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A Nation of Diversity

Demographics of the United States of America and Their Implications for Families

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We are all migrants, moving between our ancestors' traditions, the worlds we inhabit, and the world we will leave to those who come after us. For most of us, finding out who we are means putting together a unique internal combination of cultural identities.

—McGoldrick & Giordano, 1996, p. 6

Today's United States is covered in Chinatowns and Little Italys, Miami houses both Little Haiti and Little Havana, and Los Angeles boasts Koreatown, Little Tokyo, and Little Armenia. Teenagers in the suburbs are as likely to party to rock and hip-hop as they are to dance to East Indian Bhangra music, and restaurant choices in small towns all over the country range from Mexican to Ethiopian. Religious diversity is also a characteristic of the U.S. population. According to the American Religious Identification

Survey (ARIS), in which researchers conducted telephone surveys with randomly selected households in the continental United States in 1990 and then again in 2001, the percentage of U.S. residents who define themselves as being a member of a Christian religion (i.e., Baptist, Catholic, Protestant) decreased from 86 percent in 1990 to 77 percent in 2001. Concurrently, those who regard themselves as a member of another religion (e.g., Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist) or of no religious group (e.g., atheist, agnostic, no religion) increased from 3.3 percent to almost 4 percent and 8 percent to 14 percent, respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004–2005).

Though cultural identity as fluid and ever changing is a long-standing American trait (McGoldrick & Giordano, 1996), in the past four decades, the United States has experienced unprecedented, sweeping changes in its racial and ethnic landscape—changes that are transforming urban, suburban, and rural settings throughout the nation. Most of these changes can be attributed to the impressive number of immigrants¹ reaching American shores, propelled by the Immigration Act of 1965 (Massey, 1995). Compared to earlier waves of immigration, which consisted primarily of persons of European descent, the majority of more recent immigrants hail from Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). The U.S.-born² population of people of color³ likewise has continued to grow steadily, though with some exceptions. These extensive changes have important implications for “the American family,” as native and foreign-born groups alike challenge our notions of what we know about families, what they hold dear, how they view the world, and how they relate to one another.

These changes are occurring within the context of other unprecedented shifts in the U.S. population. Our purpose in this chapter is to provide an overview of the demographic profile of native and foreign-born groups in the United States at the dawn of the twenty-first century, with a particular focus on the racial and ethnic characteristics of these populations, demonstrating how the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of the U.S. population is changing American families. We begin with a synopsis of general trends in demographic changes of the U.S. population as a backdrop for our discussion. We then highlight some characteristics of native and immigrant groups. With respect to the native population, we discuss demographic trends among people of color, trends in socioeconomic conditions (including education, unemployment, income, and poverty), and trends in the population of interracial and multiracial Americans. With respect to immigrant groups, we discuss racial and linguistic diversity, the ethos of reception, and socioeconomic conditions. We conclude the chapter with implications of these demographic changes for how family scientists study and understand families in general and families of color in particular.

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We would like to point out that the current chapter's focus on the traditional major racial and ethnic group categories (i.e., Asian and Pacific Islander, Black and African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native/American Indian, Non-Hispanic White), is reflective of available demographic data provided by the U.S. Census and related sources.⁴ This does not preclude our understanding of the amazing diversity that exists *within* these broad categories. For instance, the daily lived experiences of Korean Americans are likely quite different from those of Bangladeshi Americans, yet both groups are collapsed under the umbrella term "Asian American." Likewise, we recognize that "American Indian" cannot even begin to capture the widely different histories and experiences of groups as diverse as the Lumbee of North Carolina and the Washoe of Nevada. The sociopolitical, historical, and economic reasons for the construction of these categories are extensive, and a discussion of these is beyond the scope of the current chapter. We ask our readers to consider the data we present in this chapter as painting with a very broad brush a picture of this intensely complex society in which we live, while the other chapters in the book provide more detailed images of how this diversity is lived out in family life.

Population Characteristics

U.S.-Born Population Growth by Race and Ethnicity

In their comprehensive report on the growth of the "Minority"⁵ population, He and Hobbs (1999) make several projections about expected changes in the U.S. population from 1995 to 2050, three of which we highlight here. First, close to 90 percent of the growth in the U.S. population between 1995 and 2050 will be accounted for by people of color, a group that will outnumber Whites sometime after 2050. Projections suggest that people of color will compose one-third of the U.S. population by 2015 and almost 50 percent of the population by 2050 (Schmidt, 2004).

Second, the diversity of the U.S. population will increase as the growth of all "Minority" groups steadily outpaces that of Whites. Asians and Pacific Islanders and Hispanics/Latinos are the fastest-growing Minority groups. By 2050, Asians are expected to compose almost 10 percent of the U.S. population, and by 2015, Hispanics/Latinos are expected to compose nearly 24 percent of the total U.S. population (He and Hobbs, 1999; Schmidt, 2004). In 2002, the Hispanic/Latino population outgrew the African American one, thus exceeding previous population predictions.

Third, He and Hobbs (1999) predict that by 2030, young children of color (aged five and under) will outnumber their non-Minority counterparts.

