remained relatively low from 1980 to 2000.

Figure 6
Median Family Income by Race, 1980–2000



Note: Shaded area indicates recessionary period.
Source: Author's estimates using the Current Population Survey.

Over this period, the median family income of blacks never surpassed $35,000. To put this number in perspective, median family income in the United States in 2000 was about $52,000, or about $17,000 higher than the median figure for blacks. Alternatively put, blacks' median family income level of $31,000 in 2000 was about the median family income level in the United States in 1965 (using constant 2000 dollars).[22] Moreover, the racial gap in family income hovered consistently around $20,000 over this period.

The black/white family income ratio increased from 0.54 in 1990 to 0.58 in 2000. This suggests that blacks made up some ground relative to whites in family income during the last economic expansion. However, an examination of the absolute difference in income between blacks and whites, which indicates the true resource difference between the races, shows that these relative gains disappear. The racial difference in family income remained at virtually the same level at the end of the expansion in 2000 as it was at the beginning of the decade (about $21,500), despite strong gains by blacks in family income over this period. In fact, the racial gap in family income widened somewhat during the peak period of the economic expansion, from 1995 to 2000.

Of course, the difference in annual earnings between blacks and whites is a major explanation of the racial gap in family income. But so too is the racial difference in family structure. Blacks are less likely to be married and more likely to have families headed by females than are whites. Thus, black families have fewer members contributing to family income than do white families, and this difference contributes to part of the racial gap in earnings. This factor has become more important in recent years as the share of wives' earnings in family income has risen. In 1970, about 27 percent of family income came from wives' earnings; by 2000 this percentage had risen to nearly 34 percent.[23] To the extent that black families are disproportionately headed by females, these factors are likely to influence the racial gap in family income.

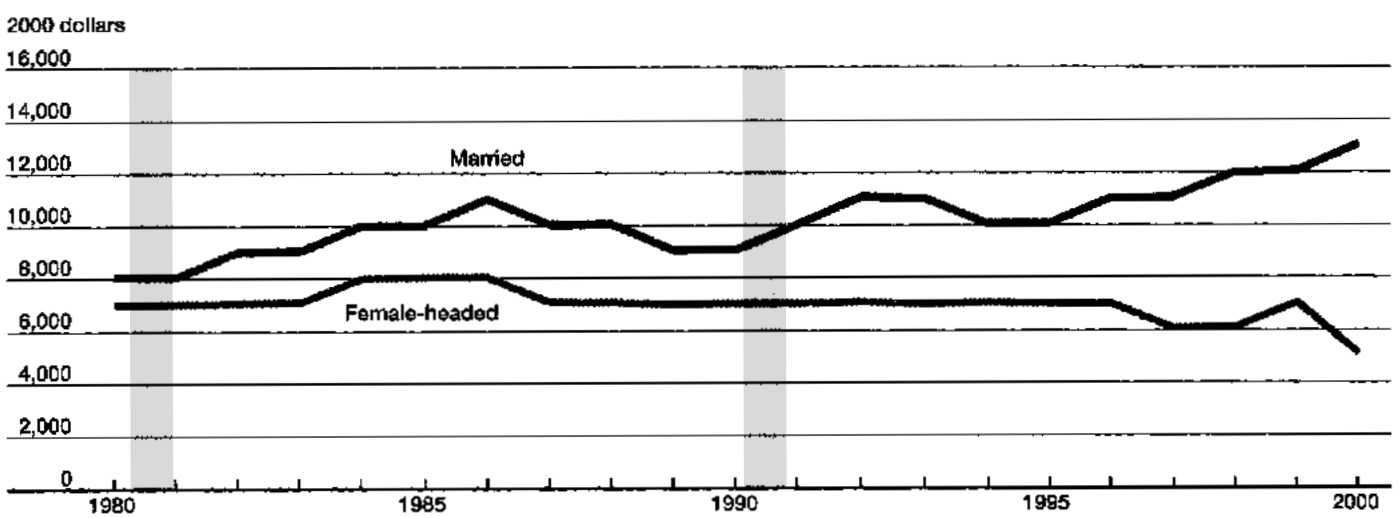
Alternatively, the absolute growth in the racial gap in family income in the late 1990s could be related to differences in growth in family income for different household types—two-parent and female-headed families (see Figure 7). The greatest influence on the growth of the racial gap in family income in the late 1990s came from racial differences in family income among married (two-parent) families. The racial gap in family income for this group fluctuated between $10,000 and $12,000 between 1985 and 1992, before rising to nearly $14,000 in 2000. Interestingly, while this racial gap declined somewhat during the economic expansion in the late 1980s, it rose rather dramatically during the economic boom of the late 1990s for reasons that are not well understood.

The racial gap in family income among female-headed families declined somewhat during the late 1990s. This gap remained fairly constant at about $8,000 between 1980 and 1994. Thereafter, the racial gap declined precipitously from about $8,000 in 1994 to just under $6,000 in 2000.

A possible explanation for the rise in the racial gap in family income for two-parent households is the role that income from financial assets plays in overall family income. Family income comes from many sources—wages and salaries, government transfer payments, other business income, and income from investments—

Figure 7

BLACK-WHITE DIFFERENCE IN MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME BY FAMILY TYPE, 1980–2000



Note: Shaded area indicates recessionary period.
Source: Author's estimates using the Current Population Survey.

although wages and salaries make up the lion's share. The economic boom of the 1990s was characterized by a run-up of stock market prices. Thus, some that were heavily invested in the stock market during this period realized significant income gains as a result of either rising dividend payments or capital gains income from the selling of shares of rising stocks. Whites are more heavily invested in the stock market than are blacks, as are two-parent or married families relative to other types of families. Therefore, racial differences in income-generating assets are also a plausible explanation of the rise in the racial gap in family income observed between two-parent households in the late 1990s.

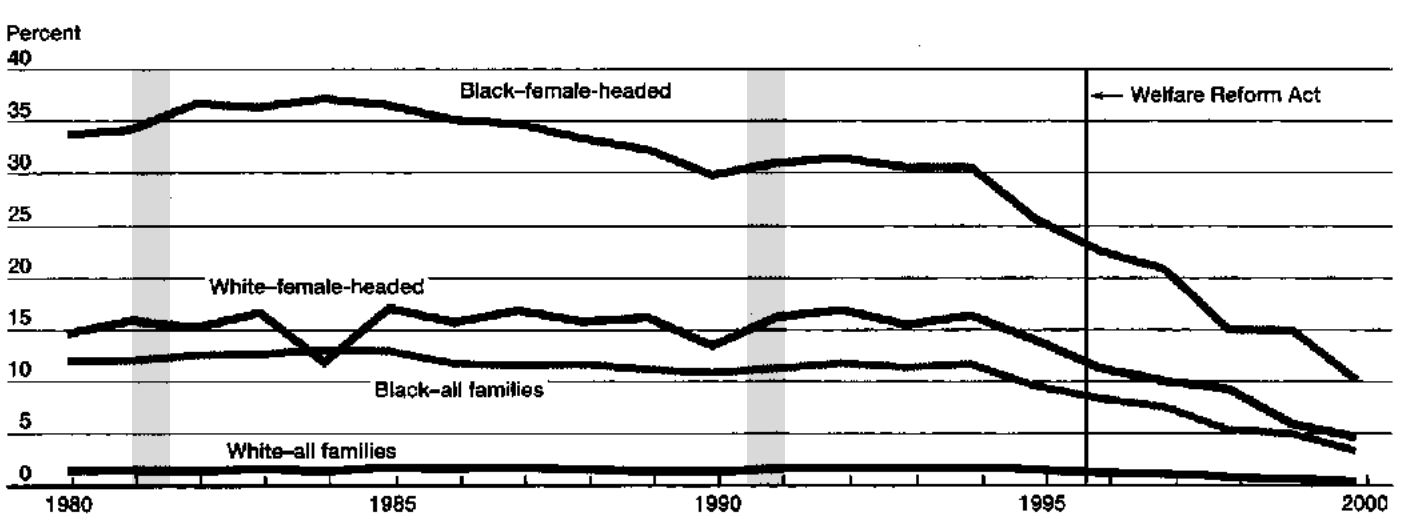
What factors explain the decline in the racial gap in family income among female-headed families during the late 1990s? One plausible hypothesis is the role of welfare reform legislation. PRWORA effectively ended the federal guarantee of cash assistance to poor and needy families and imposed stringent work requirements and time limits on welfare recipients. Black mothers are disproportionately on welfare compared with their white counterparts. But since the mid-1990s, welfare caseloads declined dramatically, and employment rates among current and former recipients, as well as single female heads of household more broadly, rose substantially. Indeed, the number of adults on welfare in the United States declined by a record 30 percent between August 1996 and September 1998, to the lowest level in 30 years. The research of economists Rebecca Blank and Robert Schoeni indicates that about 50 percent of this decline was due to economic factors such as the tight labor market at the time, and nearly 40 percent was due to policy changes in the rules governing welfare receipt.[24] Furthermore, during the late 1990s, the gains accruing to welfare recipients from employment generally seemed to outweigh the costs, and thus incentives for them to gain employment seemed strong.[25]

Analyzing the percentage of family income derived from public assistance between 1980 and 2000 reveals interesting trends (see Figure 8). First, as expected, black female-headed families had the highest percentage of family income coming from welfare in any year. In the early 1980s, 35 percent to 37 percent of income among black female-headed households derived from public assistance, while the percentage among equivalent whites hovered around 15 percent.

Second, the percentage of family income derived from public assistance began to decline slightly before welfare reform legislation, especially among all black families and among white and black female-headed families. However, the decline in these percentages, especially among black female-headed families, accelerated after 1996 probably because of welfare reform legislation and a strong economy. Welfare reform put pressure on mothers to enter the labor force if they received public assistance monies or to avoid using public assistance if they were already in the labor force. Economic conditions at the time enabled single mothers to secure employment that paid wages superior to income received from welfare. From 1994 to 2000, the share of income from public assistance declined by 20 percentage points for black female-headed families. The decline for

Figure 8

INCOME FROM PUBLIC ASSISTANCE BY RACE AND FAMILY TYPE, 1980–2000



Note: Assistance includes Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Shaded area indicates recessionary period.
Source: Author's estimates using the Current Population Survey.

white female-headed families was about 11 percentage points. This occurred despite the fact that black welfare recipients were shown to have a much harder time entering employment (or exiting the welfare roles) than white welfare recipients after welfare reform.[25]

Third, as a result of these trends, the black-white difference in the percentage of income that female-headed families derived from public assistance was significantly reduced over this period. This difference declined by 10 percentage points, from nearly 15 percentage points in 1994 to 5 percentage points in 2000. Thus, the data suggest that to the extent that welfare leavers over the 1990s gained employment with wages higher than welfare payments, the racial gap in family income among this group was likely to decline. This is because black single mothers received a much greater share of income from public assistance than did their white counterparts, but the decline in this percentage over the 1990s was much greater for blacks than for whites.

Falling Poverty

The rise in blacks' employment, earnings, and family income over the 1990s suggests that their poverty rates should have declined as well during this period of economic robustness. The federal poverty rate, developed 40 years ago (see Box 5), can be used for this analysis.

However, it should be noted that this official approach to measuring poverty has been widely criticized. Some argue that the rate fails to reflect changes in consumption and spending since the early 1960s, as ideas of material needs in the nation have changed rapidly. Some also argue that the current approach to measuring poverty fails to include noncash contributions or resources that clearly increase the buying power of the poor, such as food stamps; welfare income; and, more important, income from the Earned Income Tax Credit. Finally, some also argue that the official measure neglects important differences in the cost of living. Living costs vary wildly from one metropolitan area to the next, between urban and rural areas, and even across regions.

Despite these concerns, the federal poverty rate is an absolute measure that provides a uniform and consistent way to measure deprivation in the United States and how it changes over time.

The poverty rate, like family income, has historically fluctuated with the overall state of the economy. With the persistent economic growth that followed World War II and federal antipoverty efforts begun in the 1960s, the poverty rate fell from about 22 percent in 1959 to about 11 percent in 1973. However, unlike family income, the poverty rate has not improved significantly since 1973. As a result of the recession of the late

Box 5

How Is the Federal Poverty Line Determined?

The federal poverty standards are set by determining a baseline income needed for individuals or families to enjoy a reasonable living standard. For the most part, the income baseline varies by the size of the family, with higher baselines for larger families. For example, in 2000, a single person was considered poor if his or her income fell below $9,214, while a mother with two children was considered poor if her annual income was less than $14,269. People or families with incomes below these thresholds are considered poor. The poverty rate is the percentage of the population that falls below the poverty threshold.

The poverty threshold does not vary geographically but is updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index. The official poverty definition counts money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps). Poverty is not defined for people in military barracks or institutional group quarters, or for unrelated individuals under age 15 (such as foster children). These individuals are excluded from the poverty universe.

The federal poverty standards were determined in 1964 with the assistance of economist Mollie Orshansky, who worked for the Social Security Administration. Orshansky began with the price of the Department of Agriculture's Economy Food Plan, which was, according to the department, the cheapest plan that still provided adequate nutrition. Since the average family in the 1960s spent one-third of its income on food (the other two-thirds on rent, utilities, clothing, transportation, and other household expenditures), Orshansky multiplied that price by three and called it a poverty threshold.

Orshansky's purpose was not to introduce a new general measure of poverty in the United States. Instead, her intent was to develop a measure to assess the relative risks of low economic status (or, more broadly, differentials in opportunity) among different demographic groups of families with children. However, her work coincided with the announcement by the Johnson administration of a War on Poverty in January 1964. The Office of Economic Opportunity was being set up to address poverty and adopted Orshansky's poverty thresholds as a working definition of poverty for statistical, planning, and budget purposes in May 1965. In 1969, the Bureau of the Budget designated the somewhat-revised poverty thresholds as the federal government's official statistical definition of poverty.[1]

Reference

1. Patricia Ruggles, *Drawing the Line: Alternative Poverty Measures and Their Implications for Public Policy* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press, 1990).

1970s and early 1980s, the national poverty rate increased from 12 percent in 1978 to nearly 15 percent in 1983, before declining to 12.5 percent in 1989 with the economic expansion. However, by the end of the economic boom of the 1990s, the poverty rate had declined only to its 1973 level of 11 percent.[27]

The poverty rate of African Americans has historically been at least two to three times higher than that of whites, and it surpassed the rate for any other racial or ethnic group until the early 1990s, when Hispanic and black poverty rates began to converge. Moreover, blacks' poverty rate has been particularly sensitive to changes in economic conditions. In response to the early 1980s recession, blacks' poverty rate increased from about 30 percent in 1978 to 36 percent in 1983.[28] Did blacks' poverty rate decline over the 1990s, during the strongest economic expansion in 30 years? If so, did it decline enough to reduce the historic racial gap in poverty?

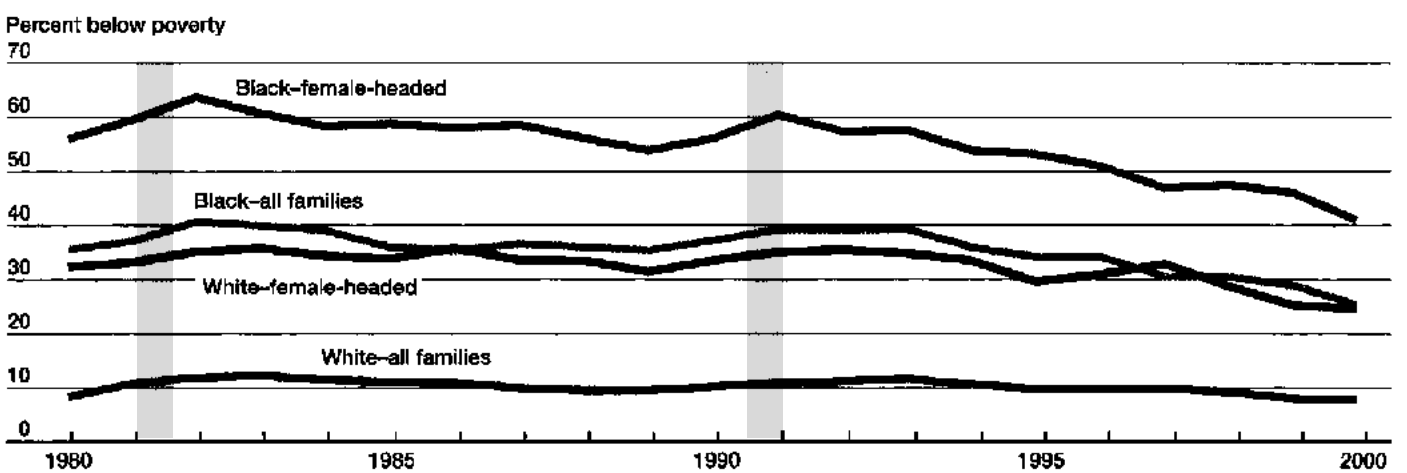
A close analysis of poverty rates by race and family type between 1980 and 2000 reveals that blacks' poverty rate declined absolutely and relative to that of whites during the economic boom of the 1990s, for all families (see Figure 9). Among all black families, the poverty rate declined from a 20-year high of about 40 percent in 1982 and 1993 to 25 percent in 2000. During this period, the poverty rate for white families remained fairly constant, at about 10 percent.

Among female-headed families, the black poverty rate also dropped dramatically over this period, but especially over the late 1990s during the economic boom. From 1990 to 2000, the poverty rate among black female-headed families dropped by 20 percentage points, reaching a 20-year low of 40 percent. While the poverty rate for white female-headed families declined over this period too, it did so less dramatically. During the 1990s, this poverty rate declined by about 10 percentage points, reaching a 20-year low in 2000 at 25 percent, the same poverty rate for all black families.

The racial difference in the poverty rate declined during this period for both all families and those headed by females. The racial gap in poverty among all families declined by about 10 percentage points (or 37 percent) over the 1990s, while the gap among female-headed families dropped by about 8 percentage points (or 35 percent) over this period. Though not as impressive, the black/white poverty ratio for all families declined from 3.6 in 1990 to 3.2 in 2000, a drop of about 11 percent; the ratio for female-headed families declined from 1.7 in 1990 to 1.6 in 2000, a drop of 6 percent.

Second, as expected, the poverty rate of blacks (either all families or those headed by females) is much more sensitive to economic fluctuations that that of their white counterparts. This is partly due to the fact that blacks' labor-market outcomes are much more sensitive to economic conditions for reasons discussed previously. Still, these facts remain interesting when viewed in relation to whites' poverty rate over time. Indeed, despite peaks in the economy in 1989 and 2000, whites' poverty rate for all families remained relatively unchanged at about 10 percent over this 20-year period. To a lesser extent, the same pattern was true for the poverty rate of white families headed by females, but that poverty rate declined rather sharply with the economic boom of the late 1990s, from about 32 percent between 1980 and 1992 to nearly 25 percent in 2000. Among all black families and those headed by females, poverty rates declined significantly during the economic boom of the 1990s.

Figure 9
POVERTY BY RACE AND FAMILY TYPE, 1980–2000



Note: Shaded area indicates recessionary period.
Source: Author's estimates using the Current Population Survey.

Clearly, these trends indicate substantial progress in lowering blacks' economic deprivation over the 1990s. The data suggest that strong economic growth plays an important role in reducing poverty among those for whom poverty has been high and persistent. One caveat in interpreting these data is that the poverty rates especially for blacks are likely to be downwardly biased, painting a rosier picture of black progress in overcoming poverty than what actually occurred. This is because, as noted earlier, the poverty rate calculation does not include the incarcerated who, if included, would likely be counted as poor. Their inclusion would drive up the black poverty rate, especially that of all families, since a disproportionate number of the incarcerated are men.

What is alarming is that, despite the strongest growth in the economy in 30 years, black poverty remained high at an absolute level. In 2000, at the height of the economic boom, nearly a quarter of black families were poor and nearly 40 percent of black female-headed families were poor. Since the economic boom of the 1990s was a rare event, extreme black poverty is likely to remain a permanent feature of American social life in the absence of any other intervention.

Still, the absolute decline of the black poverty rate in the United States over the 1990s likely had positive spillover effects. Beyond falling poverty rates, the United States experienced significant declines in the number and fraction of people who lived in high-poverty neighborhoods over the 1990s. High-poverty neighborhoods are defined as those where more than 40 percent of the residents are living in poverty. The research of Paul Jargowsky showed that, over the 1970s and 1980s, the number of people living in high-poverty neighborhoods doubled. This was especially true for blacks, who had a higher share of their population living in high-poverty neighborhoods than any other racial or ethnic group by 1990. The chance that a poor black child lived in a high-poverty area increased from 25 percent in 1980 to 33 percent in 1990.[29]

Some have argued that the poor may benefit from having poor neighbors because they may develop and share coping strategies and draw on and produce neighborhood networks that help them manage in impoverished conditions. However, research by sociologists Greg Duncan, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, and others clearly demonstrates that the cost of poor people living side by side and isolated from others exceeds any possible benefits that might derive from these living arrangements. There is now a reasonable degree of certainty that the concentration of poor families and children in high-poverty neighborhoods compounds or even causes the problems faced by the poor. Consistent with this interpretation, crime, dropping out of high school, and joblessness, among other problems, are disproportionately experienced in these neighborhoods because of a lack of resources, institutions, or role models; social isolation and discrimination; or all of the above.[30]

Consistent with the falling poverty rate in the United States over the 1990s, the number of people living in high-poverty neighborhoods declined significantly. In his recent work, Paul Jargowsky estimates the decline at 2.5 million between 1990 and 2000 (from about 10.3 million to 7.9 million). Moreover, the number of neighborhoods in the United States that are characterized by high poverty declined from 3,417 to 2,510.[31]

While the falling poverty rate certainly contributed to these declines, the falling black poverty rate contributed disproportionately since blacks are overrepresented in these neighborhoods. Jargowsky's recent research also documents that the share of the poor living in high-poverty neighborhoods also declined over the 1990s and that this decline was strongest for African Americans. Whether the decline in high-poverty neighborhoods was caused by residents in these areas gaining more income or by the migration of the poor out of these areas is an open question. The decline in such neighborhoods is definitely good news. But whether the decline will continue when the poverty rate begins to rise again, especially for African Americans, remains uncertain.

Limited Gains in Wealth Accumulation

Most researchers interested in assessing the degree of racial economic inequality in American society have focused on measures of income, earnings, and poverty. Recently, however, researchers have broadened their focus to include wealth. Wealth is arguably an important measure of economic well-being, and of racial differences in economic well-being in particular. To the extent that racial differences in wealth are much greater than differences in measures such as income, the extent of racial inequality between blacks and whites is likely to have been underestimated and policy efforts directed at closing the gap are likely to have been insufficient.

Unlike income, which measures flows of money over a set period of time, wealth is a stock of owned assets. Income does allow individuals and families to purchase goods and services, thereby helping determine a standard of living. But wealth signifies the command of financial resources that individuals or families have accumulated over a lifetime, along with those assets that have been inherited across generations. In the long run, individuals and families accumulate wealth to finance education, purchase a house, start a small business, or finance retirement. In the short run, wealth, particularly those liquid financial assets such as checking and savings accounts, can help families cope with financial emergencies related to unemployment or illness, some-

thing that income alone cannot do. Wealth, when combined with income, can also widen opportunities to secure a better life for individuals, families, and their children. This is because the accumulation of wealth opens opportunities to enhance income through investment. Thus, wealth is arguably a more encompassing measure of economic well-being.

Wealth distribution in the United States is very unequal. The wealthiest 1 percent of all households control about 38 percent of national wealth, with the bottom 80 percent of households holding about 17 percent. This inequality in wealth is even greater for stock ownership. The top 1 percent of stockholders hold almost 50 percent of all stock value, with the bottom 80 percent owning about 4 percent. This is because most individuals in the United States do not have a meaningful stake in the stock market. In 1998, 48 percent of households in the United States owned stock, while about 36 percent held stock worth $5,000 or more.[32]

Recent studies of wealth and assets by sociologists Melvin Oliver and Harold Shapiro and others have documented large racial differences. Moreover, almost all studies show that the racial differences in wealth are much larger than those for typical earnings or income measures. This is true even in those studies that match blacks and whites on the basis of educational attainment. For example, in the late 1980s, Oliver and Shapiro showed that the median net worth for a white person with a college degree was about $75,000, while it was roughly $17,500 for a black person with a college degree—a difference of nearly $60,000. This racial gap in wealth is even bigger for the population as a whole. During this period, the racial gap in net worth was estimated to be about $82,000.[33]

There are a number of explanations for the racial gap in wealth. Some, like Oliver and Shapiro, argue that it is heavily influenced by public policy. The enslavement of African Americans, the barring of blacks from certain occupations, the erection of racial housing covenants through local ordinances, and federal policy on homesteading and homeownership—which in many instances excluded blacks—have all reduced blacks' accumulation of wealth. So, too, has private market discrimination against blacks in labor, credit, and capital markets. This discrimination has lowered blacks' earnings and ownership rates of assets such as houses and businesses below what would be expected given their economic or human capital profile. This setback has disadvantaged blacks cumulatively by reducing intergenerational transfers of wealth, which serve to build wealth within families and racial groups.[34]

Others have examined racial differences in personal and family characteristics and other factors to explain the racial gap in earnings. Economists Francine Blau and John Graham have shown that racial differences in income, family structure, residential location, and education explain a small portion of the racial gap in wealth. So, too, do racial differences in the composition of wealth and in the rates of return on assets. For example, whites are much more likely than blacks to have their wealth held in stocks, which historically have had higher rates of return than typical savings accounts. Blacks, on the other hand, are much more likely than whites to have their wealth held in savings accounts. Even so, racial differences in the composition of wealth and the components' rates of return explain a small portion of the racial gap in wealth. In fact, according to Blau and Graham, when all of the above factors are taken into account, about three-quarters of the racial gap in wealth remains unexplained.[35]

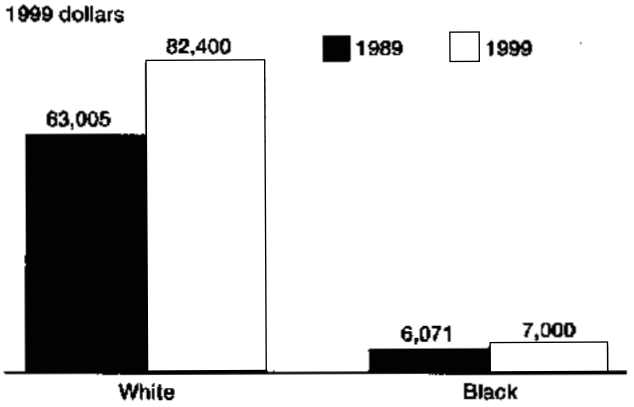
Did the economic boom of the 1990s, which saw stock prices rise to historic levels, widen or narrow the racial gap in wealth? Either effect would seem plausible. Blacks are less invested in the stock market than whites, so it would be reasonable to expect that the racial gap widened. On the other hand, over the 1990s black homeownership rates rose significantly for a variety of reasons: rising income, lower mortgage rates, greater enforcement of the Community Reinvestment Act, and federal policy directed at increasing minority homeownership rates. For example, in 1990 about 40 percent of blacks owned their own homes, compared with 69 percent of whites. By 2000, about 47 percent of blacks owned homes compared with 74 percent of whites. Put another way, from 1990 to 2000, the black/white homeownership ratio increased from 0.58 to 0.64.[36] Given rising black homeownership rates both absolutely and relative to whites, and given that for most Americans the largest share of wealth is held in home equity, it is reasonable to expect that the racial gap in wealth could have narrowed over the 1990s.

