

## Introduction: Multicultural Insights from the Study of Demography

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Today, the United States, as a nation, is engaging in many discussions of its population diversity.<sup>1</sup> Nowhere is this trend more prominent than on college campuses, where discussions about what should be taught have resulted in what one observer has called “PC panic.”(Gitlin, 1996:177). While these discussions do allow different opinions to be aired, and sometimes serve to bring together members of many different groups, the resulting dialogue about American diversity all too often sounds like a cacophony. Combining the voices of people not previously heard with much regularity, such as Blacks or women, with the new immigrants and native-born White Americans can often be contentious. For listeners as well as participants, it is often not clear how to make sense of the discussions or the underlying societal diversity that gives rise to them. Perhaps a common “starting line” for discussions of diversity and multiculturalism would lend some order to the currently dissonant and disorganized discussion. We argue that a better understanding of the racial and ethnic groups responsible for American diversity, and the demographic forces affecting those groups, is a reasonable point of departure for participants in the “diversity debates.” It is toward that goal of better demographic understanding that the current volume is addressed.

The chapters in this volume reflect up-to-date demographic analyses of basic population processes in the contemporary U.S. population.<sup>2</sup> As such, they are not directed to the more politicized aspects of the national diversity debate per se. Yet, we argue in this introduction that they are relevant to the diversity debate because to understand the issues of diversity and political correctness, it is necessary to first understand the fundamental demographic processes that underlie them. This point is not necessarily obvious, so we will lay out our case here. In doing so, we will address such questions as: How can an analysis of demographic data provide any meaningful insights into the debate over American diversity? Given the stridency of the debate and the conflicts among people from the various groups, wouldn't law, history, economics, psychology, or any of a number of other disciplines have more to offer than demography, the study of numbers, births, and deaths? Isn't the demog-

raphy of increasing numbers of different types of people obvious to all those commenting on the contemporary scene?

It is certainly true that nearly all discussions of U.S. population diversity talk about the numbers of different groups of people, and some even discuss the future implied by projecting these numbers forward in time. However, it is equally true that virtually no one contributing to the diversity debate has thoroughly examined the key demographic processes separately: fertility, mortality, and migration. Neither does the literature offer a reasonable discussion of the interrelationship among these demographic facts of life, or their association with the fundamental life processes of education, labor force participation, marriage, neighborhood context, and aging. But it is just such questions that are grist for the demographer's mill.

Demographers have long focused on documenting, describing, and explaining differences among groups of people with regard to many key aspects of life: the number of children women have, marriage rates, life expectancy, moving within a country or to a new one, educational attainment, labor force participation rates, neighborhood distributions, and aging. Furthermore, key elements in all social demographic analyses are race/ethnicity, gender, and social class. Thus, demographers are in a unique position to inform the debates about population diversity with more than just numbers. This is hardly to argue that demography is destiny, but rather that the momentum of demographic processes, well known to demographers, forms the underpinning of all the other aspects of people's lives in the modern world. In a very real sense, the social world we observe, including the substantial racial and ethnic diversity within it, is the product of those phenomena that occupy demographers.

We are arguing that some of the stridency and antagonism of the contemporary debates over racial and ethnic diversity results in part from either ignoring or fundamentally misunderstanding past, current, and future demographic changes in U.S. society. Understanding these demographic underpinnings challenges our assumption that we can completely control the increasing diversity, points out how some of the increasing diversity is internal to the United States and will continue regardless of what happens to immigration, and reveals that part of the "perceived" increasing diversity is the result of fundamental social changes (e.g., divorce, female labor force participation, childlessness, unmarried mothers) during the last 50 years that have affected all groups in U.S. society, and which, themselves, have generated controversy. Demography cannot magically "solve" the many contentious issues of the debate. However, if we are ever to make progress toward mutual acceptance, respect, and accommodation, we must not ignore the structural demographic underpinnings of contemporary changes in the U.S. population.

A focus on demography points us in two directions simultaneously: toward the *individual* and toward the *structural*. The basic population process-

es of birth, death, and migration are events that occur to individuals who make critical decisions that determine demographic outcomes. Clearly, a woman or a couple can choose whether or not to have a birth; adult individuals or families can choose whether or not to migrate; and exercise and not smoking can appreciably delay one's death. And, group differentials represent the sum of these individual events. Yet, from this basic truth, we are too often tempted to think that the demographic processes themselves are completely under individual level control. Social scientists continually provide macro-level evidence that indicates the operation of social forces that transcend the individual: the child poverty rate soars while the elderly poverty rate falls, even though the former group represents the future of the nation; women are denied access to abortion facilities because local sentiment and politics discourage the operation of convenient clinics; environmental pollutants increase morbidity and mortality, despite an individual's exercise regimen or diet; illegal immigrants continue to enter the country regardless, it seems, of what laws we pass or border controls we institute. Thus, despite the important role of individual-level decision making in determining behavioral outcomes, it is important to acknowledge the simultaneous operation of social structural forces that are far outside of any individual's control. The "demographic model" recognizes that all individual decisions are made, and individual behaviors are performed, within a structural context that has important consequences of its own.

