Introduction

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Immigration issues have in recent years risen once again to a prominent place on the public policy agenda of the United States (Teitelbaum and Weiner 1995). This is reflected not only in the results of public opinion polls that show an increase in the number of people who think current U.S. immigration levels are "too high" (Espenshade and Belanger 1997; Espenshade and Calhoun 1993) but also in the creation of a special commission to recommend changes in U.S. immigration policy (U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform 1994) and in the passage of legislation tightening restrictions on unauthorized migration (Bean et al. 1997). Such concerns on the parts of the public and policymakers are in part the product of recent trends in the magnitude and racial and ethnic mix of persons coming into the country compared to those at earlier times. They are also the result of economic trends over the past twenty-five years that seem to suggest relatively diminished economic prospects for American workers, especially workers with less than college educations (Bean, Cushing, and Haynes 1997). Given each of these trends, and given that educational levels in the African American population continue to lag behind those in the white population (Farley 1996), questions about the economic implications of immigration for blacks take on special resonance. This volume seeks to address such questions.

One of the reasons for popular, public policy, and social-scientific concern about the consequences of immigration derives from the volume of the flows, which has been rising since World War II. But even at their recent sizable levels, immigration totals still are not as substantial as they were during the first two decades of the century (see, for example, Bean, Vernez, and Keely 1989; Cafferty et al. 1983; Reimers 1985). During the 1930s and 1940s, immigration numbers dropped tenfold from these record-setting, early twentieth-century levels because of the passage of the National Origins Quota Act in 1924, the Great Depression during the 1930s, and an unfavorable immigration climate during World War II. Specifically, the number of entrants decreased from over seven hundred thousand per year during the first twenty years of the

century to less than seventy thousand per year from 1925 through 1945 (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1996). After this lull, legal immigration again moved steadily upward, and by the late 1980s and early 1990s reached levels approaching the all-time highs set in the early part of the twentieth century. (If the legalizations resulting from the Immigration Reform and Control Act [IRCA] are included, the recent levels exceed all previous highs [U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1996].)

The national origins of U.S. immigrants have also changed sharply. Prior to 1960, the vast majority came from European countries or Canada (often over 90 percent when examined on a decade basis). Even as late as the 1950s, over two-thirds (67.7 percent) of all arrivals were from these countries. Things changed rapidly during the 1960s, when family reunification criteria rather than national origin quotas became the basis for granting entry visas. By the 1980s, only 12.5 percent of legal immigrants came from Europe or Canada, whereas 84.4 percent came from Asian or Latin American countries (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1996).

These relatively recent changes in the national origin of immigrants have begun to convert the United States from a largely biracial society consisting of a sizable white majority and a small black minority (together with a very small American Indian minority of less than 1 percent) into a multiracial, multiethnic society consisting of several racial/ethnic groups (Passel and Edmonston 1994). This trend became discernible in the 1950s, but began to accelerate in the 1960s. By 1996, over a quarter of the U.S. population designated itself as either black, Hispanic, Asian, or American Indian (table I.1). And the growth of other groups has meant that the proportion of African Americans in the minority population has been declining. By 1990 blacks, no longer a majority of the minority population, made up only 48 percent of minorities (compared with 44 percent in 1996).

Because some observers think current concerns about immigration may be rooted in fears about the country's changing racial/ethnic composition and the role that immigration plays in contributing to that process, it is useful to examine more precisely the contribution of immigration per se to population growth and changing population composition. Table I.2 shows the contribution of immigration since 1900 to population growth (as opposed to growth resulting from an excess of births over deaths among pre-1900 natives) for the major racial/ethnic groups in 1990 (Passel and Edmonston 1994). Although post-1900 immigration has accounted for about 30 percent of the growth of the total U.S. population since 1900, its contribution to the growth of the

Table I.1 U.S. Population by Race/Ethnicity: 1990 to 1996 (in Thousands)