Median net worth increased for both blacks and whites over the 1990s (see Figure 10). But it increased more for whites than for blacks, so that the racial difference in net worth was much bigger in 1999 than 1989. Indeed, blacks' net worth increased very modestly over the 1990s (by $1,000 on average), while that for whites increased by $19,000 on average. Thus, over this period the racial gap in net worth increased by about $18,000, or by 32 percent. An examination of the change in the black/white ratio of net worth leads to the same general conclusion. From 1989 to 1999, the black/white net worth ratio decreased from 0.096 to 0.085.

What are the factors that influenced the rise in the racial gap in wealth over the 1990s? Data on the composition of total wealth by race provide some insight into this question (see Figure 11). The composition of blacks' and whites' wealth is very different. Whites' wealth is disproportionately held in financial assets. For example, in 1989, before the run-up in stock prices in the late 1990s, 10 percent of whites' wealth was held

Figure 10

MEDIAN NET WORTH BY RACE, 1989 AND 1999

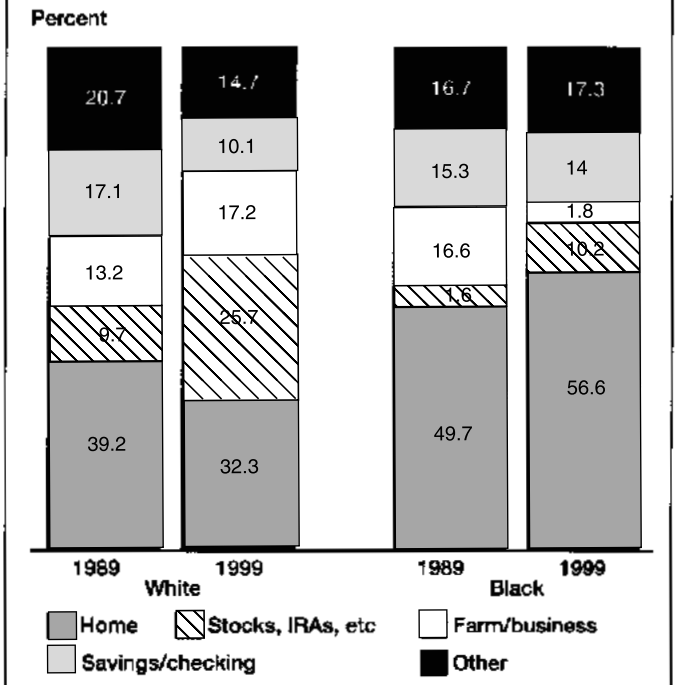


Note: The median is shown because it is a more conservative measure of wealth. Net worth, the standard measure of wealth, is calculated by subtracting total liabilities from total wealth. Total wealth refers to the estimated value of assets including the value of homes, stocks, cars, checking and savings accounts, businesses or farms, and other owned real estate. Total liabilities include remaining balances on home mortgages and car loans, and any other outstanding debt including credit card balances.

Source: Author's estimates using the Panel Survey of Income Dynamics.

Figure 11

COMPOSITION OF TOTAL WEALTH BY RACE, 1989 AND 1999



Note: The composition of total wealth is shown rather than the composition of net worth since total liabilities for blacks and whites over the 1990s changed very little. Total wealth levels (not shown here) vary over time.

Source: Author's estimates using the Panel Survey of Income Dynamics.

in stocks and other related assets, while the comparable figure for blacks was 2 percent.

On the other hand, blacks' wealth is disproportionately held in the value of their homes. In 1989, 50 percent of blacks' wealth was held in home value, while the comparable percentage for whites was 40 percent. Among blacks, this percentage increased to 57 percent in 1999. An alternative way to examine the extent to which blacks' wealth is disproportionately held in home value is to measure the percentage of net worth that is made up of home equity (home value minus mortgage balance). The data (not shown) reveal that in 1989, 43 percent of blacks' net worth was composed of home equity, while the comparable figure for whites was 32 percent. This gap actually increased during the 1990s. By 1999, 46 percent of blacks' net worth was composed of home equity, while the comparable figure for whites dropped to 24 percent.

Blacks also have a relatively large share of wealth in savings and checking accounts. The higher unemployment rates, longer unemployment spells, and greater income uncertainty faced by blacks relative to others in the labor market may increase their demand for liquid assets. However, rates of return on these types of assets are much lower than those on stock or bond markets and thus may further disadvantage blacks in long-run wealth accumulation.

The factors that influenced the rise in total wealth over the 1990s were different for whites and blacks. The data for whites suggest that the major source of the increase in their wealth over the 1990s came from stocks and other related assets. In 1989, about 10 percent of whites' total wealth was in the form of stocks and other financial assets; by 1999, this percentage had increased to 26 percent. Surely, the rise in the value of stocks during the economic boom of the 1990s had much to do with this change. Interestingly, although home prices rose fairly strongly during the 1990s and although nearly 75 percent of whites owned their own homes, home value as a percentage of whites' wealth declined over this period. This suggests that the increase in wealth generated by the rapid increase in stock value over the 1990s exceeded any increase in home equity that whites saw contribute to their overall wealth.

In contrast, the data suggest that the moderate rise in blacks' wealth over the 1990s was fueled by home value. In 1989, about 50 percent of blacks' wealth came from their homes' value, and by 1999 this percentage had increased to 57 percent. Blacks' increasing homeownership rates over this period, coupled with rising home prices, contributed to this increase. The data also suggest that had blacks' been more invested in the stock market in the 1990s, their total wealth would have increased substantially more than it did over this period.

Thus, the analysis of racial inequality in wealth over the 1990s suggests two things. One is that the pattern of racial inequality over the next decade is likely to look different than the pattern seen during the 1990s. The prime contributor to the rise in racial inequality in wealth over the 1990s appears to be racial differences in participation in the stock market. But the popping of the stock market bubble in 2000 must have decreased total wealth, especially for those heavily invested in the stock market. Thus, the drop of stock market prices in 2000 and the closing of the racial gap in homeownership rates suggest that the racial gap in wealth is likely to be lower over the coming decade.

The other thing that is clear from the data is that racial inequality in wealth grew over this period, despite blacks' increased homeownership rates. The racial wealth gap will persist, and given the long-run importance of stocks and other related financial assets to the formation of wealth in the United States, the continued racial difference in the participation in the stock market is likely to perpetuate racial inequality in wealth.

Growing Stability in Family Structure

Changing economic conditions clearly influence economic outcomes of individuals, but they can also influence social decisions, such as those pertaining to marriage and childbearing. Yet the effect of economic conditions on these decisions is sometimes ambiguous. For example, better economic opportunities such as those that came about in the 1990s may influence some people's decisions to marry and have children because greater economic security enhances one's ability to provide. For others, especially women, better economic conditions may mean that leaving a marriage or remaining single becomes more viable. What effect did the period of sustained economic opportunity in the 1990s have on African Americans' family structure?

Before proceeding, it is important to consider that notions of family as a principal unit of social organization are virtually universal, but the specific definition or form of families, and the extent to which such family types are socially acceptable, vary widely across countries and cultures and time. After a prolonged period in the United States in which the nuclear family was the main form of family structure, family and living arrangements have undergone serious changes. For example, from 1960 to 1980, the marriage rates for white men and women fell from 70 percent and 67 percent, respectively, to 65 percent and 60 percent. The decline among African Americans was even more dramatic, falling from about 60 percent for black men and women in 1960 to 49 percent and 45 percent, respectively, in 1980.[37] Did this trend continue during the economic boom of the 1990s, and was the decline still more pronounced for blacks than for whites?

The marriage rates for both blacks and whites declined over the 1980s, but declined only for whites over the 1990s. Between 1980 and 1990, the proportion married declined for whites by 5 percentage points or by about 7 percent, and for blacks, by about 7 percentage points or 15 percent. Given the faster rate of decline of black than white marriages over the 1980s, the racial difference in this rate grew by 3 percentage points, or by 13 percent.

The decline in the percentage of individuals married continued over the 1990s, but only for whites (see Figure 12). The rate declined for whites by about 2 percentage points, or by about 3 percent. The percentage of blacks who were married remained virtually the same in 2000 as in 1990 at about 40 percent. As a result, the black-white difference in the percentage married dropped slightly over the 1990s by slightly more than 2 percentage points to near 1980 levels. Thus, in 2000, the percentage of whites who were married reached an historic low, while the percentage of blacks who were married stabilized after nearly five decades of decline.

Since the findings for blacks concerning marriage represent a major departure from historic trends, it is helpful to look at data for those ages 20 to 34 to examine this question in more detail. This age range corresponds more closely with the period of entry into marriage (or first marriage) and thus may shed more light on the extent to which the stabilization in the percentage married for blacks occurred.

The data for this age group confirm the trends observed for those ages 20 to 64. The only major difference in these trends is that the percentage married for both blacks and whites at all three points in time is lower than that for the age group 20 to 64, as should be expected since older individuals are more likely to be married than younger ones. Moreover, in 2000, the racial difference in the percentage married for younger individuals is smaller than that for those ages 20 to 64.

These changes have implications for the living arrangements of children and how such arrangements differ by race (see Figure 13).[38] In contrast to the pattern in the 1980s, the percentage of black children living in female-headed families stabilized over the 1990s, at 51 percent, while the comparable fraction for white children grew by about 3 percentage points, or 17 percent, thus closing slightly the racial gap in female-headed families. For both black and white children, the percentage that lived with married families declined during the 1990s, as it also did during the 1980s, but did so more for whites than for blacks. Indeed, the decline was 6 percentage points (or 7 percent) for whites and 2 per-

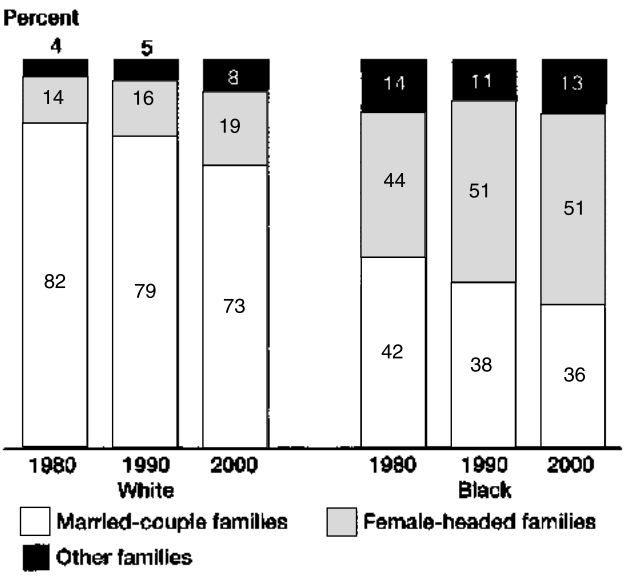
centage points (or 5 percent) for blacks. Finally, for both white and black children, the percentage who lived in other family types, such as with grandparents and in male-headed families, increased over the 1990s as well.

While the rise in the percentage of children in female-headed families could occur through divorce, separations, or deaths of spouses, much of it is being driven by births to unmarried women. Much of the racial difference in the percentage of children living in female-headed families is driven by earlier racial differences in the rate of childbirth between white and black women. In the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, the unmarried fertility rate for blacks remained nearly 10 times that for whites. However, since the 1960s, the rate for blacks in most age cohorts has declined, while that for whites has increased. Indeed, by 1995, the unmarried fertility rate for blacks had dropped to 2.6 times that for whites.[39]

The changing patterns of family formation, especially the decline of marriage, suggest that there are changes in macro forces influencing all racial groups' marriage decisions, but especially those of whites over the 1990s. These likely include shifting norms, attitudes, and values regarding marriage and the growing economic independence of women.[40] In addition, there appear to be specific factors associated with the large racial gap in marriage rates between whites and blacks.

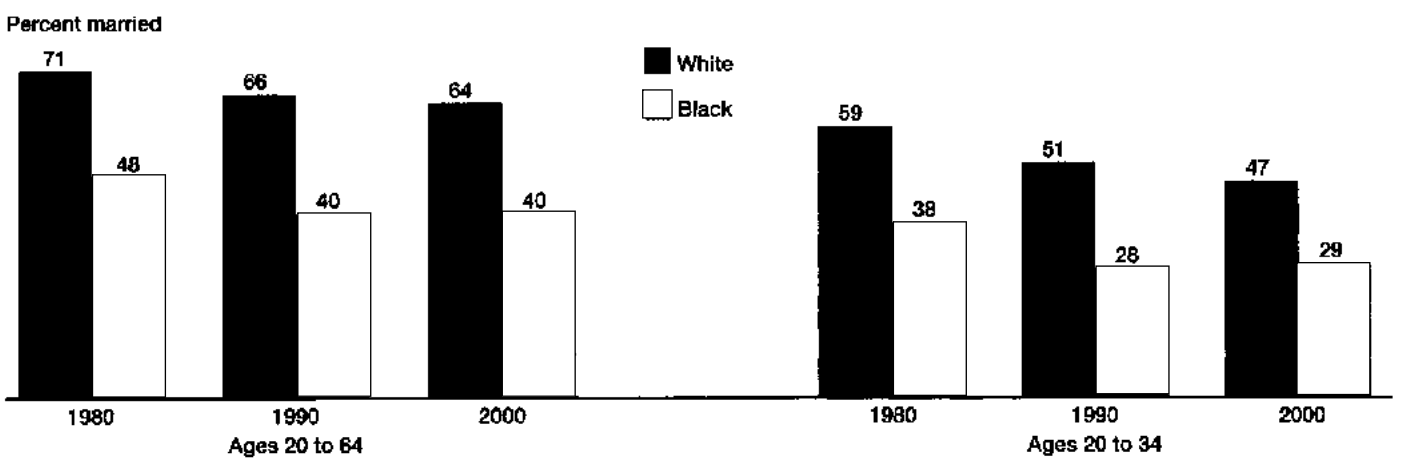
A number of well-substantiated hypotheses about racial differences in family formation and marriage have been documented. Some have shown that the peculiar nature of the African American slave experience created and fostered critical differences in family formation between African Americans and whites that have persisted through time. Historian Brenda Stevenson argues that the brutal effects of slavery on the family forced African Americans to adopt and be open to a variety of forms including extended roles of more distant family members.[41] Others, such as anthropologist Carol Stack, have extended this line of reasoning in the contemporary period by arguing that some poor and working-class African American women share a

Figure 13
LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF CHILDREN BY RACE, 1980, 1990, AND 2000



Note: Children are under 18 years old.
Source: Author's estimates using the Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

Figure 12
MARRIAGE RATE BY RACE AND AGE GROUP, 1980, 1990, AND 2000



Note: The data are restricted to those below age 65 to limit the influence of life expectancy differences between men and women.
Source: Author's estimates using the Census 2000 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

notion of community-based independence that emphasizes kin-based support networks and long-term partnerships with men, but not necessarily marriage.[42]

Even more contemporaneously, interracial marriage and dating are likely to be associated with lower African American marriage rates, especially those of black women. The growing tendency of black men, relative to black women, to date and marry those of other races may be a factor in the lower marriage rate of black women. For example, the rate at which black men marry white women (the most frequent black male interracial marriage) jumped from about 1.5 percent in 1990 to over 4 percent by 1999. During this period, the interracial marriage rate between black women and white men (the most frequent black female interracial marriage) increased from about 0.8 to 1.8 percent.[43]

Moreover, interracial cohabitation may be influencing these trends as well. Interracial cohabitation rates are rising, and are much higher among black men than among black women. For example, in 1990, about 4.5 percent of black women were cohabiting with white men (the most frequent black female interracial cohabitation type), while 15 percent of black men were cohabiting with white women (the most frequent black male interracial cohabitation type).[44] Given the continuing liberalization of racial attitudes in this recent period, it is expected that such unions are likely to have increased over the 1990s. Surprisingly, although interracial marriage and cohabitation increased during the 1990s, the percentage married did not decline for all blacks or for those in their marriage-entry years (ages 20 to 34).

There is great debate about the relative importance of these factors in explaining the lower marriage rates of blacks, but the one factor that has received the most attention is the black male marriageability hypothesis. Some, such as sociologist William Julius Wilson, have argued that blacks are less likely to marry because of the increasing economic marginality of black men. As noted earlier, the decline in the economic fortunes of black men, especially those who are less-educated, sharpened since the 1970s as a result of several factors, including the loss of manufacturing jobs on which black men were disproportionately reliant. These changes have hurt black men's attractiveness as potential spouses, especially since the 1960s, and affected black men's views of themselves as breadwinners. That is, an increasing number of black males are less willing to marry and become husbands because they perceive that they cannot meet the socially defined responsibilities of husbands.[45] The apparent stabilization of black men's economic fortunes (at least of those who were employed) as a result of the 1990 boom should have positively influenced black marriages during this period.

The data provide some support for this hypothesis. As the percentage married for blacks remained steady over the 1990s while declining for whites, the economic stability of black men is perhaps an important factor in marriage for blacks and may act to buffer against any national cultural trends influencing lower marriage rates in the United States.

Alternatively, sociologist Robert Sampson and others have argued that demographic factors are associated with lower marriage rates among blacks. This argument holds that there are simply not enough black men as potential mates for black women, especially in the prime marriage years of 20 to 34. Thus, a sex-ratio imbalance between young black women and men has developed and is growing as a result of factors including high mortality rates of black men, especially young black men.[46] Sampson and others see the sex-ratio imbalance as playing a large role in lower black marriage rates, particularly since a vast majority of black marriages are of the same race. In the 1990s, the growing incarceration rate of black men is likely to have further influenced sex-ratio imbalances among young blacks. This factor may help account for the racial difference in marriage rates, but is not consistent with the marriage rate of blacks over time, especially over the 1990s, as the data previously shown suggest.

Changing Residential Location Patterns

The slave economy served to concentrate blacks in the South, where the largest share of blacks still reside today (about 55 percent). When slavery ended, blacks in the South still faced the oppression of Jim Crow and limited economic opportunities. From 1910 to 1920, the nation's black population shifted away from underdeveloped rural areas in the South to industrial centers in the cities, particularly in the North and Midwest. The same type of migration but on a massive scale occurred before, during, and shortly after World War I: Between 500,000 and a million African American men, women, and children left the South, settling in New York, Chicago, Detroit, and other parts of the North and Midwest. Chicago's black population increased from 44,000 to 110,000 during this period. This mass movement has been called the Great Black Migration.[47]

Although the distribution of blacks became less skewed toward the South as a result of migration, racial housing covenants and residential housing discrimination ensured that blacks remained concentrated and residentially segregated in mostly big Northern and Midwestern cities. Within these cities, they lived in the worst neighborhoods, which again limited their economic and social opportunities.

How much have black geographic and residential distributions changed over the years, especially during

the 1990s? New York, California, and Texas, the top three states according to the size of their black populations in 2000, have had the largest black populations for the past 30 years. The top 10 states with the largest black populations (see Table 1) house about 58 percent of the total black population, while they represent 48 percent of the total U.S. population. The ranking of these states, however, is likely to change. The states that gained the most blacks during the 1990s included a disproportionate share of Southern states such as Florida, Georgia, Texas, and Maryland; California, for the first time in 30 years, was not among the top five states with the largest black gains.[48]

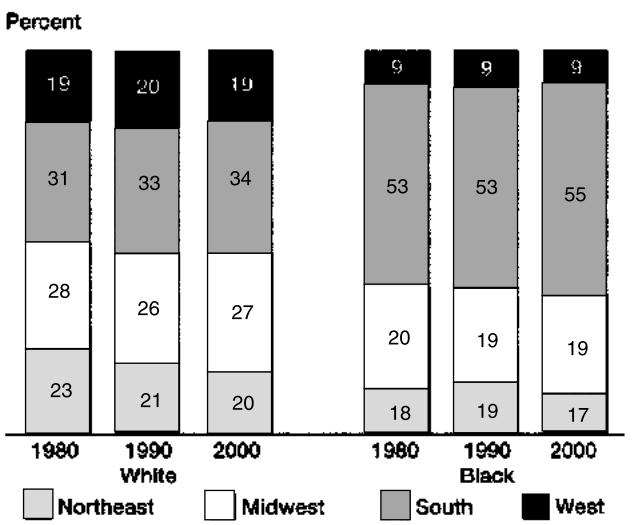
In all but one of the cities with the largest black populations (see Table 1), blacks made up over 20 percent of the overall population (the exception was Los Angeles). Big urban areas in the North still topped the list, as they have for the past 30 years. But Southern urban areas enjoyed the largest growth in black population over the 1990s, especially Atlanta, Houston, and Washington, D.C., and thus they are likely to overtake some of those in the North in the coming decades as cities with the largest black populations.[49]

The return of blacks to the South that occurred during the 1980s continued and perhaps accelerated in the 1990s. As alluded to earlier, the South experienced net out-migration of blacks for every decade from 1880 to 1970. But for the first time in 100 years, blacks began returning to the South in much greater numbers than they were leaving during the 1970s and 1980s.

As for the pattern during the 1990s, the Southern share of the black population increased yet again over the decade, suggesting continued return migration. The South's black population increased by 3.6 million, about two times the number the South gained in the 1980s (1.7 million). The Southern share of the population also increased for whites, though to a lesser extent. Of course, there are other factors besides interregional migration that are likely to be driving these changes, such as regional birth or death rate differences by race or by immigration, among others.

Still, the magnitude of the change in the share of blacks living in the South appears to be strongly influenced by black out-migration from all other regions (see Figure 14). The share of blacks living in the Northeast and Midwest, and to a lesser extent in the West, declined from 1990 to 2000. In fact, the 1990s was the first decade in which each of these regions (besides the South) registered a net out-migration of blacks.

Figure 14
REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF U.S. WHITES AND BLACKS, 1980, 1990, AND 2000



Source: Author's estimates using the Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

Table 1
TOP 10 PLACES IN UNITED STATES WITH LARGEST BLACK POPULATIONS, 2000

State	Count	Share of U.S. black population (%)
1. New York	3,234,165	9
2. California	2,513,041	7
3. Texas	2,493,057	7
4. Florida	2,471,730	7
5. Georgia	2,393,425	7
6. Illinois	1,937,671	5
7. North Carolina	1,776,283	5
8. Maryland	1,525,036	4
9. Michigan	1,474,613	4
10. Louisiana	1,468,317	4
U.S. Total	36,419,434	

City	Count	Share of city population (%)
1. New York	2,274,049	28
2. Chicago	1,084,221	37
3. Detroit	787,687	83
4. Philadelphia	672,162	44
5. Houston	505,101	26
6. Los Angeles	444,635	12
7. Baltimore	424,449	65
8. Memphis	402,367	62
9. Washington, D.C.	350,455	61
10. New Orleans	329,171	67

Source: Jesse McKinnon, "The Black Population," *Census 2000 Brief* C2KBR/01-5 (www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-5.pdf, accessed March 18, 2004).

Table 2

INTERREGIONAL MIGRATION BY RACE, 1995–2000

Region of residence in 1995 (movers)	Region of residence in 2000			
	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
White				
Northeast	85%	2%	9%	3%
Midwest	1%	88%	7%	4%
South	2%	4%	91%	3%
West	2%	4%	15%	79%
Black				
Northeast	84%	1%	13%	1%
Midwest	1%	90%	7%	2%
South	1%	2%	96%	1%
West	1%	2%	38%	59%
Black/white ratio				
Northeast	0.99	0.56	1.40	0.39
Midwest	0.59	1.02	1.12	0.40
South	0.51	0.51	1.06	0.41
West	0.76	0.65	2.44	0.74

Note: The table reads that, of whites who moved from the Northeast in 1995 (i.e., in the first row), 85 percent moved within the Northeast, 2 percent moved to the Midwest, 9 percent moved to the South, and 3 percent moved to the West.