This recognition that there are structural forces leading to increased population diversity that are outside the control of individuals, and to a lesser extent, outside the control of government, while not the focus of traditional demographic analysis, does flow naturally from it and provides a needed view in discussions about population diversity. Individualism is deeply rooted in and very important to the U.S. psyche, particularly for middle-class White Americans (Gans, 1988), so the effects of social structure are often very hard for Americans to understand (Mayhew, 1980, 1981). But the result of not understanding structural forces is that we do not understand fully our social problems and so are at risk of misdiagnosing them. Once a problem is misdiagnosed, no analysis, no matter how thoughtful, detailed, statistically rigorous, or well documented, will help alleviate the problem for the very simple reason that we have defined the problem incorrectly. A prime example of this point about incorrectly diagnosing problems is the role of law in immigration. In his chapter, Doug Massey argues that changes in immigration are better thought of as the result of macroeconomic forces than changes in law. While it is individuals and government that establish social structure, once established, social structures take on a life of their own and can be quite resistant to change. Demography, by focusing simultaneously on the individual and the structural, serves to emphasize this point.

In addition to recognizing the importance of structural opportunities and constraints as determinants of individual behavior, demographers have long had an interest in how different population groups (e.g., races or ethnicities) differ on the key population processes (e.g., mortality, marriage, or fertility). Having described intergroup differences, it is common for demographers to then ask, “How do different population groups adjust to one another?” When asked of immigrants, this question refers to the important process of “becoming American.” Assimilation theory has had a lot of bad press—some would say it is deserved—but the underlying process to which assimilation refers, that of becoming more like the people in one’s new country than like those left behind in one’s country of origin, will continue (Alba, 1995). Witness African Americans—we focus all too often on how dissimilar they are from White Americans, but can we really argue that they are more similar to modern-day Africans? Perhaps in color and some relatively minor aspects of culture and heritage, but in terms of everyday life dreams, values, and behavior they are American, though there are signs of increasing disenchantment with the American Dream for middle-class African Americans (Hochschild, 1995:251).

Many of the newest Americans are people of color, and our historical treatment of African Americans in the United States means that the new immigrants face what Portes and Zhou (1993) argue is a process of segmented assimilation. For Hispanics in particular, involvement in an ethnic enclave, like that of the Cubans in Miami, may offer better roads to upward mobility than facing the discrimination and prejudice against Hispanics in the larger society. For Black immigrants, this problem is even more acute, as identification with American Blacks, given the history of discrimination and race relations in the United States, can be a downward route to membership in the underclass instead of a route to upward mobility, and a shot at entering the ranks of the “plunderclass.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, by comparing adjustment to U.S. society across groups of different types, the demographic perspective simultaneously shows two things: first, that the magnitude of group differences may not be as large as stereotypes imply; and second, that some level of diversity and difference will remain. In other words, no matter what happens to immigration, newcomers will assimilate to *some* degree. The continued infusion of new members and their racial diversity may make the process not as fast or as complete as that of the White ethnics of the early part of this century, but in some way all will learn to be Americans and come to see themselves as Americans. To accept the truth of this statement requires only the demographic recognition that the newcomers themselves produce native-born children who grow up in the U.S. social structure. The emergence of the dramatic differences that separate first-generation immigrants from their second-generation offspring is one of the most profound, and predictable, processes known to social science.

Within the discipline of demography, this volume is unique because it provides the opportunity to read and reflect upon all the demographic processes at the same time. Most demographic research focuses exclusively on one or two of the basic demographic processes: fertility, mortality, migration, and the auxiliary processes of education, marriage, labor force participation, and aging. While the individual authors represented here do specialize in one of these, the volume's emphasis is on looking for the interactions and interrelationships across the demographic processes.

It is for this reason that we have included specialists from so many different areas—to make these interrelationships a key to this book. It is also important that we are *not* taking the more usual approach and having individual chapters about each of the groups that comprise the U.S. population. Such an approach, while in some cases offering more detail about individual groups' experiences in the United States, by its very nature focuses our attention away from the common social and economic structure in which we all reside. As Takaki has noted, "...regardless of who does the telling, much of what is presented as multicultural scholarship also tends to fragmentize American society by separately studying specific groups such as African Americans or Hispanics. Intergroup relationships become invisible, and the big picture is missing. This decontextualizing only reinforces the bewilderment already separating racially and ethnically diverse Americans from one another. We are left with shards of a shattered mirror of our diversity"(Takaki, 1994:299). All groups are subject to the same demographic processes, and by looking at the processes rather than the groups, we are able to see both *differences*, the topic of much concern today, as well as *similarities*, the patterns already present in society as well as those that may potentially emerge as we move into the future.