Year	Total	Non-Hispanic White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian
Population						
1900	76,195	66,225	8,834	656	243	237
1910	93,879	82,049	10,255	999	299	277
1920	110,747	96,969	11,512	1,632	389	244
1930	127,585	111,543	12,736	2,435	527	343
1940	136,928	119,425	13,767	2,814	577	345
1950	155,156	134,351	15,668	4,039	739	357
1960	182,055	154,969	19,071	6,346	1,146	524
1970	205,567	170,371	23,005	9,616	1,782	793
1980	226,625	180,392	26,482	14,604	3,726	1,420
1990	248,712	187,139	29,986	22,354	7,274	1,959
1996	264,313	191,270	33,073	28,438	9,468	2,064
Percent						
1990	100.0	86.9	11.6	0.9	0.3	0.3
1910	100.0	87.4	10.9	1.1	0.3	0.3
1920	100.0	87.6	10.4	1.5	0.4	0.2
1930	100.0	87.4	10.0	1.9	0.4	0.3
1940	100.0	87.2	10.1	2.1	0.4	0.3
1950	100.0	86.6	10.1	2.6	0.5	0.2
1960	100.0	85.1	10.5	3.5	0.6	0.3
1970	100.0	82.9	11.2	4.7	0.9	0.4
1980	100.0	79.6	11.7	6.4	1.6	0.6
1990	100.0	75.2	12.1	9.0	2.9	0.8
1996	100.0	72.4	12.5	10.8	3.6	0.8

Sources: Adapted from table 2.3 in Passel and Edmonston (1994) and 1996 Current Population Survey.
Note: Populations include fifty states and District of Columbia.

various major racial/ethnic subgroups varies enormously, accounting for nearly all of the growth among Hispanics and Asians (85.7 percent and 97.3 percent, respectively), but virtually none of the growth among blacks.

Given that immigration has recently affected U.S. racial/ethnic composition, questions are often raised about what the racial/ethnic composition of the U.S. population will look like in the future if current immigration and other demographic trends continue. One answer is provided by population projections undertaken by the Bureau of the Census of current demographic trends. Although the bureau projects the Hispanic and non-Hispanic populations separately (Hispanics may be of any race, although almost all are white), it is useful to subtract the

Table I.2 Contribution of Post-1900 Immigration and 1990 Population for the Population of the United States in 1990 by Race/Ethnicity (in Thousands)

Contribution from Component	Total	Non-Hispanic White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Estimated population	248,712	187,139	29,986	22,354	7,274
1990 population	174,145	141,369	27,493	3,108	216
1st generation	8,534	8,184	29	301	20
2nd generation	35,574	34,118	392	956	108
3rd generation	38,547	36,735	941	869	2
4th + generations	90,055	60,868	26,151	991	85
Immigration since 1900	74,567	45,769	2,493	19,246	7,058
1900–1910 immigrants	17,286	16,398	125	606	157
1910–1920 immigrants	14,487	12,624	196	1,257	409
1920–1930 immigrants	9,305	6,661	167	2,182	295
1930–1940 immigrants	1,439	1,021	22	312	83
1940–1950 immigrants	3,590	2,389	68	1,055	77
1950–1960 immigrants	5,272	2,870	158	1,885	359
1960–1970 immigrants	5,214	1,930	266	2,433	584
1970–1980 immigrants	9,518	2,658	834	4,013	2,014
1980–1990 immigrants	10,756	1,341	774	5,525	3,116

Source: Adapted from Passel and Edmonston (1994, table 2.4).

Hispanic numbers from the numbers for non-Hispanic whites so that the totals for these two groups are mutually exclusive. Expressed as a percentage of the total population, the four largest racial/ethnic minority groups are projected to increase from 27.7 percent of the total population in 1996 to 37.5 percent in 2020 (Campbell 1994). Thus, given current trends (including immigration), the size of the U.S. minority population as measured by the Census Bureau would grow considerably in less than twenty-five years.

Such results sometimes cause alarm and fuel anti-immigration sentiment. The projections on which they are based, however, should be viewed with skepticism. Apart from their assumptions about demographic processes, projections about the future racial/ethnic composition of the U.S. population depend on two critical additional assumptions: first, that racial/ethnic categories are immutable; and second, that interracial and interethnic marriage patterns are unchanging and have little effect on racial/ethnic identification and thus on projections of future population composition. Neither of these assumptions seems totally warranted. In particular, rates of intermarriage have increased substantially in recent years, and depending on the self-identification of

the offspring of such marriages, projections of racial/ethnic composition can vary substantially (Edmonston, Lee, and Passel 1994). The future racial/ethnic composition of the U.S. population thus is probably much less ascertainable than is often thought because of the blurring of racial/ethnic boundaries, including those between blacks and other groups. Nonetheless, it is likely that in the foreseeable future immigrants to the United States will continue to be made up of large numbers of Asians and Hispanics, thus keeping African Americans a minority within the subpopulation of racial/ethnic minorities. Such a secondary minority position may deflect attention away from the continuing disadvantaged status of segments of the African American population, a possibility that reaffirms the importance of studying the economic implications of immigration for blacks.