Source: Author's calculations using the Census 2000 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

As for whether the propensity to move to the South is greater for blacks than for whites, analysis of Census 2000 data on interregional migration by race (see Table 2) indicates a few clear patterns. First, most people who moved between 1995 and 2000 moved within their region of residence. For example, for white and black movers living in the Northeast at the end of the decade, 85 percent and 84 percent of them, respectively, had moved there since 1995 from other locations within the Northeast. The second strong pattern is that black movers were much more likely than white movers to move to the South, confirming expectations. For example, for black movers who lived in the Northeast in 1995, about 13 percent of them moved to the South by the end of the decade, while the comparable figure for whites was about 9 percent.

The ratio of black to white percentages in these figures (the bottom panel of data in the table) confirms blacks' greater propensity to move south. Ratios above 1 indicate that blacks were much more likely than whites to move to a particular region, while scores below 1 indicate the reverse. The shaded area of the table indicates that blacks were more likely than whites to move to the South irrespective of their region of residence in 1995, something that was especially true for movers out of the West and to a lesser extent the Northeast.

Although researchers have yet to examine the factors underlying blacks' interregional migration patterns in the 1990s, some have studied these for the 1970s and 1980s. The factors that emerged from that research are likely to go a long way in explaining the continued trend of black return migration to the South in the 1990s.

There are two major explanations of blacks' return to the South: the traditional push-pull framework and historical social networks. Demographer Larry Long argues that the recent black return to the South is a result of a push out of the Northeast and Midwest and a pull to the South. He reasons that the black dream of the North as a place of "milk and honey" never materialized and that the changing South represented new opportunities for blacks. In Long's view, deteriorating social and economic conditions for blacks in the North, caused by deindustrialization and persistent discrimination, were the push factors; improvements in the general economic and social environment of the South—increasing school integration, improved race relations, and the rise of Sunbelt cities as centers for capital investment and economic opportunities—were the pull factors.[50]

The ethnographic work of anthropologist Carol Stack argues that historically significant social and familial ties play a key role in blacks' decisions to return to the South. Stack maintains that black Northerners, even those born outside the South, kept strong ties to home communities in the South, and passed these on from one generation to the next. These kinship and familial ties have been shown to be strong predictors of migration decisions by blacks.[51]

Underlying these regional trends are changing residential patterns by blacks within metropolitan areas. It is well known that, as a result of historical migration patterns, housing discrimination and affordability, and to some extent, preferences to live near other blacks, African Americans' residential locations have long been concentrated in central cities. Although the percentage of blacks living in central cities has been one of the highest of any racial or ethnic group over the past three decades, this percentage declined among blacks for every decade since the 1970s. This trend continued during the 1990s. The 2000 Census shows that for large metropolitan areas with populations of 500,000 or more, 61 percent of African Americans lived in the central city, down from 66 percent in 1990. The similar percentage of whites living in the central city was 34 percent in 1990 and 29 percent in 2000.[52]

Black suburbanization increased over the 1990s. Blacks moved in greater numbers to the suburbs for greater homeownership and economic opportunities, among other factors. The increase in black suburbanization over the 1990s may have been spurred in part by the economic boom of the 1990s, which led the black unemployment rate to drop to a record low. With more blacks working, housing demand among black house-

holds grew, and black homeownership (discussed earlier) increased over this period. Given that single-family homes are disproportionately found in the suburbs, these trends suggest greater black representation in suburban communities over the 1990s.

Still, most of the suburbs into which blacks are moving are inner-ring suburbs (usually in close proximity to central cities). Some argue that economic conditions in these inner rings do not differ dramatically from those in the central cities.[53] Hence, for many, it is an open question as to whether blacks experienced greater economic opportunities as a result of the increased residential mobility over the 1990s.

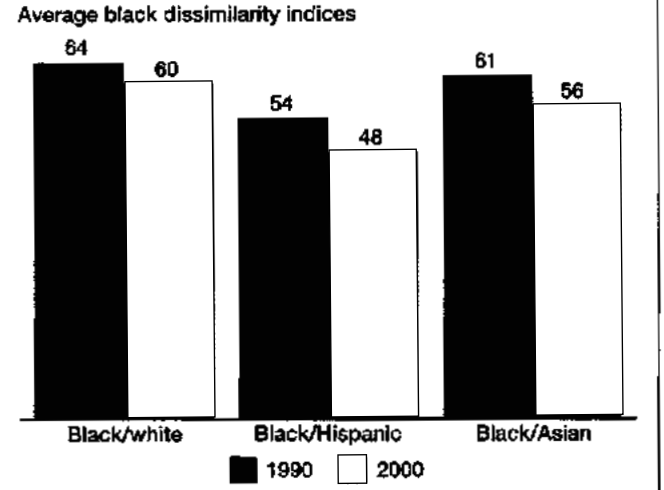
Persistent Residential Segregation

The increased residential mobility of blacks over this period is likely to have affected residential segregation patterns in the United States. Social scientists measure the degree of residential segregation between groups using indices of dissimilarity. The dissimilarity indices shown in Figure 15 are based on data for the 316 Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the United States and are weighted by the total black population in each of these metropolitan areas. The dissimilarity index ranges from 0 to 100, with higher values indicating greater residential segregation between racial groups. Hence, the index value between blacks and whites for all metropolitan areas in the United States describes the extent to which the neighborhoods that blacks tend to reside in are different from the neighborhoods whites live in.

The actual numerical value of the dissimilarity index has a convenient interpretation. Specifically, the index can be interpreted as the percentage of either population that would have to be relocated to different neighborhoods to completely eliminate any geographic imbalance. For example, the 1990 index value describing the imbalance between the residential distribution of blacks and whites is 64. This indicates that in 1990, about 64 percent of blacks would have had to relocate within the metropolitan area to be spatially distributed in proportion to the residential distribution of whites.

Over the 1990s racial segregation between blacks and other groups declined modestly. However, these declines were more dramatic between blacks and Hispanics and between blacks and Asians than between blacks and whites. The index of dissimilarity between blacks and whites declined by 4 percentage points, or 6 percent, from 1990 to 2000. The equivalent decline between blacks and Hispanics was 6 percentage points, or 11 percent; and between blacks and Asians, 6 percentage points, or 8 percent. Thus, by the end of the decade, segregation between blacks and whites still remained higher than that between blacks and other racial and ethnic groups.

Figure 15
Metro Neighborhood Segregation Between Blacks and Other Groups, 1990 and 2000



Source: Author's estimates using Census 2000 data on people provided by the Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research at the State University of New York at Albany (www.mumford1.dyndns.org/cen2000/data.html, accessed April 20, 2004).

The decline in black segregation over the 1990s seems to be linked to demographic changes in metropolitan areas. Additional analysis of the 2000 Census reveals that the biggest declines in black segregation occurred in metropolitan areas that were growing quickly and in places where the percentage of blacks in the population was rising rapidly. This suggests either that metropolitan areas where blacks are migrating are areas where black segregation is lower than the average, or that black movers within metropolitan areas are moving to increasingly nonblack neighborhoods. Bigger declines still in the indices of segregation occurred in places where blacks made up a small proportion of the population in 1990. However, segregation of blacks changed very little in the largest metropolitan areas, where segregation historically has been the highest, and in metropolitan areas where the black population is the largest.[54] The latter trends cause concern since these areas house a disproportionate share of the nation's population and of the U.S. black population.

The degree of racial segregation is influenced by a number of factors. Among these, suburban housing discrimination plays a key role. This kind of discrimination can take many forms, one of which is discrimination against blacks in obtaining home mortgages. Indeed, numerous studies have documented that blacks are less

likely than whites to be approved for home mortgages, even after racial differences in income, debt, creditworthiness, residential location, and other relevant personal characteristics are taken into account.[55] Since single-family homes are disproportionately located in the suburbs, discrimination against blacks in mortgage approvals will likely contribute to racial segregation.

Housing discrimination can also take the form of discrimination by real estate agents and landlords. Suburban landlords discriminate against blacks in rental housing, while many real estate agents steer blacks away from certain neighborhoods that are disproportionately white. But other factors also perpetuate segregation. The limited availability of low-income housing in suburban areas limits the extent to which many blacks can move there. Growth controls, the setting of high impact fees on developers by cities and municipalities, as well as other development regulations (such as limits on multiunit housing) are chief reasons for the lack of affordable housing in suburban areas. Of course, suburban whites' fear of blacks could also contribute to these housing development barriers.

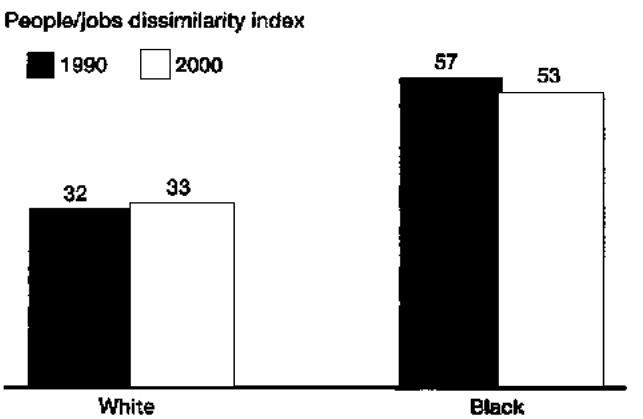
Blacks' racial preferences to live near those of their own race play a smaller role in perpetuating segregation. Housing segregation by income plays an even smaller role, as the black middle class is just as likely to be segregated from whites as the black poor.[56]

Racial Segregation and Economic Opportunity

The modest decline in the segregation of blacks observed in the United States over the 1990s is likely to have affected blacks' proximity to employment opportunities.[57] During the latter half of the 20th century, employment opportunities have grown more distant from predominantly black residential areas. As a result of innovations in transportation, such as the development of highways and of cargo trucks in the mid-20th century, and of cheaper land prices on the suburban fringe, firms, and therefore employment, have decentralized toward suburbs and exurbs, where a disproportionate share of whites also located. However, for a variety of reasons discussed above, black residential locations have remained fairly centralized and concentrated in older urban neighborhoods of the nation's central cities.

Many social scientists argue that this "spatial mismatch" between black residential locations and employment opportunities is in part responsible for the stubbornly inferior labor-market outcomes experienced by African Americans. Given the difficulties of reverse commutes in many metropolitan areas and the fact that traveling long distances imposes high money and time

Figure 16
Geographic Mismatch Between People and Jobs by Race, 1990 and 2000



Sources: Author's estimates using Census 2000 data on people provided by the Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research at the State University of New York at Albany (www.mumford1.dyndns.org/cen2000/data.html, accessed April 20, 2004); and data on total jobs from the 1992 Economic Census and the 1999 Zip Code Business Patterns files.

costs on commuters, such spatial mismatch may render impossible many jobs for which black workers are suited. Thus, an important question is whether the modest decline in the segregation of blacks observed over the 1990s is associated with improvements in blacks' spatial proximity to economic opportunity.

There is a clear racial difference in the degree of mismatch between people and jobs (see Figure 16). In both 1990 and 2000, all of the dissimilarity index values for blacks indicate that more than 50 percent of blacks would have had to relocate to even out the distribution of blacks relative to jobs (the lowest value was 53 percent for total employment in the year 2000). The comparable figures for whites are 25 percentage points lower. Thus, in both 1990 and 2000, there are large racial differences in the imbalance between people and jobs, and African Americans are far more physically isolated from jobs than whites. And though not shown here, the data also indicate that blacks residing in metropolitan areas in the Northeast and the Midwest are the most physically isolated from employment opportunities, whereas blacks residing in the South are the least isolated.

However, blacks' geographic separation from jobs declined during the 1990s. Figure 16 confirms this, as the total employment mismatch index for blacks declined by more than 3 points. Over this period, there are very small changes in the average mismatch values for whites. These changes narrow the black-white difference in geographic mismatch by approximately 13 percent.

The modest improvements in blacks' proximity to employment opportunities occurred in nearly every U.S.

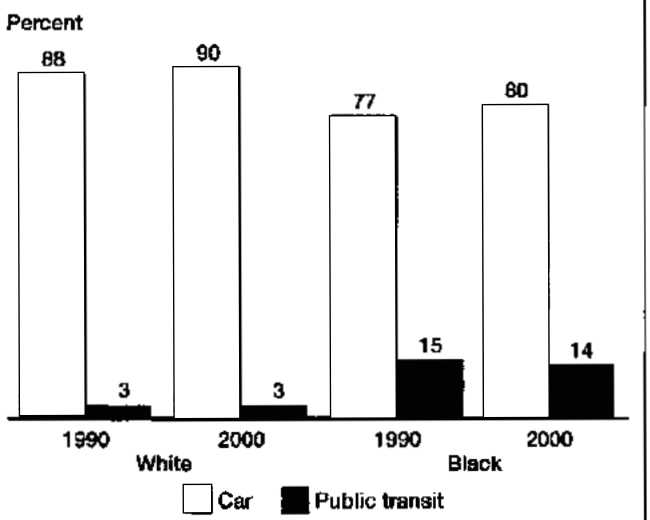
metropolitan area. Such declines were smallest in the Northeast, where segregation is high and economic growth sluggish. The mismatch between blacks and jobs is also most severe in areas where a relatively large percentage of the population is black and where the black population is large in absolute terms. In addition, the absolute declines in the mismatch indices are largest for metropolitan areas with small black populations (in both relative and absolute terms).[58]

Several factors could explain the modest declines in blacks' geographic separation from economic opportunities during the 1990s. One of these is the possibility that job development began to occur in minority neighborhoods as a result of the economic boom. The boom brought with it tremendous economic and employment growth, slowing and in some cases reversing the hemorrhaging of jobs from central cities that characterized the previous four decades. With talk of the revival of central cities, many middle- and upper-income households began to repopulate older urban neighborhoods, bringing with them consumer dollars and businesses that cater to such demand. With this revival came talk of the "competitive advantage of the inner city." Poor, distressed, and predominantly minority urban neighborhoods were increasingly seen as strategic areas of capital investment because of their underserved retail markets and proximity to central business districts.[59] In fact, in some instances, the development and repopulation of these neighborhoods proceeded to the point where many observers increasingly turned their attention to the potential negative consequences of urban gentrification.[60]

This reasoning, it turns out, has little explanatory power. All of the declines that occurred during the 1990s in blacks' segregation from jobs were driven by the residential mobility of blacks within metropolitan areas.[61] That is, most of the reduction in blacks' geographic separation from jobs occurred because blacks moved closer to where jobs are located within metropolitan areas—in or near suburban areas. In fact, changes in the location of jobs during the 1990s actually precipitated higher levels of black isolation from employment. Had black residential mobility out of mostly disadvantaged black communities not occurred to the extent that it did over the 1990s, blacks' geographic isolation from jobs would have worsened significantly during the economic boom. This is because little job growth occurred in inner-city minority communities during the boom of the late 1990s, despite the fact that job development occurred to a significant extent in other areas of central cities.[62]

Despite improvements in these measures for blacks, the geographic imbalances between blacks and jobs are magnified by racial differences in how individuals travel to work. The different ways in which individuals travel to work, in addition to their residential locations,

Figure 17
MODE OF TRANSPORTATION USED TO GET TO WORK BY RACE, 1990 AND 2000



Source: Author's estimates using the Census 2000 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

strongly influence employment opportunities. Cars, for example, provide the greatest flexibility during travel and allow individuals to search for and maintain more distant jobs, thus improving employment opportunities, especially for those that are physically isolated from jobs, such as African Americans. But blacks are significantly less likely than whites to drive to work. In both 1990 and 2000, blacks were less likely than whites to travel to work by car (see Figure 17). In 1990, 88 percent of whites traveled to work by car, whereas only 77 percent of blacks did, resulting in a difference of about 11 percentage points, or 13 percent. The work of Steve Raphael and Michael Stoll indicates that differences between the races in car access are greater for the less-educated. For example, in the mid-1990s, the car ownership rates among those with a high school degree or less were 74 percent, 47 percent, and 48 percent for whites, blacks, and Hispanics, respectively.[63]

Many factors help explain these racial differences in car ownership: differences in income and earnings between whites and blacks, differences in insurance premiums that these groups face, and discrimination against blacks in the car loan market. Indeed, in black and other poor minority neighborhoods, auto insurance premiums are much higher than elsewhere because of redlining by insurance companies and higher theft and traffic accident rates in these areas.[64] Also, blacks are charged significantly higher interest rates for private car loans than are similar creditworthy whites and therefore pay significantly more interest over the course of a car loan. This problem led to a recent lawsuit against and subsequent settlement by GMAC, a wholly owned sub-

sidiary of General Motors that was found to engage in these discriminatory practices.

By 2000, the percentage of whites and blacks traveling to work by car increased, consistent with the long-run trends in these measures. This increase could also have been triggered by the economic boom of the 1990s, in which employment rates and earnings for many groups increased, giving more individuals the ability to purchase a car. Still, the rate of increase in car travel to work was similar for both whites and blacks, leaving the racial difference in this measure virtually unchanged by 2000.

Because lack of car access diminishes employment prospects and limits the ability to search for a job, it harms African Americans in the labor market. As a consequence of the relative lack of car access, blacks are much more likely than others to travel by public transportation. In 1990, about 15 percent of blacks traveled to work by public transit, while only 3 percent of whites did. These percentages changed very little for either group over the 1990s, maintaining the racial difference in mode of travel by 2000.

Economists Edward Glaeser, Matt Kahn, and Jordan Rappaport intimate that the poor, including a disproportionate share of blacks, live in cities because they cannot afford cars and precisely because public transit is reasonably available there.[65] Accordingly, blacks disproportionately use public transit to get to work. But even if this were true, in most metropolitan areas, traveling to work by public transit increases travel burden in a number of ways and therefore diminishes labor-market opportunities. Because commuting by public transit takes considerably longer than commuting by car, individuals using public transit are less likely to search for or maintain a distant job. In boom economies like that experienced over the 1990s, this may be less of a problem as central-city employment opportunities become more numerous. But during recessions, distant suburban employment becomes more important because central-city employment dries up fastest during hard times.

Moreover, reverse commutes from central cities to suburbs, where there is greater employment opportunity, are difficult because of transit service unavailability, particularly for rail. And relative to other workers, blacks and other minority workers are increasingly working nonstandard work schedules, such as the graveyard shift, when public transit is even less available. Finally, suburban firms are more physically distant from public transit stops than are central-city firms, making many suburban employment opportunities that much less accessible. Indeed, in the mid-1990s, nearly half of all jobs in suburban areas where employment growth has been strong were inaccessible by public transportation (defined as being more than a quarter of a mile away from the nearest public transit stop), while the comparable figure for jobs in the central city was about 20 percent.[66]

Rapid Growth in Incarceration

Blacks' pursuit of equal rights, particularly in the nation's criminal justice system, has been long-standing. The criminal victimization of blacks by whites that went unpunished (such as lynching), the imprisonment of blacks for crimes that they did not commit, and the differential treatment and sentencing of blacks have led to sustained fights by African Americans for equal treatment under criminal law and for changes in unjust laws. Changes within the criminal justice system since the 1960s in due process and equal rights have led to a substantial reduction in racial inequalities in the administration of justice.

Despite this, blacks have been overrepresented in the criminal justice system as a result of past and present socioeconomic disadvantages, differential policing and enforcement by race, and other factors. Many social scientists have documented a fairly strong relationship between economic opportunities and crime, suggesting that groups such as African Americans that are disproportionately poor, have limited educational attainment and limited skills, and lack good jobs have higher crime and incarceration rates. This, combined with research showing that racial disparities in arrests and sentencing remain, whether or not the defendant committed the crime, suggests that blacks' incarceration rate should be higher than that of whites, something that has historically been true.[67]

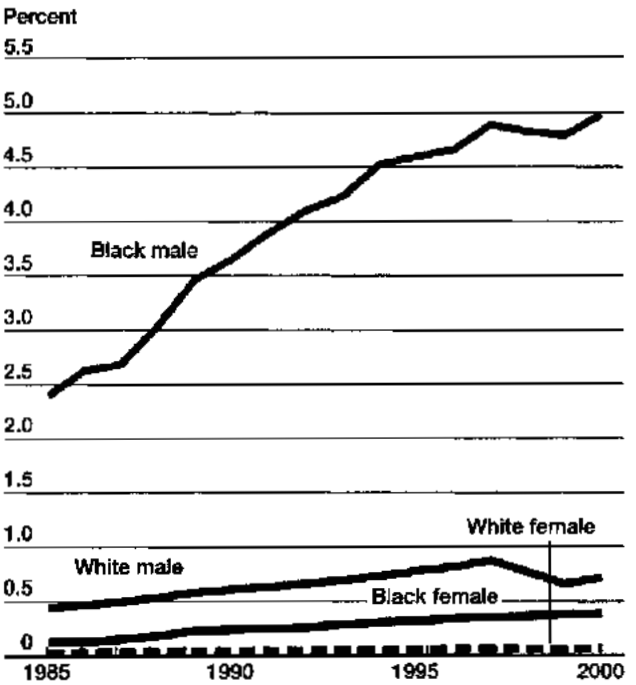
For much of the postwar period, the nation's incarceration rate remained fairly stable, and the fraction of the prison population made up of blacks remained fairly constant as well. Throughout the 1980s and until the mid-1990s, rates of incarceration in the United States rose dramatically, particularly for blacks, despite the fact that rates of most major types of crime, such as violent and property crime, dropped dramatically during this period. The reasons for the decline in crime during the 1990s are not fully understood but include a strong economy, changes in sentencing and policing policies, a decline in the share of young people in the population, and the imprisonment of more offenders.[68]

Over the 1990s, the number of those incarcerated in the United States nearly doubled, from about 600,000 to 1.2 million. The rise in incarceration in the United States has been disproportionately fueled by prison and jail admissions of blacks, in particular black men (see Figure 18). The share of black men under correctional supervision is higher than that for other racial or gender groups.

Moreover, the percentage of black men under supervision grew rapidly over the late 1980s and early 1990s, while the same was not true for others, suggesting that the black male fraction of the prison population also

Figure 18

INCARCERATION BY RACE AND SEX, 1985–2000



Note: The incarceration rate is calculated by dividing the incarcerated population by the relevant noninstitutional population. The noninstitutional population estimates are derived from the CPS for those ages 18 and older.

Sources: Author's estimates using data from the *Correctional Populations in the United States*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, and from the Current Population Survey.

rose over this period. In 1985, between 2 percent and 3 percent of black men were incarcerated, but by 2000 this number had swelled to 5 percent, thus driving the black-white male difference in incarceration to 4 percentage points, up from 2 percentage points in 1985. With black men in the United States numbering 16 million in 2000, the data suggest that about 800,000 black men were incarcerated at any given point in time in the late 1990s. But those imprisoned were disproportionately young, so the percentage of young black men who were imprisoned was even higher. There were roughly 5 million young black men ages 16 to 34 in the population in 2000. Of these, perhaps 600,000 to 700,000 were incarcerated, representing about 14 percent of this population. Furthermore, when the flows of young black men in and out of prison are taken into account, the Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that during the 1980s and 1990s nearly 17 percent of African American men had been incarcerated at least once.[69]

Is the rapid rise in black male incarceration over the 1980s and 1990s accounted for by a rise in blacks' propensity to commit crimes relative to whites? The data indicate that this is not the case. Indeed, tabulations from the U.S. Department of Justice's Uniform FBI Crime Reports indicate that from 1976 to 1999 the percentage of crime committed by African Americans was fairly stable. In fact, over this period, African Americans committed between 43 percent and 47 percent of violent crime (down to 40 percent in 1999) and between 33 percent and 37 percent of overall crime (down to 29 percent in 1999).[70] Thus, the rise in black incarceration over this period was not accounted for by any increase in black criminality. Moreover, if anything, the strong economy should have helped lower black incarceration rates, as well as others, all else being equal, because of the relationship between economic opportunities and crime.

Alternatively, some indicate that the spread of mandatory sentencing laws across states and the increasing use of plea bargaining in the 1980s and 1990s may have increased incarceration, but these factors account more for the rise in overall incarceration than for the disproportionate rise in black incarceration.

What has fueled black male incarceration most over this period is the rise in drug-related arrests and convictions and the differential sentences imposed on those in possession of crack versus powder cocaine. Although violent and property crime declined over the 1990s, drug-related crime rose rapidly, and by the end of the decade became slightly more prevalent than violent crime. This increase is due partly to stricter drug laws and enforcement in the war on drugs, which became prevalent during the Reagan, first Bush, and Clinton administrations. In particular, the harsher penalties on those in possession of crack cocaine, which is disproportionately possessed by blacks, versus powder cocaine, which is disproportionately held by whites, has contributed mightily to the recent run-up in black male incarceration. In 2000, for example, the median cocaine possession sentence (for 25 grams or less) was about 14 months for powder cocaine versus 65 months for crack cocaine.[71] This sentencing differential for apparently equal substances has led to the question of whether blacks are receiving equal treatment under the law.

In any case, the rising contribution of drug offenders to the prison population has disproportionately involved black men. It is estimated that over the 1990s black men accounted for 35 percent of arrests, 55 percent of convictions, and 74 percent of prison sentences for drug-related crimes such as possession. These events have occurred despite the fact that blacks are estimated to represent about 13 percent of monthly drug users in the United States. Moreover, the rise in the number of drug offenders over the late 1980s and early 1990s accounted for 42 percent of the total growth among black inmates but only 26 percent of the growth among white inmates.[72]

The problem of incarceration does not end with the imprisonment of these mostly young black men. Given that the median time served for imprisoned offenders at the end of the 1990s was about two to three years, this suggests that a large share of the 800,000 incarcerated black males are reentering society now. Most of these ex-offenders return to poor, mostly black communities in America's biggest urban centers, where job opportunities are already limited. Even if those who were incarcerated had skills that employers valued, the stigma of ex-offender status would likely dampen any potential labor-market opportunities. Harry Holzer, Steve Raphael, and Michael Stoll show that employers are averse to hiring ex-offenders, for reasons that include fear of negligent hiring lawsuits.[73] Still, many ex-offenders have other disadvantages including personal deficits that may have limited their labor-market opportunities in the first place and may have influenced their incarceration. To the extent that policy supports are not in place to help ex-offenders rejoin society, further stress will be put on these already vulnerable urban and minority communities over the coming decade.