Higher fertility rates, particularly among Hispanics/Latinos, will account for the population growth among people of color. The fertility rate is an average of three children for Hispanic/Latina women, 2.2 for African American women, and 1.8 for Whites (Schmidt, 2004). Similarly, the population of color aged 0–14 will more than double between 1995 and 2050, even as the non-Minority youth population declines. In fact, largely due to higher fertility rates, every group of U.S.-born people of color will represent a greater share of U.S. youth, while Whites will constitute the majority of the nation's elderly (Schmidt, 2004).

U.S.-Born People of Color

According to the 2000 census, approximately 28 percent of the U.S.-born population consists of people of color, a category that includes (in alphabetical order) American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks and African Americans, Latinos, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, the “Two or more races” population, and people who chose “Some other race” among the categories listed on the census. Of these, the Black and African American population composes the largest proportion of the U.S.-born, followed by the Hispanic/Latino population. Figure 2.1 displays the racial distribution of the U.S.-born population according to 2000 census figures (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

One of the greatest challenges with analyzing data on U.S.-born people of color is that often the sociodemographic characteristics of racial and ethnic groups as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau combine foreign-born and native populations. Furthermore, as will be seen in the section on the immigrant population below, when racial and ethnic subgroups of the foreign-born are compared with the native population, these comparisons do not compare racial and ethnic groups to one another (Ewing, 2003). For example, the Hispanic/Latino foreign-born population is compared to the native population as a whole, which consists mostly of White Americans, as opposed to comparing foreign-born Hispanic/Latinos to U.S.-born Hispanic/Latinos. To address this issue, and to shed light on actual disparities due to racial and ethnic discrimination rather than place of birth, the Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research at the State University of New York at Albany conducted a study comparing U.S.-born and foreign-born Asians, Blacks, Hispanics/Latinos, and Whites (Logan, 2003). The data presented below on U.S.-born people of color come from this report. Unfortunately, the report does not cover all U.S.-born people of color but focuses instead on the three largest groups: Asians, Blacks, and Hispanics/Latinos.

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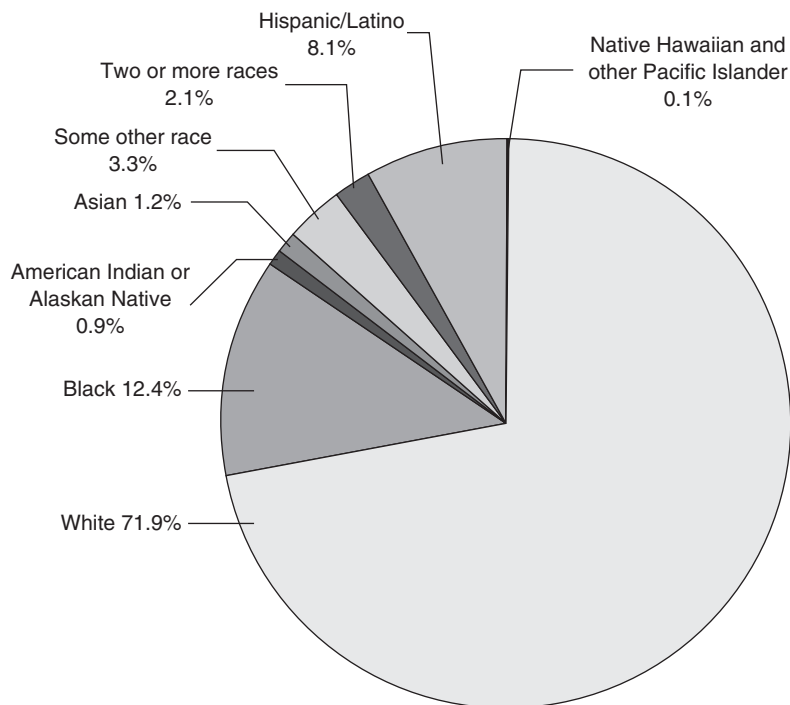


Figure 2.1 Racial Distribution of the U.S.-Born Population: 2000

SOURCE: Immigration Policy Center (Ewing, 2003).

The majority of the U.S.-born population, regardless of race, is concentrated in metropolitan areas. In 2000, 95.7 percent of Whites, 95.4 percent of Blacks, 59.1 percent of Hispanics/Latinos, and 32.4 percent of Asians lived in metropolitan areas. Compared to 1990 U.S. Census figures, all groups but Blacks were slightly less likely to live in metropolitan areas in 2000. In fact, the percentage of U.S.-born Blacks living in metropolitan areas increased slightly (by 0.4 percent). Another interesting set of findings regarding residential patterns of the U.S.-born reflect trends in neighborhood segregation. Logan (2003) found that Whites were more likely to be concentrated in neighborhoods where Whites were in the majority. Compared to Blacks and Hispanics/Latinos, Asians were the most likely to live in neighborhoods with high concentrations of Whites. It is also noteworthy that while the percentage of the population that was White decreased in predominantly White, predominantly Asian, and predominantly Hispanic/Latino neighborhoods, Black neighborhoods maintained

a minimal White presence. These patterns with respect to metropolitan residence and neighborhood segregation, showing Blacks at a clear disadvantage when compared to Asians and Hispanics/Latinos, were consistent across almost all socioeconomic conditions as well.