At a general level, the question of the economic consequences of immigration has recently been addressed by a study conducted by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences (Smith and Edmonston 1997). The major conclusions are that immigration: (1) benefits the U.S. economy overall and exerts only a small adverse impact on the wage and employment opportunities of competing native groups (pp. 5–34); (2) that it benefits high-skilled workers and the owners of capital but not low-skilled workers; and (3) that it imposes overall a small fiscal burden (measured as the difference between the cost of services received and the amount of taxes paid) on taxpayers, a burden that is larger the greater the number of low-skilled (generally low-education) immigrants. The report had little to say on the question of the economic implications of immigration for blacks, noting that "none of the available evidence suggests that [blacks] have been particularly hard-hit on a national level" (p. S-5).

The importance of this question and its relative lack of study are the main reasons for this book. In order to investigate further the economic implications of immigration for African Americans and other minorities, we assembled a group of economists and charged them with the task of producing innovative research projects on various aspects of the relationship between immigration to the United States and the economic circumstances of African Americans. A few of the authors had already produced substantial research on a variety of topics in the area of immigration. Indeed, the group comprises many of the leading experts who study the economics of immigration. For most of the authors, however, immigration had not been the major focus of their research. Instead, they had concentrated on some particular labor-market outcome more generally and were convinced that the interrelations between it and immigration to the economic situations of African Ameri-

cans were important and potentially fruitful research topics. After this group completed its work, we also asked another group of scholars and policy analysts to consider broadly the results of the research studies and place them not only in the context of recent economic and social trends in the United States, but also in the context of the country's changing policies toward immigration and racial/ethnic relations.

The first set of papers (the research studies) are divided into two main groups that make up the first two parts of this volume. The first group deals either directly or by implication with the impact of immigration on the labor-market outcomes experienced by African Americans and other minorities. The overarching theme of this group of studies is the extent to which immigrants substitute for native minority workers in employment. This means that the studies consider how immigration affects employment, various dimensions of work time, wage rates and earnings, and how these effects differ among various minority workers distinguished by educational attainment or geographic location. The studies also examine how our inferences about these impacts are affected by the nature of the ownership of capital and other inputs into production that cooperate with minority, immigrant, and other labor in the United States.

A huge literature on labor demand demonstrates that the degree of substitution between workers of different types is altered by the amount of capital that employers use. Thus, in his simulation of the labor market in the United States, George E. Johnson recognizes that one must account for the degree to which employers can substitute capital for workers of different skills and ethnicities. He therefore constructs a simulation model that uses the best available estimates of the parameters describing substitution among these groups of labor and capital, of the sizes of the populations of workers and their earnings, and of the capital stock and the returns to it. The strongest conclusion from this careful simulation is that immigration of the type that predominated in the United States from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s *does* reduce the earnings of unskilled workers, particularly African Americans. The effects are not, however, very large, partly because immigration has not been that large relative to the size of the low-skilled and minority populations. Nonetheless, the theoretical derivations show that accounting for substitution between capital and labor would not alter the conclusion from the empirical studies presented later in the volume that recent immigration has to some extent imposed a burden on low-skilled African Americans.