In the remainder of this introduction, our aim is to link the ten chapters of this volume together and show how each of the papers included in the volume helps to flesh out the argument of the importance of demography to the debate over U.S. population diversity. As we do so, we will try to explain exactly what the study of human demography is, how it involves more than just numbers as we demonstrate what demographic principles can offer to the current debates about U.S. diversity. We structure the volume in four parts: Part I looks at the initial numbers of people in each group, and takes up definitional issues regarding race and ethnicity, as well as the concept of population projections. Part II focuses on the three basic demographic processes, which together completely define national population change: migration, fertility, and mortality. Part III moves to a discussion of life course processes: geographical location, marriage, education and labor force, and aging. These processes are common across almost all people. Part IV provides a summary of the issues raised by the new diversity from the point of view of one of the

nation's largest and oldest sources of population diversity, African Americans. In the end, we hope that the reader interested in how U.S. society is changing will be left with a firmer knowledge of the demographic underpinnings of contemporary U.S. population diversity and therefore a firmer base for his or her opinions on the issue of population diversity.

### **Part I. Population: The Initial Numbers**

Fundamental to any understanding of our current concern with human diversity, then, is information on the relative numbers of people in each group. Counting people is first and foremost the business of demography. At the close of the twentieth century, the United States was home to roughly 281 million people. Of these, approximately 195 million are non-Hispanic Whites, the largest and culturally dominant group in the United States since the founding of the country, and the group with the strongest ties to European origins. Another 34 million people are non-Hispanic Blacks, mainly native-born descendants of the slaves who were first forced to come to the United States nearly 400 years ago.<sup>4</sup> About 13 million persons identify themselves as Asian, Native American, or Other, 4.6 million identify with two or more races, while 35 million are of Hispanic origin. In proportional terms, non-Hispanic Whites make up 69.4%, non-Hispanic Blacks 12.1%, with Hispanics and Asians/Native Americans at 12.5% and 4.6% respectively (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001a).

Each of these broad groups includes very heterogeneous subgroups as well. From the 2000 Census, we know that over 2 million people identified themselves as Native American, descendants of the persons originally here when Europeans arrived on this continent. This represented a huge increase from the 1980 Census as increasing numbers of people sought to claim their Native American roots. Persons of Asian origin are distributed across very different countries of origin: 23.7% are Chinese, 18.1% are Filipino, 16.4% are Indian, while about 10% are Vietnamese (11.0%), Korean (10.5%), or Japanese (7.8%) (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001b). Similarly, Hispanics are 58.5% Mexicans, 9.6% Puerto Ricans, 3.5% Cubans, with 28.4% from other countries in Central and South America. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001b). In all, nearly 11% of the population is foreign born, with just over half (50.7%) born in Latin America, 27.5% in Asia and 15.6% in Europe. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001c).

Even this simple summary of the numbers serves to establish a basic fact: compared to the beginning of the century, when the population was nearly

90% White Northern and Western European (Passell and Edmonston, 1994:43), contemporary U.S. society is very diverse, and much of the diverse population being discussed is already in residence here. While people understand that the population is more diverse, there is evidence that they overestimate the magnitude of the diversity (Gitlin, 1996:113). A recent study by the Kaiser Family Foundation reported that estimates of the percentage of the U.S. population that is White ranged from 45.5% to 54.8%, black from 20.5% to 25.9%, Hispanic from 14.6% to 20.7%, and Asian from 8.3% to 12.2%, depending on which group answered the question. Since the correct figures at the time of the study were 74% white, 11.8% Black, 9.5% Hispanic, and 3.1% Asian, it is clear that no group was even remotely close to an accurate estimate of its own or another group's relative size, and that estimates of the non-White populations were anywhere from 1.5 to 3 times the true value (Brodie, 1995). At the same time, there are substantial areas of the United States that are still mainly White: "In almost half the counties of the U.S., the Black population is less than 1 percent. California and Texas between them have more than half the Hispanics, while in the Midwest fewer than one person in 30 is Hispanic." (Gitlin, 1996:110–111). We cannot hope to deal with our diverse population unless we correctly understand the magnitude of the diversity.

We also sometimes feel as though the increasing diversity is "sudden," all the result of the recent immigrants when in reality, the change has been occurring for quite some time.

