Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being by Race and Hispanic Origin

Prepared by the Council of Economic Advisers
for the President s Initiative on Race

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Introduction

> "I believe the greatest challenge we face . . . is also our greatest opportunity. Of all the questions of prejudice and discrimination that still exist in our society, the most perplexing one is the oldest, and is in some ways today, the newest: the problem of race. Can we fulfill the promise of America by embracing all our citizens of all races? . . . In short, can we become one America in the 21st Century?"
>
> President Clinton
> President's Initiative on Race Announcement at the
> University of California, San Diego Commencement, 1997

This fact book is intended to document current differences in well-being by race and Hispanic origin and to describe how such differences have evolved over time. It has been produced for the President's Initiative on Race by the Council of Economic Advisers in consultation with the Federal statistical agencies. It is hoped that this book will further one of the goals of this initiative: to educate Americans about the facts surrounding the issue of race in America.

The collection of charts included in this fact book present some key indicators of well-being in seven broad categories: population, education, labor markets, economic status, health, crime and criminal justice, and housing and neighborhoods. This type of information can provide a benchmark for measuring progress and can highlight priority areas for reducing disparities in well-being across racial and ethnic groups, another important goal of the President's Initiative on Race. Indicators were selected for inclusion in this volume based on the importance of the indicator for economic and social well-being, as well as the quality and availability of the data. In addition, availability of longer time trends or information for more groups also influenced the decision to include one indicator over another. Of course, a book of this size cannot cover all important aspects of social and economic life. Instead, these charts provide the reader with a place to begin. The appendix provides more information for how to access additional information that is collected and compiled by agencies of the Federal government.

The American record has been one of tremendous progress in many areas such as education, health and longevity, and economic growth, but deterioration in others, such as incarceration rates, divorce, and the likelihood that a child is born outside of marriage. Since 1950, life expectancy at birth has increased from 68 years to 76 in 1996, and infant mortality rates have fallen from about 29 per thousand live births to 7. And per capita income, adjusted for inflation, has nearly tripled since 1950. The proportion of American adults with a high school education has increased from 73 percent in 1967 (the first year for which comparable data are available) to

87 percent in 1996. The fraction of households living in severely inadequate housing has fallen from 8.5 percent in 1976 to 4.5 percent in 1995.

Although all racial and ethnic groups have experiences substantial improvements in social and economic well-being over the second half of this century, disparities between groups persist. And in some cases, disparities have widened. Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians continue to suffer disadvantages in opportunity and in material and physical well-being. These disadvantages appear in many arenas, but they are larger in some than others. For example, although the Hispanic poverty rate is far higher than that of non-Hispanic whites, differences in infant mortality between Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites are relatively modest. Blacks have nearly closed the gap with non-Hispanic whites in the attainment of a high school degree, but large gaps persist (or have widened) in the completion of a four-year college degree.

Several themes emerge from the data presented in this document.

- Race and ethnicity continue to be salient predictors of well-being in American society. Non-Hispanic whites and Asians on average experience advantages in health, education, and economic status relative to blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians.
  Since the first half of the century, black Americans have made substantial progress towards narrowing gaps with whites in many areas. But this progress generally slowed, or even reversed, between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s, and in many cases, large disparities persist.
- Hispanics' status relative to other groups has generally declined over the past 25 years. However, the Hispanic population has grown rapidly, roughly doubling in size between 1980 and 1996, in large part the result of immigration. In interpreting these trends, it is therefore important to keep in mind that the increasing representation of Hispanic immigrants with lower average levels of education has contributed to the decline in average Hispanic social and economic well-being.
- Asians and Pacific Islanders, on average, are nearly as advantaged as non-Hispanic whites according to many indicators. There is great diversity within this population, however. Some subpopulations are quite disadvantaged, although data for subgroups are scarce. The fact that Asians have both higher median income and higher poverty rates than non-Hispanic whites, for example, illustrates the economic diversity within the Asian population.

- American Indians are among the most disadvantaged Americans according to many available indicators, such as poverty rates and income, although comparable data for this group are sparse due to their small representation in the population.

An important caveat is that, for each indicator, this volume generally presents averages for each race and Hispanic origin category and cannot fully capture the diversity within these groups. For instance, Mexican Americans and Cuban Americans may have very different average economic status, although both are included in the Hispanic category. Similar diversity occurs within all groups (including ethnic diversity within the non-Hispanic white population). Unfortunately, this book has not the space to look at subpopulations, nor are the data readily available.

The classification of individuals by race and ethnicity is a complex and controversial undertaking. The concepts of race and ethnicity lack precise and universally accepted definitions. Their economic and social significance depend on a variety of factors, including how individuals identify themselves racially or ethnically and how others identify and treat them. Most of the data collected by the Federal statistical agencies and presented in this book are classified by *self-reported* race and ethnicity. (Notable exceptions are death and homicide statistics.) Most of these data are collected through household surveys and the decennial censuses, in which respondents are asked to identify their race in one questions and, in a separate question, are asked whether or not they are of Hispanic origin. Whenever possible, data for the following five categories are presented:

- Hispanic, may be of any race,
- White, not of Hispanic origin,
- Black, not of Hispanic origin,
- Asian, including Pacific Islander,
- American Indian, including Alaska Native (Alaskan Eskimos and Aleuts).

In this volume, categories of race and Hispanic origin are labeled as they are labeled in most of the surveys at the time the data were collected (using black rather than African American, orHispanic rather than Latino, for example). It should be noted, however, that the Office of Management and Budget revised standards for classifying Federal data on race and ethnicity in October 1997. The new standards permit respondents to mark one or more race category on survey questionnaires. In addition, the "Asian and Pacific Islander" category has been divided into two categories: "Asian" and "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander." The "black" category has been changed to "black or African American." There will continue to be a separate

question on ethnicity, which will have two categories: "Hispanic or Latino" and "Not Hispanic or Latino."

Published data are not always available for all of the groups described above. At times statistics are lacking because survey sample sizes are too small to yield reliable estimates for smaller populations such as American Indians or Asians. In addition, statistical agencies tabulate published data using different classifications. For example, as noted above, Hispanics may be of any race. Some agencies tabulate data for Hispanics but also include Hispanics in tabulations for the categories white and black. In a few cases, agencies have changed the way they tabulate data over time as well. The labels and notes for each chart indicate these differences in data classification.

This book is divided into seven sections. Each section begins with brief introduction of the topical area and an overview of the charts presented in that section. These introductions provide background information on the concepts addressed in the section, including references to some of the key research literature in the area. In addition, each chart is accompanied by bullet points, which highlight the important information in the chart and also provide related information that may not appear in the charts but may draw on the preceding introductory sections. The appendix provides a list of other government publications and internet addresses where the reader can find more information on all of the topics covered in this book.

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Population

The population of the United States is becoming increasingly diverse. In recent years, racial and ethnic minority populations—non-Hispanic black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian—have each grown faster than the population as a whole (Population 1). Whereas in 1970 racial and ethnic minorities together represented only 17 percent of the population, by 1997 this share had increased to 28 percent. Assuming current trends continue, the Bureau of the Census projects that racial and ethnic minorities will account for almost half of the U.S. population by 2050.

Immigration has played a major role in the increasing diversity of the population by contributing to the rapid growth of the Asian and Hispanic populations since the 1960s.[1] In 1997, 38 percent of the Hispanic population and 61 percent of the Asian population were foreign-born, compared with 8 percent of the white population, 6 percent of the black population, and 6 percent of the American Indian population (Population 2). The increased immigration of Asians and Hispanics over the past several decades is largely the result of changes in immigration policy. In particular, the 1965 Immigration Act ended the system of national origin quotas that had previously restricted immigration from non-European countries.[2] The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 also contributed to the increase in the documented Asian and Hispanic populations by legalizing a large number of immigrants.

As immigration of Asians and Hispanics has increased, population growth has slowed dramatically for the nation as a whole, largely due to declining fertility rates among blacks and non-Hispanic whites. As a result of these declining fertility rates, the non-Hispanic white share of the population has fallen considerably since 1970, and the black share of the population has increased only slightly.

Changes in racial and ethnic identification have also contributed to the increase in (measured) racial and ethnic diversity. These changes are most important for the American Indian population, which has increased more in recent years than can be accounted for by deaths, births, immigration, and improvements in census coverage. The increase in the American Indian population suggests that people are more likely to identify themselves as American Indian in the census than they were in the past.[3]

Although the racial and ethnic diversity of the population as a whole is increasing, an individual's experience of growing diversity may be affected by the geographic region in which he or she lives, since the racial and ethnic composition of the population varies considerably from region to region (Population 3). The West has the highest concentration of minorities (33 percent), followed by the South (28 percent), the

Northeast (21 percent), and the Midwest (14 percent). Blacks are most likely to live in the South, while Asians, Hispanics, and American Indians are most likely to live in the West.

Racial composition also varies from the center cities of metropolitan areas, to the suburbs (metropolitan areas outside center cities), to nonmetropolitan areas. Hispanics, blacks, and Asians are more likely than non-Hispanic whites and American Indians to live in central cities—in 1990 more than half of blacks and Hispanics and nearly half of Asians lived in the central city, compared with less than a quarter of non-Hispanic whites and American Indians (Population 4). In contrast, over half of all non-Hispanic whites lived in the suburbs in 1990, as did 47 percent of Asians. American Indians were by far the most likely to live in nonmetropolitan areas; in 1990 nearly half of the American Indian population lived outside of metropolitan areas. Substantial percentages of both non-Hispanic whites and Southern blacks also live in nonmetropolitan areas.

As the population becomes more diverse, individuals' opportunities for social interaction with members of other racial and ethnic groups increase. Interracial marriage is one measure of social interaction (Population 5). The number of interracial married couples has increased quite dramatically over the past several decades, more than tripling since 1960. However, interracial married couples still represent less than 4 percent of all married couples.

Many demographic characteristics may affect social and economic well-being. In particular, differences in age distribution, household structure, and immigration can affect the economic and social status of racial and ethnic populations discussed throughout this book. For example, poverty rates are highest among children, and rates of criminal activity are higher among young adults. Differences in age distributions between racial and ethnic groups reflect differences in death rates, fertility rates, rates of net immigration, and the age of immigrants.

Differences in the age distribution of racial and ethnic groups (Population 6) affect rates of population growth as well as differences in average economic and social well-being. For example, poverty rates are highest among children, and rates of criminal activity are highest among young adults. On average, the non-Hispanic white population is considerably older than the population as a whole. Only 25 percent of the non-Hispanic white population is below the age of 18, compared with more than 30 percent of blacks, Asians, and American Indians, and nearly 40 percent of Hispanics. Differences in age distributions between racial and ethnic groups reflect differences in death rates, fertility rates, rates of net immigration, and the age of immigrants.

Household structure is also related to economic status. In particular, growth of child poverty has often been associated with the rising share of single-parent families. Since 1970 the fraction of families headed by a single parent has increased for all groups (Population 7) and is highest among blacks (36 percent), American Indians (25 percent), and Hispanics (24 percent).

Finally, immigration affects the average social and economic status of different racial and ethnic groups. The immigrant population is diverse, representing a wide range of educational backgrounds and social characteristics. Foreign-born Asians, on average, are highly educated and have high median incomes. In contrast, Hispanic immigrants, along with some subgroups of Asian immigrants, tend to have low levels of educational attainment and income, and some have had virtually no formal schooling. The low average socioeconomic status of Hispanic immigrants, coupled with their increasing share of the U.S. Hispanic population, has lowered the average socioeconomic status of Hispanics relative to other racial/ethnic groups.