In a second theoretical study George J. Borjas asks how the results are affected when we recognize that capital is not just some disembodied input, but is instead a factor of production that is owned by *people*,

and in the United States owned disproportionately by native whites. Because he focuses on this aspect of the market for inputs and the distribution of returns to providing labor and owning capital, he examines in a different way than Johnson the nature of substitution between capital and workers of different types. Recognizing that a disproportionate ownership of capital exists, however, is crucial to understanding the implications of immigration for African Americans because they control relatively much more labor than capital. Thus, if low-skilled immigration benefits owners of capital, as the National Research Council study recently argued (Smith and Edmonston 1997), it will benefit native whites disproportionately. Recognizing the ethnic identity of the ownership of capital in a formal simulation model leads to the interesting conclusion that most of the cost to African Americans of low-skilled immigration comes because blacks do not reap much of the higher returns to capital that it generates. Borjas estimates that recent immigration has reduced the average personal income of African Americans by about 0.5 percent, specifically, around one hundred dollars per person. The main point is that, even if one finds very small direct labor-market impacts on minorities, those effects are exacerbated by the disproportionate benefits that unskilled immigration has conferred upon native whites through their ownership of capital.

In his study of labor-market disamenities, Daniel S. Hamermesh examines whether the preconditions for substitution between immigrants and natives exist. In particular, he considers whether it is possible, as many scholars believe, that immigrants wind up in jobs that natives would not accept and that would not otherwise be filled because their nonwage conditions are so repugnant to natives. He studies this by measuring immigrant-native, white-minority differences in a variety of nonwage outcomes, all else equal, including the timing of work—when during the day the worker is on the job—injury rates and durations, and expressed satisfaction with various aspects of the job. Using data from the Current Population Surveys for May and June 1991, he finds that there is little difference between native whites and immigrants in the timing of their work during the day. Otherwise identical immigrants are also in jobs where injuries are less frequent and of shorter duration than in jobs held by native whites. The real difference in these nonwage outcomes is between minorities, especially African Americans, and immigrants and native whites. The results suggest that the preconditions for substitution between immigrants and natives do exist, but also that there is a major dimension—nonwage job characteristics—along which outcomes are worse for African Americans than for otherwise observationally identical native and immigrant workers.

Cordelia W. Reimers uses the 1980 and 1990 Censuses of Popula-

tion to examine the wages of low-skilled native workers, after adjusting them for the observable characteristics such as education and age that we know cause wages to differ among workers. She looks at the impacts of differential changes over this decade in the geographic dispersion of low-skilled immigrants on how well low-skilled native workers, particularly high school dropouts, fared in the labor market. The novel foci of the study are a concentration on high school dropouts and an examination of workers arrayed by their position in the distribution of earnings. This allows Reimers to examine how immigration has affected minority workers distinguished explicitly by their labor-market productivity. She finds some evidence that, where recent immigration has been greater, the wage rates of African Americans rose less during the 1980s. This impact was, however, greater among the higher-paid high school dropouts than among the lower-paid. In other words, the findings imply that the immigrants of the 1980s generally substituted most heavily for minority workers slightly above the bottom of the distribution of skills. The labor-market prospects of the most marginal minority employees—those who had dropped out of high school and fared worst in the labor market among all high school dropouts—were less severely affected by immigration.

Kristin F. Butcher uses a similar methodology to answer a different, and in some ways more general, question: How did the migration of the 1980s affect labor-market outcomes of minorities more generally, not only lower-skilled minorities? She uses the same data on the relative size of changes in immigration across metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) during the 1980s, but examines how these differential changes affected the changing gap between native whites and African Americans in such outcomes as employment, annual weeks worked, wage rates, and annual earnings. Her estimates demonstrate that there is little evidence that differential changes in immigration affected the white-minority gaps in most of these outcomes generally. The gap in annual earnings was increased, however; and in each of the outcomes the effect on the gap was greater among less-educated minority workers than among others. To some extent these results corroborate Reimers's, in that they indicate the labor-market burden generated by recent immigrants has been felt particularly heavily among workers near the bottom of the distribution of skills in the minority population. They also suggest, since the biggest impacts are on annual earnings, that the main effect on low-skilled minorities may have been to reduce their weekly hours of work.

Taken together, the studies in the first part of the volume provide by far the clearest and most comprehensive evidence of the direct labor-market impacts of the immigration of the 1970s and 1980s on the sit-

uations of African Americans. They make it clear that there has been a negative impact, not especially large overall, but clearly identifiable. Moreover, the impact has been especially felt by the lowest-skilled African American workers (as opposed to all blacks, since people with very little attachment to the labor force are not directly affected). Much of the overall impact is the result of African Americans benefiting only slightly from the higher rate of return to the ownership of capital that low-skilled immigration has induced. Perhaps most important, the studies suggest that the impacts are crucially dependent on the skill composition of immigration: Had recent immigration been higher-skilled, the impact on African Americans would very probably have been smaller and perhaps even positive.