"Simply put, the White percentage has been declining for decades, and the rate of decline accelerated after 1970 (though the rate of decline was frequently exaggerated in the press and popular lore). Between 1950 and 1970, the White percentage (including those Hispanics classified by the census as "White") declined by 2 percent, from 89.3 percent to 87.6 percent, while the Black percentage rose by 12 percent, from 9.9 percent to 11.1 percent. Between 1970 and 1990, the White percentage declined by more than 4 percent, twice the earlier rate, from 87.6 percent to 83.9 percent, while the Black percentage rose by a slightly smaller rate of 11 percent, from 11.1 percent to 12.3 percent. Still more striking changes were evident among Americans whose origins were in Latin America, Asia or the Pacific Islands. Between 1970 and 1990, the Hispanic population almost doubled, from 4.9 percent to 9.0 percent, while Asians and Pacific Islanders more than doubled, from 1.4 percent to 3.0 percent" (Gitlin, 1996:108).

Important as these initial numbers are to an accurate discussion of U.S. population diversity, they represent only the beginning of demography's contribution to the issue. In the next section we take up the task of seeing the future implications of these numbers for the diversity of the U.S. population.

*Chapter One: Identity and Culture:  
Understanding the Meaning of Race and Ethnicity*

To project the population forward in time and come up with race/ethnic specific estimates, a demographer uses the numbers of persons in each race/ethnic group as a starting point. To the extent that the non-Hispanic White population is older than the rest of the population, then we know that their growth will be slower than that of people of color, *even if fertility were the same among all groups*. But this task of projection assumes that people will remain in their same race/ethnic group into the future, and more importantly, that children will be of the same race/ethnic groups of their parents.

As Mary Waters points out in the first chapter, “The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity: Some Examples from Demography,” knowing one’s race/ethnic group is not a simple matter. The group that one personally identifies with may not be reflected in the Census categories, or one may think of oneself as a combination of the categories, but only one response had been allowed, until Census 2000. Hollinger points out that “the ethno-racial pentagon which divides the population into African American, Asian American, Euro-american, Indigenous and Latino segments, even as the labels for these five groups vary slightly” (Hollinger, 1995:8), reflects not race or communities of descent but “is a framework for politics and culture in the United States” (Hollinger, 1995:24). He continues, “they are not designed to recognize coherent cultures. They are designed, instead, to correct injustices committed by White people in the name of the American nation, most but not all of which can be traced back to racial classifications on the basis of morphological traits” (Hollinger, 1995:36).

Thus, the meaning of the racial ethnic categories is problematic to those seeking to define U.S. population diversity. To the extent that people change groups, to the extent that people identify with a different group than that into which outsiders classify them based on their physical characteristics, or to the extent that persons of different groups intermarry, then population projections will give false information about the future of the U.S. population. While we tend to think of race and ethnicity as something that is “fixed,” the reality is that it is changeable and malleable (Winant, 1994). The difficulty of classifying the population by race/ethnicity serves as a strong reminder of the fact that even without further immigration, the diversity of the U.S. population is likely to change.

*Chapter Two: Population Projections:  
Future Numbers Implied by Initial Numbers*

One of the contributions of demography is to take the initial numbers of people and project them forward in time to show what the population will look like in the future. Thus, to a demographer, the presence of the initial diversity outlined above has important intuitive implications for future diversity through the demographic processes of births and deaths. Population projections are the source of the often heard statement that by the middle of the twenty-first, century within the lifetimes of many current U.S. residents, non-Hispanic Whites will just barely be the majority of persons in this country (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992). While this statement is technically true, as Charles Hirschman points out in chapter 2, "Race and Ethnic Population Projections: A Critical Evaluation of their Content and Meaning," in order to make it one must make several assumptions, the truth of which are as yet unknown. These assumptions involve the meaning of the race/ethnic categories themselves, the number of future immigrants to the United States and race/ethnic differences in fertility as well as mortality patterns. Incorrect assumptions about *any* of these can lead to dramatically different future scenarios of the U.S. population size and the relative sizes of each group.

By focusing on these assumptions, we offer the nondemographer the opportunity to think about the meaning as opposed to the methodology of population projections. While there are different scenarios possible depending on what assumptions one makes, it is equally true that the parameters being assumed can only change within limited ranges, given how low mortality and fertility regimes currently are. It makes no sense to assume huge increases in the death rate nor the number of children per family. Thus, the current level of population diversity, combined with the current age structure, has some implications for increasing diversity over time: people of color are younger than non-Hispanic Whites on average, and since young people have children, even with fertility at near replacement levels, the implication is that their relative share of the population will increase over time. Put another way, the changes in the assumptions that would be required to make this NOT happen, namely that white family size increases but other family sizes do not, seem to be extremely unrealistic ones to make in the contemporary world.

## **Part II. Basic Demographic Processes and Diversity**

The second part of this volume focuses directly on the three basic population processes of fertility, mortality, and migration. We begin with a discussion of migration not because it is the most important, but rather because it is the demographic process most often associated with the increasing diversity

of the U.S. population. In the stridency of the diversity discussions, one is sometimes left with the impression that if we could simply end immigration, the issues relating to population diversity would vanish.