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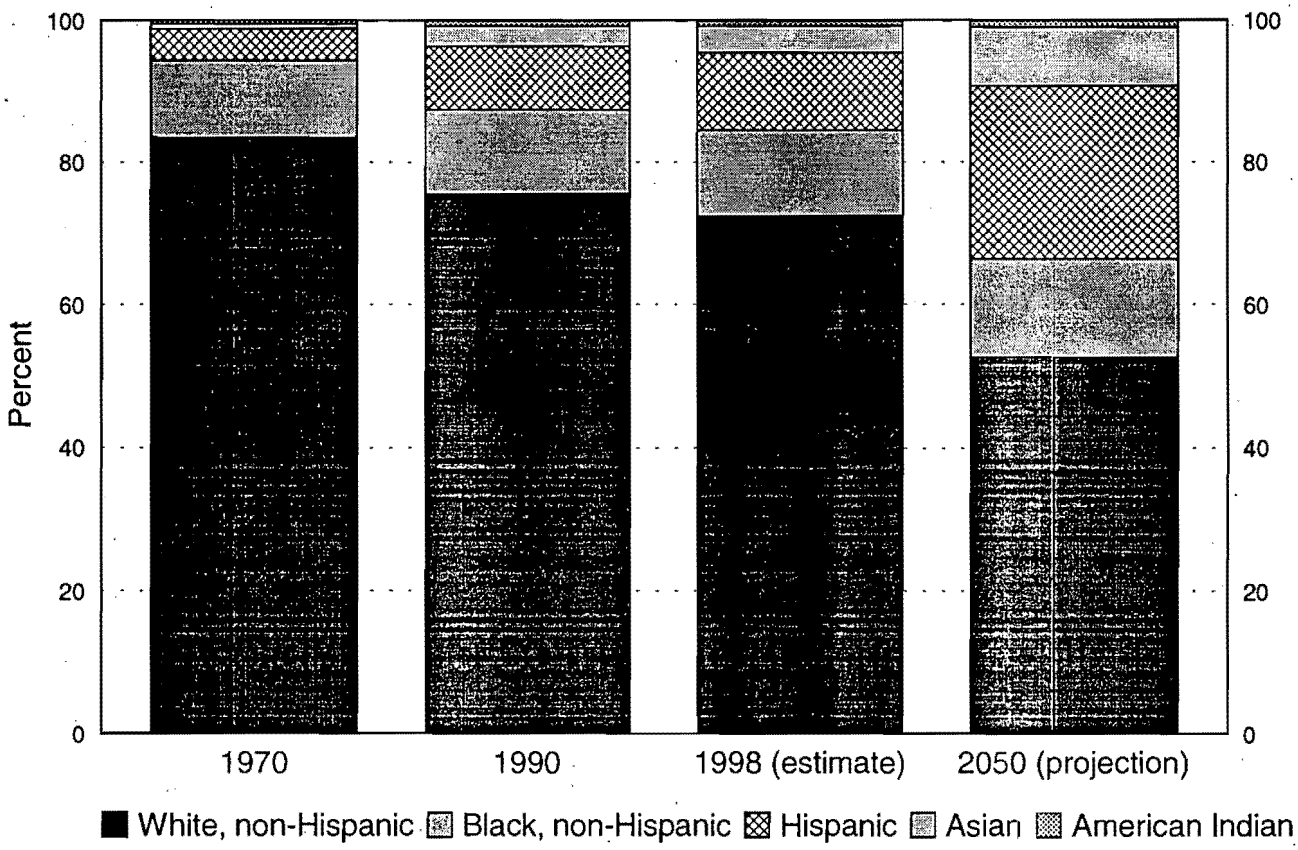
1. Bennett, Claudette, and Roderick Harrison. 1995. "Racial and Ethnic Diversity." In Reynolds Farley, ed., *State of the Union: America in the 1990s*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

2. ibid.

3. Passel, Jeffrey S. 1996. "The Growing American Indian Population, 1960–1990: Beyond Demography." In Gary D, Sandefur, Ronald R. Rindfuss, and Berney Cohen, eds., *Changing Numbers, Changing Needs, American Indian Demography and Public Health*. New York: National Academy Press.

Population

1. Racial/Ethnic Composition of the Population



Note: Data for Asians exclude Asian Hispanics, and data for American Indians exclude American Indian Hispanics.
Source: Bureau of the Census.

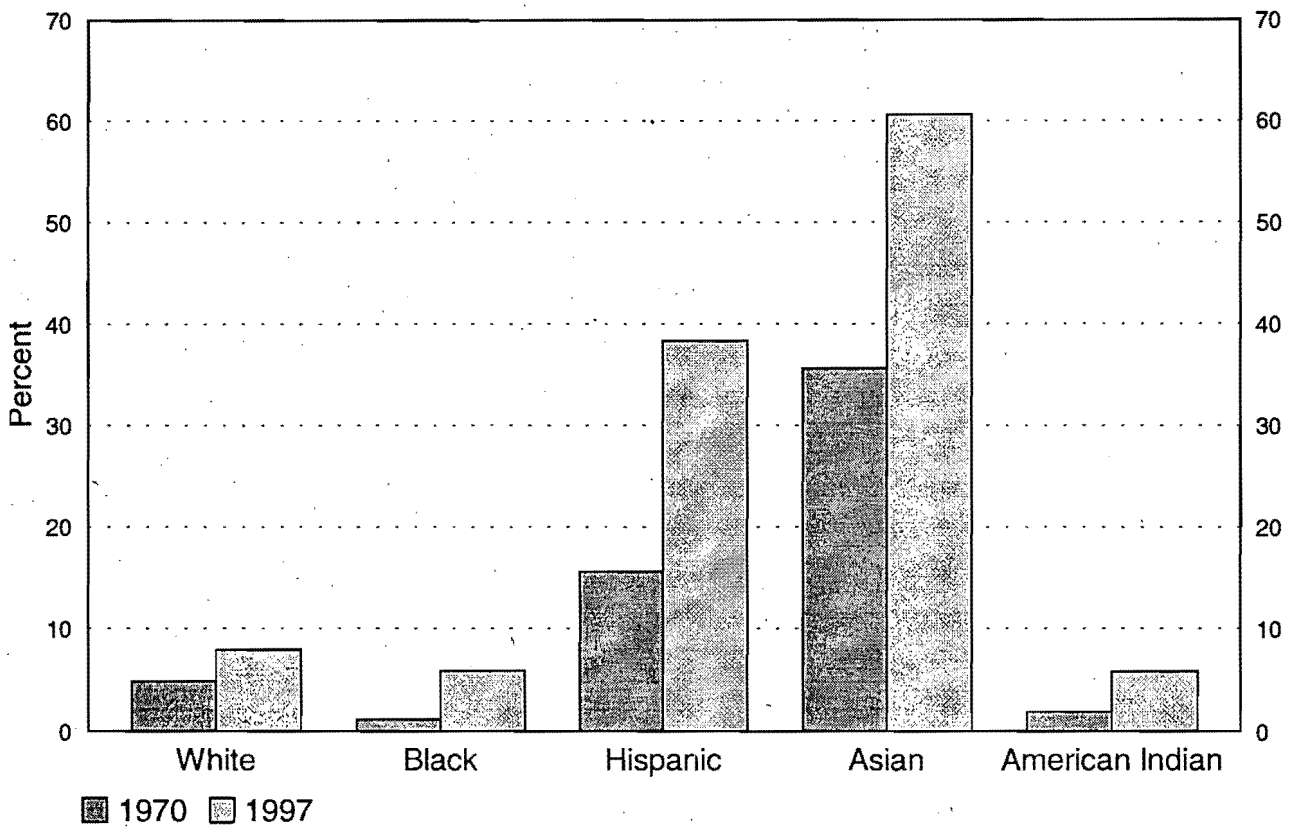
- The share of the U.S. population that is Asian, Hispanic, and American Indian has increased since 1970. A substantial portion of the increase in the American Indian population has resulted from an increase in the number of persons identifying themselves as American Indian.

- If recent demographic trends continue, Asians, non-Hispanic blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians together will approach 50 percent of the population by the year 2050.

- Hispanics, who may be of any race, are projected to outnumber blacks around the year 2005.

Population

2. Foreign-Born Population

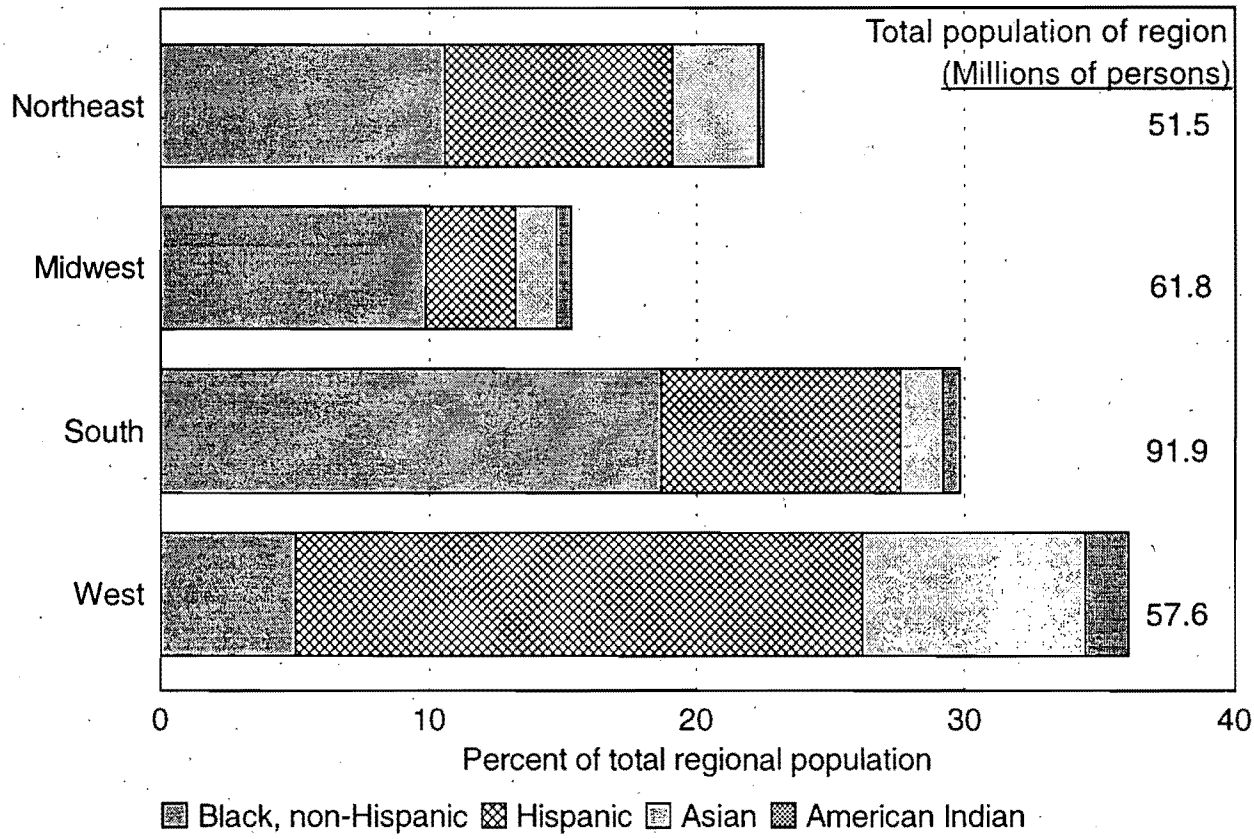


Source: Bureau of the Census.

- Among all groups, the fraction of the population that is foreign-born has increased since 1970.
- As of 1997, 61 percent of the Asian population and 38 percent of the Hispanic populations were foreign-born. In contrast, only 8 percent of whites, 6 percent of blacks, and 6 percent of American Indians were foreign-born.
- The immigrant population represents a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. On average, Asian immigrants are highly educated and have high median incomes. Hispanic immigrants, along with some subgroups of Asian immigrants, tend to have low levels of educational attainment and income, and some have had virtually no formal schooling.
- The low average socioeconomic status of Hispanic immigrants, coupled with their increasing share of the U.S. Hispanic population, has lowered the average socioeconomic status of Hispanics relative to other racial/ethnic groups.