Socioeconomic Conditions

Education

In today's high-stakes educational climate, in which school closures happen routinely based on test scores, it is imperative that we take into account the disparities in the "separate and unequal" schools attended by our populations of color (Neill, 2003). In the adult population, there are some clear differences in the educational attainment of racial and ethnic groups. According to data from the 2000 census, the U.S.-born Hispanic/Latino population had an average of 12.1 years of educational attainment (indicating slightly more than a high school education), the average for U.S.-born Blacks was 12.5 years, and for the Asian population it was 14.5 years, which exceeded the average 13.5 years of education for the White population (Ewing, 2003). Figure 2.2 shows these data in graphic form.

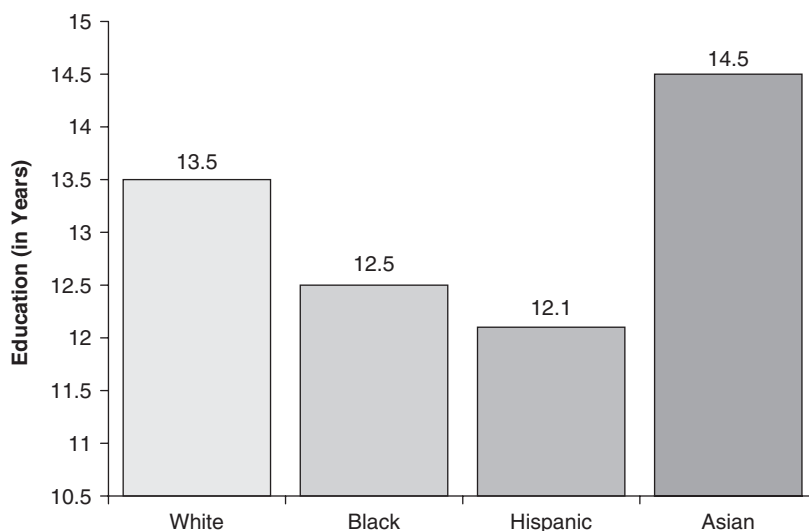


Figure 2.2 Educational Attainment of U.S.-Born by Major Ethnic Group: 2000

SOURCE: Immigration Policy Center (Ewing, 2003).

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When considering the data on neighborhoods discussed above, and considering that school funding for inner-city, predominantly Black and Hispanic/Latino schools is increasingly sparse (Mathis, 2003), we should expect that these patterns will continue for younger generations unless policy makers attempt to intervene.

Unemployment Rates

Another sociodemographic marker of how our populations and families are faring is the percent of the labor force without jobs. As Figure 2.3 shows, there are several quite striking differences in unemployment rates across racial and ethnic U.S.-born groups.

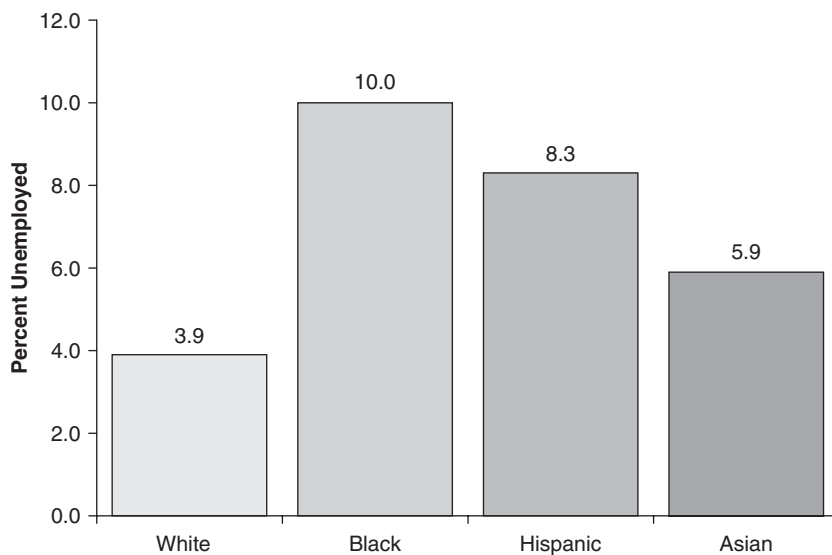


Figure 2.3 Unemployment Rates of U.S.-Born by Major Ethnic Group: 2000
SOURCE: Immigration Policy Center (Ewing, 2003).

Once again, the U.S.-born Black and Hispanic/Latino populations led with the highest unemployment rates in 2000, at 10 percent and 8.3 percent respectively. By contrast, the U.S.-born Asian population had an unemployment rate of 5.9 percent while the rate for U.S.-born Whites was 3.9 percent.

Income

The median household income is calculated by dividing in half the number of households that fall above and below a given amount. As Figure 2.4 shows, U.S.-born Asians had the highest median household income in 2000, far surpassing Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics/Latinos.