*Chapter Three: New Arrivals: Current and Future Numbers of Immigrants*

New immigrants arrive daily, and in 1998 they numbered about 660,477, a decrease from the 915,900 who arrived in 1996 and the 798,378 who arrived in 1997. The immigrants overwhelmingly come from Asia (32.2%) and North America (38.3%). Europe accounts for another 14.1%, South America 6.8%, Africa 5.7%, and Oceania 0.7%. Within the North American group, 19.8% are from Mexico, about 11.0% are from the Caribbean and another 5.4% are from Central America (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1998). Refugees and illegal immigrants are not included in these figures, so the number of newcomers can approach a million in some years. It is this immigration that is always thought of first when one considers the diversity of the U.S. population. Efforts to control the flow of immigrants receive wide discussion in the media and by politicians, and in fact, immigration is the population process most often assumed to be under the control of law. Much of our current debate on American Diversity actually centers on immigration law. Are the laws we have adequate? Should we change them? Are they being adequately enforced? These issues have involved us for much of the past century, from the quota laws of the 1920s, which sought to limit immigration and structure the origin of immigrants to match the Northern and Western European orientation of the resident population, through the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) and the Immigration Law of 1990.

Yet as we learn from Doug Massey's paper in chapter 3, "The New Immigration and Ethnicity in the United States,"<sup>3</sup> the effectiveness of previous attempts to control immigration was perhaps more influenced by world economic conditions and world events than by law. Furthermore, if one works through the legislative process of actually trying to change the law, as Bach (1993) does, then it becomes clear that other than reducing the absolute number of immigrants allowed, substantial changes in the categories are going to be very politically difficult, no matter how good they seem in "sound bites." Substantial numbers of the new arrivals come because they are related to someone here, and politicians are not likely to win re-election by voting to keep out their constituents' relatives. Others come to fill needed jobs, and going against business interests does not help in re-election either. We are essentially now in a worldwide system of immigration, and what the demographic studies of migrants tell us (and what lawmakers all too often ignore)

is that immigration is fundamentally a social process. Stopping it is not simply a matter of changing the law. Immigration is a part of our national culture, and a part of both our own and many sending countries' social structure. As such, it is neither completely within the power of the individual nor the legal system to control.

#### *Chapter Four: Fertility Differentials*

While many would allow an important role for immigration as a source of demographic diversity, the role of past immigration makes another contribution to U.S. diversity in the form of births to former immigrants. Many students of introductory demography are surprised to learn that the primary source of population growth over the course of U.S. history was not immigration, but what demographers call natural increase, the excess of births over deaths (Weeks, 1996:57). Today, immigration accounts for only about one-third of the population growth in the United States, with the remaining two-thirds being attributable to natural increase. This fact alone is sufficient to point to the fallacy of focusing solely on immigration in current debates about multiculturalism and diversity. Another way to think about this point is that even if we were somehow able to ban all future immigration to the United States from any source, the diversification of the U.S. population would remain and would continue to grow, albeit more slowly than it will with continued immigration.

Gray Swicegood and Phil Morgan in chapter 4, "Racial and Ethnic Fertility Differentials in the United States," take up the issue of fertility differentials in the contemporary United States. In the context of U.S. fertility being historically low, it is easy to ignore the relatively small differences in family size observed for various subgroups of the population. Swicegood and Morgan point out, however, that these small differences do have implications for the relative future sizes of groups. They also caution us that the assumption of a fertility convergence as people assimilate to life in the United States is by no means certain, given how small families tend to be now. Again, fertility is individual, but the diversity implied by even small intergroup differences has social structural implications.

#### *Chapter Five: Mortality Differentials*

The relative sizes of various subgroups in the population are also affected by how long each group lives, or at birth, how long each group is expected

to live. To the extent that newcomers to the United States, particularly from less developed countries, benefit from the better health care and nutrition available here, and certainly their children derive this benefit in many cases, then their life expectancy rises when compared to their country of origin. In chapter 5, "Mortality Differentials in a Diverse Society," Richard Rogers provides us with information on both the methodology of studying differences in mortality (including the concomitant difficulties of getting consistent definitions of individuals at birth and death), as well as the importance of specifying the conditions under which mortality differences arise. He challenges us to think in terms of what the mortality differentials he documents would look like if the underlying social and economic conditions of the diverse groups were the same, at the same time as he informs us of the magnitude of the differentials that currently exist. His chapter also points to the importance of biological differences in studying the impact of disease on populations, while at the same time cautions us that skin color or the racial pentagon (White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American) so often used in U.S. statistics does NOT correspond to true biology.

Once one begins to think through the process of diversity from a demographic perspective then, the error of focusing only on immigration as the source of diversity becomes apparent. A recent study by Edmonston and Passell shows that in 1990, 33.7% of Asians and 59.1% of Hispanics are native born (1994:341–342), and thus increase population diversity by giving birth to native-born U.S. citizens.