Population

3. Minority Population by Region, 1995



Note: Data for Asians exclude Asian Hispanics, and data for American Indians exclude American Indian Hispanics.
Source: Bureau of the Census.

- The regional distribution of populations affects individuals' experiences of growing racial and ethnic diversity.

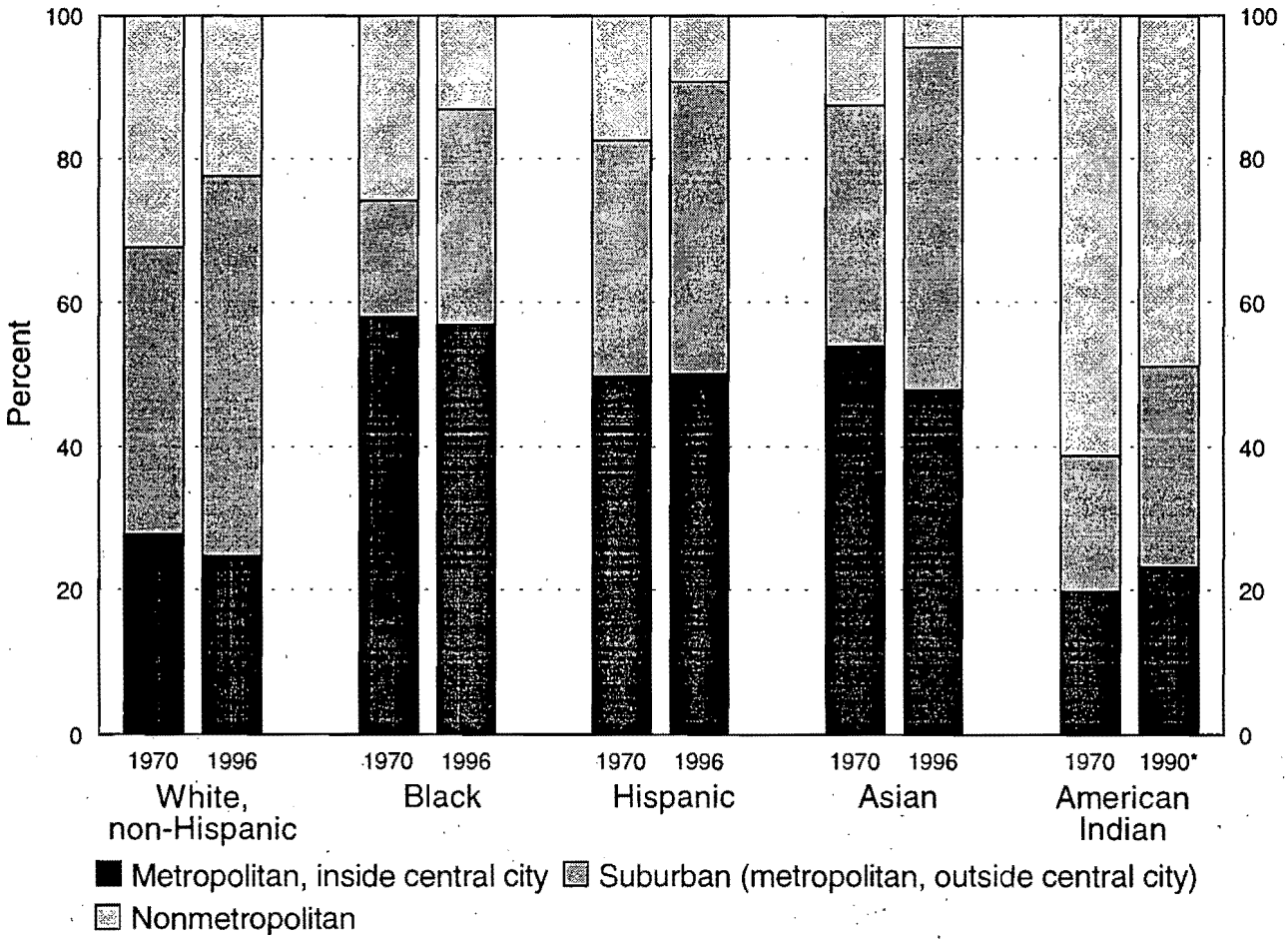
- The West has the highest concentration of minorities (33 percent), followed by the South (28 percent), the Northeast (21 percent), and the Midwest (14 percent).

- A high proportion of non-Hispanic blacks live in the South, whereas American Indians, Hispanics, and Asians are more likely to live in the West. Asians are also concentrated in the Northeast.

- In general, the minority share of the population has increased across all four regions since 1970 (not shown in chart). There has been dramatic growth of the Hispanic populations in the West and the South and of the Asian population in the West.

Population

4. Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Residence



* 1996 data for American Indians are not available.
Note: In 1970, data for whites include white Hispanics.

Source: Bureau of the Census.

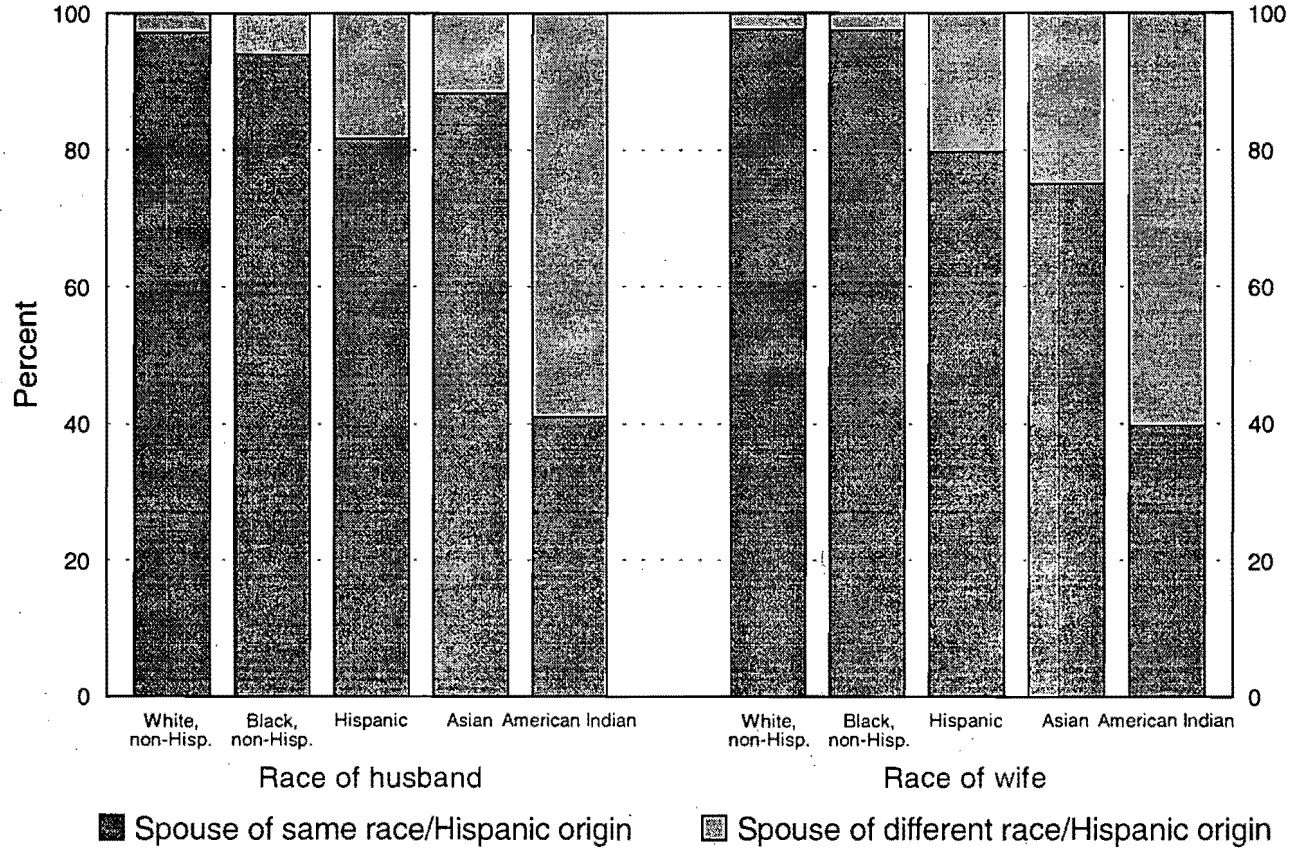
- Suburban residence is often associated with middle-class status. Nonmetropolitan; metropolitan, central city; and suburban populations may have different public service needs and different political interests.

- Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics are more likely to live in central cities of metropolitan areas than are non-Hispanic whites or American Indians.

- A large percentage of non-Hispanic whites and Asians live in suburbs. The fraction living in suburbs has increased since 1970 among all racial and ethnic groups.

- Nearly half of American Indians, one quarter of non-Hispanic whites, and nearly 20 percent of blacks live outside of metropolitan areas. These nonmetropolitan population shares are shrinking for all groups, however.

5. Interracial Marriage, 1990



Source: Bureau of the Census.

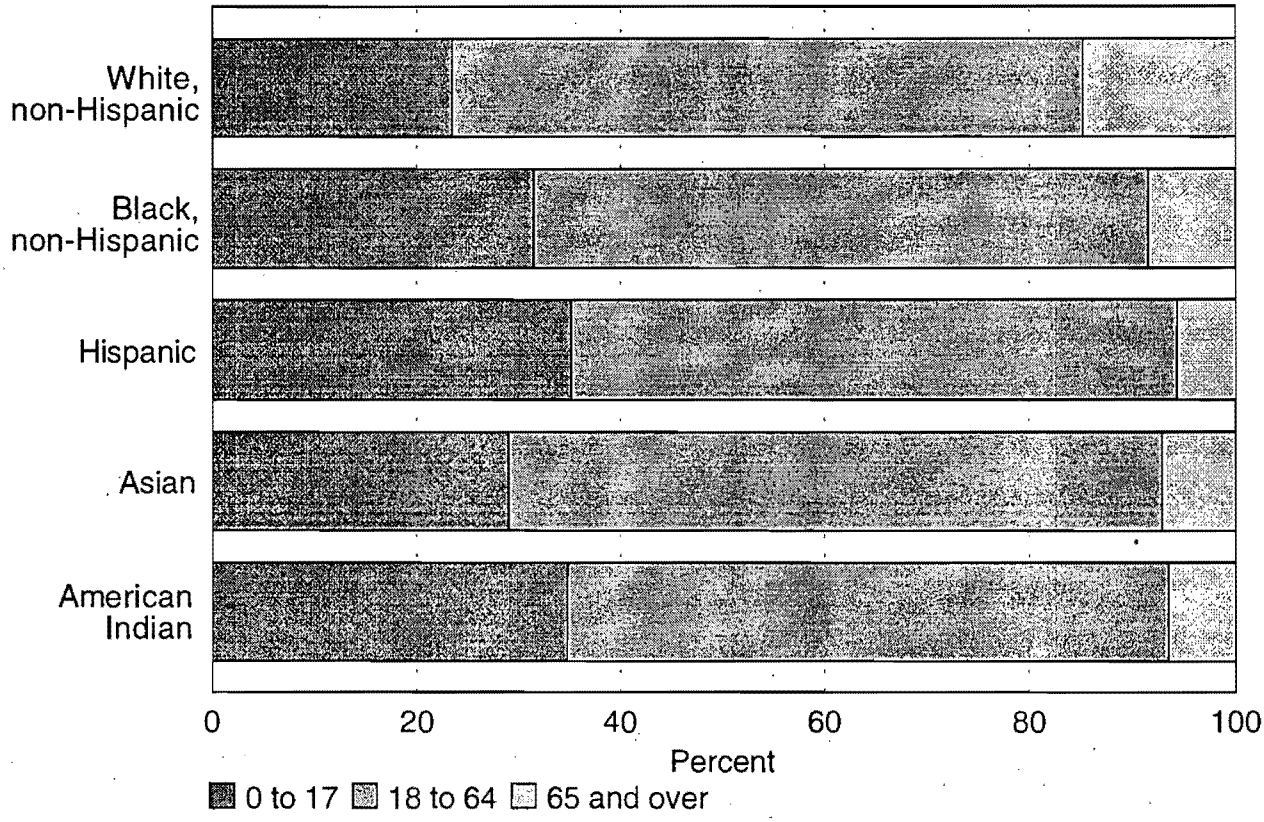
- Intermarriage is an indicator of social integration and is associated with increased interracial births. This chart shows on the left the percentage of married men who are members of interracial couples and on the right the percentage of married women who are members of interracial couples.