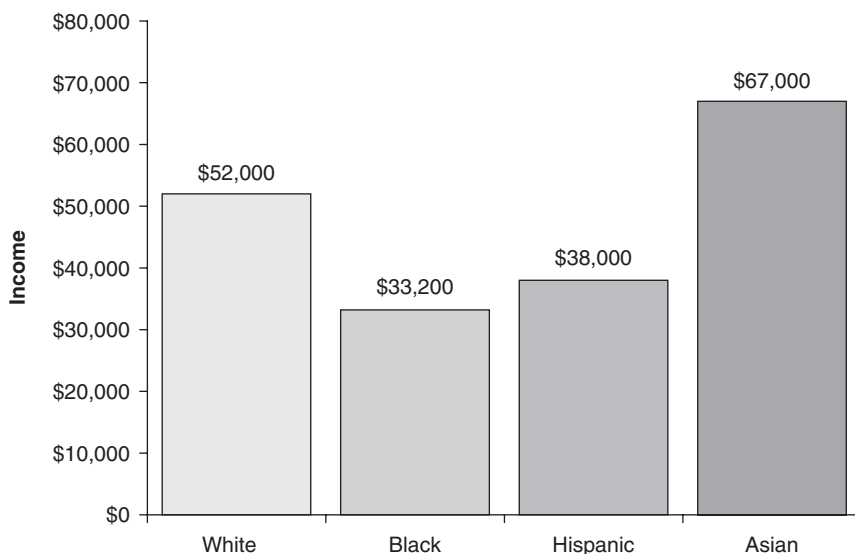


Figure 2.4 Median Household Income of U.S.-Born by Major Ethnic Group: 2000

SOURCE: Immigration Policy Center (Ewing, 2003).

While income figures were commensurate with educational attainment for Asians and Whites, Blacks actually had a significantly lower median household income than Hispanics/ Latinos even though with respect to educational attainment, Blacks were slightly ahead of Hispanics/Latinos.

Poverty

The poverty line is an important gauge of the expected quality of life for individuals and families. In 2006, the federal poverty line for a family of four was \$20,000 (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2006). Yet some scholars have argued that families can barely afford to provide their

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children with such basic necessities as food, housing, and health care until they reach *double* the poverty level (Fuller, 2003). According to the most recently available data on poverty levels by race and ethnicity, Whites had the lowest poverty rate (8.1 percent) in 1999, followed by Asians (12.6 percent) and Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders (17.7 percent). Poverty rates were higher among Hispanics/Latinos (22.6 percent), African Americans (24.9 percent), and American Indians and Alaskan Natives (25.7 percent), exceeding the national average of 22.6 percent. This suggests populations of color may find it difficult to maintain a quality of life they would consider acceptable.

Interracial and Multiracial Individuals and Families

The United States has become increasingly attentive to diversity as evidenced by the fact that although interracial and multiracial families always have been part of the U.S. population, the 2000 census was the first to allow respondents to choose more than one race category to describe their racial identities (Jones & Smith, 2001), providing a much more accurate picture of the racial diversity of the United States. Surprisingly, however, according to the 2000 census, only 1.9 percent of the U.S.-born population identified themselves as belonging to two or more races (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The figures reported here include both U.S.-born and foreign-born persons who identify as part of the “two or more races” population, a group composing 2.4 percent of the total U.S. population, because detailed data were not available for the U.S.-born group alone.

So what are some characteristics of the “two or more races” population? A report on the 2000 census by Jones and Smith (2001) outlines some of the major findings about this group. First, census data showed that the “two or more races” population was most likely to live in the West (40.0 percent) and the South (27.1 percent) of the United States, though the two cities with the largest concentrations of people of two or more races were New York (4.9 percent of the population) and Los Angeles (5.2 percent of the population). Second, the racial and ethnic groups least likely to report more than one race were Whites, followed by Blacks or African Americans, while the group most likely to report more than one race was Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander. Table 2.1 shows the percent of the population reporting two or more races, specified by race, for the 2000 census.

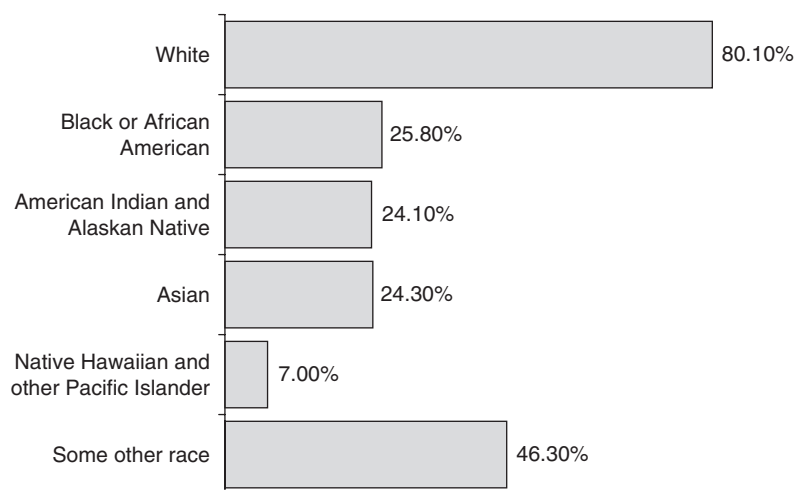
A third characteristic of this population was that approximately four-fifths of the persons who reported more than one race identified “White” as one of their races, close to half reported “some other race,” and about one-fourth of all responses included “Black or African American,” “American Indian and Alaskan Native,” and “Asian” (see Figure 2.5).

Table 2.1 Percentage Reporting Two or More Races by Specified Race: 2000

<i>Specified race</i>	<i>Alone or in combination¹</i>	<i>Alone²</i>	<i>In combination³</i>	<i>% in combination⁴</i>
White	216,930,975	211,460,626	5,470,349	2.5
Black or African American	36,419,434	34,658,190	1,761,244	4.8
American Indian and Alaskan Native	4,119,301	2,475,956	1,643,345	39.9
Asian	11,898,828	10,242,998	1,655,830	13.9
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	874,414	398,835	475,579	54.4
Some other race	18,521,486	15,359,073	3,162,413	17.1

SOURCE: Jones & Smith, 2001.