### **Part III. Life Cycle and Diversity**

While chapters 3, 4, and 5 have focused on the primary demographic processes of fertility, mortality, and migration, it is well known to demographers that these fundamental processes are influenced by other life-cycle events of the population. As people go through life, their regional and neighborhood locations, educational attainment, occupations, and choice of marriage partners can lead to differences in their fertility, mortality, and migration behaviors, which in turn affect the diversity of the population. It is to these life-cycle components that we turn our attention in Part III.

#### *Chapter Six: Neighborhood Diversity and Housing Policy*

Part of the difficulty underlying many of our national discussions of population diversity is the fact that the diversity is not evenly spread across all

areas of the United States. The work of William Frey and others shows that racial and ethnic diversity is greatest in the coastal states and much less pronounced inland (Frey 1995). Regionally, the West is the most diverse, with nearly one fifth (18.8%) of its population Hispanic, combining with 7.7% Asians and 5.1% Blacks, but in the other three regions, Blacks are the largest minority group (Harrison and Bennett, 1995:150). These large-scale disparities imply the possibility of an interstate debate, with California, New York, and Florida pitted against the remainder of the nation. This has not occurred for two reasons. First, the diversity is not evenly spread across the cities and counties of the states that have most of it. Second, patterns of White separation from people of color are present in all the largest cities and suburbs, regardless of the diversity of the region or state.

It is thus fitting that Michael White and Eileen Shy's chapter, "Housing Segregation: Policy Issues for an Increasingly Diverse Society," does not focus on large-scale regional differences but on more local, neighborhood-based differences which help to fuel the national debates. Their chapter delves into the causes of this separation, causes that are tied to our nation's history of prejudice and discrimination against "foreigners"—against those who are not part of "us." At the same time, this chapter emphasizes the fact that one of the groups defined as "not us," namely African Americans, have always been singled out and remain so today. Continued high levels of racial residential segregation are an important component of the national discussion about diversity, even if they are seldom acknowledged as such.

### *Chapter Seven: Adapting to the American Economy*

Everyone, be they immigrant or native born, knows and finds that their individual fate in U.S. society is a function of two important individual variables: education and labor force participation. These two characteristics interact to determine individuals' relative success or failure, as well as that of their children. Increasingly, success is determined not just by quantity (how many years of schooling, how many weeks or hours worked) but also by quality (how good the school, how well paying and what promotion potential the job has). As wage rates fell during the 1980s, only those who had a college degree experienced a stable wage rate (Mare, 1995), thus emphasizing the important link between education and labor force rewards.

The paper by Joseph Hotz and Marta Tienda, "Education and Employment in a Diverse Society: Generating Inequality through the School-to-Work Transition," looks at these issues across all the major groups of the U.S. population. Particularly noteworthy is their finding that early work expe-

rience, obtained prior to finishing school, is a substantial advantage in later life. To the extent that young Whites are more likely to have access to these early jobs, then attaining the same level of education does not mean as large a reward for Blacks as it does for Whites. In exploring the complexities of this important transition for women as well as men, and for Hispanics as well as for Blacks and Whites, this paper embodies the essence of the demographic perspective: namely, that all groups are subject to the same fundamental processes, and hence it allows us to notice both our diversity *and* our differences.

### *Chapter Eight: Patterns of Inter marriage*

In addition to locating somewhere in a neighborhood, completing education and earning a living, large numbers of people in the contemporary United States spend their adult lives in marriages, and an even larger number of them raise children. The increasing population diversity that is the subject of this volume has two direct implications for the institution of marriage: first, a greater variety of people translates into more diverse choices of marriage partners, and second, as noted in the Hirschman and Waters chapters above, the children of racially or ethnically mixed marriages pose challenges to the system of racial and ethnic identity. In fact, current writing on the issue of racial categorization frequently singles out persons of mixed race as the source of what may ultimately lead to a dismantling of the racial/ethnic categories themselves in statistical, if not behavioral, terms (Zack, 1993:142–144; Hollinger, 1995:43–44; Cf. Zack, 1995; Root, 1992).

Gillian Stevens and Michael Tyler begin their chapter, “Ethnic and Racial Inter marriage in the United States: Old and New Regimes” by noting that in traditional assimilation theory, inter marriage has been and remains a “litmus test” of full assimilation. While same-race marriages still predominate in about 98% of all the marriages for White men, White women and Black women, 6% of Black men have a non-Black spouse in 1990. Asians, Hispanics, and those who report their race as “Other” marry within their own group roughly 80% of the time, though Asian women report a non-Asian spouse twice as often as Asian men. Marital homogamy within the Native American population has declined dramatically in recent decades, most likely as a result of the increasing numbers of people who are now “claiming” their Native American heritage (Hollinger, 1995:46). In their discussion, Stevens and Tyler point to a number of cautions regarding predicting future changes in inter marriage, especially the changing nature of the institution of marriage itself, which both lessens the potential for inter marriage and lessens the time spent in any union, including interracial ones.