- Between 1960 and 1990, interracial married couples as a percentage of all married couples have more than tripled (not shown in chart). However, interracial married couples still account for less than 4 percent of all married couples.

- In general, members of smaller racial or ethnic groups (such as American Indians) are more likely to be in an interracial marriage than members of larger groups (such as non-Hispanic whites). The notable exceptions are Asian men and non-Hispanic black women, since both groups, despite their small group size, have relatively low rates of intermarriage.

Population

6. Age Distribution, 1997



Source: Bureau of the Census.

- Differences in age distributions between population groups reflect differences in death rates, fertility rates, rates of net immigration, and the age of immigrants. These age differences can in turn lead to differences in economic, health, or social status across racial and ethnic groups. For example, poverty rates are highest among children, and rates of criminal activity are high in the teens and twenties.

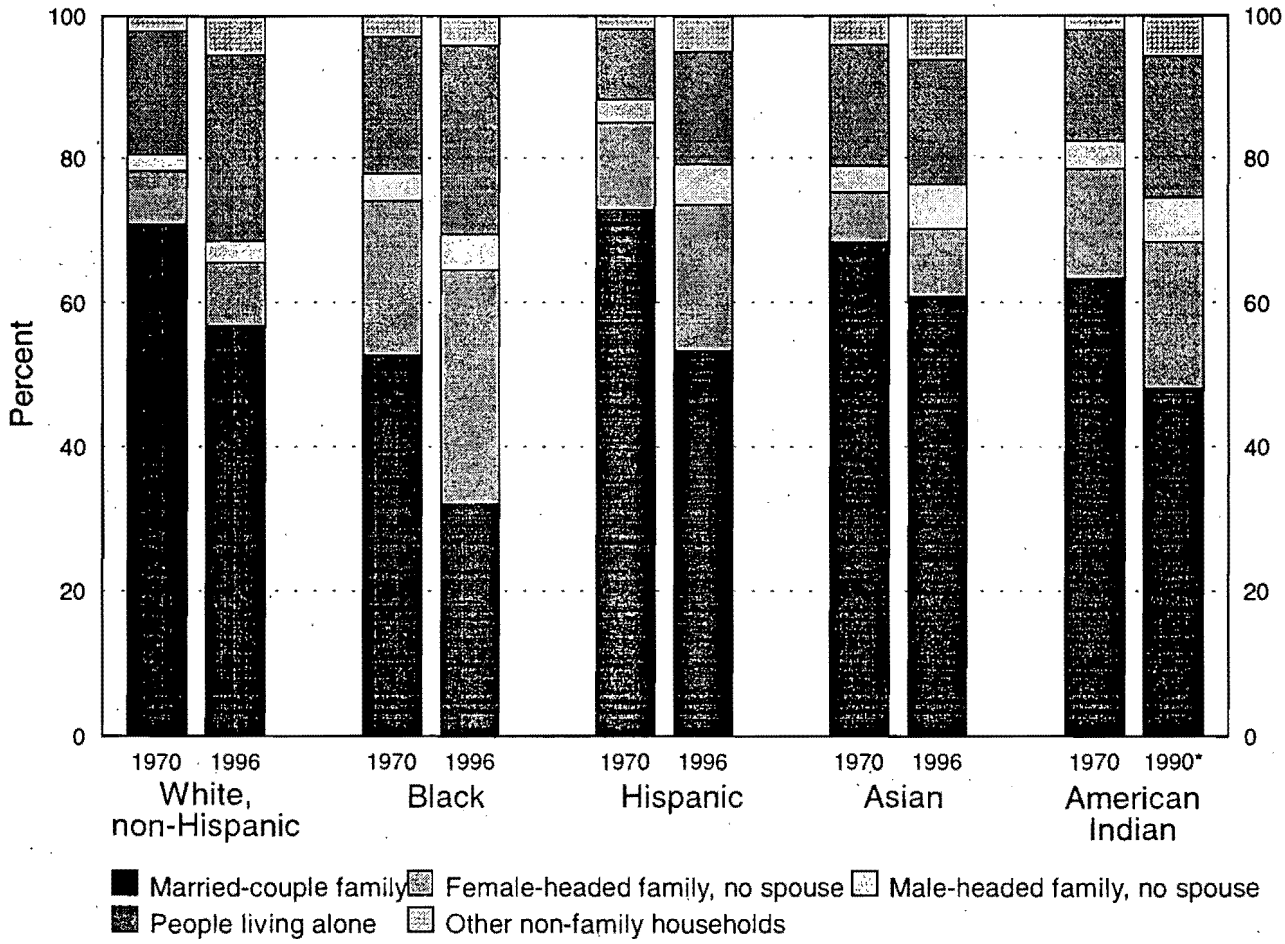
- Nearly 15 percent of non-Hispanic whites are above the age of 65, compared with less than 9 percent of all other groups.

- More than 30 percent of Hispanics, non-Hispanic blacks, and American Indians, and nearly 30 percent of Asians are below the age of 17, compared with less than 25 percent of non-Hispanic whites. In part, the younger average age of Asians and Hispanics reflects the younger average age of new immigrants in these groups.

- As a result of the high percentages of non-Hispanic blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and American Indians under the age of 17, the school-age population is more racially and ethnically diverse than the population as a whole; the racial/ethnic composition of this population resembles the projected composition of the population as a whole for 2020 (not shown in chart).

Population

7. Household Structure



* 1996 data for American Indians are unavailable.

Note: For 1970, data for whites include white Hispanics.

Source: Bureau of the Census.

- Household structure is often linked to social and economic status. For example, the increase in child poverty has been associated with the rising share of single-parent families. The greater tendency of older persons to live independently has been linked to their increased wealth.

- Since 1970 the fraction of families headed by married couples has declined substantially; this decline has been greatest for blacks. A relatively high percentage of both Asian and non-Hispanic white households are maintained by married-couple families.

- The fraction of families headed by a single parent has increased for all groups. The increase has occurred both for female-headed and male-headed families with no spouse present, although male-headed families with no spouse present make up less than one quarter of single-parent families.

- The fraction of households composed of only one person has increased for all groups except Asians since 1970 and represented more than a quarter of non-Hispanic white and black households in 1990. Other non-family households (unrelated individuals living together) have increased as a fraction of all households for all groups since 1970.

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Education

Educational attainment is one of the most important indicators of lifetime economic opportunities. Higher education is associated with lower unemployment and higher wages, higher family income and wealth, and better health status for adults and their children. A substantial portion of gaps in well-being among racial and ethnic groups can be accounted for by differences in educational opportunities and attainment. For example, studies find that an important component of the improvement in the economic status of blacks in the 1960s and early 1970s resulted from improvements in educational attainment and school quality, especially in the South.[1]

Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians continue to experience educational disadvantages. Black and Hispanic children are more likely than non-Hispanic white children to be poor (Economic Status 3), and to have parents with lower education levels. As a result, they often begin life with disadvantages related to family financial and educational resources. Research is mounting about the importance of a stimulating environment for early childhood development, starting in infancy. This education begins at home. It is not until age three that children typically enter preschools or Head Start programs designed to promote school readiness. The most important teachers for children under the age of five are family members. For example, reading to young children helps them learn to speak and, later, to read and write. Reading to children is also correlated with school performance in reading comprehension and overall success in school.[2]

Young non-Hispanic black and Hispanic children are less likely to be read to by family members or to be told a story than their non-Hispanic white counterparts (Education 1). Because reading to children increases sharply with a parent's educational attainment,[3] some differences in reading to children across racial and ethnic groups are likely to be related to parental education.

Social policies attempt to improve educational opportunities by providing enriched early childhood educational opportunities through programs such as Head Start, the largest federal program for early childhood education of economically disadvantaged children. Partly as a result

of such policies, non-Hispanic black children aged three and four are more likely than non-Hispanic white children to be enrolled in preschool programs (Education 2). Research has found that Head Start and other preschool programs promote children's cognitive development and achievement. Some research has found that the effects of Head Start are largest for Hispanics, perhaps because it provides an advantage in English language acquisition for children from homes where English is not the primary language spoken. The research literature is unsettled on the question of whether the beneficial effects of preschool interventions persist or fade as children age. One recent study reported that gains found for black children in the Head Start program fade if the children enter poor quality elementary schools but persist if their elementary schools are of good quality.[4]

Computing skills are valued in the labor market, and demand for workers with computer skills has increased markedly over the past 20 years.[5] Computer use by all children, whether at home or at school, has grown markedly in the past 15 years (Education 3). However, the increase in use both at home and at school has been greatest for non-Hispanic whites, and in 1993 non-Hispanic blacks and Hispanics were considerably less likely to use a computer at home or at school than non-Hispanic whites. Lower levels of computer usage among non-Hispanic black and Hispanic children may be related to lower income levels among these groups; in general, children from higher income families were more likely to have used a computer at home or at school than children from lower income families.

Math and reading proficiency scores measure student achievement in these areas. Higher scores are predictive of higher future educational attainment; they are also associated with future success in the labor market, even among individuals with similar levels of education.[6] Non-Hispanic black and Hispanic children score lower on achievement tests, on average, than non-Hispanic white children at similar ages (Education 4 and Education 5). Like many other indicators of educational progress, however, between-group differences in achievement tests scores may be influenced by differences in a variety of social and economic factors, including school quality, parental education, and family income.

Educational attainment is predictive of improved socioeconomic status, higher wage rates, and better health. Parents' education is associated with better health, development, and educational attainment of children. Educational attainment has been steadily increasing (Education 6). The fraction of the population aged 25 and older who completed high school (or equivalent) exceeds 50 percent for all groups and exceeds 75 percent for non-Hispanic blacks, non-Hispanic whites, and Asians. The increase in attainment has been faster among blacks, non-Hispanic whites, and Asians than among Hispanics. Attainment has increased markedly among blacks since the 1940s, and even since 1980, the fraction of non-Hispanic blacks who did not complete high school dropped from nearly half to less than one quarter. In 1996, non-Hispanic blacks were more likely to have completed high school, and more likely to have completed some education beyond high school, than non-Hispanic whites were in 1980. However, non-Hispanic blacks today are still less likely than whites were in 1980 to have a college, professional, or doctoral degree. Asians have by far the highest average level of educational attainment of any of these groups. Generally, Asian's educational attainment increased over the past 15 years as more attended and completed college.

Hispanic high school attainment has improved only slowly over the past 15 years. About 47 percent of Hispanic adults over the age of 25 have not completed high school. The numbers are not much better for younger Hispanics (aged 25 to 29). However, among those who have completed high school, the fraction completing at least some college has increased from 31 percent in 1971 to about 54 percent in 1997. The slow increase of educational attainment among Hispanics in aggregate is at least partly due to the immigration of persons with low educational attainment. For example, in 1997 among Hispanics aged 25 and over, 31 percent of U.S.-born Hispanics had not completed high school, compared to 5X% of foreign born Hispanics. Further, the high school completion rates of native-born Hispanics increased substantially between 1980 and 1990, similar to the increase among blacks, whereas attainment of Hispanic immigrants remained stagnant at low levels.[7]

Since education takes place most intensively at younger ages, data on attainment among younger

adults provide a better sense of current educational opportunities and conditions. The percentage of 25 to 29 year olds with a high school degree is nearly as high among blacks as among non-Hispanic whites (Education 7). However, Hispanic 25- to 29-year olds continue to have lower rates of high school completion. And, although young blacks are attending college at increasing rates, the gap in college completion between young blacks and non-Hispanic whites did not narrow appreciably over the 1980s (Education 8).