1. People who reported only one race, together with those who reported that same race plus one or more other races, are combined to create the race alone or in combination categories.
2. People who reported only one race create the race alone categories.
3. People who reported more than one of the six race categories create the race in combination categories.
4. The “percent in combination” is the proportion that the “in combination” population represented of the “alone or in combination” population. This is the equivalent of the percent of people reporting a specified race who reported two or more races.

**Figure 2.5** Race Reported as a Proportion of the Two or More Races Population: 2000

SOURCE: Jones & Smith, 2001.

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Finally, there was a significant age difference among those reporting more than one race. Specifically, 42 percent of the people who reported more than one race were under 18, while 25 percent of the people who reported only one race were under 18. As Tafoya, Johnson, and Hill (2004) pointed out, however, not all persons who are indeed biracial or multiracial report this information. Because census data are collected at the family level, these researchers investigated the extent to which parents of different races identify their children as having two or more races. Interestingly, they found that most couples of different races did not report their children as multiracial. However, some particular combinations of mixed-race couples are more likely to report their children as multiracial—parents of Asian/White and Black/White interracial children were much more likely than American Indian or Alaskan Native/White, non-Latino “Some other race”/White, and Latino “Some other race”/White to report their children as interracial. Increasingly, the reality is that many families have two or more cultural or ethnic identities represented within them, requiring “syncretism,” or the “blending of cultural influences” (Falicov, 1995).

The Foreign-Born Population

The story of the American people is a story of immigration and diversity. The United States has welcomed more immigrants than any other country—more than 50 million in all—and still admits as many as one million persons a year. (U.S. Society & Values, 1999, p. 7)

With the exception of American Indians, Mexican-origin people,⁶ and the descendants of enslaved Africans, today’s U.S. population is composed of migrants—people who make the decision to leave their countries of origin and come forge a new life on American shores (Schaeffer, 2002). They come to the United States for three primary reasons: economic, political, and familial (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). As the Suárez-Orozcos explain, changes in the global market have created strong pulls in the high-tech and service industries for immigrant labor, while simultaneously pushing people out of their countries due to the depressed economies in these less developed nations. Political instability, political persecution, and religious and ethnic discrimination have compelled others to emigrate from their home countries. For example, millions of Colombians, Haitians, Cubans, and Sudanese immigrants seek political refuge in the United States. Finally, since many families migrate in stages (as will be described later), family reunifications are an important factor in the large numbers of migration to this country. Once

family members have established themselves in the new homeland, they are eager for spouses, children, and other relatives to join them.

At the time of the most recent report by the U.S. Census Bureau (Larsen, 2004), the foreign-born population of the United States constituted 11.7 percent of the total population. Though in sheer numbers the foreign-born population is larger than ever—an astonishing 33.5 million residents of the United States are foreign-born—at the height of the first large wave of immigration (1880–1920), the foreign-born constituted 14 percent of the U.S. population (Suárez-Orozco, 2000). What has changed dramatically is the world regions from which recent immigrants hail. Table 2.2 displays the change in region of birth among immigrants from 1880 to 2003. Immigrants in early 1900 originated in countries like Italy, Austria-Hungary, Russian Canada, and England), while the majority of today’s foreign-born population is from Latin America (including the Caribbean), followed by Asia, Europe, and other regions, such as Africa, Australia, and Canada.

Table 2.2 Percentage of Foreign Born by Region of Origin^a

	1880	1920	1950	1980	2000	2003
Europe	97%	93.6%	89.3%	49.6%	15.8%	13.7%
Asia	1.6%	1.7%	2.65	18%	26.4%	25%
Latin America	1.3%	4.2%	6.3%	31%	51.7%	53.3%
Other regions	0.2%	0.4%	1.8%	1.4%	6%	8%

SOURCES: Larsen, 2004; Malone, Baluja, Costanzo, & Davis, 2003; Suárez-Orozco, 2000.

a. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the numbers do not all add to 100% due to rounding.

With respect to specific countries of origin, at the time of the 2000 census, the top 10 countries of birth for immigrants to the United States were Mexico, China, the Philippines, India, Vietnam, Cuba, Korea, Canada, El Salvador, and Germany (Malone, Baluja, Costanzo, & Davis, 2003). It is important to note that this list represents the approximate numbers of immigrants from each country *living* in the United States at the time of the 2000 census. The numbers of immigrants *admitted* to the United States vary from year to year, so that in 2003, one of the top 10 countries from which immigrants to the United States were admitted was Russia (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2004).

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Just as the majority of immigrants come from particular regions of the world, so do they tend to settle in particular regions of the United States. Immigrants are typically drawn to magnet areas due to a “strong reunification tradition in U.S. immigration laws” and the practical necessity for these new residents to reside in communities where others share their language and cultural background and where they can gain entry into job networks (U.S. Society & Values, 1999). According to Pyke (2004), “New immigrant groups, who do not have the benefit of longstanding ethnic enclaves with firmly established social networks to assist in successful adaptation, must create from scratch the meaning of their ethnicity” (p. 254). Many of these individuals and families must grapple with a racial minority status and forms of racism for the first time in their lives.