The Color Line's Uncertain Future

The evidence provided in this report points to an uncertain future of continuing black progress and declining racial inequality in America, based on uneven progress in the 1990s (see Box 6). African Americans made real, continued progress during the 1990s. By 2000, African Americans' poverty and unemployment rates were reduced to the lowest levels in 30 years, and black family income rose strongly over the 1990s. These factors, in conjunction with historically low interest rates, contributed to rising African American homeownership rates, some of the highest ever recorded. The sustained period of economic growth over the 1990s contributed to these positive developments, as perhaps did a reduction in private market discrimination and declining negative attitudes toward African Americans.

Black progress was also evident on social measures. The dramatic decline in the percentage of black high school dropouts over the 1970s and 1980s continued through the 1990s, while blacks' college completion rates continued to rise. By 2000, blacks' attainment of a college or advanced degree was higher than ever before. And the percentage of blacks who were married and the percentage of black children living in female-headed families stabilized over the 1990s, after falling and rising, respectively, over the previous two decades. To the extent that important outcomes for children, such as educational attainment, tend to be poorer in female-headed families than other family types, stabilization of these trends suggests positive developments.

Despite these signs of unambiguous progress, African Americans' advancement on many other measures inched along, stalled, or reversed. Residential segregation between blacks and whites declined modestly over the 1990s, not as significantly as that between blacks and other racial minorities. This decline occurred despite the fact that black suburbanization and migration to the South where segregation levels are lower increased during this period. This suggests that the increasing residential mobility of blacks is leading to only slight increases in residential integration. Moreover, blacks' proximity to areas with greater economic opportunity increased only modestly during this period, despite the increasing residential mobility. Finally, notwithstanding a robust economy and stock market in the 1990s and increasing homeownership rates that provided greater opportunities to build home equity, African Americans' wealth grew very little over the 1990s.

Box 6

The Unevenness of Black Progress During the 1990s

Blacks made important gains during the 1990s. Many of these occurred through high-profile government appointments: David Satcher became the 16th Surgeon General of the United States, while Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice were appointed as the U.S. Secretary of State and the National Security Adviser, respectively. Other gains came in the private sector. Oprah Winfrey and Robert Johnson of Black Entertainment Television became black billionaires, while Franklin Raines, Ken Chenault, and Lloyd Ward became the first black CEOs of Fortune 500 companies (Fannie Mae, American Express, and Maytag, respectively). These events, and others like them, were visible signs that blacks were "making it" in mainstream America.

Yet other events during this period suggested that blacks still had a long way to go to achieve equality in America. The police beating of Rodney King (and beatings of others like him that were less publicized), the modern lynching of Donald Byrd in Texas (Byrd was a disabled man who was tied to the back of a truck and dragged to his death), the discrimination against black Secret Service agents at a prominent restaurant chain, and the largest racial discrimination class-action suit on behalf of black employees at Coca-Cola were reminders that racial discrimination and perceptions of blacks as second-class citizens had not been erased. Moreover, the diverging opinions of blacks and whites of O.J. Simpson's guilt and the contentious hearings surrounding the Clarence Thomas appointment to the Supreme Court provided evidence that race still mattered and was a powerful force in America.

Other important indicators offer cause for greater concern, especially among black men. Black men's employment and wages improved very little during the 1990s. Indeed, their employment rate was only slightly higher at the height of the late 1990s economic boom than at the peak of the late 1980s economic expansion. And among young black men, the employment rate fell in absolute terms during this period of economic robustness. By 2000 the percentage of black men in prison had doubled since the 1980s; among young black men, nearly 14 percent were incarcerated in 2000.

While understanding whether blacks made absolute gains is important for assessing the degree of racial progress in America, understanding whether the racial divide is closing is equally important. Many have argued that groups view their well-being in relation to how dominant groups are faring.[74] Indeed, DuBois' prophetic declaration about the color line in America suggests a comparative framework for understanding racial progress.

But when viewed in this light, the degree of racial progress observed over the 1990s was limited. For most of the social and economic outcomes examined here, African Americans either made up very little ground or lost ground relative to whites. This pattern was true for most measures in education, the labor market, wealth, family structure, and incarceration. One of the few exceptions to this trend was poverty, in which the racial difference declined by nearly half during the 1990s.

Taken as a whole, the events that occurred over the 1990s are likely to provide evidence to both optimists and pessimists regarding racial progress in America. Optimists will point to the continued absolute gains that blacks made over the 1990s in education, poverty reduction, and family income. These gains can be interpreted to mean that private mechanisms are sufficient to ensure black progress in this modern era and that government involvement in these affairs is no longer warranted. Pessimists will highlight the lack of relative gains made by blacks during this period of economic robustness in education, wealth, and employment. These findings will serve as evidence of a continuing need for government involvement—if not for social justice, especially in light of the history of the "Negro question" in America, then for policy purposes and civil rights.

The debate is likely to continue for at least the next decade. Economic and political conditions are likely to be, by and large, unfavorable to significantly more African American progress. Persistent racial discrimination against African Americans in labor, housing, and credit markets is unlikely to disappear in the next decade or so. And the economic downturn that began in early 2000 is likely to have erased many of the labor-market gains made by African Americans over the 1990s, perhaps even resulting in losses when compared with whites. And there is little evidence that in the next decade the strength of the American economy will return to its late 1990s level, which was impressive by historic standards.

The persistence of criminal justice policies that clearly have racially disparate effects, the continuing shrinking role of the federal government, the increasing stress on state and local governments to meet unfunded federal mandates, and the lack of enforcement of antidiscrimination laws in key sectors of the economy and society will surely harm African Americans. These factors, combined with the narrowing of coverage of affirmative action policies, will reduce blacks' opportunities to move into the middle class. Though controversial and limited in the extent to which they affect the black population, affirmative action programs in higher education, the labor market, and contracting, among others, remain one of the few viable policy options shown to spur black progress as well as narrow racial gaps in important outcomes. But continued softening of public support for these programs suggests that they will remain tenuous at best as policy solutions to address discrimination and social justice issues in the foreseeable future.

Finally, growing diversity in America and within the African American population may limit the degree of African American progress in the near future as well. The rapid growth of other racial and ethnic minority populations is likely to create greater competition for government resources, policies, and attention to address race- and ethnic-specific problems, thus limiting the extent to which the public listens and remains concerned about the unique challenges affecting black social and economic progress. And the growing diversity within the black population, spurred by the growing immigration and higher birth rates of blacks from Africa and the Caribbean and by the growing black "biracial" population, raises the question of whether African Americans' political unity, which has helped overcome numerous injustices and indignities, will remain intact. All the evidence suggests that the problem of the color line will be an important question that will continue to be raised, studied, and debated.

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www.albany.edu/mumford/census/index.html

Center on Metropolitan and Urban Policy, Census 2000 Series, The Brookings Institution:
www.brookings.org/urban

U.S. Census Bureau:
www.census.gov

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics:
www.bls.gov

A Demographic Portrait of Asian Americans

By Yu Xie and Kimberly A. Goyette

Asian Americans are a diverse group who either are descendants of immigrants from some part of Asia or are themselves such immigrants. They come from East Asia (China, Japan, and Korea); Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam); and South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan). Cultural heritage, economic conditions, political systems, religious practices, and languages are quite different across these countries and, in some cases, have changed over time. As a result, ethnic differences among Asian Americans are so large that they call into question the use of a single, overarching category to group them.

The broad category of Asian Americans is used for several reasons. Besides the practical need to collapse racial categories in statistical tabulations, there are also many ways in which Asian Americans are distinct from other major racial groups in the United States. First, Asian Americans are physically and culturally distinguishable from whites and other minorities. Second, except for those of Japanese descent, most Asian Americans arrived in the United States recently, as beneficiaries of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act (Chinese, Koreans, Filipinos, and Asian Indians) or as refugees (Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians). Finally, again with the exception of Japanese Americans, most Asian Americans speak their native languages at home and maintain their distinct ethnic cultures and values, signaling that they either face difficulties fully assimilating into the American mainstream or purposefully resist full assimilation. As this report will show, Asian Americans have socioeconomic experiences and demographic profiles that are overall distinct from those of whites and blacks.

With available census data and supplemental material, this report documents racial differences in demographic and socioeconomic characteristics between Asian and non-Asian Americans, as well as ethnic differences in these characteristics among Asian Americans. The report begins with an historical review of the immigration history of the major Asian groups. It then examines the educational achievements of Asian Americans relative to whites and blacks and across Asian ethnicities over the past 40 years; the labor force outcomes of Asian Americans relative to whites and blacks and variations across Asian ethnicities over time; Asian Americans' family characteristics and marriage patterns; and spatial distribution and residential patterns in the United States.

History of Asian Americans

Although Asian ethnic groups in the United States have had diverse immigration and settlement experiences, these experiences can be divided into two broad historical periods demarcated by the landmark 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act (also known as the Hart-Celler Act). The first, prior to 1965, is characterized by a U.S. economy hungry for low-wage labor and by severe racial conflicts. In this period, Asian Americans faced competition, racial violence, and discrimination. The second period, after 1965, reflects a relatively more tolerant racial environment following the Civil Rights Movement and a growing need in the U.S. economy for an educated, skilled labor force. Since 1965, Asian Americans have been perceived more positively, in the words of some, as a "model minority."[1] A brief review of the immigration histories of the most populous Asian ethnic groups in the United States follows, highlighting some of the similarities and differences in immigration experiences by Asian American ethnicity.

Chinese

Chinese were among the first Asians to settle in the United States.[2] Some Chinese were present in Hawaii as early as 1835, but thousands of Chinese arrived both in Hawaii and on the mainland during the 1840s and 1850s. The 1860 U.S. Census documented almost 35,000 Chinese on the mainland (see Box 1, page 416). These Chi-

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nese immigrants came to the United States for various reasons. Some sought shelter from wars and rebellions in the mid-1800s. Others sought better economic opportunities. Tremendous social and political turmoil in China during this period led the Imperial Qing Dynasty to levy high taxes, and in trying to pay them, peasants often lost their land. Frequent floods destroyed crops, and the population lived under the threat of starvation.

Early Chinese immigrants were primarily peasants, with little or no formal schooling. Large waves of them came to the United States as manual workers when the rapid development of the West demanded cheap labor. Immigrants were also drawn by the promise of the discovery of gold in California. Most Chinese immigrants to the United States in the 19th century were men. They envisioned making money in the United States and then returning to China at some future date. Married women remained home to care for their children and for their husbands' parents. At the turn of the century, only 5 percent of all Chinese on the mainland, and 14 percent in Hawaii, were female.

Chinese immigrants initially settled in rural areas but soon gravitated toward urban centers: San Francisco, and later New York and Boston. By 1900, 45 percent of Chinese in California lived in the city of San Francisco. Chinese in urban areas were predominantly employed in service-sector jobs—working in laundries, for example—and lived in their ethnic communities. Because Chinese in these communities were isolated from mainstream American society, many children of Chinese immigrants grew up speaking only Chinese and interacting with few whites. Some supplemented their American public school experiences by attending Chinese schools at the end of the day or on weekends.

Chinese immigrants found work outside their enclaves in agriculture, in construction, in mining, and as shopkeepers. Chinese laborers represented 90 percent of the workforce responsible for the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad. Chinese workers were often brought into factories after white workers went on strike over labor disputes. Because of this practice, Chinese in the United States were perceived as a threat to white workers and were often a target of hatred and racial violence. In the late 1870s, federal courts ruled that Chinese immigrants should be barred from naturalization as "aliens ineligible for citizenship." Later, Chinese immigration was legally restricted by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Immigration of all Asians except Filipinos, who were residents of a U.S. territory at that time, was prohibited by the National Origins Act of 1924, which barred the immigration of all "aliens ineligible for citizenship." From a high of over 107,000 in 1890, the Chinese population in the United States dwindled over the following decades. Chinese immigration practically stalled until 1965, when immigration law changed significantly.

Box 1

Asian Americans in the U.S. Census

The U.S. census has counted Asian Americans in different ways since the 1850s. Early Chinese in the United States were first documented through questions on nativity. Later, as more Chinese immigrated and sentiment against them among U.S.-born laborers grew, U.S. state and federal courts struggled with their racial classification and the classification of other immigrants from Asia. In 1870, Chinese were classified as a "race" on the census form, followed by Japanese in 1890. The practice of enumerating Asian ethnicities as separate racial groups has continued to this day, with new major groups (such as Filipino, Korean, Asian Indian, and Vietnamese) added to the list as their populations grew in the United States. In the 1990 Census, there was a short-lived attempt to group different ethnicities of Asian Americans along with Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders under a heading "Asians and Pacific Islanders."

In this report, Asians include East Asians, Southeast Asians, and South Asians, but not individuals with ancestry from West Asia, who are identified racially as "white" or "Other." The 2000 Census was the first one that allowed racial identification with more than one race. The race question from the 2000 Census is shown below.

→ NOTE: Please answer BOTH Questions 5 and 6.

5. Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino? *Mark ☒ the "No" box if not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.*
   - ☐ No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino
   - ☐ Yes, Puerto Rican
   - ☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
   - ☐ Yes, Cuban
   - ☐ Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino – *Print group.*

6. What is this person's race? *Mark ☒ one or more races to indicate what this person considers himself/herself to be.*
   - ☐ White
   - ☐ Black, African Am., or Negro
   - ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native – *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.*
   - ☐ Asian Indian
   - ☐ Japanese
   - ☐ Native Hawaiian
   - ☐ Chinese
   - ☐ Korean
   - ☐ Guamanian or Chamorro
   - ☐ Filipino
   - ☐ Vietnamese
   - ☐ Samoan
   - ☐ Other Asian – *Print race.*
   - ☐ Other Pacific Islander – *Print race.*
   - ☐ Some other race – *Print race.*

Note: For further reading on how the race question is asked in the Census, see M.J. Anderson and S.E. Fienberg, *Who Counts? The Politics of Census-Taking in Contemporary America* (1999); and N. Mezey, "Erasure and Recognition: The Census, Race and the National Imagination," *Northwestern Law Review* 97, no. 4 (2003): 1701-88.

Although small numbers of Chinese people were allowed to immigrate following the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, immigration of Chinese and other Asians to the United States did not really flourish until the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965. This act repealed all previous quotas and immigration restrictions, and established preferences for immigrants

Table 1

ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATION BY MAJOR ETHNICITY: 1980, 1990, AND 2000 CENSUSES

Race/ethnicity	1980 Census Number	%	1990 Census Number	%	2000 Census Number	%
Total U.S. population	226,545,805		248,709,873		281,421,906	
Asian Americans	3,259,519	1.4	6,908,638	2.8	11,070,913	3.9
Chinese	806,040	0.4	1,645,472	0.7	2,633,849	0.9
Japanese	700,974	0.3	847,562	0.3	958,945	0.3
Filipino	774,652	0.3	1,406,770	0.6	2,089,701	0.7
Korean	354,593	0.2	798,849	0.3	1,148,951	0.4
Asian Indian	361,531	0.2	815,447	0.3	1,785,336	0.6
Vietnamese	261,729	0.1	614,547	0.3	1,171,776	0.4
Other Asian	806,040	0.4	2,425,453	1.0	3,916,204	1.4

Note: To be consistent with the 1980 and 1990 censuses, multiracial and multiethnic Asian Americans in the 2000 Census were allocated evenly to their appropriate categories following the 50 percent rule (see Box 2, page 420).

Sources: Summary reports from the 1980 and 1990 U.S. censuses; and calculations based on J.S. Barnes and C.E. Bennett, *The Asian Population: 2000* (2002).

who wished to reunite with family members or who had skills valued in the U.S. labor market. Following the passage of this landmark legislation, Chinese immigrating to the United States tended to be highly educated, to have professional and technical occupations, and to arrive with their families. Many came from Hong Kong and Taiwan, places where they had taken refuge after the 1949 military defeat of the Nationalists in China. Some of these new immigrants settled in urban ethnic enclaves like Chinatowns, while others, especially those with professional occupations, established themselves in suburban communities. Before 1900, Chinese made up the largest Asian group in the United States, though eventually the Japanese overtook them. Since 1970, Chinese have again been the most populous Asian ethnic group in the United States (see Table 1). Currently, there are more than 2.6 million Americans of Chinese descent in the United States.

Japanese

Japanese first started immigrating to the United States in the 19th century. Like Chinese, they came as agricultural workers. Unlike Chinese, a large proportion of Japanese immigrants became plantation workers in Hawaii. In the 1920s, 43 percent of the Hawaiian population was Japanese. On the mainland, many Japanese who were initially employed as agricultural workers soon became self-employed merchants and farmers. By 1925, 46 percent of Japanese immigrants were involved in agriculture. In cities like San Francisco, they established small enclaves where they could support and socialize with each other, eat familiar food, and speak their native language. After Japanese men had established themselves with farms or businesses, they sent for their wives, and the wives worked with their husbands in businesses and on farms. Japanese, more than other early Asian immigrants, came to the United States to settle and raise families.

Given their intention to settle, Japanese emphasized to their children the importance of learning to be American to avoid discrimination. Japanese sent their children to American public schools and encouraged their children to become fluent in English. They saved money for their children to go to college, believing education would help them overcome discrimination.

Their efforts did not protect them from massive government-sponsored discrimination, however. Because white workers saw the Japanese, as they had the Chinese, as a source of unfair competition, immigration of Japanese was restricted by the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907-1908. Japanese immigration was later completely prohibited in 1924. Further, during World War II, over 100,000 Japanese from California and other states in the Pacific Northwest were placed in internment camps by the U.S. government. Whole families were herded into camps under suspicions that they had colluded or would collude with Japan to attack the mainland United States. Many Japanese families lost their land while residing in these camps. Some Japanese Americans fought in the U.S. Army to show their loyalty to the United States.

Because many Japanese had settled in the United States with their families, their numbers increased through natural population growth. They were the most populous Asian American group from 1910 to 1960 (see Figure 1, page 418). Because Japan's economy was well developed by 1965, relatively few Japanese entered the United States after the major overhaul of immigration laws in 1965. And because of this, many Japanese ethnic enclaves have not been sustained. Greater proportions of Japanese speak English well, and Japanese tend to be more structurally assimilated—that is, to have attainment in education and occupation that is equal to that of whites—than other ethnic groups such as Chinese and Koreans. Currently, fewer than 1 million people are estimated to be Japanese Americans.

Filipinos

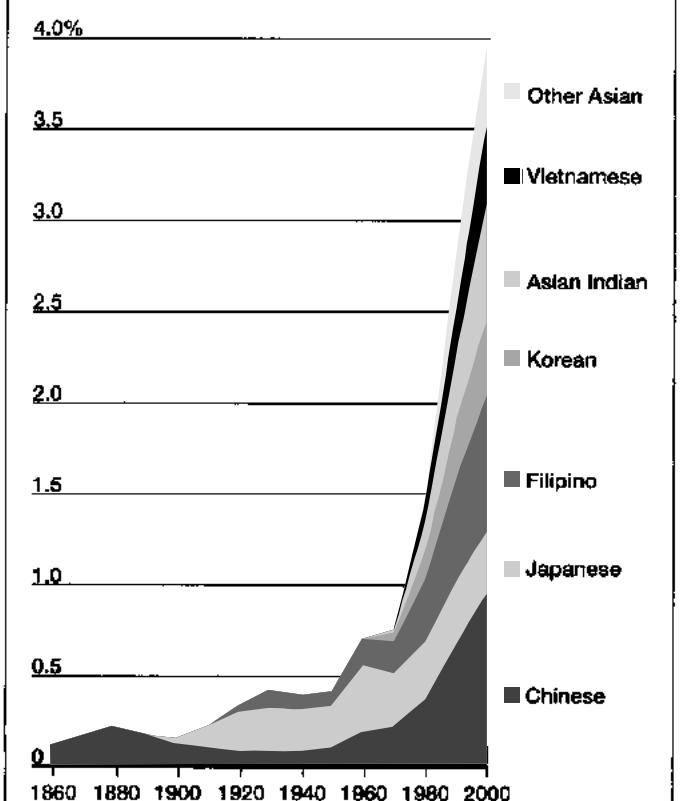
Few Filipinos lived in the United States before the turn of the 20th century. Most of the early Filipino immigrants arrived as American nationals after 1898, the year that the United States acquired the Philippines at the conclusion of the Spanish-American War. Filipinos immigrated to the United States in search of employment on plantations in Hawaii and other agricultural work on the mainland. Filipinos also worked in fisheries in the Pacific Northwest and as domestic and other service workers. Many Filipino workers organized labor unions during the early 20th century, but their efforts to win wage increases were met with hostility not only from their employers but also from white workers who feared competition. More likely to intermarry than Chinese and Japanese, Filipino immigrant men also provoked racial hatred and violence by marrying white women. Because a large portion of the Filipino population worked as plantation or migrant agricultural workers, they did not establish ethnic communities in urban centers. As a result of their geographical dispersion and their propensity to intermarry, Filipinos soon became more structurally assimilated in the United States than Chinese and Japanese.

Filipinos were the only Asian ethnic group not prohibited from immigrating by the 1924 National Origins Act, because they came from an American territory. However, when the Philippines was established as a commonwealth of the United States in 1934, severe restrictions were placed on Filipino immigration. The Filipino population in the United States dropped from about 108,000 to 98,000 in the following decade.

After changes to immigration laws were enacted in 1965, many Filipinos came to the United States fleeing the repressive Marcos regime and seeking better economic opportunities. For example, Filipino doctors, nurses, and pharmacists were better compensated for their skills in the United States than in the Philippines. From 1980 on, Filipinos constituted the second most populous Asian American group in the United States. Currently, Filipino Americans number slightly over 2 million.

Figure 1

ASIAN ETHNIC GROUPS AS PERCENT OF U.S. POPULATION, 1860–2000



Source: Authors' calculations based on U.S. census data.

Koreans

Most early Korean immigrants, both men and women, began their journey to the U.S. mainland working on plantations in Hawaii. Plantation owners in Hawaii capitalized on ethnic enmity, using Korean plantation workers to break strikes by Japanese workers. About 40 percent of Korean immigrants were Christians. They built many churches and formed Christian associations in Hawaii. By 1907, almost 1,000 had left Hawaii for the U.S. mainland.

Other Koreans came to the mainland after Japan annexed Korea in 1910. The 1910 Census counted around 4,500 Koreans. Korean Americans maintained a strong loyalty to Korea and an intense desire to liberate their country from Japanese rule. Korean Christian churches often served to maintain this nationalism, as did Korean language schools, in which second-generation Koreans not only spoke Korean but also learned about the culture and politics of the homeland.

Many Koreans immigrating to the U.S. mainland worked in mines and fisheries; others formed gangs of migrant farm workers. Some Koreans also became business owners, running laundries and hotels that served whites. Because they were so few in number, they did not establish ethnic enclaves, though they maintained a distinct sense of Korean identity. Along with Japanese, Koreans were prohibited from immigration by the 1924 National Origins Act.

The majority of the present Korean population in the United States is the result of an immigration wave that began after 1965. Since then, in major metropolitan centers such as New York and Los Angeles, Korean ethnic enclaves have sprung up. Most post-1965 emigrants were middle class and well educated. In the 1960s and 1970s, educational attainment increased in Korea, but

there was no corresponding increase in skilled jobs in densely populated cities such as Seoul. Skilled professionals, such as doctors and pharmacists, immigrated to many places, including the United States. Some Koreans arrived with capital and established grocery stores and other small businesses. As a result, Koreans have the highest rate of self-employment among all Asian ethnic groups in the United States. Today there are over 1 million Korean Americans.

Asian Indians

The first Asian Indian immigrants to the United States were recruited to work on plantations in Hawaii. Others came to Washington and California to find agricultural work, and Asian Indian workers were often used as strike breakers in both construction and mining industries. Many early Asian Indian immigrants were from the Punjab, and about 80 percent were of the farming caste. By 1920, about 6,400 Asian Indians were in the United States. The majority of South Asian immigrants to the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries were single Sikh men, who kept the Sikh tradition of wearing long hair wrapped in a turban. Unlike Chinese and Japanese immigrants, Asian Indians did not concentrate geographically.

Asian Indians in the United States were first classified in court decisions of 1910 and 1913 as Caucasians. These decisions permitted Asian Indians to become naturalized and intermarry with U.S.-born whites. These decisions, however, were reversed in 1923, when Asian Indians were legally classified as nonwhite because their ancestry could not be traced to northern or Western Europe. Asian Indian immigrants, reclassified as nonwhite, were prevented from becoming citizens and barred from further immigration, as were other Asians, in 1924. Antimiscegenation laws prevented Asian Indians from marrying Caucasian women. However, many Asian Indian men married newly immigrated Mexican women.

Because the initial Asian Indian immigration was small and Asian Indians were not allowed to bring families to the United States, few Asian Indians lived in the United States prior to 1965. Since then, many highly educated professionals from India have immigrated to the United States in search of skilled employment. Most had been exposed to Western culture and education in India and had little trouble finding professions in which their education and skills were needed. Today 1.8 million Asian Indians live in the United States.

Vietnamese

Very few Vietnamese immigrated to the United States prior to 1970. However, U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War resulted in substantial Vietnamese immigration in the 1970s. In 1972, after the United States withdrew all its forces from Vietnam, many Vietnamese left the country. And during the months preceding the collapse of the South Vietnamese government in 1975, over 100,000 people were evacuated or airlifted out of the country. Many Vietnamese who left had prospered under the South Vietnamese government. Others left because they had aided the United States in some way, and the U.S. military made provisions for them. Refugees leaving Vietnam before 1975 were generally better off economically than the overall population of Vietnam.