Immigration can affect the economic circumstances of African Americans in a variety of ways that are not directly part of the employment relationship. These include pre–labor-market effects, such as those that occur through the accumulation of knowledge in formal education; effects on non–labor-market activities, such as housing choices and criminal activities; and impacts on workers' choices of whether to enter employment or to become self-employed instead. Part two of the volume provides economic analyses of these other activities. Since there has been even less research on these topics than on the labor-market effects of immigration on African Americans, the knowledge gleaned from these studies stands entirely alone in forming the basis from which future research must depart.

One of the most incendiary issues in American cities is the role of small-scale immigrant enterprises in primarily African American residential areas. In their contribution Robert W. Fairlie and Bruce D. Meyer shed light on this controversy by examining the extent to which immigration reduces the likelihood that African Americans enter self-employment. They thus examine a substitution question, but here substitution in self-employment rather than in the wages and employment opportunities that were the focus of the studies in Part I. As in several of those studies they use Census of Population data for 1980 and 1990 and compare both levels of and changes in the importance of immigrants across MSAs to the self-employment propensities of minorities. Their results indicate at most weak evidence that immigration reduces the self-employment opportunities of African Americans: The latter are almost as likely to be self-employed in those metropolitan areas where immigration has been more important, and their self-employment has grown more rapidly than is the case elsewhere. This is true even if one accounts for the differing propensities of various immigrant groups to be self-employed. To put it concretely, the well-publicized Asian grocer

in the inner city does not appear to be deterring in any substantial way the entrepreneurial instincts of the local residents.

One of the most persistent concerns about minority employment is that residential segregation has coupled with the changing spatial distribution of job opportunities to make it increasingly difficult for minorities to gain access to jobs. Many people believe that the suburbanization of jobs, along with the concentration of African Americans in inner cities, has contributed to their rising unemployment. Jeffrey S. Zax asks the next question in this line of argument: How does immigration affect spatial relationships in the labor market for minority workers? Again using the 1980 and 1990 censuses, Zax compares levels and changes in immigration across MSAs to the changing relationship between minority residential segregation and outcomes reflecting the economic well-being of minorities. The evidence makes it absolutely clear that residential segregation and poorer economic outcomes among African Americans go together; but where immigration has been more rapid recently, minority residential segregation is less, and minority outcomes are better. It may simply be that more dynamic areas are the ones to which immigrants are attracted and which generate better outcomes for minorities, natives, and the immigrants themselves. A more optimistic interpretation of Zax's results, however, is that the influx of immigrants generates a fillip to labor demand in the local area that provides minorities the ability to improve their housing situation by relocating nearer to where jobs are located.

An immense amount of research in the study of economic development and of labor markets has demonstrated the central role of education—of the accumulation of human capital through formal schooling—in generating growth and improving workers' well-being. For that reason we included two studies examining the relationships between immigration and minorities' educational opportunities in this book. In the first of these Julian R. Betts asks whether there is "educational substitution" between immigrants and African Americans in the completion of secondary schooling. Immigration can be viewed as raising the cost of education for other lower-income groups, since it increases competition for the public funds that finance high schools. Also, however, an influx of low-skilled workers raises the returns to education by making skill relatively more scarce. The net impact on minorities' incentives to complete school is thus unclear and must be settled by examining the data.

Betts does this, again using 1980 and 1990 census data by MSA, in this case comparing the immigration data to changes in the fraction of young African Americans completing high school. Accounting for dif-

ferences in the characteristics of both the individual workers and the MSAs, Betts finds clear evidence that increased immigration has had a substantial negative effect on young African Americans' likelihood of completing high school. The effect on Mexican Americans is much less clear. The results imply that, if we are to ease the burden of immigration, local public authorities must accommodate it by ensuring that sufficient funding is available for schools so that immigration does not reduce the educational opportunities of the minorities with whom the children of immigrants apparently compete for access.