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1. Donohue, J., and J. Heckman. (1991) "Continuous Versus Episodic Change: The Impact of Civil Rights Policy on the Economic Status of Blacks." Journal of Economic Literature 29: 1603-43.

2. Wells, C. G. **[[Date?]]**"Preschool Literacy-Related Activities and Success in School." In D. Olson, N. Torrance, and A. Hildyard, eds., *Literacy, Language and Learning: The Nature and Consequences of Literacy.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press (Cited in *Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics 1997*).

3. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. 1997. *American Children: Key National Indicators of Well-being*; White children are also about 50 percent more likely than black or Hispanic children to be read to daily-64 percent of white children, 44 percent of black children, and 39 percent of Hispanic children aged 3 to 5 were read to every day by a family member (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics 1997, p. 43).

4. Currie, J. and T. Duncan. 1995."Does Head Start Make a Difference?" *American Economic Review* 85 (3): 341-64; Currie, J. and T. Duncan. 1998. "School Quality and the Longer-Term Effects of Head Start." Working Paper No. 6362, National Bureau of Economic Research, Washington, DC.

5. Krueger, A. B. 1993. "How Computers Have Changed the Wage Structure: Evidence from Microdata, 1984—1989." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, February 1993: 33-60.

6. Neal, D., and W. Johnson. 1996. "The Role of Premarket Factors in Black-White Wage Differences." *Journal of Political Economy* 104 (5): 869-95.

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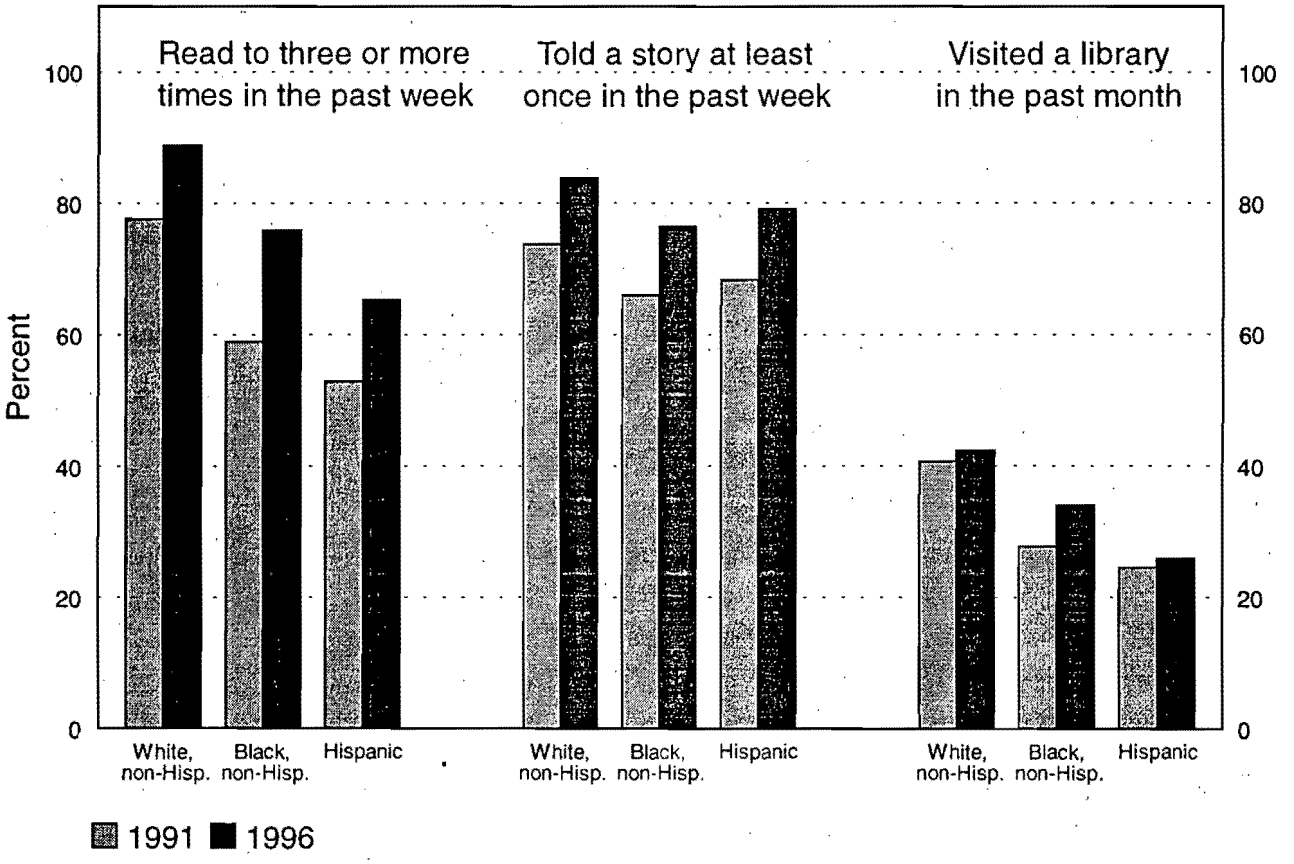
Education

1. Participation in Literacy Activities with a Parent or Family Member by Children Aged Three to Five



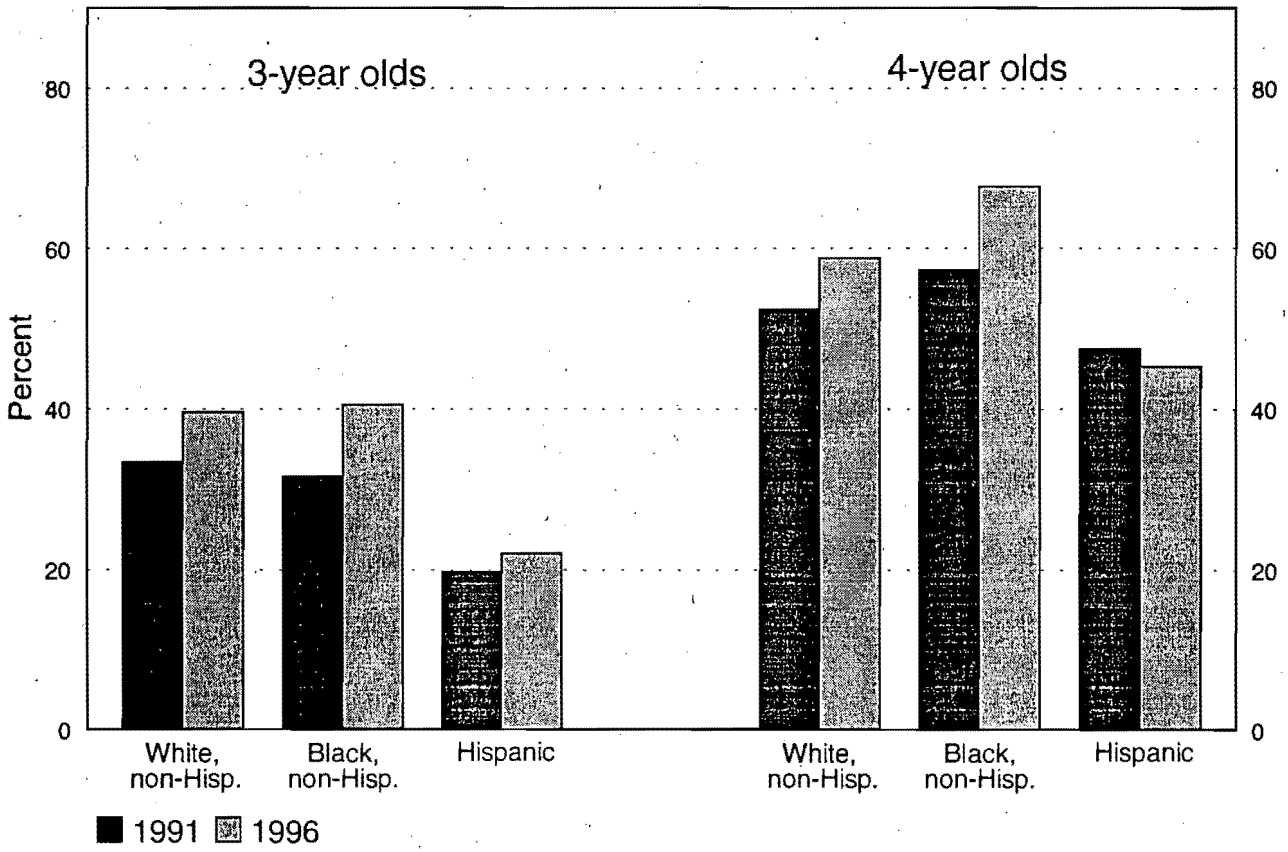
Source: National Center for Education Statistics.

- Parental and family interactions with children are critical to child development. Reading to children or telling them stories helps children learn to read and improves their verbal communication skills.

- In 1996 non-Hispanic white children were more likely to have been read to than their non-Hispanic black or Hispanic counterparts, and they were also more likely to have been told a story and to have visited a library in the past month. Some of these differences may reflect the lower levels of educational attainment of parents in the non-Hispanic black and Hispanic populations.

Education

2. Children Aged Three to Four Enrolled in Center-Based Programs or Kindergarten



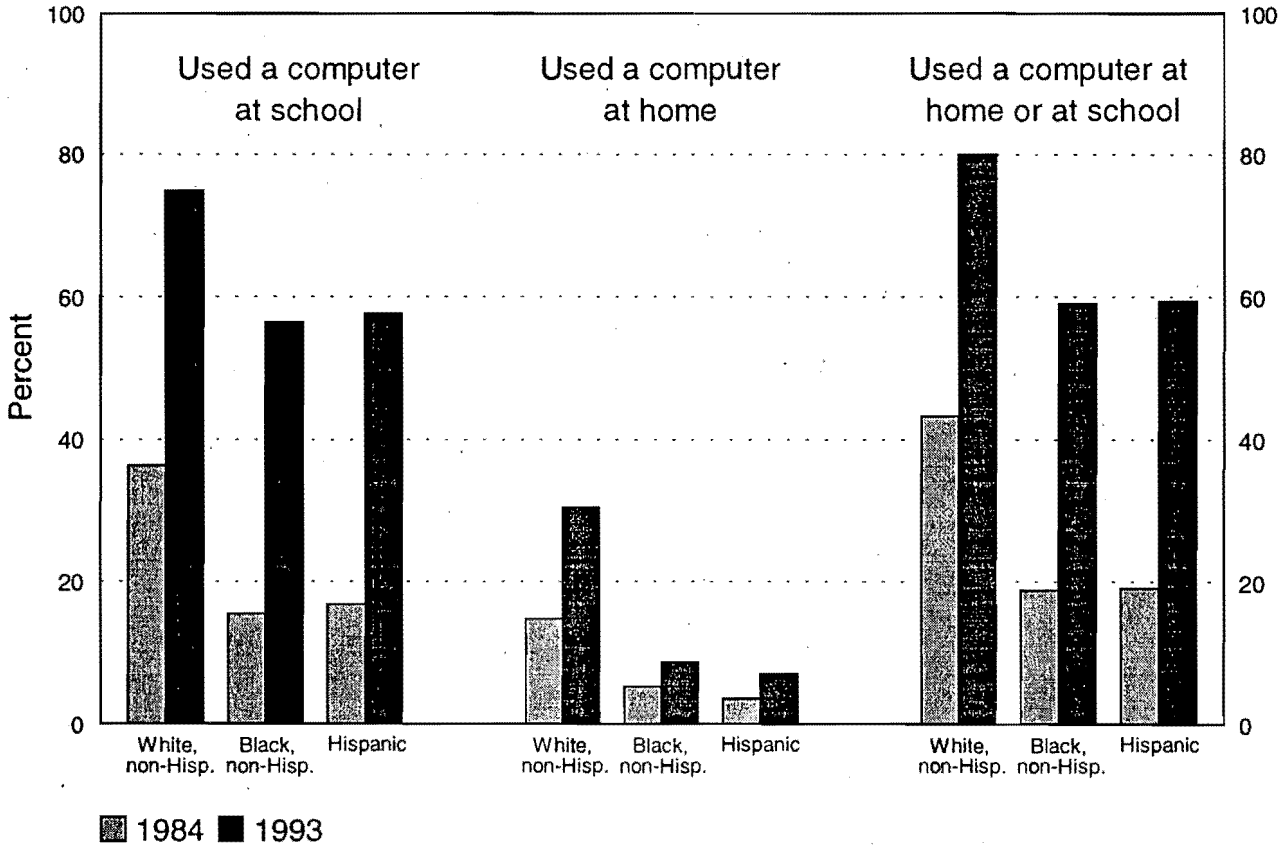
Note: Center-based programs consist of nursery schools, prekindergarten, and Head Start.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics.