The communists captured Saigon in 1975 and placed segments of the Vietnamese population in reeducation camps. Fearing political persecution, some Vietnamese left Vietnam as political refugees. Those who left after 1975 tended to be poorer than the earlier wave, often leaving without capital or possessions. Many were Chinese-Vietnamese who were ethnically Chinese but had lived in Vietnam for generations. This group was concentrated in the South and was particularly persecuted by the Vietnamese communists, who were suspicious of their class as merchants. Many escaped by boat, crossing the Mekong River into Thailand or crowding onto boats to cross the South China Sea. These "boat people" were desperate and faced extortion by those helping them escape. Once boat people were spotted on the sea or had made it safely to ports, they were sent to refugee camps in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand, where many spent years waiting to be admitted to the United States. Children in refugee camps were schooled in the English language and Western etiquette but lost years of learning math, science, and other subjects.

Vietnamese who came as political refugees were originally sponsored by Midwestern churches and other charitable organizations in the United States. These groups provided refugees with shelter and food and helped them obtain temporary government assistance. Many immigrants got job training, and their children enrolled in public schools. After several years in the United States, Vietnamese began to know family members and friends settling in other parts of the United States and initiated a wave of secondary migration, concentrating in communities such as Orange County, Calif.; Houston; and even New Orleans. Vietnamese Americans now number over 1 million.

Other Asians

There are other Asian ethnic groups in the United States. They include Southeast Asians from Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Laos, and Cambodia. Cambodians and Laotians are similar to Vietnamese in that they immigrated to the United States primarily as refugees from the Vietnam War. Other Asians came from South Asian countries such as Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. They

are similar to Asian Indians in that they were primarily immigrants seeking better economic opportunities. Like the groups discussed above, other Asians represent a diversity of languages, cultures, national heritages, and immigration and settlement experiences.

Demographic Characteristics

After the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, Asia quickly became the second-largest source of immigrants to the United States, and, as a result, the Asian American population has grown rapidly. For example, Asian Americans represented 1.4 percent of the population in 1980 and almost 4 percent in 2000 (see Table 1, page 417). With the exception of Japanese Americans, all Asian ethnic groups have more than doubled in population since 1980. By comparison, the total U.S. population increased by only 24 percent in this period.

The option to choose more than one race first available in the 2000 Census makes it difficult to compare Asian populations over time and, for 2000, across Asian ethnic groups (see Box 1, page 416). To compare the 2000 totals with earlier censuses in Table 1, we used a 50 percent rule to reallocate multiracial and multiethnic Asians to their appropriate groups (see Box 2). These numbers differ slightly from the 2000 Census figures released by the U.S. Census Bureau, shown in columns 1 and 3 of Table 2. In the 2000 Census, 10,019,405 individuals reported being of one Asian ethnicity (column 3), and 11,898,828 chose an Asian ethnicity either alone *or* in combination with some other category (column 1). Overall, 84 percent reported a single ethnic group among all who reported an Asian ethnicity. This percentage, which roughly gauges the extent to which an Asian group does not have mixed ancestry, varied from 92 percent among Vietnamese to 69 percent among Japanese. Throughout this report, we focus mostly on those who chose a single ethnic group when comparing Asian ethnic groups.

Most of the increase in the Asian American population is due to immigration rather than to natural growth, a circumstance reflected in the proportions of foreign-born among Asians in the United States (see Table 2). Although these proportions vary greatly by ethnicity, with Japanese at the low end (41 percent) and Koreans at the high end (79 percent), overall 64 percent of Asians in the United States were born abroad.

Foreign birth and speaking a language other than English at home are crude measures of assimilation into American society. While the highest foreign-born fraction is found among Koreans, the highest percentage of non-English speaking at home is among Vietnamese (at 93 percent). Other than multiracial Asians, the Japanese have the lowest rates of foreign birth and of non-English speaking at home—both below 50 percent. The multiethnic and multiracial Asians are similar to the Japanese in having low rates of both being foreign-born and non-English speaking at home.

Despite a long history of disproportionately male immigration, the sex ratio among Asian Americans overall is either balanced or in favor of women. The only ethnic group with an underrepresentation of women is Asian Indians, at 47 percent female. The age composition varies greatly by ethnicity. The Japanese American population shows signs of aging, with 20 percent at age 65 or older and 12 percent below age 18. Among all the other groups, children constitute a much larger percentage (from 21 percent to 45 percent), and the elderly a much smaller percentage (from 4 percent to 10 percent). The relative youth

Box 2

The One-Drop Rule vs. the 50 Percent Rule

The 2000 U.S. Census allowed for the first time the enumeration of people with multiple racial/ethnic affiliations. For comparison with historical data and for simplicity, it is sometimes necessary to reclassify multiracial people in the 2000 Census into single-race categories in statistical tabulations.

There are two possible simple rules for such an objective: the "one-drop rule" and the 50 percent rule. The one-drop rule defines race in reference to the white majority. It specifies that anyone with any minority ancestry is considered nonwhite. The 50 percent rule evenly assigns biracial people to the two racial groups to which they partially belong for statistical purposes. These two rules serve as ideal types, as more rules can be devised to allocate multiracial people based on fourth or eighth fractions according to the mixture of their parents' and grandparents' races.

In much of U.S. history and culture, a common rule for categorizing multiracial blacks has been the one-drop rule, although it is unclear how rigidly it has been practiced. For multiracial Asians, who are a relatively recent phenomenon, it appears that the 50 percent rule is a close approximation. Prior research has found children of parents who had one Asian and one white parent (the majority of multiracial Asians) were almost equally likely to be identified as Asian or white when forced to choose a single race.

For this report, the 50 percent rule was applied when it was necessary to reclassify multiracial Asians in the 2000 Census into single-race categories. For example, the size of the 2000 Asian American population was estimated at 11,070,913 (3.9 percent of total) if the racial classification system had not been changed (see Table 1, page 417). In most of the analyses presented in the report, rich information pertaining to multiracials in the 2000 Census was preserved by separating multiethnic and multiracial Asians.

Table 2

POPULATION SIZE AND KEY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS BY ASIAN AMERICAN ETHNICITY, 2000

Race/ethnicity	Asian alone or in combination	% single ethnic group	Single-ethnic classification	% foreign-born	% speaking non-English language at home	% female	% children (ages 0–17)	% elderly (ages 65+)
All Asians	11,898,828	84	10,019,405	64	73	52	27	7
Chinese	2,879,636	84	2,432,585	72	86	52	21	10
Japanese	1,148,932	69	796,700	41	47	57	12	20
Filipino	2,364,815	78	1,850,314	70	71	55	22	9
Korean	1,228,427	88	1,076,872	79	82	56	24	6
Asian Indian	1,899,599	88	1,678,765	76	81	47	25	4
Vietnamese	1,223,736	92	1,122,528	77	93	50	27	5
Other Asian	1,449,087	73	1,061,641	68	87	50	35	3
Multiethnic Asian	223,593	—	223,593	50	61	51	33	4
Multiracial Asian	1,655,830	—	1,655,830	30	35	50	45	4

Note: Percentages for All Asians were based on the total in the "Asian alone or in combination" column; percentages for Asian ethnic groups were based on the "Single-ethnic classification" column.

— Not applicable.

Sources: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS); and J.S. Barnes and C.E. Bennett, *The Asian Population: 2000* (2002).

of the other Asian groups is due to immigration, as immigrants tend to be young people who either bring children to America or rear children soon after immigration.

From Discrimination to Model Minority

For the convenience of statistical reporting, Asian Americans are often treated as a single race and compared with other major racial groups such as whites and blacks. That is the practice adopted here. Yet cultural heritage and immigration paths vary greatly by country of origin among Asian Americans. Owing to this diversity, most Asian Americans would not accept the proposition that they belong to a single Asian race. When given a choice, they often would rather identify themselves as part of an Asian ethnic group (such as Chinese, Japanese, or Vietnamese) than as simply Asian American. However, because Asian groups are all numerically small and lacking in political strength, some Asian Americans feel the need to develop a panethnic Asian American identity.

In this context, three distinctions are drawn between race and ethnicity. First, it is commonly accepted that race refers to distinctions drawn from physical appearance, whereas ethnicity refers to distinctions based on cultural markers such as national origin, language, religion, and food. Second, race has serious social consequences for individuals' life chances, whereas ethnicity is for the most part considered optional in contemporary America. Third, individuals' freedom of racial identification is limited, in the sense that racial identification requires external consent from others, whereas ethnic identity can be internal.

Therefore, regardless of their own views concerning whether or not they belong to a single race, Asian Americans face categorization into a single race in America, as they are often defined in contrast to the other racial groups—whites, blacks, and American Indians. This categorization of Asian Americans as a racial minority has differed historically, geographically, and legally. In Hawaii, Asians often adopted the identity of Hawaiian, speaking a dialect of English called pidgin, which mixed elements of English, Portuguese, Native Hawaiian, and Asian languages. In Mississippi, early Chinese immigrants were subject to the same segregation as blacks, though later they would achieve "honorary" white status as they became economically successful. Despite these regional differences, U.S. Supreme Court cases such as People v. Hall (1854) and Saito v. United States (1893) ruled that Asians were either classified as "a lesser caste similar to Indians" (in the case of Chinese) or Mongolian (in the case of the Japanese), but not Caucasian or white. These two court cases, among others, reaffirmed that Asian immigrants could not obtain citizenship, because citizenship was only possible for "free whites" or for those born on U.S. soil. Asian Indians, first considered Caucasian according to two separate court cases in 1910 and 1913, were denied citizenship in 1923 (United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind) because they were not of northern or Western European descent.[3] The restriction on naturalization was lifted for Chinese immigrants in 1943 and for other Asian immigrants in 1952.

How Asian Americans were defined racially affected whether or not they could be citizens of the United States, own land, and hold certain jobs. Because the courts defined Asians as nonwhite, most Asian immigrants in the 19th and early 20th centuries were prevented from becoming citizens of the United States.

Box 3

Significant Laws, Treaties, and Court Cases Affecting Asian Americans

1790: Naturalization Act. This act established that a candidate for naturalization to the United States had to have resided in the country for two years and be a "free white person."

1878: In re Ah Yup. Chinese were not eligible for citizenship.

1882: The Chinese Exclusion Act. This act prohibited Chinese immigrants from entering the United States for a period of 10 years and prohibited Chinese immigrants from becoming U.S. citizens. The exclusionary period became indefinite in 1904 and was repealed in 1943.

1907-8: The Gentlemen's Agreement. This agreement between the United States and Japan ended the issuance of new passports for laborers in Japan leaving for the United States.

1913: California Alien Land Law Act. This act, originally passed by California but soon enacted in 14 other states, prohibited "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning land. These laws were not repealed in some states until 1952.

1923: The United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind. The United States determined that Thind, an immigrant born in the Punjab, was Caucasian but not a white person, and thus was ineligible for citizenship.

1924: The National Origins Act. This act prohibited the immigration of all Asians, with the exception of Filipinos (who were residents of an American territory). Quotas were established for immigrants from European countries.

1934: Tydings-McDuffie Act. This act gave independence to the Philippines by first establishing a commonwealth and then guaranteeing independence 10 years later (achieved by 1946). Immigration from the Philippines to the United States was limited to a maximum of 50 immigrants per year, the smallest quota of any country.

1942: Executive Order 9066. With this presidential order, issued during World War II, the Secretary of War was given authority to remove people of Japanese descent from certain areas, resulting in their internment in camps. Eventually, 120,000 Japanese Americans were interned.

1943: Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act. In consideration of China as an ally in World War II, this act repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act by setting a quota of 105 Chinese immigrants per year and allowing for naturalization of Chinese immigrants.

1945: War Brides Act. This act allowed for admission of foreign women married to servicemen. No quota was set. Approximately 700 Chinese and 2,000 Japanese women were admitted as "war brides."

1952: McCarran-Walter Immigration and Nationality Act. This act permitted naturalization of Asians and affirmed the national-origins quota system of 1924.

1965: Immigration and Nationality Act (also known as the Hart-Celler Act). The most significant change in U.S. immigration law since 1924, this act replaced the national origins system with a system of preferences designed to unite immigrant families and attract skilled immigrants to the United States.

1967: Loving v. Virginia. Laws recognizing intermarriage as criminal were deemed unconstitutional.

1980: Refugee Act. In response to the boat people fleeing Vietnam, this act granted asylum to politically oppressed refugees.

1988: Civil Liberties Act. The U.S. government gave an official apology to Japanese Americans for their internment in World War II and paid $20,000 per internee.

Note: This chronology was drawn from F. Odo, ed., *The Columbia Documentary History of the Asian American Experience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

However, children of Asian immigrants who were born on U.S. soil were citizens. In 1913, alien land law acts prevented Asian immigrants from owning land or leasing land for more than three years. Taxes were levied on "foreign" miners' earnings in California in 1850. Race also determined where Asians lived and whom they could marry. Chinese people attempting to settle in Tacoma, Wash., were prevented from doing so by white residents of the town. Koreans were prohibited from settling in Riverside County, Calif. Antimiscegenation laws forbidding marriage specifically between whites and Mongolians were enacted in some states as early as 1880.

In different places and at various points in U.S. history, Asian Americans have also been subjected to prejudice, hatred, and racial violence. An 1870 poem, entitled "The Heathen Chinee," reflected a negative sentiment toward Chinese at that time. The poem was reprinted and republished across the country, and "its sensational popularity made Bret Harte [its author] the most celebrated literary man in America in 1870." It begins with:

> "Which I wish to remark,
> And my language is plain,
> That for ways that are dark
> And for tricks that are vain,
> The heathen Chinee is peculiar,
> Which the same I would rise to explain."[4]

Mob violence against Asian Americans was first documented in 1871, when European Americans entered neighborhoods in Los Angeles' Chinatown and shot and hanged 21 Chinese people. Settlements of Asians were burned, and Asian residents were forced out of towns. Fear of and prejudice toward Asian immigrants eventu-

ally led to the prohibition of all Asian immigration to the United States, a process that was enacted in stages. Chinese immigration was first limited in 1882 with the Chinese Exclusion Act; Japanese immigration was restricted in 1907-1908; and then in 1924 all Asian immigration was prohibited. Changes were not made to these discriminatory immigration laws until 1943 (see Box 3).

The generally negative image of Asian immigrants in America between the 1860s and 1920s is far from the "model minority" label widely used to characterize Asian Americans in recent decades.[5] Since the 1960s, Asian Americans' success in education and their high concentration in professional occupations have been widely publicized by the popular press. Asian Americans' values have been declared compatible with the Protestant work ethic of the United States.[6]

Demographic changes in the population of Asian immigrants are in part responsible for the shift in the public's image of them from negative to positive. When the prohibition of Asian immigrants was repealed in 1965, immigration priority was given to family members of immigrants and workers with needed skills. Therefore, Asian immigrants to the United States after the 1960s were more likely to be highly skilled workers than those who immigrated during the 19th century, and many had been exposed to the English language and Western culture.

Political refugees formed another major component of immigration to the United States during the 1970s and 1980s. During the 1970s, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Lao, and Hmong refugees who aided the United States in military operations were helped to escape from their countries. Other refugees left Vietnam after 1975, when the communist forces gained control over the South. Citizens of the United States were sympathetic to the plight of these noncommunist refugees, having waged war on behalf of these people against what they perceived to be a communist threat. Many aid organizations and churches organized the immigration and settlement of these groups.

Another popular explanation for the portrayal of Asian Americans as a model minority is that immigrant Asian Americans invest heavily in their children's education. Cultural explanations for this investment stress the compatibility of Confucian cultural values with the Protestant work ethic. Other research adds that anticipation of discrimination and marginalization in the labor force leads Asian Americans to choose education as a viable means to achieve upward mobility.

Despite the overall educational and economic successes of Asian Americans, heterogeneity among them is high. Just as the image of the model minority is an uninformed characterization of Asian Americans, the attribution of all observed disadvantages of Asian Americans to racial discrimination is too simplistic. Complex by nature, social phenomena routinely defy simple explanations and require nuanced analyses. The experience of Asian Americans is no exception. The remainder of this report focuses on the empirical question of how Asian Americans have fared in terms of measurable indicators of socioeconomic status relative to whites and blacks in this country.

Educational Attainment

One important empirical finding that distinguishes Asian Americans is that they have indeed attained socioeconomic status that is overall comparable with, and in some instances superior to, that of whites. In studying the relatively high socioeconomic status of Asian Americans, scholars have invariably pointed out that Asian Americans have successfully attained high levels of education.[7] Hence, a fruitful examination of the socioeconomic conditions of Asian Americans requires knowledge of their educational experiences.

New Entrants to the Labor Force

Asian educational attainment was higher than that of both blacks and whites as early as 1960, with 70 percent of Asians completing a high school education, compared with 61 percent of whites and 33 percent of blacks (see Table 3, page 424). However, the gap in high school completion narrowed over time. In 1990, whites showed slightly higher rates of high school completion than Asians, due to the influx of new refugees from Southeast Asia. In 2000, Asians overall had a slightly higher rate of achieving high school degrees.

The gap between Asians and whites in college completion is far more dramatic. In 1960, 19 percent of Asian Americans had completed college, compared with 12 percent of whites. This gap increased throughout subsequent decades. In 2000, 53 percent of Asians had completed a college degree, compared with 30 percent of whites.

A substantial portion of the widening gap between Asians and whites in college completion was driven by foreign-born Asian Americans, particularly those who immigrated after 1965. The impact of changes in immigration laws, which established preferences for skilled workers, is seen in the dramatic differences in college completion among foreign-born Asian Americans from 1960 to 1970. In 1960, 19 percent of both foreign- and U.S.-born Asian Americans had attained a college degree. In 1970, this percentage jumped to 46 percent for the foreign-born. Although some foreign-born Asian Americans were educated in the United States, the immigration of highly educated Asians is largely responsible for this jump. By comparison, the college completion rate among U.S.-born Asian Americans in 1970 was 26 percent, while whites' college completion rate was at 16 percent.

Variation in Asian Americans' educational attainment is evident not only by nativity but also by ethnicity. In 1960, Japanese had the highest level of high school attainment, but Chinese had the highest level of college attainment. In later decades, Chinese, Koreans, and Asian Indians are among the most educationally successful, with college completion rates of 67 percent, 59 percent, and 76 percent in 2000, respectively. Vietnamese are among the least successful, with rates of high school and college completion below whites, and rates of high school completion below blacks.

The comparison by nativity does not follow the same pattern over time. Among Filipinos, for example, the foreign-born seem to have had an advantage in education even before 1965. Foreign-born Japanese had a lower college completion rate than the U.S.-born in 1960, but this reversed in 1970 and reversed again in later years. Koreans show a different pattern still. While in earlier decades foreign-born Koreans had more education than their U.S.-born counterparts, in 2000, 58 percent of foreign-born Koreans had completed college, compared with 70 percent of U.S.-born Koreans. It should be noted that, while some foreign-born Asians came as immigrant children who received all or most of their education in the United States, most foreign-born Asian Americans completed their education before immigrating to the United States.[8]

Elementary and Secondary

Asian American children were not always educationally advantaged. Data from the 1910 Census, for example, reveal that Chinese and Japanese children ages 7 to 17 were less likely to be enrolled in school than were whites (77 percent for Chinese and 73 percent for Japanese versus 88 percent for whites). In part, this disadvantage was due to segregation laws that prevented Chinese and Japanese children from attending schools with majority whites. In California in the late 1800s, the effect of such laws was to restrict Chinese and Japanese children to segregated schools for "Orientals." In states with smaller Asian populations, like Mississippi, Asian children were required to attend segregated schools

Table 3

PERCENT COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL AND ATTAINING COLLEGE DEGREES BY ASIAN ETHNICITY AND RACE, AMERICANS AGES 25–34, 1960–2000

	High school or higher					College degree or higher				
Race/ethnicity	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
All Asians	70	84	87	85	90	19	37	42	43	53
U.S.-born	79	87	95	94	94	19	26	44	43	50
Foreign-born	58	82	84	83	89	19	46	42	44	54
Chinese	62	82	88	85	92	26	44	50	53	67
U.S.-born	80	90	97	97	96	28	32	58	63	73
Foreign-born	48	79	85	83	91	25	48	48	51	65
Japanese	77	90	96	98	97	16	32	45	49	57
U.S.-born	83	93	98	98	96	18	30	46	47	57
Foreign-born	63	84	93	97	98	11	37	40	52	57
Filipino	58	82	88	90	95	18	37	42	37	43
U.S.-born	53	76	87	89	97	11	10	15	23	43
Foreign-born	63	85	89	91	94	25	47	47	42	43
Korean	—	69	83	90	97	—	40	31	42	59
U.S.-born	—	40	91	97	98	—	6	33	57	70
Foreign-born	—	77	83	90	97	—	51	31	42	58
Asian Indian	—	—	90	90	94	—	—	60	60	76
U.S.-born	—	—	81	94	92	—	—	40	67	74
Foreign-born	—	—	90	89	94	—	—	61	60	76
Vietnamese	—	—	69	67	72	—	—	14	22	27
U.S.-born	—	—	—	42	52	—	—	—	8	23
Foreign-born	—	—	69	67	73	—	—	14	22	27
Whites	61	74	87	87	88	12	16	25	25	30
Blacks	33	52	75	77	81	4	6	12	12	15

— Data not available.

Source: Authors' calculations using the 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) from the 1960–2000 censuses.

with blacks. Asians, like other minorities, fought vehemently for integration and educational opportunity. And, as early as 1930, Chinese and Japanese enrollment in elementary and secondary schools surpassed that of whites, although segregation laws were not removed officially in many states until the 1950s.

In today's elementary and secondary schools, the academic performance of Asian American students is generally high. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), in 1999, only 7 percent of Asians in grades K through 12 had ever repeated a grade, compared with 9 percent of whites. Additional results drawn from the 1988-1994 National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), administered by NCES to a nationally representative sample of eighth-graders in 1988, show that Asian Americans scored significantly higher on a standardized math test than whites; differences in verbal scores were statistically insignificant between whites and Asians.

These results are confirmed by scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) in the academic year 2000-2001. On the verbal SAT, Asian American students taking the test scored slightly lower than their white peers (501 versus 528) but higher than blacks and Hispanics (at 430 and 460, respectively). On the math SAT during that same year, Asians scored higher than all the other groups, with an average score of 566 compared with whites at an average of 531.

Asian American high school students also attain higher grade point averages than do their white counterparts. Asian American eighth- and 10th-graders in NELS reported grade point averages of 3.2 and 3.0 on a four-point scale, compared with 2.9 and 2.7 for whites.[9] Furthermore, Asian American students take more advanced math and science courses than do students of other race and ethnic groups. In 1998, NCES reported that 74 percent of Asian high school graduates had taken advanced science and that 56 percent of them had taken advanced math. The comparable percentages for whites were 64 percent and 45 percent.

Asian American teenagers seem to have fewer behavioral problems in schools as well. From the 1999 National Household Survey, the NCES reports that the percentages of students in grades 7 to 12 who had ever been expelled or suspended from school were 13 percent for Asians, 15 percent for whites, 20 percent for Hispanics, and 35 percent for blacks. Asian American students are also unlikely to drop out of high school. According to data from the October 2000 Current Population Survey, 4 percent of Asian American 16-to-24-year-olds were considered high school dropouts, while the corresponding percentages were 7 percent among whites, 13 percent among blacks, and 28 percent among Hispanics. The high school completion rates among 18-to-24-year-olds in 2000 were 95 percent among Asians and 92 percent among whites. Similarly, 92 percent of Asians in the eighth-grade in 1988 received their high school diploma within six years, compared with 85 percent of whites (see Table 4).

Table 4

HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION AND COLLEGE ENROLLMENT OF ASIAN ETHNIC GROUPS, WHITES, AND BLACKS WITHIN SIX YEARS OF EIGHTH GRADE, 1994

	Eighth graders in 1988	
Race/ethnicity	High school graduation by 1994 (%)	Enrollment in postsecondary institution by 1994 (%)
All Asians	92*	80*
Chinese	97*	87*
Japanese	95	80
Filipino	96*	76
Korean	93*	79*
South Asian	99*	87*
Southeast Asian	88	86*
Whites	85	68
Blacks	73*	57*

* Percentages for Asians and blacks were significantly different from percentages for whites.

Source: Authors' calculations based on the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988.

Asian Americans' academic achievement in elementary and secondary schools is related to attitudes and behaviors of both Asian American children and their parents. Asian American parents expect their children to achieve higher levels of education than do parents of other racial groups. For example, data from NELS show that over a third of the mothers and fathers of Asian 10th-graders expect their children to achieve some graduate education, compared with less than a fifth of white parents. Further, Asian American children themselves expect to achieve more education than their white, black, and Hispanic peers. Over 20 percent of Asian 10th-graders in this same study reported the expectation of achieving a doctorate, compared with 14 percent or less among blacks, Hispanics, and whites.[10] It has been suggested that Asian American parents perceive effort rather than ability as the key to children's educational attainment, while white parents believe more in innate ability.[11] To achieve the goals that parents set for them and that they set for themselves, Asian American children also expend more effort on academic matters, doing on average close to one hour more of homework per week than whites.[12]

Postsecondary

Academic success in high school prepares Asian Americans well for entering postsecondary institutions. The NELS data show that Asian Americans of all ethnic groups, except Filipinos, apply for admission to two- and

four-year colleges at much higher rates than do whites.[13] Furthermore, detailed analysis of the data reveals that Asian Americans tend to apply to more colleges than do whites, and that these colleges are more likely to be the top-tier schools (as measured by the average SAT scores of entering classes). Whites are more likely to apply to smaller, less expensive, and less selective schools.