Since the 1990s, an interesting shift has occurred in the regions to which immigrants have been drawn. As U.S. demographer William Frey (2002) pointed out, though the traditional immigrant magnets (i.e., California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey) continue to attract the majority of immigrants, other states have experienced unprecedented growth in their immigrant populations. Nevada, for example, had a 123 percent increase in its Latino population between 1990 and 2000, Arkansas had a 148 percent increase, North Carolina a 110 percent increase, and Nebraska sustained a 96 percent increase (Schmidley, 2001). Table 2.3 displays the regions of the United States where immigrants were living in 2000, divided by immigrants’ world region of birth.

Contemporary immigrant families are structurally diverse, depending upon such variables as criteria for admission to the host country and economic and political conditions and family patterns in both the home and new countries. These heterogeneous family forms are represented in transnational families (when one member enters the host country ahead of the rest, usually for the purpose of finding housing and work), parachute children (when children aged 8 to 17 are sent to the United States to live with others, without their parents), chain migration (when family members are reunited over time in the host country, causing families to experience bicultural households), nuclear families (when an immigrant family arrives in total), extended families (when more than one generation of parents and children live together), and coresident groups (those formed out of necessity) (Pyke, 2004). Consequently, family members who immigrate to the United States at different times experience their own unique challenges. As Pyke describes,

When family reunification is complete, the years of separation contribute to bicultural households, with some family members having had more time to adapt to life in the United States. The result can be a family of related strangers

Table 2.3 Percentage of Foreign-Born Population by World Region of Birth and Region of Residence in the United States 2000

Area	<i>Total foreign-born population^a</i>	<i>Total foreign-born population^a</i>				<i>Latin America</i>			
		<i>Europe</i>	<i>Asia</i>	<i>Africa</i>	<i>Oceania America^b</i>	<i>Northern</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Mexico</i>	<i>Other Latin America</i>
Northeast	23.2%	38.3%	22.2%	31.2%	10.3%	22.7%	18.9%	3.0%	40.0%
Midwest	11.3%	18.6%	12.8%	15.0%	7.8%	16.0%	7.8%	10.9%	3.8%
South	27.7%	20.2%	19.9%	34.9%	16.0%	26.9%	33.7%	29.6%	39.2%
West	37.8%	22.9%	45.1%	18.9%	65.9%	34.4%	39.5%	56.5%	17.1%

SOURCE: Malone et al., 2003.

a. Does not include the foreign-born population "born at sea."

b. The region Northern America includes Canada, Bermuda, Greenland, and St. Pierre and Miquelon.

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who have very different values, needs, and perspectives, and who may not even speak a shared language—particularly when children, who adapt more quickly, are among those who arrived first. (p. 256)

Family scholars and practitioners need to take into account the range of family types and family strains when working with immigrant families.

One of the oldest and most common misconceptions about immigrant groups is that they never will truly become “American.” As Mindel, Habenstein, and Wright (1998) pointed out, complaints about the cultural differences of newcomers date from as early as the colonial period. As in the past, recent scholarly work on the new immigrants of today convincingly demonstrates that this fear is unfounded (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Rumbaut, 1999; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001) as immigrants do become absorbed into the complex fabric of U.S. society. A publication by Farkas, Duffett, and Johnson (2003) describes what America’s immigrants have to say about life in the United States. The majority of the participants in this random sample expressed commitment to the United States and considered it their permanent home. They also identified themselves as American, while cherishing their own heritages and maintaining a strong bond with their native countries. The longer immigrants had been in this country, the more connected they seemed to be to the United States. Overall, immigrants were thankful and appreciative of their adopted nation, though this gratitude was moderated by the struggles and sacrifices they have also experienced in the new country.

It is the case, however, that the process of assimilation is not linear or unidimensional (Suárez-Orozco, 2002). As Portes and Zhou (1993) argued, “segmented assimilation” is the best way to describe the numerous ways today’s immigrants become part of U.S. society, some integrating into mainstream culture, others becoming part of the underclass, and still others becoming successful through ethnic solidarity and the preservation of their own cultures. Thus, although it is the case that immigrant groups have many experiences in common as they make the transition to a new homeland, it is true also that there is a tremendous amount of diversity among immigrant groups.

Racial and Linguistic Diversity

While immigrants from Europe in the early 1920s struggled to transcend social class boundaries, immigrants today often have to contend with prejudice due to skin color (Rumbaut, 1994), which is arguably the most powerful characteristic for social stratification and discrimination in the United States (Appiah & Gutmann, 1998). Figure 2.6 displays the percent distribution

of race and Hispanic/Latino origin for the foreign-born population. According to these data, the majority of immigrants identified themselves as Asian in the 2000 census (close to 70 percent). Among those who identified as Hispanic/Latino, 40 percent were foreign-born.