*Chapter Nine: Population Aging*

The last contribution that demography makes to the discussion of population diversity comes from the fundamental importance of the basic demographic variable of age. Since the United States was formerly more numerically dominated by Whites than is true presently or will be true in the future, the racial composition of the population is very different for the old as opposed to the young. This difference is illustrated by Cynthia Taeuber in chapter 9, "Sixty-five Plus in the USA." She begins by reviewing the overall trend toward an older population as the baby boom ages, and becomes the grandparent generation, noting that the size of the elderly population varies by state and that there are important implications for providing for the care of the elderly that we must face.

Several implications follow from these facts. First, the needs of the young for schooling and other training are not as salient to the older population when the young don't look like them and are not related to them (Preston, 1984; Thurow, 1996). Support for taxes to pay for schools, playgrounds, health care, and all the other things that children need is thus jeopardized by the diverging colors of different age groups of the population. Second, as the baby boom (those born 1945–1964) becomes elderly, the people available to take care of them are increasingly people of color. Yet the elderly have had less intimate experience with people of color than the younger population, so the potential for social conflict is enhanced. Third, by virtue of being concentrated in younger ages, the newest members of U.S. society will be engaged in the support of the elderly, but they will not necessarily be well represented among them. Nor, with the temporariness of immigration in many migrant's minds, will they necessarily plan to be here for their own golden years. Thus, they will not have both of Preston's (1984) motives of working to support their elderly parents, whom they would otherwise have to support, as well as working to support themselves since they will hopefully one day become old. All of these implications flow from the basic fact that the changing age structure of the population, to an increasingly older one, will be experienced at different paces by the different race/ethnic groups. As a result, the general dislocations suggested by the aging of the population may lead to greater social conflict than the mere aging of the population itself would imply.

**Part IV. Implications and Conclusions**

These demographic points relevant to contemporary population diversity serve to provide a context for discussions of contemporary U.S. population

change and increasing diversity. In so doing, they raise issues that require more thought and attention on all of our parts. The first of these, and the subject of the final chapter in the book, is: Does the increasing population diversity have specific implications for African Americans, and what are they? Since African Americans are the nation's longest-resident (and until recently, largest) minority group, given the decimation of the Native American population, it only seems fair to single them out for special discussion.

*Chapter Ten: Implications of Increasing Diversity for African Americans*

It is possible to argue that the increasing diversity of the U.S. population, brought on at least in part because of changes in immigration, would be less troublesome had the United States solved what Myrdal (1944) referred to as the "American Dilemma." Likewise, one can also say that increasing diversity increases the urgency for Whites to try to solve the many problems associated with race now. Had we developed a more mutually satisfactory and equitable relationship with Blacks, we might be better able to deal with the diversity the immigrants provide. Certainly we would not have to face the second and third paths of segmented assimilation outlined by Portes and Zhou, whereby Hispanic Americans, particularly Cubans, find themselves remaining within their ethnic enclave, and immigrants of Black race are faced with possible assimilation into the Black underclass (Portes and Zhou, 1993).

In chapter 10, Hayward Horton raises some of these issues in the context of the treatment of race in the field of demography. His chapter, "Rethinking American Diversity: Conceptual and Theoretical Challenges for Racial and Ethnic Demography," traces how, despite the importance of the concept of race to many different demographic analyses, demographers as a group have tended to ignore the role of racism. He argues strongly for its incorporation into the main areas of the discipline and presents a theoretical model showing how its use can provide different answers and different ways of thinking about the relative status of Blacks in U.S. society.



In addition to focusing on one specific group, we can also gain from contemplating both the past and the future in our attempts to understand current population diversity. How different are these issues from those we have faced in the past? What does the nature of this diversity imply for our definition of ourselves as a nation? While the demographic focus of this volume offers little direct evidence on either of these questions, the discussion of the demo-

graphic diversity in each of these chapters serves to bring these issues into sharp relief. We will summarize some recent perspectives on them here, not as the last word, but to encourage wider discussion and broader reading.

The arrival of immigrants and the concomitant changing of the complexion of the U.S. population is certainly not a new phenomena, nor is this the first time that it has aroused concern. In one sense, our concerns as the new century begins bear a striking similarity to those we had at the beginning of the 20th century. We are still living with what Hollinger describes as "...*nonethnic* ideology of the nation" (Hollinger, 1995:19), despite the fact that we have a predominately *ethnic* history and present. Then, as now, there are concerns that the new immigrants are taking away our country.