The NELS data also indicate that Asian Americans have rates of acceptance to their first-choice schools that are comparable to those of whites overall. This is significant in light of the fact that, in recent decades, the admission policies concerning Asian American applicants at highly selective schools like Harvard, Princeton, Brown, and Stanford have been closely scrutinized. At issue is whether or not academically qualified Asian applicants are disadvantaged in admission processes that prioritize nonacademic factors such as extracurricular activities and athletic abilities. Despite perceived difficulties, the desire of Asian American applicants, or more precisely their parents, to enroll in these elite universities remains very high. Analysis of the NELS data reveals that Asian Americans do gain admission to and later attend the top tier universities in this country in large numbers.

Asian Americans are much more likely to enroll in a postsecondary institution than are whites and other minority groups (see Table 4, page 425). Among those who were eighth-graders in 1988 and who later received their high school diplomas, 80 percent of Asian Americans, compared with 68 percent of whites, had enrolled in either a two-year or four-year postsecondary school by 1994. The enrollment rates vary by Asian ethnicity, ranging from 76 percent among Filipinos to between 86 percent and 87 percent among South Asians, Chinese, and Southeast Asians.

Some Asian American ethnic groups are more likely to attend two-year colleges than are whites. For example, Filipinos in the 1988 eighth-grade cohort of NELS were almost twice as likely to be enrolled in two-year colleges as whites. Japanese and Southeast Asians also report higher rates of enrollment in two-year institutions than do whites. Two-year schools may be perceived as less-expensive paths to four-year degrees, with many students who cannot immediately afford tuition at four-year schools receiving their first two years of education at community colleges. These students may later transfer to four-year institutions to complete coursework for a bachelor's degree.

Much media attention has focused on Asian Americans' overrepresentation in America's elite colleges. The NCES found that Asians were over two times more likely than whites to attend "Tier 1" national universities (top 50 national universities according to *U.S. News & World Report*).[14] Analysis of the NELS data shows that the proportion attending such universities among Asian students is very high, ranging from 18 percent and 22 percent among Japanese and South Asians to 42 percent and 44 percent among Korean and Chinese students. This can be compared with whites' rate of about 9 percent. However, Asian Americans are not more likely than whites to attend first-tier liberal arts colleges.

Asian American college students differ from white students in choice of majors. Asians are more likely than whites to major in science, math, and engineering, and less likely than whites to choose fields in the humanities and education. Data from the 1993-1994 Baccalaureate and Beyond study indicate that 20 percent of Asian American graduates were granted bachelor's degrees in science or math, compared with 13 percent of whites. By comparison, 9 percent of Asians received degrees in the humanities, compared with 14 percent of whites.

For 1999-2000, the NCES reports that Asian Americans received about 5 percent of all the associate's degrees and 6.5 percent of all the bachelor's degrees conferred in the United States.

Postgraduate

Data from the Educational Testing Service show that Asian Americans' scores on the Graduate Record Examination during the 1980s were close to those of whites, with higher quantitative scores and slightly lower verbal scores. For example, Asian Americans in 1984-1985 scored 479 on verbal, 603 on quantitative, and 533 on the analytic portions of the test, compared with 513, 537, and 550 for whites. Similar Asian-white patterns have been observed in scores for the business, law, and medical school entrance exams.[15]

Asian Americans appear to be about as likely to enroll in master's and doctoral graduate degree programs as whites. However, analysis of data from the Baccalaureate and Beyond study reveals that Asian Americans are more likely than whites to enroll in graduate professional programs even when family background, test performance, and other undergraduate characteristics are taken into account. Among those in professional schools, Asians are more likely to be in medical school, while whites are more likely to be in law school. Similar to the situation for undergraduate majors, Asian Americans in doctoral programs are more likely than whites to be found in science and engineering programs and less likely to be in the liberal arts.

According to the NCES, Asian Americans received 5 percent of the master's degrees, 11 percent of the professional degrees, and about 5 percent of the doctoral degrees conferred between 1999 and 2000.

Explanations

What accounts for Asian Americans' overall high educational achievement? There are five potential explanations.

Socioeconomic background. The socioeconomic explanation highlights the role of family socioeconomic

resources in Asian American children's educational success. Many Asian ethnic groups arrive in the United States with high levels of education. Others arrive with financial capital to enable them to set up small businesses. Asian parents may make good use of these socioeconomic resources to facilitate their children's educational achievement. However, it is important to recognize the diverse backgrounds of Asian Americans. Vietnamese and other Southeast Asians immigrated with little human or financial capital, and variation in income within groups like Chinese and Koreans is also very high. Poverty rates among Chinese, Koreans, and Vietnamese are higher than they are among whites. Thus, the socioeconomic explanation is simply not applicable to all Asian Americans.

Ability. The second popular explanation for high Asian American academic achievement focuses on their ability. On various standardized tests, Asian Americans show a greater proficiency in math and only slightly lower verbal aptitude than do whites. Popular attention to racial differences in tested proficiency has led to much speculation about the sources of these differences. While some contend that the differences are biological in nature, others attribute differences in measured proficiency to parents' socioeconomic resources, neighborhood and community environments, immigration selectivity, and perhaps culture.

Community and identity. Another explanation for Asian American educational success considers the community-level support, encouragement, and information that is available to students. Because Asian Americans hold high educational expectations, they serve as examples for each other, encourage and support each other's achievement, and serve as sources of information about colleges and application procedures. For example, Asian American adults who have attended college act as role models for Asian American high school students. Asian Americans may also benefit from peer groups composed predominantly of other Asian Americans. Students in close-knit ethnic communities, like the New Orleans Vietnamese community, benefit from the supervision and support of community members. Children who maintain their ethnic distinctiveness through their native language and ethnic self-identification link themselves to this community. They are then accountable to the community and closely supervised by its members. Children not only learn norms that contribute to their success from this community, but also benefit from the connectedness of its members.[16]

Attitudes, values, and beliefs concerning education. Attitudes, values, and beliefs held by Asian Americans that differ from those of whites may have their origins in Asian cultures or in the self-selection of immigrants. Researchers suggest that one legacy of Confucianism in many Asian countries (notably China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam) is the notion that human beings are perfectible if they work hard to improve themselves. Given this cultural heritage, some Asian Americans may be more likely than whites to believe that hard work in school will be rewarded. It is also argued that Asian Americans may presume greater returns to education, both material and symbolic, than do whites and other minorities, based on beliefs originating in Asian home countries. In traditional Confucian societies, individuals of low social origin are encouraged to achieve upward mobility through intensive study. In particular, sought-after civil service jobs are tied to the successful completion of examinations. Because of this culture, Asian American parents and their children may be more likely to view education as a prominent, if not the sole, means to greater occupational prestige, social standing, and income. In addition, Asian Americans may be more likely to hold particular values, attitudes, and beliefs because they are voluntary immigrants to the United States. Voluntary immigrants are self-selected in having high motivations to achieve, evidenced by the fact that they chose to immigrate. Therefore, values encouraging success and hard work may be a product of the self-selected immigration process itself rather than of any particular ethnic or cultural heritage.

Blocked opportunities. The blocked opportunities perspective is closely related to the last two explanations. It suggests that Asian Americans use education as a means to overcome obstacles to social mobility.[17] As recent immigrants, Asian Americans lack social networks to help them obtain good jobs in the mainstream economy, although they may have ethnic networks that are conducive to educational attainment. For example, Asian Americans may lack access to social networks that will help them obtain well-paid manufacturing jobs after graduating from high school because few Asian Americans work in such occupations. They also lack population bases for political careers. Thus, Asian parents stress education as a means for their children to overcome their disadvantages in achieving social mobility. In an economy where the demand for knowledge-based skill is high and meritocracy is held as a norm (even if not fully implemented in practice), this strategy for social mobility is quite appealing, especially when accompanied by the Confucian cultural norm that human imperfections can be improved by persistent learning and practice. Asian Americans' strong belief in the connection between hard work and success underlies their heavy investment in education as a means to achieve the social mobility that might otherwise elude them.

The five explanations overlap. Together, they provide plausible explanations of the educational achievement of Asian Americans. Many Asian American youths have highly educated parents and/or high family incomes. Overall, Asian Americans perform better on standardized math tests than do whites. Asian American students may also have highly educated role models and motivated peers, and reside in interconnected ethnic communities. Some Asian Americans, either because

they are selective immigrants or because of their cultural backgrounds, may believe hard work is rewarded with success and may perceive high returns to education. Further, these values—coupled with limited opportunities for Asian Americans' social mobility through means other than education—may lead Asian American families to stress education as a means to high social standing and economic success in the United States.

Labor Force Outcomes

Socioeconomic status is multidimensional, with education and labor force outcomes as two of its main components. Thus, racial inequality or ethnic inequality usually refers to racial or ethnic differences in education and labor force outcomes. The last section examined education and found that Asian Americans overall have surpassed whites in key outcomes, despite substantial differences across ethnic groups among Asian Americans. This section focuses on labor force outcomes.

Labor force outcomes are quite different from educational outcomes in some respects. First, labor force outcomes have direct economic consequences for individuals and their families, whereas the consequences of educational outcomes are indirect, mostly mediated by their effects on labor force outcomes. Second, labor force outcomes are not only affected by individuals' own efforts and family resources but also by relationships with others—employers, supervisors, and co-workers. Third, except for slots in prestigious universities, the educational achievement of Asian Americans does not necessarily pose a threat to whites and other minorities. Some workers, however, feel that, as more positions are taken by Asians in the labor market, fewer are available for non-Asians.

Because labor force outcomes are more likely than educational outcomes to be influenced by racial resentment or discrimination, they are more direct indicators of Asian Americans' social status in American society. This section analyzes three dimensions of labor force outcomes—labor supply, earnings, and occupation—and draws comparisons by race and ethnicity as well as by gender. A focus on gender is necessary because work has been traditionally segregated by gender in American society.

Labor Supply

The labor force participation rate refers to the proportion of the adult population who are either employed or actively looking for work. Labor force participation excludes people who are not employed and not seeking employment. If nonparticipation in the labor force reflects not only an individual's own choice but also market forces (such as little hope of finding meaningful employment), labor force participation confounds labor supply with demand.

Table 5
Labor Force Participation by Race and Asian Ethnicity, Americans Ages 21–64, 1960-2000

	% in labor force				
Race/ethnicity	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
All Asians					
Men	92	89	87	86	80
Women	48	56	65	68	65
Chinese					
Men	89	85	86	86	81
Women	45	53	67	69	66
Japanese					
Men	94	93	88	88	84
Women	51	57	65	64	65
Filipino					
Men	90	90	92	91	80
Women	39	61	75	80	73
Korean					
Men	—	77	87	83	78
Women	—	36	61	61	59
Asian Indian					
Men	—	—	92	91	85
Women	—	—	57	64	59
Vietnamese					
Men	—	—	74	81	74
Women	—	—	53	63	61
Whites					
Men	93	91	89	88	84
Women	39	48	59	70	71
Blacks					
Men	86	83	79	76	68
Women	51	57	64	70	69

— Data not available.

Source: Authors' calculations using the 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) from the 1960–2000 censuses.

Here, labor force participation is treated as labor supply. To interpret number of hours worked as labor supply, it is assumed that workers can increase the number of hours worked at will. That is, part-time workers can work full time if they wish, even if this change requires them to change employment. No results concerning employment are shown, for two reasons. First, employment (or unemployment) measures demand more than supply. Second, preliminary analysis indicates very small, unsystematic racial differences in employment rates between Asians and non-Asians and across Asian ethnic groups.

An interesting pattern that emerges from examining labor force participation rates is that gender differences vary by race (see Table 5). In the earlier decades, gender

differences were much larger for whites than for blacks: A lower fraction of black men than white men, and a higher fraction of black women than white women, participated in the labor force. Black women's higher rates of labor force participation are a reflection of greater economic need—in part because of black men's lower labor force participation rates, and in part because of black women's lower marriage rates. For Asian Americans, both men and women have had relatively high labor force participation rates.

In particular, Japanese and Chinese women had high rates of labor force participation during the period. In 1960, for example, the rates were 51 percent for Japanese women and 45 percent for Chinese women, compared with 39 percent for white women and 51 percent for black women. However, unlike blacks, relatively few Chinese and Japanese women remained unmarried. It appears that these working Asian women contributed significantly to family income, in part because not many Asian husbands had high incomes.

A clear trend from 1960 onward is the steady increase in women's labor force participation. Although all the racial/ethnic groups experienced the increase, it was sharpest among whites, for whom labor force participation increased rapidly from 39 percent in 1960 to 71 percent in 2000. For Asian women, the rate increased from 48 percent to 68 percent in 1990 and held at 65 percent in 2000—a trend that was very similar to that of black women. By 1990, the rate for white women was slightly higher than blacks' and had surpassed Asians'. Asian men's labor force participation rates declined gradually over the decades, as they did for whites and blacks.

There is also substantial ethnic variation in labor force participation between 1960 and 2000. Among Asian American men, Vietnamese had the lowest participation rates (74 percent to 81 percent between 1980 and 2000). Among Asian American women, both Vietnamese and Koreans had low participation rates (between 36 percent and 63 percent between 1970 and 2000). Because Vietnamese Americans were mostly refugees, they were disadvantaged in the labor market by a lack of both human and financial capital. Korean women's low levels of labor force participation in part reflect a cultural norm that women should stop working outside the home after marriage and childbirth. While this cultural norm is shared to some degree by all the groups (as revealed in the data), its influence on labor force participation is more pronounced among Korean Americans. Low levels of labor force participation among Korean women may also reflect the underreporting of their participation in family-owned businesses.

In terms of average hours worked per week, Asian men worked slightly less than white men and Asian women worked slightly more than white women (by one to two hours per week overall). The real divergence between Asians and whites is seen in gender differences. While women overall worked fewer hours per week than men, the gender disparity is wider for whites than for Asians—a difference that emerged after 1970, as the gender gap substantially narrowed for Asians but remained at a similar level for whites. In 1980, for example, Asian men worked an average of 43 hours and Asian women worked 38, a gender difference of about five hours. In contrast, white men worked 44 hours and white women worked 36 hours, an eight-hour difference. The gender differences in hours worked were even smaller among blacks: four hours in 1990 and 2000.[18]

The extent to which the gender gap in hours worked is smaller for Asians than for whites varies by ethnicity. The smallest gender gap is found among Vietnamese: two hours in 1980 and 1990, and three hours in 2000. After 1960, the gender gap in hours worked was also very small for Filipinos: two hours in 1970, 1990, and 2000. Vietnamese and Filipinos on average had lower socioeconomic status than the other major Asian ethnic groups. As with blacks, the narrowing gender gap in hours worked among Vietnamese and Filipinos is attributable both to a lower number of hours worked by men and to a higher number of hours worked by women, who needed to compensate for men's lower labor supply and earnings.

Earnings

In contrast to education and labor supply, earnings directly reflect the demand for a worker's skill and productivity in the labor market. If there is discrimination against Asian Americans because of their race or country of origin, it is more likely to be reflected in earnings than in any other indicator.

An analysis comparing U.S.-born Asians' earnings to whites' earnings, separately by gender, appears in Table 6 (page 430). Because education attained abroad may not be as highly valued in the American labor market as education acquired in the United States, immigrants who completed their education prior to immigration may suffer an earnings disadvantage.[19]

The entries in Table 6 are the Asian/white earnings ratios, observed and adjusted. An observed earnings ratio is the ratio of Asians' average earnings to whites' average earnings. An adjusted earnings ratio accounts for education and experience and indicates whether Asian Americans suffer an earnings disadvantage after adjustment for schooling and years of work experience. Asians are said by some to achieve economic parity with whites through "overeducation"; this is called the net disadvantage thesis.[20] Since Asian Americans are advantaged relative to whites in education but not in work experience, the difference between observed earnings ratios and adjusted earnings ratios is attributable to Asians' higher educational attainment.

A value of 1.00 in Table 6 means earnings equity. A ratio value less than 1.00 indicates Asians' disadvantage.

Likewise, a number greater than 1.00 indicates Asians' advantage. For example, in 1959 all Asian men earned 98 percent as much as white men on average, but the racial difference is not statistically significant (in other words, it could be due to chance). However, after adjusting for human capital, Asians earned 94 percent as much as comparable whites in 1959, and this racial difference is statistically significant (not likely to be due to chance). Thus, the apparent equality of observed earnings is the result of Asians' higher levels of educational attainment.

Several findings emerge from the earnings results. First, Asian Americans compared more favorably with whites in observed earnings than in adjusted earnings. Asians' advantage over whites in observed earnings is particularly large in 1989 and 1999, in part reflecting the increased return to higher education in the U.S. labor market during this period. Second, there is a significant and steady trend over the decades in Asians' favor. Without adjustment, Asian men earned about as much as white men between 1959 and 1979, but earned 9 percent more in 1989 and 14 percent more in 1999. After adjustment, Asian men experienced an earnings disadvantage of 6 percent in 1959 and 5 percent in 1979, but a 4 percent advantage in 1999. Similar increases in the Asian/white ratio for the six major ethnicities are also apparent. Third, Asian women have fared well relative to white women. Throughout the period and for all the groups considered, Asian women's earnings were not significantly lower than white women's. In fact, Asian women's observed earnings and adjusted earnings began to surpass those of white women in 1969, and the Asian advantage continued to grow. By 1999, Asian women earned 32 percent more than white women before adjustment and 17 percent more after adjustment.

Finally, substantial variation occurred across Asian ethnic groups. Of the three major Asian groups that were observed throughout the four-decade period, Filipinos did not do as well as Chinese and Japanese. In 1959, Filipino men earned 79 percent as much as whites before adjustment and 87 percent as much as white men after adjustment. The gap between Filipino men and white men gradually closed by 1999. However, in no

Table 6

RATIO OF ASIAN AMERICANS' EARNINGS TO WHITES' EARNINGS: OBSERVED AND ADJUSTED FOR EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE, 1959–1999

Race/ ethnicity	1959		1969		1979		1989		1999	
	Observed	Adjusted*	Observed	Adjusted*	Observed	Adjusted*	Observed	Adjusted*	Observed	Adjusted*
All U.S.-born Asians										
Men	0.98	0.94**	1.04**	0.98	1.01	0.95**	1.09**	1.02	1.14**	1.04**
Women	1.04	1.02	1.13**	1.08**	1.17**	1.09**	1.28**	1.16**	1.32**	1.17**
Chinese										
Men	0.99	0.94	1.01	0.90**	1.03	0.95	1.29**	1.11**	1.35**	1.12**
Women	1.10	1.07	1.18**	1.09	1.31**	1.18**	1.44**	1.24**	1.65**	1.35**
Japanese										
Men	1.00	0.95**	1.08**	1.02	1.08**	0.99	1.13**	1.01	1.19**	1.00
Women	1.04	1.02	1.15**	1.11**	1.17**	1.09**	1.31**	1.17**	1.37**	1.15**
Filipino										
Men	0.79**	0.87**	0.80**	0.89**	0.80**	0.86**	0.87**	0.95**	0.93**	1.00
Women	0.86	0.88	0.94	0.95	0.99	0.98	1.07**	1.07**	1.09**	1.09**
Korean										
Men	—	—	0.97	1.00	0.85	0.86	1.04	1.11	1.15**	1.13**
Women	—	—	0.92	0.91	1.25	1.18	1.28**	1.20**	1.24**	1.20**
Asian Indian										
Men	—	—	—	—	0.74**	0.67**	1.03	0.94	1.10	1.09
Women	—	—	—	—	1.02	0.97	1.33**	1.15	1.34**	1.20**
Vietnamese										
Men	—	—	—	—	0.94	0.97	0.65**	0.77	0.87	1.08
Women	—	—	—	—	1.02	1.12	1.11	1.24	0.83	0.97

*Ratios adjusted for differences in education and experience.

**U.S.-born Asians' earnings were significantly different from those of whites.

— Data not available.

Note: Analysis was restricted to full-time/year-round workers with positive earnings who were ages 21–64.

Source: Authors' calculations using the 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) from the 1960–2000 censuses.

year were the earnings of Filipino men higher than those of white men, either observed or adjusted. The Filipina-white gap for women was not statistically significant between 1959 and 1979, after which the gap turned to Filipinas' favor. In fact, in 1999 Filipinas earned 9 percent more than white women, in both observed and adjusted earnings. While Vietnamese overall had relatively low earnings, the only statistically significant disparity between Vietnamese and whites was for observed earnings in 1989. Asian Indians actually had low earnings relative to whites as recently as in 1979, when Indian men earned 74 percent as much as white men before adjustment and 67 percent as much after adjustment. After 1989, Asian Indian men reached parity with white men in both observed and adjusted earnings. Asian Indian women had about one-third higher observed earnings than white women in 1989, and about one-fifth higher adjusted earnings in 1999.

These results suggest that the net disadvantage thesis may be a valid characterization of the experiences of Asian American men prior to 1989. However, it does not appear to hold for either Asian American women in general, or for Asian American men since 1989. Due to both their higher educational attainment and higher earnings within levels of education, Asian American women have had an advantage over white women since 1969. Relative earnings of Asian American men also improved dramatically, to the point of surpassing white men, even after adjusting for education and experience. If there is evidence that Asian American men's lower adjusted earnings relative to white men's earnings reflected racial discrimination from 1959 to 1979, this ceased to be true after 1989.

Occupation

Occupation has been of central interest to those who study inequality for several reasons. First, one's occupation is usually known to friends, relatives, and acquaintances, and it is often considered a shorthand description of social status. In contrast, earnings are customarily private and are seldom used by others to describe a person's social status. Second, occupation is a relatively stable attribute that does not change much over the life cycle or the business cycle. In some ways, occupation can be thought of as a proxy measure of one's permanent income. Third, occupations are concrete social positions that are filled by actual workers. Forces such as technological innovation or economic development change the occupational structure and generate new positions, which in turn provide opportunities for social mobility. Sociologists have long been interested in who benefits and who loses as a result of such structural changes.

Occupation is significant for another reason that is especially germane to the discussion of inequality among Asian Americans. Some occupations may provide channels of mobility that are less subject to potential discrimination.[21] First, the extent to which objective criteria can be used for performance assessment varies, or is perceived to vary, from occupation to occupation. For example, universalism is a core normative principle in science, where extraneous factors—such as race, gender, nationality, and religion—should not play a role in the evaluation of performance. Similarly, in occupations such as engineering and computer programming, delivery of products and services can be more directly observed and assessed than in other occupations such as the military, teaching, and clerical work.

Furthermore, there is a direct correspondence between educational credentials and entry into certain occupations. For example, it usually takes a doctoral degree in science to be a scientist, and a medical degree to be a physician. Attaining such credentials is a long and arduous process, and no matter how privileged a person is—either because of family background or race—he/she cannot become a scientist or a physician without the requisite educational credentials. However, regardless of one's social origin (including race), job opportunities in these fields are widely available once one attains the educational credentials. This close link between education and entry into many prestigious occupations makes it reasonable for Asian Americans to use educational attainment as an effective channel of mobility to overcome either real or perceived barriers to some high-status occupations.

Given that Asian Americans have achieved high educational and academic credentials, they may rationally seek to work in occupations in which they can demonstrate their skills and in which objective criteria are used to evaluate performance. One 30-year-old Korean American summed up Asians' motivation in this way:

> "I don't think that Asians prefer the sciences. Sometimes it is the only avenue open to them. In the sciences, empirical results matter more than in the esoteric discussion of humanities. So that at least as an engineer, you know how to put machines in, and you can be a useful bolt and nut. And I think the job opportunities for us lie in this field."[22]

Asians, then, may be concentrated in certain occupations on the basis of their desire to maximize socioeconomic outcomes. However, racial concentration in certain occupations can also occur through other social mechanisms. An historical example illustrates how this can happen. In San Francisco in the late 19th century, a small group of Chinese people began working in the laundry service occupation in response to discrimination and labor competition from whites. Their success demonstrated that they could operate laundries, not necessarily that they were best suited to running laundries relative to other kinds of work. Somehow, through social networks and role modeling, many other Chinese

Table 7

PERCENT ASIAN BY OCCUPATION AND INDEX OF DISSIMILARITY, 1960-2000

Occupation	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Life scientists	3.6	4.2	4.4	6.7	14.7
Physical scientists	0.7	2.6	4.8	7.0	15.3
Social scientists	0.3	1.3	2.0	2.4	4.3
Mathematicians	0.6	2.7	2.4	5.6	11.1
Engineers	0.9	1.6	4.5	6.7	9.9
Architects	1.5	2.5	5.1	6.3	6.9
Physicians, dentists, and related practitioners	1.4	3.7	7.9	9.0	13.6
Nurses, dietitians, therapists	0.7	1.4	3.5	4.2	6.2
Elementary and preschool teachers	0.4	0.6	1.1	1.3	1.9
Secondary and vocational teachers	0.5	0.6	1.1	1.7	2.8
Postsecondary teachers	1.7	1.7	3.6	7.0	8.7
Health technicians	0.6	1.7	3.8	4.4	5.4
All other technicians	0.7	1.2	2.6	4.2	4.3
Computer specialists	—	1.2	4.2	7.0	13.2
Writers, artists, and media workers	0.4	1.0	1.9	2.6	4.1
Lawyers and judges	0.3	0.3	0.7	1.3	2.7
Librarians, archivists, curators	0.5	1.8	2.0	3.2	3.5
Social and recreation workers	0.9	0.9	1.3	1.7	2.3
Religious workers	0.2	0.4	1.2	2.9	4.0
Accountants and financial analysts	0.8	1.1	2.9	4.3	6.1
Administrators and public officers	0.5	0.6	1.1	1.8	2.4
Managers and proprietors	0.6	0.7	1.6	2.6	4.1
Sales workers, retail	0.4	0.7	1.4	3.3	4.8
Sales workers, other	0.5	0.5	1.3	2.6	3.8
Clerical workers	0.5	0.8	1.8	2.9	3.8
Bookkeepers	0.5	0.8	1.7	2.9	3.8
Secretaries	0.6	0.7	1.2	1.7	2.3
Mechanical workers	0.5	0.5	1.2	1.8	2.5
Carpenters	0.5	0.6	0.7	1.0	1.3
Electricians	0.3	0.6	1.1	1.5	1.5
Construction workers	0.3	0.4	0.6	1.0	1.0
Craftsmen	0.3	0.4	1.3	3.0	4.7
Textile machine operators	1.1	1.4	3.5	6.7	10.1
Metalworking and transportation operators	0.3	0.3	0.7	1.2	2.3
Other operators	0.3	0.5	1.3	2.5	4.0
Laborers, except farm	0.4	0.7	1.2	1.7	2.1
Farmers and farm laborers	1.1	0.8	1.0	1.2	1.5
Cleaning and food service workers	1.1	1.4	2.7	3.9	4.7
Health service workers	0.2	0.6	1.5	2.3	3.3
Personal service workers and barbers	0.5	0.8	1.6	2.8	5.1
Protective service workers	0.1	0.4	0.6	1.1	1.8
Total	0.5	0.8	1.7	2.8	4.1
Index of dissimilarity	18.6	17.7	19.7	17.8	18.1

— Data not available.