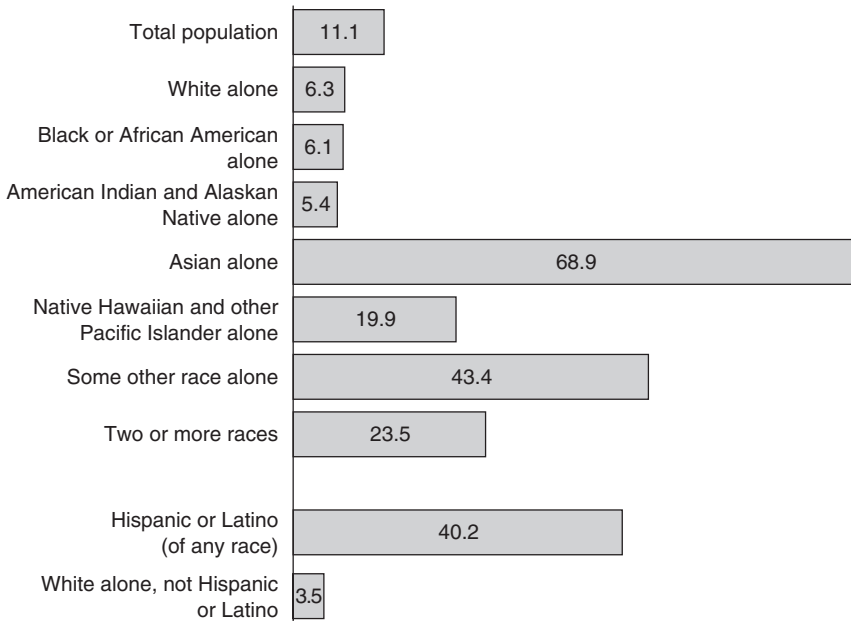


Figure 2.6 Percent Foreign-Born for the Population by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2000

SOURCE: Malone et al., 2003.

In terms of language, Spanish is spoken by the largest proportion of new immigrants (Suárez-Orozco & Páez, 2002). However, there is a great deal of linguistic diversity among immigrant groups as well. For example, in New York City public schools, there are more than 100 different languages represented, and more than 90 are found in Los Angeles Unified School District (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Even in smaller school districts, it is not unusual to find 30 different languages and dialects spoken (Suárez-Orozco, 2000). According to 2000 census data, the top 10 languages spoken at home in the United States (after English) were Spanish, French, Chinese (which includes what are actually several separate languages), German, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Italian, Korean, Russian, and Polish. With more languages, there

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is a greater chance for misunderstanding and conflict. Words and nonverbal expressions of communication—like eye contact, hand gestures, and touch—can vary as well. In light of such diversity, policy makers, educators, family life specialists, and other human service providers need to be aware of the cultural and linguistic needs of their clients.

The Ethos of Reception

The general social climate, or ethos of reception, plays a critical role in the adaptation of immigrants to the U.S. context (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). While intolerance for newcomers is an all too common response all over the world, discrimination against immigrants of color is widespread and intense, particularly in many settings receiving large numbers of new immigrants. This is the case in Europe (Suárez-Orozco, 1996), the United States (Espenshade & Belanger, 1998), and in Japan (Tsuda, 2003). As today's immigrants are more diverse than ever in terms of ethnicity, skin color, and religion, they are particularly subject to the pervasive social trauma of prejudice and social exclusion (Rubin, 1994; Tatum, 1997).

Exclusion can be structural, when individuals are excluded from the opportunity system, or attitudinal, when immigrants are vulnerable to disparagement and public hostility. For instance, Arab Americans always have been at the center of scrutiny and mistrust (Ibish, 2001), but this has only intensified since the tragic events of September 11, 2001 (Muzher, 2001). Americans' general lack of knowledge about and understanding of Islam has fueled this discrimination further, putting Muslim Americans in the uncomfortable position of having to defend their religious beliefs, which are erroneously believed to promote violence (Ibish, 2001).

The structural barriers and the social ethos of intolerance and racism encountered by many immigrants of color intensify the stresses of immigration. Philosopher Charles Taylor argues that

our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. (1994, p. 25)

Socioeconomic Conditions

Immigrant groups also differ in regard to their socioeconomic conditions in the host society. Also, according to recent data, there are marked differences between the foreign-born and native populations in socioeconomic characteristics.

Education

An interesting paradox exists among the children of immigrants today. They are simultaneously among the most likely to attend Ivy League universities and become incredibly successful and among the most likely to drop out of school, engage in illegal activities, and become incarcerated (Fulgini, 1998; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001), a phenomenon Howard Gardner refers to as the “Princeton or Prison/Yale or Jail” syndrome (Suárez-Orozco & Gardner, 2003).

Looking across the adult population of immigrant and native groups, we find that the foreign-born were just as likely to report having earned a bachelor’s degree in 2003 as their native counterparts (27.3 percent versus 27.2 percent, respectively). However, immigrants were overrepresented among those having less than a ninth-grade education (21.5 percent), whereas only 4.1 percent of the native population were in this category (Larsen, 2004).

Attempting to account for the socioeconomic effects of ethnicity and minority status, Ewing (2003) offers comparative data of immigrants and natives within the same ethnic group. His analysis suggests that when comparing native and immigrant Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians, only immigrant Blacks have more education than native Blacks. Educational attainment of native Whites, Hispanics, and Asians exceeds that of the immigrants in these ethnic groups.