As Caroline M. Hoxby explains, the analysis of access is more complicated in the case of higher education, where there is much greater heterogeneity in the nature of educational institutions. These may reduce native minority enrollment by relying on foreign students to satisfy pressures for affirmative action programs that put minorities in their classrooms. Underprepared foreign students may also compete with poorly prepared native students for the limited resources available for remedial college-level programs.

Hoxby considers both of these issues using a triennial survey of students and institutions in 1986, 1989, and 1992. Because affirmative action pressures are most visible at the institutions of higher education that have students with the highest standardized test scores, while the need for remedial programs is greatest at schools with students with lower scores, Hoxby examines these two possibilities by stratifying institutions according to a measure of student quality (average SAT score). She finds that a greater presence of immigrant/foreign students substitutes for native minorities at the most selective schools, but not elsewhere, through competition for access to affirmative action programs. Obversely, they substitute for native minorities at mid-level schools in terms of access to remedial programs (which are mostly absent at the top schools). By inference foreign students displace the higher-educational opportunities of native minorities, but the negative impact does not come at the expense of the least-qualified minority high school graduates.

Jeffrey T. Grogger uses an argument similar to Betts's to analyze the impact of immigration on the propensity of young male African Americans to engage in criminal activities. More immigration of low-skilled workers increases competition with natives for access to criminal opportunities; but the low-skilled immigration also may reduce low-skilled natives' labor-market opportunities (as Reimers and Butcher show), thus increasing the relative returns to criminal activities by native minorities. To examine the relative importance of these opposing effects Grogger links information from the National Longitudinal Sur-

vey of Youth on the amount of income a youth (age fifteen to twenty-two) had in 1980 from criminal activities, and on whether the youth was incarcerated at any time between 1979 and 1982, or between 1988 and 1992, to Census of Population data from 1990 on the size of the immigrant population in each MSA. No matter how he tweaks the data Grogger finds no differential impact of immigration on the measures of crime by young African American men.

No doubt there are more problems of mismeasurement in these data reflecting criminal activity than in many of the other outcomes we examine in this volume. Nonetheless, these are the best data available, and the study examines them extremely carefully. By inference the results suggest that any effects of immigration on crime by minorities cancel out. We need not worry that somehow the labor-market displacement that is demonstrated in the studies in Part I is leading minorities into lives of crime.

This initial view of the non–labor-market impacts of immigration on African Americans yields decidedly mixed conclusions. The research finds no (or small) adverse effects of immigration on African Americans' propensities to engage in crime and to start their own businesses. The effects are perhaps positive on the tendency to be housed nearer to jobs. But studies of the crucial pre–labor-market outcome—educational attainment—find substantial displacement of minorities by immigrants. Since education has been so important in enabling African Americans (and others) to escape poverty, these findings are especially worrisome.

Taken all together, the results of the various research projects indicate that recent immigration to the United States appears to have exerted small negative effects on the economic situations of African Americans. Each of the effects uncovered by the individual research projects is small. If viewed in isolation, none of them would be thought to constitute strong evidence about adverse effects from immigration on African Americans. As a group, however, they add up to more compelling documentation that the positive economic effects of immigration emphasized by the National Research Council (Smith and Edmonston 1997) are substantially less likely to extend to African Americans. This is perhaps not surprising given that the NRC study also found that such benefits were concentrated among the highly skilled and among the owners of capital, both of whom involve disproportionately few African Americans.

It must be emphasized, however, that the observed effects are small. In Part III an invited group of commentators (Marta Tienda, Richard B. Freeman, Peter Schuck, and Linda Datcher Loury) remind us that it

is one thing to try to estimate both the economic effects of immigration in general and those effects on African Americans in particular, but an altogether different thing to try to estimate the effects of immigration on the country's overall social welfare, as Freeman in particular notes. Small negative effects of immigration on economic variables may be offset by small (or large) positive effects on other aspects of social welfare. And even if the overall balance of such effects proved negative, thus pointing to an apparent need to find policies to curtail immigration, knowledge of the costs of implementing restrictive policy options is severely limited, thus making it difficult to know the degree to which the costs of implementing immigration controls might exceed the social welfare costs of the immigration itself. The process of selecting among policy options is thus inherently complex. Such complexities and uncertainties, however, should not obscure the fact that the results of the research reported here clearly suggest that African Americans do not appear to have benefited economically from immigration to the same degree as native whites.

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