- Enrollment in preschool programs and kindergarten is generally correlated with greater progress in the early years of elementary school.
- In 1996 non-Hispanic black children aged three and four were more likely than non-Hispanic white children to be enrolled in center-based learning programs or kindergarten. Hispanic children were less likely than non-Hispanic blacks or non-Hispanic whites to be enrolled.
- Enrollment in these programs generally increased between 1991 and 1996 among all groups, although it decreased for Hispanic four year olds.

Education

3. Computer Use by Children in Grades 1 through 6

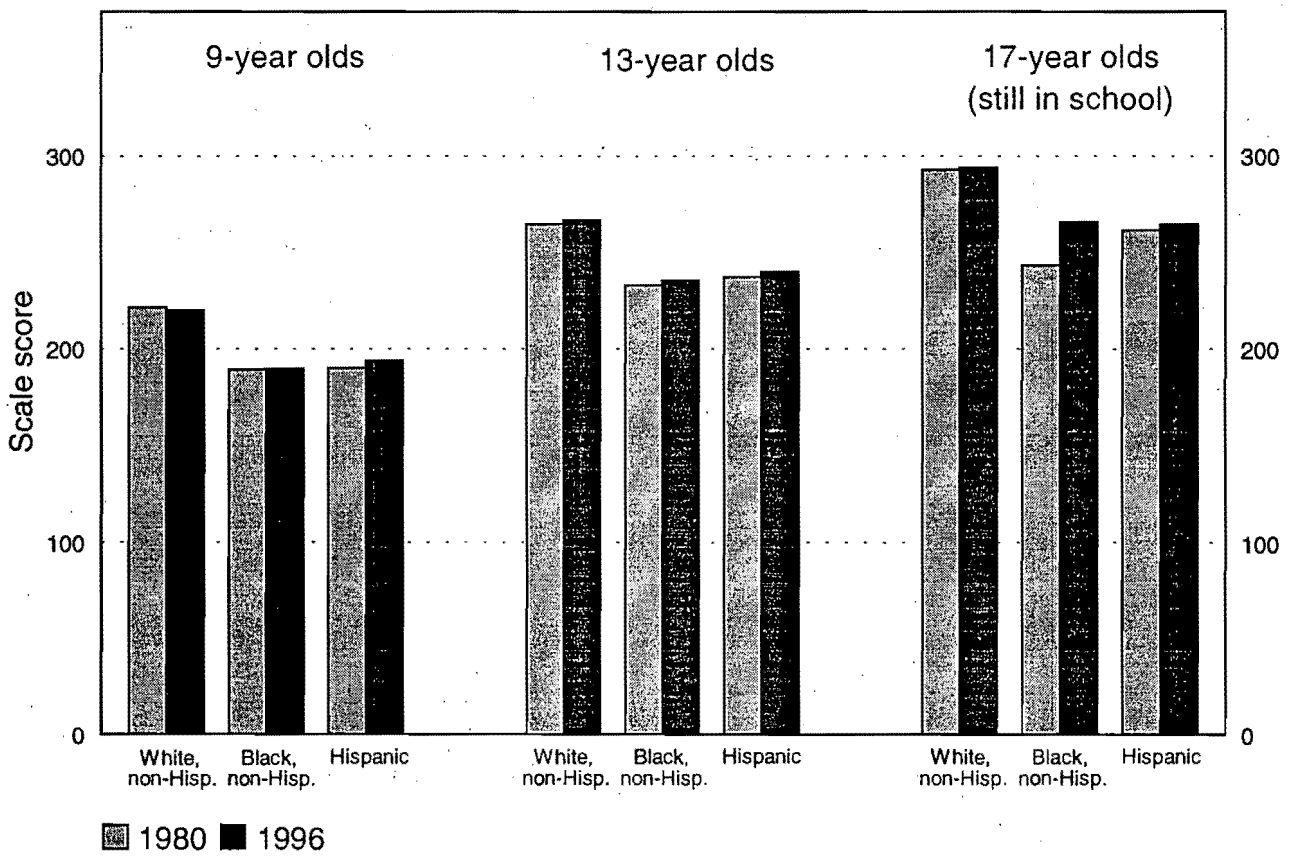


Source: Bureau of the Census and National Center for Education Statistics.

- Familiarity with computers is increasingly important to success in education and the labor market.
- Computer use increased markedly from 1984 to 1993 for all groups. In both years, non-Hispanic whites were more likely than non-Hispanic blacks or Hispanics to have used a computer at home and at school.
- Relatively few non-Hispanic black and Hispanic children use a computer at home. However, over 55 percent of non-Hispanic blacks and Hispanics and about 75 percent of non-Hispanic whites used a computer at school in 1993.
- Low levels of computer useage among non-Hispanic black and Hispanic children may be related to lower income levels among these groups; in general, children from higher income families are more likely to have used a computer at home or at school than children from lower income families.

Education

4. Average Reading Proficiency



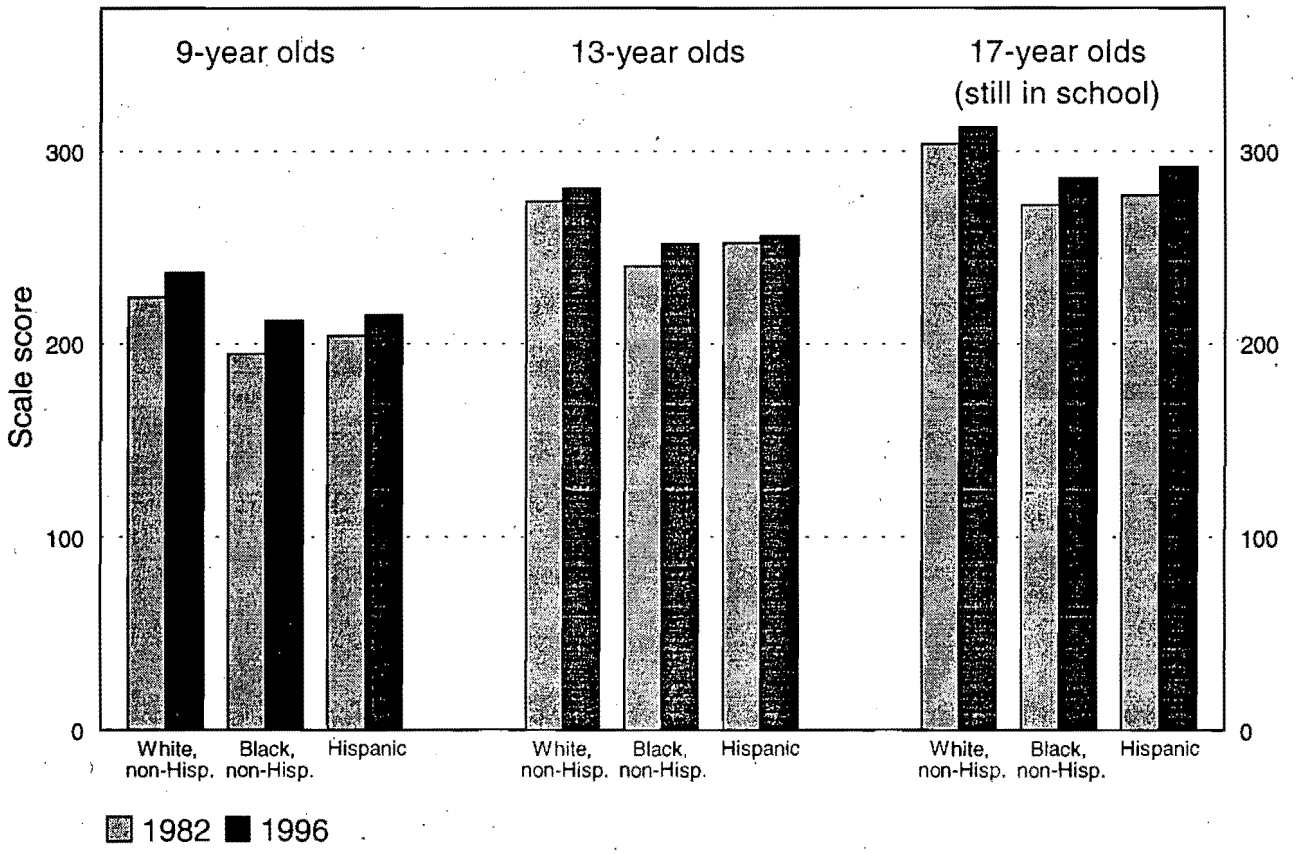
Note: A reading score of 300 means the student can understand complicated information; a score of 250 means the student can interrelate ideas and make generalizations; and a score of 200 means the student has partially developed skills and understanding.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics.

- The ability to read is linked to success in school and the labor market. This test is scaled to have a mean of 250 (and a standard deviation of 50) across all age groups in 1984.
- On average, non-Hispanic white children score higher than non-Hispanic black or Hispanic children in reading proficiency at each age.
- Non-Hispanic black 17-year-olds made substantial progress in reading proficiency between 1980 and 1996. Reading proficiency changed little among all other groups and ages from 1980 to 1996.

Education

5. Average Mathematics Proficiency



Note: In mathematics, a score of 300 means a student can do moderately complex procedures and reasoning; a score of 250 indicates a student can do basic operations and beginning problem solving; and a score of 200 demonstrates a student's beginning skills and understanding of math.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics.