Occupation and Unemployment Rates

On the whole, immigrant workers were more likely to be employed in service occupations than were native workers, with 23.3 percent of immigrants in such positions compared to 14.9 percent of U.S. natives (Larsen, 2004). Examples of service occupations include health care support (e.g., nurse’s aide), food preparation and service, and buildings and grounds maintenance (Fronczek & Johnson, 2003). Conversely, native workers were more likely to be employed in management or specialty occupations than were immigrant workers (36.2 percent compared to 26.9 percent), though this pattern was not consistent across gender. Foreign-born women were more likely to be employed in the service sector, whereas their male counterparts held more management and professional occupations (Larsen, 2004). Looking across immigrant groups, Asian immigrants were far more likely to be employed in management and professional occupations (47 percent) than were Latin American immigrants (7.9 percent).

The foreign-born population also was slightly more likely to be unemployed than the native population (7.5 percent versus 6.2 percent, respectively). Looking across gender, unemployment rate differences were not

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statistically different between native men (6.9 percent) and foreign-born men (7.2 percent), but statistically significant differences did emerge between native women (5.5 percent) and foreign-born women (7.9 percent) (Larsen, 2004). With further examination of native versus immigrant ethnic groups, Ewing (2003) discovered that unemployment rates of natives in all four ethnic groups exceeded that of foreign-born individuals.

Income

Disparities emerged for income as well, both between the native and foreign-born and within the foreign-born groups. According to Larsen (2004), in 2002, a greater proportion of foreign-born households (24.6 percent) reported a total income below \$20,000 than did native households (22.3 percent). Households with a Caribbean-born householder were the most likely to report an income less than \$20,000. Contrasting this trend, households with an Asian-born householder were more likely to report a total income of \$50,000 or more (53.8 percent) than were native households (44.0 percent). Households with an Asian-born householder also were far more likely than those with householders from other regions to report incomes of \$50,000 or more. Ewing's (2003) analyses revealed that the median income for native Whites, Hispanics, and Asians exceeded that of their immigrant counterparts. However, native Blacks experienced lower median household incomes than their immigrant peers.

Poverty

Income figures alone do not predict the poverty level, however. Although the patterns shown above among native and foreign-born groups was consistent for percentages of families living below the poverty level—that is, only 11.5 percent of the native population was living in poverty compared to 16.6 percent of the foreign-born population—the groups most likely to live below the poverty level were from Latin America and Central America (Larsen, 2004). This is because the poverty level is calculated by household size, and Latin Americans and Central Americans had larger households than other immigrant groups. Ewing's (2003) comparisons are helpful here again. Immigrant Whites, Hispanics, and Asians had slightly higher poverty rates than did their native counterparts. In contrast, immigrant Blacks had an 8.5 percent lower poverty rate than native Blacks.

Conclusion

The remaining chapters of this book will more thoroughly highlight the implications of family diversity on the field of family science. We discuss here the socioeconomic implications of the demographic changes highlighted in this chapter. While there is a great deal of diversity in the education and skill level of those immigrating to the United States today (Pyke, 2004), the new immigrants are more likely to be poor than those from earlier waves of immigration (U.S. Society & Values, 1999). The financial strain on these families and pressure on the social programs designed to assist them will become apparent. The paucity of economic resources is likely a contributing factor to long-standing disparities in the health status of U.S. ethnic minority groups. More attention needs to be given to research that identifies how to explain and address the greater incidence of illness and health of African Americans, Latino/Hispanic Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, Alaskan Natives, and Pacific Islanders when compared to the U.S. population as a whole. So too, there is potential for a new source of racial tension as the predominantly White older generation retires and a younger, largely minority population is required to provide financial support to an older, less racially and ethnically diverse population (Sweeney, 2004). As economic resources continue to be strained, we can expect family researchers and practitioners to confront questions relative to access to and distribution of services. Family professionals should remain cognizant of their own level of hospitality to those from immigrating groups.

Family science educators need to adapt their classrooms to an increasingly diverse student body, and students will be required to become culturally competent in preparation for their professional roles. Future family researchers, family practitioners, family and consumer sciences teachers (Adams, Sewell, & Hall, 2004), family policy makers and advocates, and family therapists (McGoldrick & Giordano, 1996) need to discard their monocular vision of families and assume more pluralistic cultural perspectives. Greater cultural awareness and sensitivity will enrich our work as we engage in an increasingly global environment.

Notes

1. We use the terms *immigrant* and *foreign-born* interchangeably to refer to individuals who were not born as U.S. citizens, in keeping with the definition outlined by the U.S. Census Bureau (Larsen, 2004).

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2. *U.S.-born*, or *native*, in keeping with the U.S. Census definition, refers to people “who were born in one of the following areas—the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or the Northern Mariana Islands—or were born abroad of at least one parent who was a U.S. citizen” (Larsen, 2004, p. 1).

3. *People of color* refers to non-White groups that have been native to the United States for more than one generation, including African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, and American Indians.

4. For detailed descriptions of U.S. Census definitions for the terms listed here, please visit <http://www.census.gov>.

5. In He and Hobbs's (1999) report, the term *Minority* is “used to represent the combined population of people who are Black, American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, Asian, Pacific Islander, or of Hispanic origin (who may be of any race). Equivalently, the Minority population comprises all people other than non-Hispanic Whites (who are termed the ‘non-Minority’ population when compared to the combined Minority population group)” (p. 1). As the following section will make clear, use of the term *Minority* to refer to these groups will need reconsideration.

6. Mexican-origin people inhabited the states we know today as Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Nevada, and Utah (as well as portions of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Wyoming) for centuries before these states became part of the United States through conquest during the Mexican-American War of the nineteenth century (Alicea, 1994).

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