At the beginning of both the 20th and 21st centuries, we are concerned with our identity and our unity as a country. As Fuchs has noted, "Even if that movement (immigration restriction) is partly successful, immigration is likely to continue at high levels, and it is important to pay attention to the public policies that will help unify immigrants and their children as Americans" (Fuchs, 1993:171). In 1910 roughly one-third of the U.S. population was foreign-born or of foreign stock, compared to about one-fifth today (Passel and Edmonston, 1994:39). As Watkins points out, with each new wave "commentators debated the differences between the newcomers and the 'Americans,' who were often, of course, the descendants of earlier newcomers. ...was it possible that...[they] would ever be 'like us'?" (Watkins, 1994:2).

From the vantage point of today, it is clear that the concern over the immigrants in 1910 was out of proportion to what happened to U.S. society. In many ways we thrived as a nation and our place in the world is more prominent now than then. But this does not relieve us from the responsibility to think about the sort of future we envision for the country. As Fuchs has argued, "... diversity is an American strength, but unless we protect the central principles of individual rights that makes diversity possible, we will drift toward racial and ethnic separatism" (1993:186). Fragmentation into warring factions is hardly a goal toward which to strive, though Rose (1993) has pointed out that many of the same tactics to gain integration in use today were previously used by the Southern, Central, and Eastern European immigrants. That those immigrants were eventually accepted should give us pause as we argue that today's new immigrants and their demands will lead to the fragmentation of U.S. society. Yet as the situation of African Americans so vividly reminds us, to some extent the old way of assimilating was and is reserved for those of the White race. Then what of the people of color who comprise the new immigrants?

Fear of the answer to questions like these flourishes best in ignorance. Despite evidence that Americans do not know the correct demographic dimensions of the current diversity (Brodie, 1995; Gitlin, 1996:113), we have no choice but to move forward together. Hollinger (1995) presents us with a

carefully thought-out vision of what he calls a “post-ethnic” society. He argues for building upon the racial and ethnic affiliations so prominent today, stressing the voluntary nature of these affiliations while at the same time recognizing the power of the “ethno-racial pentagon” to identify people likely to be discriminated against, and stresses a cosmopolitan definition of ourselves as “citizens of the world.” In his view, “Being an American amid a multiplicity of affiliations need not be dangerously threatening to diversity. Nor need it be too shallow to constitute an important solidarity of its own.” (Hollinger, 1995:163). That there are problems ahead is certain, but as we think about them, we might do well to remember the words of Paul Spickard: “Almost no White American extended family exists today without at least one member who has married across what two generations ago would have been thought an unbridgeable gap.” (quoted in Gitlin, 1996:113) While we have no illusions that this volume of essays will transform the current diversity debate from cacophony to symphony, we do believe that the authors have helped us take a significant step toward a much fuller understanding of the demographic underpinnings of the debate. One hopes that future discussions of American diversity will build on their important contributions, and move us even further ahead.

### Notes

1. Even an incomplete list of book titles on this topic is long: Benjamin DeMott, *The Trouble with Friendship: Why Americans Can't Think Straight About Race*; Lawrence Fuchs, *The American Kaleidoscope: Race, Ethnicity and the Civic Culture*; Todd Gitlin, *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America is Wracked by Culture Wars*; Kofi Buenor Hadjor, *Another America: The Politics of Race and Blame*; Jennifer Hochschild, *Facing Facing Up to the American Dream*; David Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*; Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*; Howard Winant, *Racial Conditions: Politics, Theory, Comparisons*. In addition, the many books specifically about African Americans are also relevant: Stephen Carter, *Confessions of an Affirmative Action Baby*; Shelby Steele, *The Content of Our Character*, etc.

2. Because only limited data are currently available from the 2000 census, the chapters in this volume rely primarily on data for 1990. In a few chapters information from the 2000 “short form” is included. Data from the 2000 “long form” have not yet been released. Go to [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) for the latest information available.

3. The term “plunderclass” was coined by Tolnay (1999) in *The Bottom Rung: African American Family Life on Southern Farms*. In the current context, we use it to offer some balance to social scientists’ preoccupation with the social problems

plaguing the underclass. The plunderclass would include those members of the upper and upper-middle classes who have benefitted disproportionately from such trends as the increasingly regressive nature of taxation in the U.S., and corporations' exportation of jobs to low-wage developing nations. In a very real sense, the same social and economic forces that have improved the fortunes of the plunderclass have had negative consequences for the underclass, and working poor, in America.

4. The legal slave trade to the United States ended in 1808, though illegal slave smuggling continued well after. Thus, the vast majority of African Americans have ancestries in the U.S. that are several generations long – far longer than most living Americans with European roots.

5. This chapter can also be found in *Population and Development Review*, vol. 21, no. 3 (Sept.1995), pp. 631-652.

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