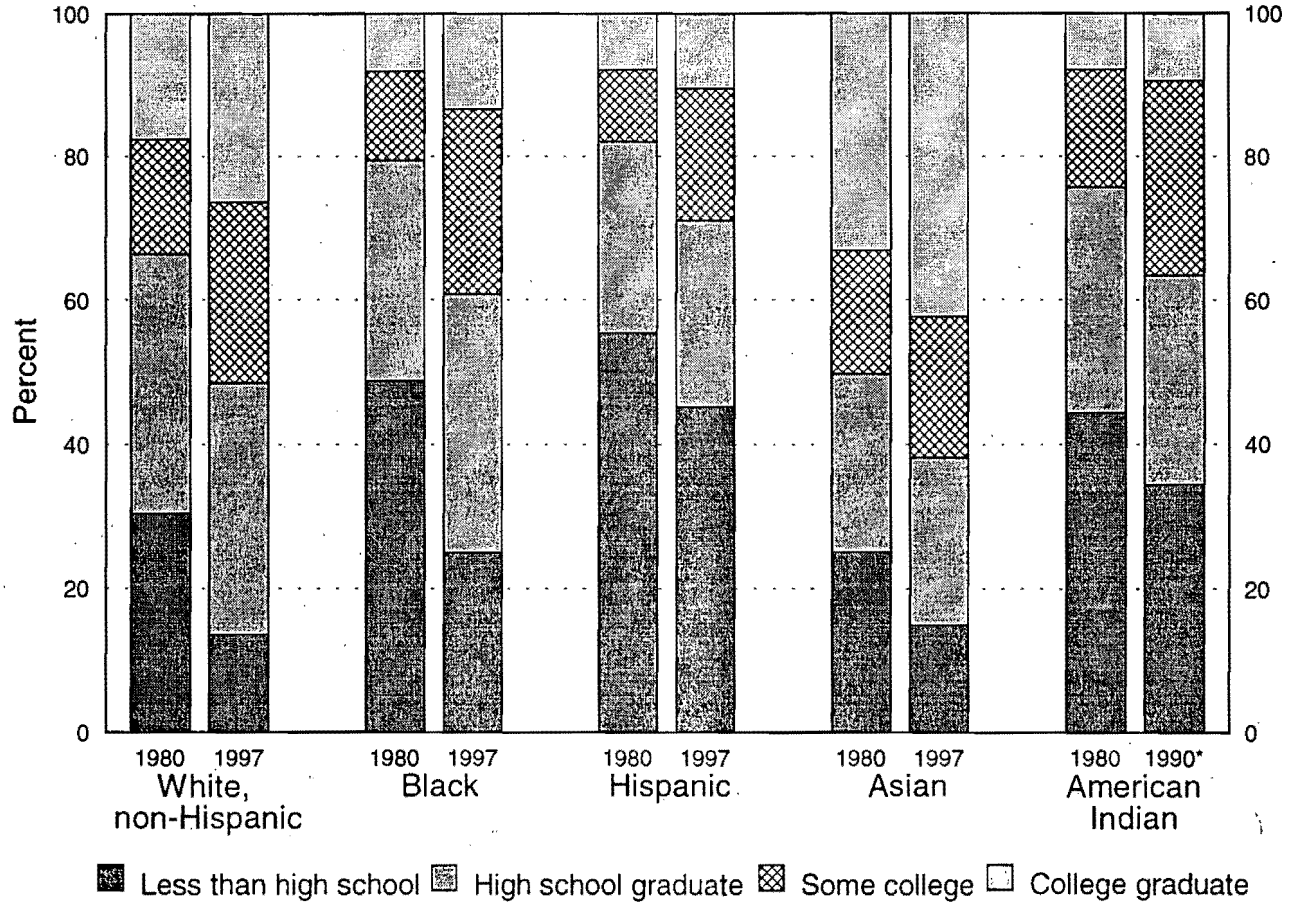
- Mathematics proficiency is valued in college admissions and in many occupations. This test is scaled to have a mean of 250 (and a standard deviation of 50) across all age groups in 1986.

- On average, non-Hispanic whites tend to score higher on tests of mathematics proficiency than non-Hispanic blacks or Hispanics at each age.

- Mathematics proficiency scores have generally increased since 1982 at all ages among non-Hispanic blacks, non-Hispanic whites, and Hispanics.

Education

6. Educational Attainment of Adults Aged 25 and Over



* 1997 data for American Indians are not available.

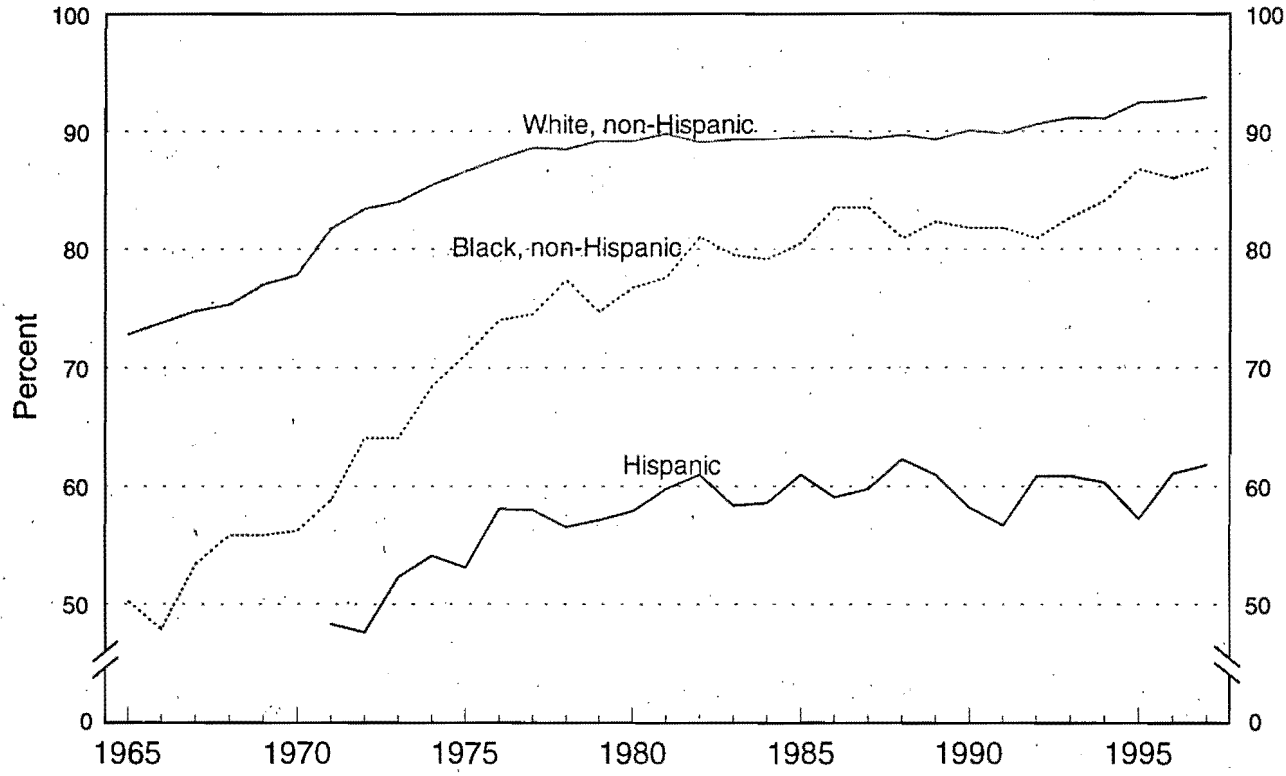
Notes: Prior to 1992, data are based on years of school completed, rather than on the highest diploma or degree received. Beginning in 1992, high school graduates include those with a GED or high school equivalency.

Source: Bureau of the Census.

- Educational attainment is a powerful predictor of economic status and health.
- Asians and non-Hispanic whites are more likely to have completed education beyond high school than are non-Hispanic blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians. Nearly half of Hispanics aged 25 and older have not completed high school.
- Educational attainment has increased for all groups since 1980. Increases have been most marked for American Indians and blacks. Increases for Hispanics have been relatively small, in part reflecting increased immigration of Hispanics with low levels of education.
- Nine percent of non-Hispanic whites and 15 percent of Asians hold master's, professional, or doctoral degrees, compared to only 4 percent of blacks and 3 percent of Hispanics and American Indians (not shown in chart, since comparable data are not available for 1980).

Education

7. High School Completion Rates for 25- to 29-Year Olds



Note: Prior to 1971 data for whites include Hispanic whites, and data for blacks include Hispanic blacks. Prior to 1992, data are for persons having completed four or more years of high school; data for 1992 and beyond include persons with a GED or high school equivalency.

Sources: Bureau of the Census and National Center for Education Statistics.

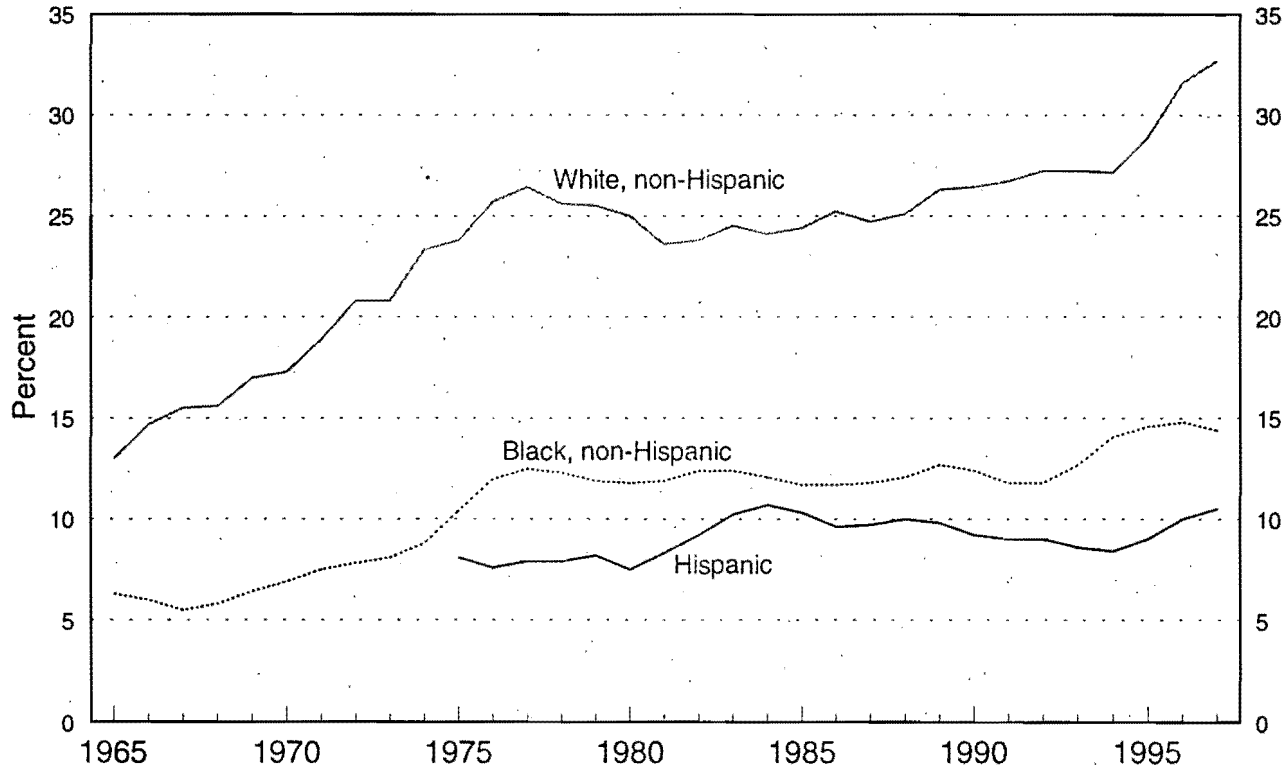
- High school completion rates for 25- to 29-year olds provide a sense of changes in educational attainment over time, since education takes place more intensively at younger ages.

- At these ages, high school completion rates have increased for all groups over the past 30 years. However, rates for Hispanics have remained virtually stagnant since the early 1980s.

- The percentage of non-Hispanic blacks aged 25 to 29 who have completed high school (87 percent) is nearly as high as that of non-Hispanic whites (93 percent). Hispanic 25- to 29-year olds continue to have considerably lower rates of high school completion (62 percent), however. The lower rates among Hispanics primarily reflect the lower average levels of education among Hispanic immigrants; *completion rates of native-born Hispanics (not shown separately in chart) are comparable to those of non-Hispanic blacks. Take out?*

Education

8. Persons Aged 25 to 29 with a Four Year College Degree or Higher



Notes: Prior to 1971, data for whites include Hispanic whites, and data for blacks include Hispanic blacks. Because of small sample sizes, data for blacks and Hispanics are 3-year centered averages. Prior to 1992, data are for persons having completed four years of college or more.

Sources: Bureau of the Census and National Center for Education Statistics.