Note: Analysis was restricted to all workers ages 21–64. The index of dissimilarity measures the percent of Asians who would need to change occupations for Asians and non-Asians to have identical occupational distributions.

Sources: Authors' calculations using the 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) from the 1960-2000 censuses; and Census 2000 5% PUMS.

followed suit and started their own laundry businesses, thus creating a concentration of Chinese in the laundry service through the 1920s.[23]

The clustering of Asian workers in certain occupations is presented in Table 7. Values in each row should be compared with the corresponding entries in the second row from the bottom, the total percentage of Asian workers in the civilian labor force within each census year. A number greater than the total percentage reveals an overrepresentation of Asians in a particular occupation. Likewise, a number smaller than the total percentage reveals an underrepresentation of Asians. The last row of the table presents the index of dissimilarity, measuring the occupational segregation of Asians from non-Asians.

The table supports the notion that Asians may consciously pursue certain occupations, such as life scientists, architects, physicians, and dentists, to maximize their chances for upward social mobility, since these are high-status occupations requiring high educational attainment. Asians' presence in some other occupations, like farmers and textile operators, reflects the labor niches that early Asian immigrants occupied.

As described earlier, the Asian population grew rapidly after 1965. This growth is reflected in the steady increase in the percentage of Asians in the labor force, from 0.5 percent in 1960 to 4.1 percent in 2000—an eightfold increase in four decades. However, the increase in Asian representation was much steeper in some occupational areas than in others. Foremost among these areas were scientific and engineering occupations. For example, the percentage of Asians in physical science jobs jumped from an unremarkable 0.7 percent in 1960 to an astonishingly high 15.3 percent in 2000. The percentage of Asians among computer specialists, an occupation that did not exist in the 1960 census occupation classification, increased from 1.2 percent in 1970 to 13.2 percent in 2000. Also, Asians' representation increased markedly in all other professional jobs except for elementary and preschool teachers, secondary and vocational teachers, lawyers and judges, and social and recreation workers. For example, the percentage of Asians among physicians, dentists, and related occupations increased rapidly from 1.4 percent in 1960 to 13.6 percent in 2000. Third, and surprisingly, Asians rapidly increased their share in some skilled manual jobs, such as textile operators, craftsmen, and other operators (respectively to 10.1 percent, 4.7 percent, and 4.0 percent in 2000). Finally, Asian representation increased among personal service workers and barbers, both in absolute terms (from 0.5 percent in 1960 to 5.1 percent in 2000) and in relation to the increase in the representation of Asian Americans in the labor force (from 0.5 percent in 1960 to 4.1 percent in 2000). Asian Americans' representation among cleaning and food service workers, at 1.1 percent in 1960, increased in absolute terms (to 4.7 percent in 2000) but not in relative terms.

Asians' presence remained small and the group as a whole was underrepresented in such occupations as librarians, clerical workers, and teachers (except teachers in higher education). Although these are all white-collar jobs, they are relatively low-status and low-paying occupations with flat career trajectories, and they tend to be filled predominantly by women. Somehow, Asians have avoided these occupations,[24] a fact that might help explain why Asian women earn more than white women. However, Asian Americans were underrepresented in 2000 in two high-status occupations: lawyers and judges (2.7 percent), and administrators and public officers (2.4 percent). Asians' presence is also hardly felt in certain skilled manual occupations: carpenters, electricians, and construction workers. One reason for Asians' absence is historical, as competition between whites and minority workers in skilled trades has been fierce, and Asians were discriminated against in dominant trade unions of the 19th and early 20th centuries, such as the American Federation of Labor. Another related reason is a lack of social networks and role models, as few Asians worked in these occupations. Finally, it is interesting to observe that Asians' representation in farming stayed low, although many Asians (especially Japanese) historically were engaged in these occupations. Many Japanese Americans may have left farming after losing land while interned in camps during Word War II, but other Asians, especially new Asian immigrants, may now view the lifestyle associated with farming as undesirable and prefer to work and live in urban settings.

It is important to consider the source of changes in Asians' representation across the census years. There is a great inertia in labor force composition in the sense that the structure of the labor force does not change much within a 10-year window. Aside from job mobility, two demographic factors account for the changes in Asian representation observed earlier—aging and immigration. Older workers (55 and older) in an earlier census left the labor force, and a new cohort of young workers (who were ages 11 to 20 in the previous census) entered the labor force. However, this source of change contributes only a small part to the changes. Most of the changes in occupational patterns are due to the influx of new immigrants and their children into the labor force.

The preceding discussion highlighted occupations in which Asians are either overrepresented or underrepresented. It is important to keep in mind that the overall differences in the distributions of Asians and non-Asians across occupations are small. This is shown in the last row of Table 7, which presents the index of dissimilarity measuring the racial occupational segregation. According to this index, which varies between 18 percent (in 1970, 1990, and 2000) and 20 percent (in 1980), levels of racial segregation are low. The index indicates that only 18 percent to 20 percent of all Asians (or non-Asians) would need to change occupations in order for Asians and non-Asians to have identical distributions across the occupational classifications.

The Role of Education

Education is at the core of Asian Americans' social mobility. Their high educational achievement has facilitated their entry into many occupations that require college and advanced degrees. Asian Americans' large presence in science, engineering, and medicine evolved gradually from 1960 to 2000. While part of this transformation is attributable to the influx of new immigrants and their children, who increased the overall share of Asian Americans in the labor force, the main explanation is that a large portion (indeed most by 2000) of Asian Americans, either U.S.-born or foreign-born, attained postsecondary education. High educational credentials facilitated Asian Americans' entry into professional jobs in the labor market.

Asian Americans' high educational attainment is also a major reason for their relatively high earnings. Among U.S.-born workers, Asian American men reached parity in earnings with white men in 1959 and 1979 through higher educational attainment. Within levels of education, however, Asian American men suffered an earnings disadvantage of 5 percent. Education accounted for about a 5 percent difference in observed earnings between Asian Americans and whites before 1989. The difference attributable to education increased to 10 percent in 1999. By then, Asian American men earned more than white men not only in observed earnings (by 14 percent) but also in adjusted earnings (by 4 percent).

Among women, Asian Americans consistently outperformed whites in earnings throughout the period, in both observed and adjusted earnings. In recent decades, education seems to play a particularly large role in the higher earnings of Asian American women. In 1999, Asian American women's observed earnings were 32 percent greater than those of white women. This premium goes down to 17 percent for adjusted earnings, suggesting that education accounts for almost half of the observed advantage enjoyed by Asian American women. Again, Asian Americans' higher earnings, either observed or adjusted, did not happen instantly. In fact, Asian American men experienced a net disadvantage in 1959 and 1979.

Finally, there are substantial ethnic differences across Asian groups. In both education and earnings, Filipinos and Vietnamese lagged behind the other major Asian groups. Indeed, the Vietnamese (even U.S.-born Vietnamese) are the only Asian group that had a lower rate of college education than whites. However, socioeconomic conditions for Filipinos and Vietnamese have significantly improved over time, and both groups had earnings roughly comparable to whites in 1999.

Marriage and Family

Asian Americans have effectively used education as a vehicle for social mobility. However, educational attainment normally occurs early in the life course, when an individual is still dependent on parents for both financial and emotional support. Because parents' emotional encouragement and financial support facilitate educational attainment, the high levels of education found among Asian American youth reflect the large investment of Asian American parents. Seen in this light, achieving social mobility through education is a family strategy. Thus, knowledge of Asian Americans' situations and experiences in the United States would be incomplete without understanding the Asian American family.

This section looks at family characteristics and marriage patterns of Asian Americans relative to those of whites and blacks. For simplicity, only the results from the 2000 Census are presented.[25] Tremendous change has occurred in American families in recent decades, such as increases in age of marriage (that is, the postponement of marriage), decreases in marriage, and increases in divorce and premarital cohabitation rates. These trends have affected all racial groups, and analysis of 2000 Census data provides sharp comparisons between Asians and non-Asians, and across different Asian ethnicities.

Another important trend has been the steady increase in women's labor force participation. Some scholars hypothesize that women's growing involvement in the labor force has contributed both to their postponement of marriage and to their disinclination toward marriage, as it has provided financial stability for women outside of marriage. This hypothesis may also explain why marriage rates are lower among blacks than among whites. Historically, black women have been more active than white women in the U.S. labor force; sizable fractions of black men have lacked steady employment, which made them less appealing as marriage partners.

The labor force participation rates of Asian women were historically higher than whites' and close to blacks' prior to 1990. Asian women also tended to work long hours and to earn more than their white or black counterparts. Thus, all available evidence indicates that Asian American women have been active in economic pursuits, although there is ethnic variation, with Korean women less economically active than other groups. However, this greater economic independence among Asian women has not caused them to avoid marriage. In fact, marriage rates are relatively high and divorce rates relatively low among Asian Americans.

Family Characteristics

Asian Americans are more likely to live in married-couple or husband-wife families than are whites or blacks (see Table 8). As defined here, a husband-wife family is not the same as a nuclear family—which includes solely a married couple and their own children—but it encompasses a nuclear family. For instance, an elderly woman who lives with her daughter and her son-in-law is considered to live in a husband-wife family, as is a child who lives with his or her grandparents. Individuals who live by themselves or in families headed by unmarried adults are not considered to live in a husband-wife family. The husband-wife family is used here as a measure of the stability and support—both emotional and material—of family life that are commonly associated with marriage.

For all people regardless of age, the share living in husband-wife families is 73 percent among Asian Americans, compared with 67 percent among whites and 40 percent among blacks. For children, the percentage is 84 percent among Asians, compared with 78 percent among whites and 40 percent among blacks. There is some cross-ethnic variation among Asian Americans. Most notable is that only 65 percent of all Japanese, the most assimilated Asian group, live in husband-wife families. However, the percentage of Japanese children living in husband-wife families is very high, at 88 percent. The only Asian American group with a significantly lower percentage of children living in husband- wife families is multiracial Asians, whose rate is similar to whites' on this measure. The overall picture that emerges from these numbers is that an overwhelming majority of Asians, especially Asian children, live in families headed by married couples and thus benefit from this living arrangement.

A family household is considered multigenerational if family members living in the same household are related to each other by blood and belong to three or more generations. An example of a multigenerational family consists of children, parents, and grandparents. Marital status is not specified; parents and grandparents in such a multigenerational family can be single, married, divorced, or widowed.

For elderly parents to live with adult married children is a cultural tradition in many Asian societies.[26] While this practice is less prevalent among Asian Americans than among Asians in Asia, it is still evident (see Table 8). Among all Asians, the percentage is 15 percent; among Asian children, the percentage is 17 percent. These numbers are much higher than those among whites (5 percent and 7 percent, respectively) and very similar to those among blacks (14 percent and 18 percent, respectively). However, the seeming similarity between Asians and blacks in percentages living in multigenerational families is misleading. Recall that Asian children live predominantly in husband-wife families. For them, having grandparents living in the same household usually means additional resources. For black children, grandparents often substitute for parents as primary caretakers. Additional analysis of Census 2000 data revealed that two-thirds of black children who live in multigenerational families do not live with two biological parents, whereas

Table 8

FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS BY RACE AND ASIAN ETHNIC GROUP, 2000

Race/ethnicity and age	% in husband-wife families	% in multigeneration families	Mean family size	1999 mean family income ($1,000)	1999 median family income ($1,000)	% in poverty, 1999
All persons						
All Asians	73	15	4.2	$77	$61	13
Chinese	73	15	3.9	82	63	13
Japanese	65	5	3.2	91	74	9
Filipino	73	22	4.4	81	70	6
Korean	74	10	3.7	71	53	15
Asian Indian	80	14	4.0	94	70	10
Vietnamese	72	16	4.7	65	52	15
Other Asian	74	19	5.3	56	44	23
Multiethnic Asian	72	13	4.3	78	64	12
Multiracial Asian	66	11	4.1	71	55	13
Whites	67	5	3.5	70	55	9
Blacks	40	14	3.9	45	35	24
Children (ages 0–17)						
All Asians	84	17	4.8	74	57	14
Chinese	88	19	4.5	82	63	13
Japanese	88	7	4.1	98	80	6
Filipino	82	27	5.0	77	67	6
Korean	86	11	4.2	73	56	12
Asian Indian	92	18	4.6	91	66	10
Vietnamese	81	17	5.1	59	45	20
Other Asian	82	21	6.1	49	38	30
Multiethnic Asian	84	15	4.7	80	65	11
Multiracial Asian	77	13	4.4	72	56	11
Whites	78	7	4.4	68	52	11
Blacks	40	18	4.4	39	29	32

Note: Mean family size, mean family income, and median family income were computed for individuals in each group.

Source: Authors' calculations using the Census 2000 1% (for whites and blacks) and 5% (for Asian groups) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

this type of family arrangement applies to only a small fraction (about 18 percent) of Asian American children.

Multigenerational living arrangements vary by Asian ethnicity. The prevalence of living in multigenerational families among Japanese is low, both for all people and for children. The rate is very high among Filipinos (22 percent for all people and 27 percent for children), Other Asians (19 percent for all people and 21 percent for children), and Vietnamese (16 percent for all people and 17 percent for children). One reason that a high proportion of Asian Americans live in multigenerational families is cultural, as noted earlier. Another reason is economic, since pooling resources across multiple generations saves money and reduces economic risk. A third reason is related to immigration. Recent immigrants may initially reside with other family members before establishing independent households of their own.

Except for Japanese, Asian Americans live in larger families than do whites and blacks (see Table 8). Note that family size is affected by many factors: the marital status of the household head, the number of children (that is, fertility), and the presence or absence of elderly adults. However, fertility among Asian Americans is relatively low.[27] Thus, the larger family size on average among Asian Americans than among whites and blacks is not due to Asian Americans having more children per family but due to their higher rate of stable marriages and higher rate of elderly people living with married adult children. Thus, it is not surprising that there is a correspondence across Asian ethnicities between the percentage living in multigenerational families and family size, with Filipinos, Vietnamese, and Other Asians at the high end and Japanese at the low end on both measures.

Asian Americans overall have much higher family incomes than do blacks (see Table 8). And except for Vietnamese and Other Asians, Asian Americans have higher mean family incomes than whites. Since Asian Americans have larger families on average than whites, measuring family income per person reduces, or may even reverse, this advantage over whites.

The 1999 mean family income was $77,000 for all Asians, for example, compared with $70,000 for whites. Per capita mean family income was around $18,000 for all Asians, lower than the $20,000 for whites. There is also

large ethnic variation in family income across Asian ethnicities. At the high end, Japanese had the highest median family income ($74,000) and the second-highest mean family income ($91,000); Asian Indians had the highest mean family income ($94,000) and the second-highest median family income ($70,000). At the low end, Vietnamese and Other Asians had mean and median family income at levels substantially lower than those of whites.

Family living arrangements have direct consequences for economic well-being. This is true because the family is usually the basic unit at which both income and consumption are shared. Everything else being equal, it is economically more efficient to live in a larger family due to economies of scale. Like family income, poverty status is a family attribute (although it is computed in Table 8 at the individual level). A person is considered to live in poverty if the combined gross cash income of his/her family falls below the official threshold income determined necessary for subsistence, which adjusts for family size and composition.

Contrary to the model minority image, a larger proportion of Asian Americans than whites live in poverty. Overall, 13 percent of Asians lived in poverty in 2000, compared with 9 percent among whites. Among children, the figures are 14 percent among Asians and 11 percent among whites. However, these poverty rates are much lower than those among blacks (at 24 percent for all people and 32 percent for children). The ethnic variation is also large. The poverty rate is low among the Japanese and Filipinos (in fact, lower among these groups than among whites) and high among Chinese, Koreans, Vietnamese, and Other Asians. The poverty rate is high among Vietnamese because they came to the United States as refugees. However, the average economic conditions for Chinese and Koreans are good—either comparable or superior to those of whites. These results suggest that there is a polarization in the economic conditions of Chinese and Korean Americans: Whereas a large portion of these groups has realized the American dream by achieving middle-class status, another large portion has been left behind and economically deprived. This economic diversity of Asian Americans within the same ethnic group is often overlooked.

Prevalence and Timing of Marriage

Examining Asian Americans' marriage patterns is not an easy task because census data provide information about current marital status only, not marital history. In particular, for respondents who said they were currently married, it is not known for how long they were married or whether they had previously married and divorced. For those who were divorced, neither the timing of the divorce nor the marital history preceding the divorce is known. The following analysis relies on a crude measure of divorce, calculated as the difference between ever married and currently married, ignoring remarriage and widowhood.

Proportionately more Asian Americans are currently married than are whites and blacks (see Table 9). Among men ages 35 to 44, 78 percent of Asian Americans are currently married, compared with 69 percent of whites and 52 percent of blacks. Among women ages 35 to 44, 80 percent of Asian Americans are currently married, compared with 71 percent of whites and 42 percent of blacks. There is some evidence that, relative to whites, Asians' higher rates of current marriage are attributable to Asians' lower likelihood of divorce.

The rates of ever being married are comparable between Asian Americans and whites (85 percent for men and 90 percent for women). The difference between ever married and currently married for people ages 35 to 44, a crude measure of divorce, is 7 percentage points among Asian men and about 10 percentage points among Asian women. In contrast, the difference stands at 15 percentage points for white men and 18 percentage points for white women. Blacks' rates of being currently married are low for two reasons, both because a lower proportion ever marries (71 percent for men and 69 percent for women) and because a higher percentage of those who were previously married is no longer married (19 percent among men and 27 percent among women).

There are notable ethnic variations in the percentages currently married and ever married. The Japanese have relatively low marriage rates, and Koreans and Asian Indians have the highest marriage rates. Furthermore, multiracial Asians have marriage rates that closely resemble those of whites. In particular, the difference in the two marriage rates, ever married minus currently married, is slightly higher among multiracial Asian women (19 percentage points) than among white women (18 percentage points). This result suggests that multiracial Asians have assimilated to the degree that their marriage patterns resemble more closely those of whites than those of monoracial Asians.

The proportion of first marriages occurring in ages 45 to 54 is twice as high among Asian American men (8 percentage points) as it is among Asian American women (4 percentage points). A similar gender difference exists between white men (7 percentage points) and white women (4 percentage points). Overall, the data show that among Asian Americans and whites a very small proportion of people get married for the first time past age 44, because an overwhelming majority of them has already been married before that age. However, the proportion is much higher among blacks (around 12 percent).

Change across age groups in the proportion currently married is a net result of divorce, remarriage, or new marriage. The difference is a positive 7 percentage points for Asian American men but a negative 2 percentage points among Asian American women. This gender difference probably reflects the fact that a higher pro-

portion of divorced men than divorced women get remarried, presumably to younger women. This gender asymmetry is also true for whites and blacks. In any event, in ages 45 to 54, 85 percent of Asian American men and 78 percent of Asian American women are still married, compared with 74 percent of white men and 70 percent of white women. Thus, the data show that Asian Americans, with the exception of Japanese and multiracial Asians, are still more likely to be married than are whites in this later age range.

Table 9

PERCENT CURRENTLY MARRIED AND EVER-MARRIED AND MEDIAN AGE OF MARRIAGE, BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND GENDER, 2000

Race/ethnicity	% currently married (ages 35–44)	% ever married (ages 35–44)	% currently married (ages 45–54)	% ever married (ages 45–54)	Median age at marriage among all ever-married
All Asians					
Men	78	85	85	93	28
Women	80	90	78	94	25
Chinese					
Men	82	87	87	94	29
Women	82	90	81	94	27
Japanese					
Men	64	72	72	84	30
Women	74	85	75	91	27
Filipino					
Men	76	84	83	92	28
Women	77	89	76	92	25
Korean					
Men	85	91	90	98	30
Women	84	94	81	98	27
Asian Indian					
Men	88	92	92	97	27
Women	90	95	87	97	23
Vietnamese					
Men	75	80	84	93	30
Women	76	87	76	93	26
Other Asian					
Men	79	86	86	95	28
Women	81	92	76	94	24
Multiethnic Asian					
Men	76	82	83	93	—
Women	75	88	78	94	—
Multiracial Asian					
Men	67	80	74	90	28
Women	68	87	65	91	25
Whites					
Men	69	84	74	91	26
Women	71	89	70	93	24
Blacks					
Men	52	71	55	82	27
Women	42	69	43	82	28

— Insufficient data.

Source: Authors' calculations using the Census 2000 1% (for whites and blacks) and 5% (for Asian groups) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

The median age of marriage is estimated to be 28 among Asian men and 25 among Asian women. Comparing these numbers to those of whites (26 for white men and 24 for white women) leads to two conclusions: First, Asian Americans marry at later ages than do whites. Second, the age gap between men and women in the median age of marriage is also slightly wider for Asian Americans (three years) than for whites (two years). The late age of marriage for Asian Americans may reflect a traditional expectation that a person (especially a man) needs to be economically established before marriage. The patterns of late marriage and a high gender gap in the age of marriage are true across all Asian American groups. For example, among Japanese Americans, the most assimilated Asian group, the median age of marriage is estimated to be 30 for men and 27 for women. Interestingly, black women have a high median age of marriage, 28.

Data from Census 2000 shed some light on Asian Americans' marriage patterns. Compared with whites and blacks, Asian Americans have relatively high rates of marriage and low rates of divorce, but a high median age of marriage. All of these results seem to suggest that Asian Americans are still influenced by a culture that emphasizes the importance of the family and family responsibility.

Intermarriage

Early Asian immigrants were predominantly male manual workers. There were very few Asian women in America who could be their marriage partners. To make the situation worse, Asian workers were not allowed to bring their wives to the United States. In fear of Asian men marrying U.S.-born white women, many states instituted antimiscegenation laws to prohibit marriages between Asians and whites. This situation lasted until the end of World War II, when U.S. servicemen who fought and were stationed overseas in Asia began to bring home war brides from Asia. This started a new era in which Asian women are accepted, and sometimes even preferred, as wives by white and black men.

Large-scale immigration from Asia did not occur until the landmark 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act. The beginning of this new wave of immigration coincided with the Civil Rights Movement, which resulted in the abolition of antimiscegenation laws in 1967. Intermarriage between Asian Americans and other racial groups began to increase. Whereas American culture has applied a one-drop rule when racially identifying children from white-

black parentage, it does not have a similar norm concerning the race of children from white-Asian parentage (see Box 2, page 420). This may be because these interracial offspring are a relatively recent phenomenon, born after the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Further, Asian-white relationships are not complicated by a history of intricate relationships between whites and blacks dating back to slavery. Our earlier study using data from the 1990 Census found that about half of biracial Asian children are identified as Asian, suggesting that how to racially identify this group is fluid and maybe even optional.[28] Out of nearly 12 million Asian Americans in 2000, 1.9 million were reported as mixed Asian—1.7 million being multiracial Asians (those with an Asian race plus a non-Asian race), and 223,593 being multiethnic Asians (those with more than one Asian ethnicity). These mixed Asians are mostly children of interracial or interethnic marriages, as only a small proportion of Asian Americans are born outside of marriage.

Although most Asian Americans still tend to marry other Asian Americans, intermarriage between Asians and non-Asians has become a significant phenomenon in American society today. Twelve percent of all married Asian American men have a non-Asian wife (see Table 10). The percentage of married Asian American women with a non-Asian husband is much higher, at 23 percent.

Interpretation of intermarriage rates is not always straightforward, because their magnitudes are subject to the influences of relative group sizes, also called exposure or "opportunity structure." Suppose that marriage occurs at random so that there is no assortative mating by race or ethnicity. Under this unrealistic ideal situation, the smaller a group, the smaller the probability of marrying a member of the group. Conversely, the larger the size of a group, the higher the probability of marrying someone from that group. Thus, there is a natural tendency for a person in a small group to marry someone outside the group due to the scarcity of supply. Similarly, there is a natural tendency for a person in a large group to marry someone else within the group. As a result, intermarriage rates for non-Asians are not shown in Table 10, since they are not comparable.

One of the most interesting observations from Table 10 is that Asian American women outmarry at higher rates than Asian American men. Among all Asian Americans, the outmarriage rate for women is about twice the rate for men (23 percent versus 12 percent). For Filipinos, the difference is almost threefold (33 percent versus 13 percent). Among Koreans, the contrast is even greater (27 percent versus 4 percent). Of course, part of the gender difference is attributable to the fact that some military men met and married their wives during their service in Asia. However, the gender difference is so large and so consistent across all ethnic groups that it goes beyond this factor alone. Even when the analysis is restricted to U.S.-born Asian Americans, a gender difference emerges:

Table 10
INTERMARRIAGE RATES AMONG ASIAN AMERICANS BY ETHNIC GROUP AND GENDER, 2000

	Spouse's race/ethnicity		
Race/ethnicity	Non-Asian (%)	Same Asian ethnicity (%)	Other Asian (%)
All Asians			
Men	12	—	—
Women	23	—	—
Chinese			
Men	6	90	5
Women	13	83	4
Japanese			
Men	20	69	11
Women	41	51	8
Filipino			
Men	13	83	4
Women	33	63	4
Korean			
Men	4	93	3
Women	27	69	4
Asian Indian			
Men	8	90	3
Women	5	92	3
Vietnamese			
Men	3	92	4
Women	10	86	4
Other Asian			
Men	9	—	—
Women	18	—	—
Multiethnic Asian			
Men	13	—	—
Women	26	—	—
Multiracial Asian			
Men	44	—	—
Women	54	—	—

— Data not applicable or not available.

Note: "Other Asian" for spouse's race/ethnicity includes multiethnic and multiracial Asians.

Source: Authors' calculations using Census 2000 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).

Whereas 38 percent of married U.S.-born Asian American men are married to non-Asians, 49 percent of married U.S.-born Asian American women are married to non-Asians. While it is difficult to pin down precisely the social processes that underlie this gender difference, the social barrier for intermarriage is lower for Asian American women than for Asian American men.

Intermarriage is far more common among U.S.-born Asian Americans than among immigrant Asian Americans. Part of the reason, of course, is that a large portion of immigrants were already married before they came to

America. This pattern is also reasonable because U.S.-born Asian Americans are more assimilated than new immigrants and have had far more opportunities to get to know non-Asians. The high percentages of intermarriage suggests that second and higher generations of Asian Americans are now well integrated into American society, as a significant proportion of them meet the ultimate criterion of assimilation— "amalgamation," or racial mixing.[29] However, because high rates of intermarriage among U.S.-born Asian Americans are accompanied by high rates of continuing immigration of Asians, it seems unlikely that Asian Americans as a group will be completely assimilated into the mainstream in the near future.

The ethnic differences in intermarriage rates among Asian Americans also reflect their varying degrees of assimilation. Japanese Americans, the most assimilated group, have high outmarriage rates of 20 percent for men and 41 percent for women. Multiracial Asian Americans, who are structurally assimilated because of their mixed parentage, have even higher rates of marrying non-Asians, at 44 percent for men and 54 percent for women. In contrast, Vietnamese Americans have low rates of outmarriage, at 3 percent for men and 10 percent for women. Although Asian Indian Americans have high socioeconomic status, they immigrated to the United States only recently and have maintained their cultural distinction. They also have low rates of outmarriage (8 percent for men and 5 percent for women). Asian Indians are the only major Asian group in which women do not outmarry more often than men.

When an Asian American is married to another Asian American, the husband and the wife are not necessarily of the same ethnicity. If Asians do not marry within their own ethnic group, they are much more likely than members of the general population to marry other Asians than to marry non-Asians. For example, this is clear in the marriage patterns of Japanese men. Of those who do not marry Japanese women, 11 percent marry other Asians (such as Chinese and Koreans), while 20 percent marry non-Asians. This ratio of other Asian (11) to non-Asian (20), 0.56, is far above the ratio of 0.04 for the total population.

Continuity and Change

Asian Americans exhibit continuity and change in terms of their family behaviors. They still maintain certain practices that have had a long tradition in their countries of origin, such as high rates of (ever) marriage, low rates of divorce (especially when children are present), a relatively large gender gap in age of marriage, and multigenerational living arrangements. Furthermore, they tend to marry within their own ethnic groups. When they fail to do so, Asian Americans still prefer to marry members of other Asian ethnic groups rather than non-Asians.

They exhibit change in their assimilation into American society. With respect to divorce, for example, Asian Americans have a nontrivial divorce rate, albeit low relative to the rates of whites and blacks. In childbearing, Asian Americans have low fertility, although recent Asian immigrants have an age distribution with a larger proportion in young, childbearing ages and thus have relatively high birth rates. In residence, most Asians do not live in multigenerational families. The clearest manifestation of assimilation is seen in the variation among Asian Americans by ethnicity and nativity. The Japanese, the most assimilated group, exhibit marriage and family behaviors that closely resemble those of whites. In addition, U.S.-born Asian Americans have much higher intermarriage rates than foreign-born Asian Americans. It seems that more-assimilated Asians are less familial and less traditional in their family behaviors than are less-assimilated Asians.

Asian Americans exhibit a high degree of family orientation. One consequence is that Asian American children overwhelmingly live in two-parent families, sometimes with grandparents, and have fewer siblings. Such family living arrangements undoubtedly benefit Asian children's academic achievement. Asian parents also hold high educational expectations for their children and are willing to invest family resources in them. For these reasons, the family is the driving force behind the social mobility of Asian American youth.

Residence

America is a race-conscious society. Race relations take on particular prominence when individuals interact with each other across racial boundaries in the workplace and in schools, neighborhoods, parks, gyms, and at religious gatherings. Despite the rapid development of computer technology and telecommunication, the vast majority of such social settings are spatially situated and constrained. People who live closer to each other are more likely to interact with each other in such social settings than people who live farther apart. In other words, if Asian Americans live close to other Asian Americans, they tend to interact with other Asian Americans in social settings. Conversely, if Asian Americans are surrounded by members of another race (say whites), they are compelled by this configuration to have more interracial interactions.

Put into more concrete terms, residential patterns are an important dimension of race relations, influencing how likely one is to be exposed to people of different races and thus potentially to interact with those of different races. The fact that Asians tend to marry within their own ethnicity and/or among Asians may in part reflect the fact that Asians may be exposed more to other Asians (and particularly those of the same ethnic-

ity) than to non-Asians in residence, schools, interest groups, and/or even work settings.

This section examines the residential patterns of Asian Americans—the geographic distribution of Asians across states and metropolitan areas, and what are the residential segregation patterns between Asians and non-Asians within metropolitan areas. The analyses are based on data from the 2000 Census.

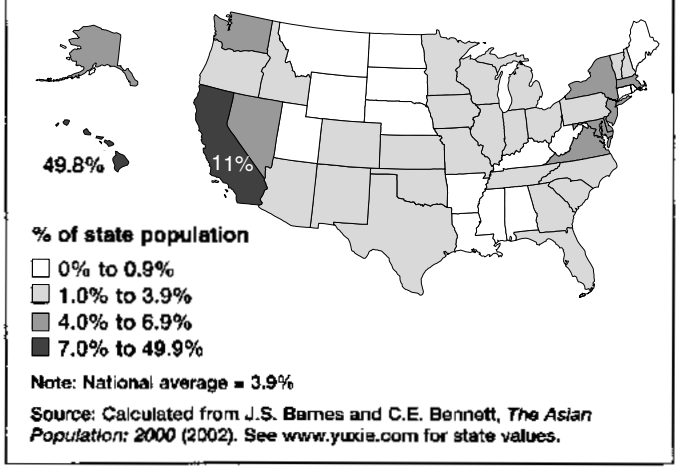
Geographic Distribution

First it is important to distinguish between absolute distribution and relative distribution. Absolute distribution refers to the uneven allocation of Asian Americans to different geographic units (such as states and metropolitan areas); relative distribution refers to the differentials between the spatial allocation of Asians versus that of non-Asians. Spatial distribution is measured in relative terms because certain geographic units are larger or denser and thus draw more people, both Asian and non-Asian. The absolute distribution of Asian Americans indicates where they tend to live, whereas the relative distribution shows where Asian Americans are overrepresented relative to other racial groups in the U.S. population.

Again, analysis of the geographic distribution of Asian Americans using 2000 Census data is complicated by the fact that almost 14 percent of all Asians are multiracial. Whether or not to include them changes results significantly. The U.S. Census Bureau reports the percentage of Asian Americans by state, county, and place.[30] However, the figures given by the bureau are not ideal because they do not include multiracial Asians. To have a single-number estimate of the 2000 Asian population that is also comparable to historical figures, one simply imputes one-half of multiracial Asians to be Asian and the other half to be non-Asian. This raises the percentage of Asian Americans from 3.6 percent to 3.9 percent for the whole United States. Thus, a percentage greater than 3.9 indicates overrepresentation of Asian Americans in an area. Conversely, a percentage smaller than 3.9 indicates underrepresentation. By this criterion, Asian Americans are overrepresented in only 10 states (see Figure 2): Hawaii (50 percent); California (12 percent); Washington, New Jersey, and New York (all 6 percent); Nevada and Alaska (both 5 percent); and Maryland, Virginia, and Massachusetts (all 4 percent).

To see how concentrated Asian Americans are geographically, one may also look at their absolute distribution. Forty-one percent of all Asian Americans live in just two states—California and Hawaii. California alone accounts for 3.9 million, or 36 percent of all Asian Americans in the United States. This is a very high degree of Asian concentration. Only 12 percent of the U.S. population lives in California, and 13 percent lives in California and Hawaii combined. If New Jersey,

Figure 2
ASIAN SHARE OF STATE POPULATIONS, 2000



Note: National average = 3.9%

Source: Calculated from J.S. Barnes and C.E. Bennett, *The Asian Population: 2000* (2002). See www.yuxie.com for state values.

Washington, and New York are added to the list of states with the highest percentages of Asian Americans, they account for 59 percent of Asian Americans but only 24 percent of the total population. There are several reasons for Asian Americans' unique geographic distribution. One is historical, as Asian immigrants first came to California and Hawaii as laborers. Another is distance, as Hawaii and the West Coast are closer to Asia than is the rest of the country. However, there is also a cultural element to this distribution: Once Asians settled and established their own communities, they began to attract other, especially newly arriving, Asian immigrants. Now, well-entrenched old Chinatowns can be found in almost all the largest cities in the United States, and vibrant new Asian (Chinese, Korean, and sometimes Vietnamese) communities are found in middle-class suburbs in metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York.

Besides their affinity with Hawaii and the West Coast for historical and geographic reasons, Asian Americans now also tend to be concentrated in major metropolitan centers. This is in sharp contrast to the early waves of Asian immigrants, especially Japanese immigrants, a large portion of whom worked on farms. In fact, Asian Americans' presence in farming can still be seen in 1960 occupational data, which showed that their likelihood to be in occupations of "farmers and farm laborers" was twice as high as the average. Asian Americans' concentration in farming declined gradually. By 1980, they were no longer overrepresented in farming occupations. Asian immigrants of the latest waves do not work on farms.

Asian Americans are now concentrated in two types of occupations: high-status professional and technical occupations, and low-skilled service and manual jobs. Given their positions in the occupational structure, it is not surprising that Asian Americans tend to live in

major metropolitan areas, which offer such job opportunities. Census tabulations show that Asian Americans with a single ethnicity made up 4.5 percent of all urban residents, compared with a mere 0.5 percent of all rural residents. Between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas, there is a similar gap; the share of Asian Americans was 4.3 percent among all residents in metropolitan areas and 0.8 percent among all residents in nonmetropolitan areas. Not surprisingly, the lowest presence of Asian Americans is found among rural residents in nonmetropolitan areas, at 0.3 percent.

Asian Americans' distributions, both absolute and relative, in the top 10 cities with the largest Asian American population are shown in Table 11. Since the definition of a city varies from place to place, it is not clear how to compare the absolute numbers across cities. However, the numbers reported in Table 11 give a sense of how concentrated Asian Americans are in major cities. New York, the largest city in the United States, also has the largest Asian population at 829,912. The percentage of Asian Americans in New York is 10.4 percent, a level more than twice the national average. Surprisingly, the percentage of Asian Americans in Los Angeles is similar to the share in New York, at 10.5 percent, and in absolute numbers, a large number of Asian Americans live in Los Angeles (388,349). Asian Americans are not well-represented in all large cities. Absent from Table 11, for example, are Dallas, San Antonio, Phoenix, and Detroit. The percentages of Asian Americans in these large cities all fall below the 3.9 percent national average.

Combining the 10 cities, the percentage of Asian Americans is on average 12.2 percent, three times the national level. Describing Asian Americans' concentration in another way, 23 percent of all Asian Americans live in these 10 cities, whereas only 7 percent of all the U.S. population lives in these same cities. Thus, the concentration of Asian Americans is on average three times as high in these cities as the national average.

Table 11

TEN U.S. CITIES WITH THE LARGEST ASIAN POPULATIONS, 2000

City	Population	Asians	% Asian
Total U.S. population	281,421,906	11,070,913	3.9
Total in 10 cities	20,586,285	2,521,098	12.2
% of U.S. total	7.3	22.8	—
New York, NY	8,008,278	829,912	10.4
Los Angeles, CA	3,694,820	388,349	10.5
San Jose, CA	894,943	248,973	27.8
San Francisco, CA	776,733	246,521	31.7
Honolulu, HI	371,657	229,637	61.8
San Diego, CA	1,223,400	178,191	14.6
Chicago, IL	2,896,016	133,246	4.6
Houston, TX	1,953,631	108,917	5.6
Seattle, WA	563,374	79,280	14.1
Fremont, CA	203,413	78,072	38.4

— Not applicable.

Source: Calculated from J.S. Barnes and C.E. Bennett, *The Asian Population: 2000* (2002).

Residential Segregation

Because residential proximity greatly influences the chances of interracial interaction, the analysis now turns to the residential patterns of Asian Americans within cities. Blacks' residential segregation from whites has long been thought to be both an indicator and a cause of racial discrimination in American society, and a major reason for their socioeconomic disadvantage. Earlier Chinese and Japanese immigrants to the United States also suffered severe racial discrimination and were restricted to living in ethnic ghettos.

For two reasons, contemporary Asian Americans are much less segregated from whites than either Asian Americans were in the past or blacks are today. First, Asian Americans have achieved relatively high socioeconomic status that on balance either equals or surpasses that of whites, especially in education. Second, the Asian American population is small in size, and individual Asian ethnic groups are particularly small. Given their small numbers in most places, when Asian Americans move into a white community, they do not pose the threat of soon dominating the community in the way that blacks are sometimes perceived to do. As a result, even though some whites may still prefer to live in neighborhoods without Asian Americans, they are now unlikely to act strongly on their racial preferences for neighbors. Attitude surveys indeed show that whites are not as hostile to the prospect of having Asian neighbors as they are to the prospect of having black neighbors.[31]

Except in a few isolated places, the barriers discouraging Asian Americans from living in white neighborhoods are relatively low, compared with those separating blacks and whites. However, even in the absence of such racial barriers, not all Asian Americans wish to live in integrated neighborhoods. Most Asian Americans are recent immigrants and maintain a strong identification with their home culture, speaking their native languages at home and relying heavily on ethnic communities for a successful transition to American life. Ethnic communities offer many practical resources to immigrants, including ethnic-specific goods and services, cultural events, information in native languages, and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Indeed, there are two related theoretical debates in sociology regarding the advantages to immigrants of living in ethnic communities.[32] The first debate is concerned with the potential economic benefits of working in an ethnic niche—an ethnic enclave economy. Some scholars argue that an enclave economy provides a protective work environment to new immigrant workers where they

can derive economic benefits that would not be available in the mainstream economy. These benefits could include pay that reflects their skills, education, and experience; social mobility to supervisory positions; and opportunities to be entrepreneurs. However, other scholars contend that an enclave economy primarily benefits business owners of enclave firms rather than their co-ethnic workers, for whom working in the mainstream economy would facilitate assimilation and thus upward mobility.

The second debate is around segmented assimilation theory, which is concerned with the long-term (particularly educational) benefits for immigrant children of maintaining a strong ethnic identity and social networks among co-ethnics and thus not being fully assimilated into the American mainstream. The basis for this argument is that America is now extremely diverse and segmented, with an underclass residing in central cities where a large portion of new immigrant families first settle upon arrival. Thus, it is argued that there exist divergent assimilation paths for new immigrants. One path is full and direct assimilation into mainstream American society; another possible path of full assimilation, to which new residents of central cities are especially vulnerable, is downward assimilation into the urban underclass. To avoid this, according to the theory, it is better for immigrants to maintain their own culture while acquiring skills for the labor market. This middle path of assimilation is called "selective acculturation."

So far, empirical evidence pertaining to the enclave economy debate and the segmented assimilation debate leaves them unresolved. However, even without the hypothesized benefits, many Asians may still wish to live close together to share a common culture or for the convenience of seeing relatives and friends. Thus, one would expect to see clustering patterns of residence among Asian Americans.

A commonly used segregation index (the index of dissimilarity) is reported in Table 12 for the 10 cities with the largest Asian population. The index measures residential segregation between two population groups, in this case, Asians and whites.[33] Measurement of segregation is at the level of census tracts. The index between Asians and whites varies from a low of 29 percent in Fremont, Calif., to a high of 50 percent in San Diego. A dissimilarity index of 29 percent means that either 29 percent of Asian Americans or 29 percent of whites in the city would need to move to different census tracts for the two groups to reach equal distributions across all census tracts. The second column presents the dissimilarity index between Asian Americans and blacks, and the last column gives the dissimilarity index between whites and blacks for comparison. The segregation between Asian Americans and whites and the segregation between Asian Americans and blacks are still substantial. In Los Angeles, for example, the dissimilarity index is 47 percent between Asian Americans and whites and 69 percent between Asian Americans and blacks, although the index between whites and blacks is even higher, at 73 percent. These numbers mean that residential segregation is very high between whites and blacks and between Asian Americans and blacks in Los Angeles. By comparison, residential segregation is moderately high between whites and Asians.

Table 12

RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION INDICES IN THE 10 U.S. CITIES WITH THE LARGEST ASIAN POPULATIONS, 2000

City	Asian and white	Asian and black	White and black
New York, NY	42	63	63
Los Angeles, CA	47	69	73
San Jose, CA	48	31	41
San Francisco, CA	41	58	59
Honolulu, HI	36	58	47
San Diego, CA	50	50	62
Chicago, IL	48	87	86
Houston, TX	45	68	72
Seattle, WA	48	34	60
Fremont, CA	29	26	24

Note: The segregation index measures the percentage of a racial group that would have to move to a different census tract to reach equal distribution across all census tracts.

Source: www.psc.isr.umich.edu/residentialsegregation, accessed June 21, 2004.

With the exception of Fremont and San Jose, the level of residential segregation between Asian Americans and whites is much lower than that between whites and blacks. Fremont is unusual also for having very low segregation levels between any two of the three groups (29 percent or lower). For six of the 10 cities—New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Honolulu, Chicago, and Houston—the segregation between Asians and whites is much lower than that between Asians and blacks. However, for the remaining cities, the segregation between Asians and blacks is either comparable to that between Asians and whites (San Diego and Fremont) or even smaller (San Jose and Seattle).

The results in Table 12 are crude in the sense that they do not present segregation indices separately by Asian ethnicity. This tends to understate levels of segregation for Asian Americans, if there is a tendency, as is the case, for residential clustering within an ethnic group. Japanese and Filipino Americans are less segregated from whites than are other Asian American groups (such as Chinese and Vietnamese).[34] Still, one can draw an overall observation that Asian Americans live in somewhat concentrated communities that are separate from whites and blacks on the whole. However, Asian Americans' residential segregation is less pronounced than residential segregation for blacks. The

difference is also qualitative, in that at least in contemporary America, Asian Americans do not face the same kind of racial discrimination and prejudice that blacks do in the housing market. To the extent that Asian Americans' residential patterns show signs of concentration, they appear to reflect Asians' own preferences to live near other Asian Americans rather than external constraints limiting their residential choices.

However, culturally based preferences to live with co-ethnics indicate a lack of assimilation into the American mainstream and thus should weaken over time as immigrants become more assimilated. In the literature on immigrants, residence in desirable neighborhoods (such as those in suburbs with a high average family income and a high percentage of non-Hispanic whites) has long been viewed as spatial assimilation or residential assimilation.[35] Given the well-known relationship between assimilation and generation, second- and third-generation Asian Americans (such as most Japanese Americans) are likely to be less segregated residentially from whites than first-generation Asian Americans. One consequence of less segregation is a structural increase in Asian Americans' opportunities for interacting with non-Asians in daily life, thus promoting intermarriage with non-Asians. This partly explains why the Japanese, who are the most assimilated group of Asian Americans, also have the highest rates of outmarriage. In fact, all U.S.-born Asian Americans have high rates of outmarriage.

Geographic Concentration

For a variety of reasons, Asian Americans tend to live near other Asian Americans. This statement is true at two geographic levels. At the national level, Asian Americans tend to be concentrated in a few states (such as California and Hawaii) and a few metropolitan areas (such as New York and Los Angeles). At the city level, Asians tend to be concentrated in certain neighborhoods or communities, not fully assimilated into white or black neighborhoods. However, in most cities Asian Americans are more residentially integrated with whites than with blacks, and Asian Americans and whites are more integrated than are blacks and whites.

While these empirical findings are clear, theoretical interpretations of them are less so. Do Asian Americans live near other Asian Americans due to their desire to maintain their culture or out of the need to cope with the potential risks of racial discrimination? That is, are the unique residential patterns of Asian Americans really the result of their own choices or of a structural constraint imposed on them? These theoretically interesting questions cannot be answered with census data. But at least when compared with such barriers for blacks, Asians' barriers to living in white neighborhoods are relatively low. Thus, the level of segregation between Asians and whites is relatively low. If blacks suffer dire socioeconomic consequences because of residential segregation from whites, Asians do not face similar disadvantages.

Conclusion

Although Asian Americans were first recorded in the U.S. census as early as 1860, their social significance in American society was not widely recognized until the post-1965 waves of immigrants fundamentally changed the demographic composition of the U.S. population. Because post-1965 immigrants are primarily from Asia and Latin America, traditional race relations in America constructed around whites and blacks have been further complicated by the presence of sizable and rapidly growing populations of Asians and Hispanics. Should Asian Americans be treated as a single race in the racial landscape of America? While this question was contemplated well before 1965, it is becoming more and more pressing due to the rapid growth of the Asian American population.

The answer to this question is mixed, depending on one's definition of race.[36] There are four simple bases for deriving a definition of race: psychological, physiological, social, and external. The psychological definition equates race to the self-identification of group membership based on one's ancestral origin. The physiological definition equates race to shared physical appearance. The social definition connects race to a common set of social consequences (such as confronting racial discrimination and residential segregation). The external definition links race to a common perception of a nominal group by people outside the group. Asian Americans are clearly not a race according to the psychological definition, as most of them prefer to be identified as members of their ethnic groups—such as Chinese and Koreans—rather than as Asians. Whether they are a race according to the physiological and social definitions is unclear. There is large variation in physical appearance, especially between South Asians (such as Asian Indians) and East Asians (such as Chinese). Further, social outcomes are similar for some Asian groups (Chinese and Koreans) but quite different for others (Japanese versus Vietnamese). It seems to us that the most plausible definition for Asian Americans is external, as non-Asians may perceive Asian Americans as a homogeneous group and treat them as a race. Indeed, the popular model minority label implicitly treats Asian Americans as a race, with minority meaning a racial minority.

Demographers explore the question of whether Asian Americans exhibit distinct demographic characteristics that differentiate them from whites and other minority groups. Thus, whether Asian Americans should be treated as a race is a question that can be addressed, in

part, with demographic data. Based on the results presented in this report, the answer is a cautionary yes. It is yes because some distinct demographic characteristics among Asian Americans set them apart from whites and other minority groups:

- The residential patterns of Asian Americans are distinct. They live in different parts of the country, concentrated in Hawaii, California, and a few large metropolitan areas. Within cities, they also tend to be concentrated in communities that attract other Asian Americans.
- Asian Americans are familial in orientation. They have a high marriage rate and a low divorce rate, and they maintain traditional practices such as living in multigenerational family households.
- Asian Americans have high levels of educational attainment.
- Asian Americans have dramatically improved their labor force outcomes, such as earnings and occupation, since the 1950s.

However, substantial variations across Asian ethnic groups and by nativity have been seen in almost all the demographic dimensions examined in this report. These differences make the characterization of Asian Americans with a simple label like model minority problematic. For example, the earnings of Filipinos and Vietnamese lag behind those of other Asian Americans. The prevalence of multigenerational living arrangements also varies greatly by ethnicity, with the Japanese being less likely to be in multigenerational families than whites. Further, as the education results indicate, ethnic differences are more pronounced among foreign-born Asian Americans than among U.S.-born Asian Americans.[37] Assimilation may exert a homogenizing force, making Asian Americans of different ethnicities appear similar. However, it is also plausible that similarities among Asian Americans of different ethnicities arise because of the common difficulties they face. For example, Asian American families may make exceptional investments in their children's education as a conscious strategy to compensate for disadvantages they believe they face as a racial minority group, such as racial discrimination and a lack of mainstream social capital.

With further assimilation and continuing success in socioeconomic spheres, Asian Americans may more and more constitute part of the American mainstream rather than a racial minority. The finding that intermarriage rates are high among U.S.-born Asian Americans supports this prediction. However, given the constant flow of new immigrants from Asia, it is a demographic impossibility that all Asian Americans will be fully assimilated at any time in the near future. Indeed, a large portion of Asian Americans are, and for the foreseeable future will be, new immigrants. Because of this, it is highly likely that Asian Americans will exhibit certain distinct demographic characteristics (such as residential segregation from non-Asians). At least part of this is attributable to the fact that many Asians are new immigrants.

With today's data, it is difficult to separate race effects from immigration effects, because most Asian Americans are immigrants. With time, however, there should be a steady increase in the share of U.S.-born second- and higher-generation Asian Americans. One possible scenario in the near future is that racial differences between Asians and whites become blurred, but differences between foreign-born Asian Americans and U.S.-born Asian Americans become more pronounced by comparison. Another possible scenario is that the continuous growth of the Asian American population and its gradual assimilation into the American mainstream will heighten the awareness of their racial distinction among second- and higher-generation Asian Americans. Whether or not Asian Americans are considered a single race in the future, one thing is certain: The ever-changing Asian American population and the diversity of Asian Americans' experiences by ethnicity and nativity present constant challenges to the logic of racial categorizations and to the understanding of race relations in the United States.

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