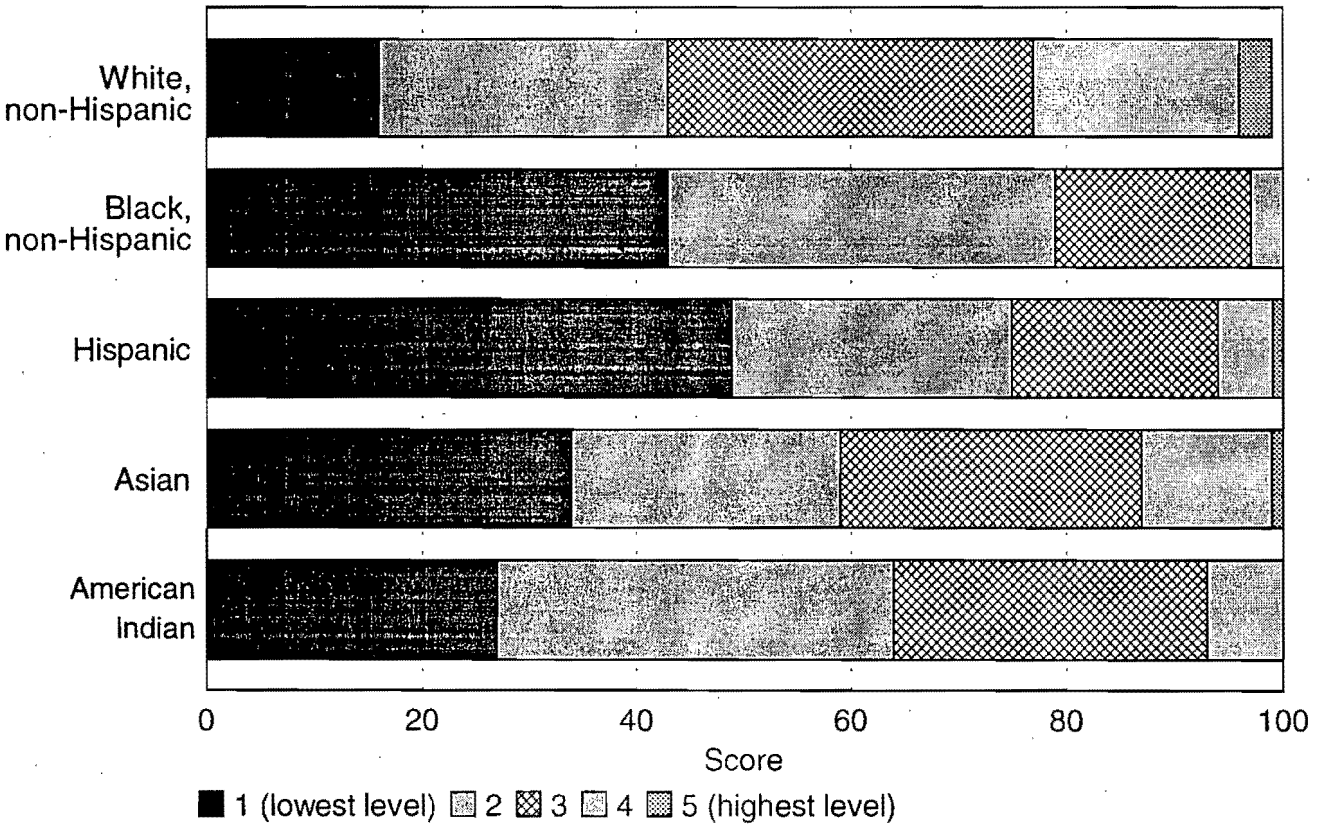
- Completion of a four-year college degree has become an increasingly important predictor of economic status and success in the labor market.

- The precentage of persons who have completed college increased sharply in the 1960s and early 1970s for non-Hispanic whites and non-Hispanic blacks. Between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s, college completion rose more slowly for all groups shown above. College completion appears to have picked up again since the mid-1990s.

- Non-Hispanic whites are more than twice as likely as non-Hispanic blacks and Hispanics to have completed a four-year college degree. Nearly 33 percent of non-Hispanic whites had completed a four-year college degree in 1997, compared with only about 14 percent of non-Hispanic blacks and 11 percent of Hispanics.

Education

9. Literacy Skills of Adults, 16 Years Old and Over, 1992



Source: National Center for Education Statistics.

- The above chart displays English document literacy scores from the National Adult Literacy Survey. Document literacy measures skills particularly relevant to success in the labor market, ranging from the ability to sign one's name to the ability to complete a job application to the ability to interpret and summarize complex tables and text.

- Adults with poor literacy skills are less likely to be employed and more likely to be poor than adults with better literacy skills.

- Non-Hispanic blacks and Hispanics were more likely than other groups to have poor literacy skills in 1992. 79 percent of blacks and 75 percent of Hispanics scored in the bottom two levels of the document literacy scale. In contrast, 64 percent of American Indians, 59 percent of Asians, and 43 percent of non-Hispanic whites scored in the bottom two levels. Differences in scores between racial and ethnic groups partially reflect differences in educational attainment between these groups.

- The low scores among Hispanics and Asians may in party reflect lower English literacy skills of new immigrants. Foreign-born Asians, Hispanics, and non-Hispanic whites scored lower on this literacy test than their native-born counterparts (not shown in chart).

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Labor Markets

Earnings from the labor market are the primary source of income for the vast majority of families. Labor market earnings are determined by the number of family members who participate in the labor force, the unemployment rate among labor force participants, the number of hours worked per year, and hourly wage rates.

In general, labor force participation rates are higher for men than women, although participation rates have generally increased for women over the past 30 years and have declined gradually for men (Labor 1). Historically, black women had higher participation rates than white women, but since 1990, these rates have been roughly equivalent. Hispanic women's participation rates are lower than those of black or white women. Hispanic men's participation rates are higher than those of black men and approach those of white men.

Unemployment rates—the percentage of the labor force not employed—of blacks have been roughly twice those of whites for many years (Labor 2). Black average annual unemployment rates have been over 10 percent for more than 20 years. Unemployment rates for Hispanics are generally between those of blacks and whites. Black and Hispanic unemployment rates rise more in recessions and fall more in recoveries than do white rates.

Investment in labor market skills tends to be most intensive at young ages. One reason is that investing in these skills early in life allows workers to reap the "returns" to their investments over a greater number of years. Therefore, our society encourages young people to invest in labor market skills—either through schooling, training, or experience on the job. Young people who are neither in school nor employed are classified as "idle," and there is concern not only about their current status and activities, but that "idleness" may reduce their future earnings prospects.

About 20 percent of young black men are neither in school nor working, a rate that is twice that of young white men (Labor 3). Young Hispanic men's rate of "idleness" falls between those of

their black and white counterparts. Rates of "idleness" have not fallen substantially over the past 10 years among men. They have fallen among young women, however, especially among young black women, as a result of both increased enrollment and employment. However, the interpretation of figures on "idleness" is less clear cut for young women than for young men, as many young women who are neither employed nor in school are taking care of children.

Wages of white men continue to far exceed those of all other groups of workers (Labor 4 and Labor 6. Studies document that black men's wages rose relative to white men's between the early 1960s and the mid-1970s, especially in the South. But this trend reversed sometime in the mid- to late 1970s, and their relative pay declined for at least 10 years. The evidence of the last 10 years is mixed, with some data series showing continued deterioration or little change in relative pay for black men, while other series show some improvement.[1] Pay of Hispanic men has fallen relative to both white and black men's pay, at least in part as a result of falling relative educational attainment among Hispanics, combined with increased demand for highly educated workers.

After reaching near parity in the mid-1970s, black women's wages have fallen relative to those of white women. (White women have gained considerably relative to white men in this period.) Young, college-educated black women actually reached pay parity with their white counterparts in the early 1970s but have seen their relative wages fall about 10 percentage points since then (Labor 5 and Labor 7).

The median wages of Hispanic men and women are below those of their black and white counterparts. Hispanics' relative wages have also fallen since 1979. The median wage of college-educated Hispanic women, however, is about 90 percent of that of white women and is slightly higher than that of black women. The median wage of college-educated Hispanic men is about 80 percent of equivalent white males and is about 10 percentage points higher than equivalent black males. In contrast, differences in educational attainment account for a much smaller portion of black-white differences in wages.

Some of the differences in wages across racial and ethnic groups are linked to occupational differences (Labor 8). Occupation is also an indicator of longer-term socioeconomic status. Asian and white employees are far more likely than black, Hispanic, and American Indian employees to work in professional and managerial occupations and are less likely to work in "blue collar" occupations. Within blue collar occupations, black, Hispanic, and American Indian employees are more likely to be found in the lower-paying, "lower-skilled" occupations of operators, fabricators, and laborers rather than the higher paying precision production and craft occupations. Black, Hispanic, and American Indian women are more likely that their non-Hispanic white counterparts to be employed in service occupations.

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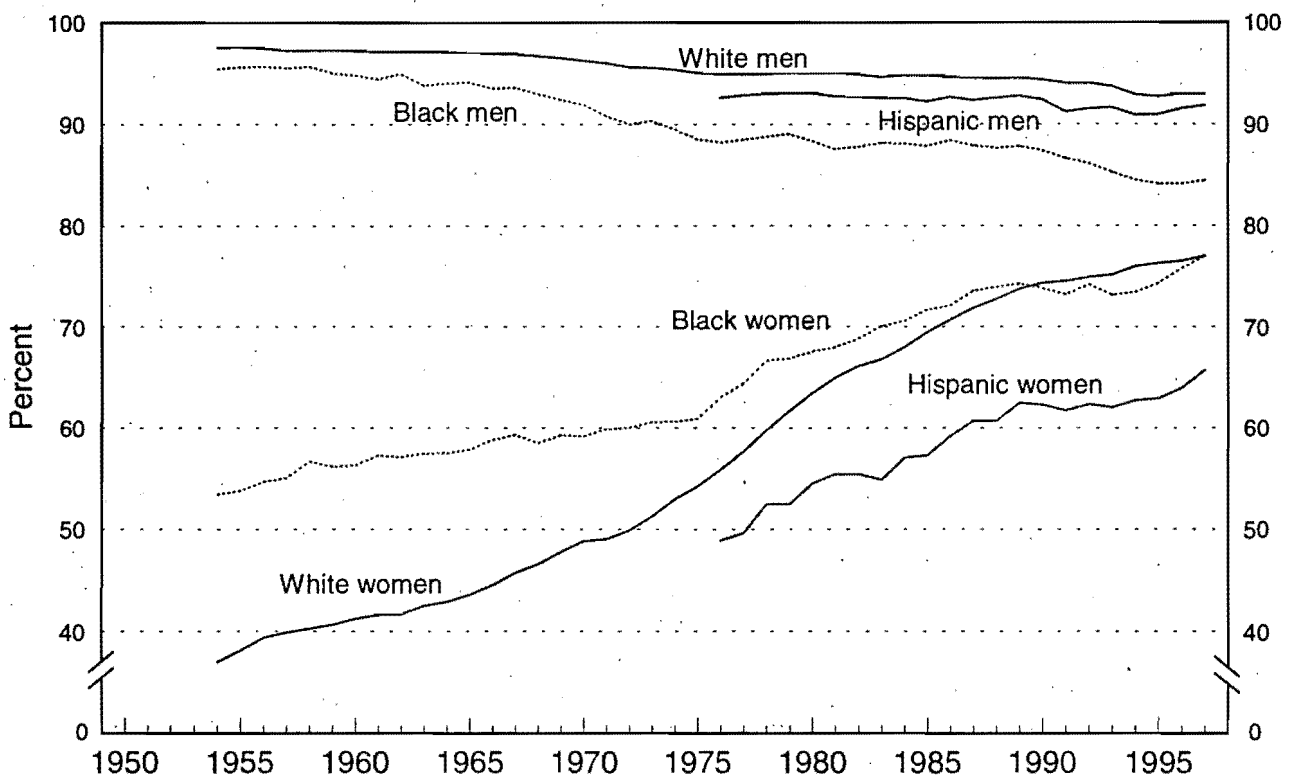
1. The black-white ratio of median wage of full-time year-round male workers reached a new high in 1996 at about 0.80.

Labor Markets

1. Labor Force Participation Rates of 25- to 54-Year Olds



Note: Prior to 1972, data for blacks include all non-whites.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

- The labor force participation rate is the percentage of a population that is either employed or seeking work. Participation in the labor force has long been the norm for men ages 25 to 54. Participation among women has been variously viewed as an indicator of women's economic power and independence or a response to family financial stress resulting from slow male wage growth or unemployment.

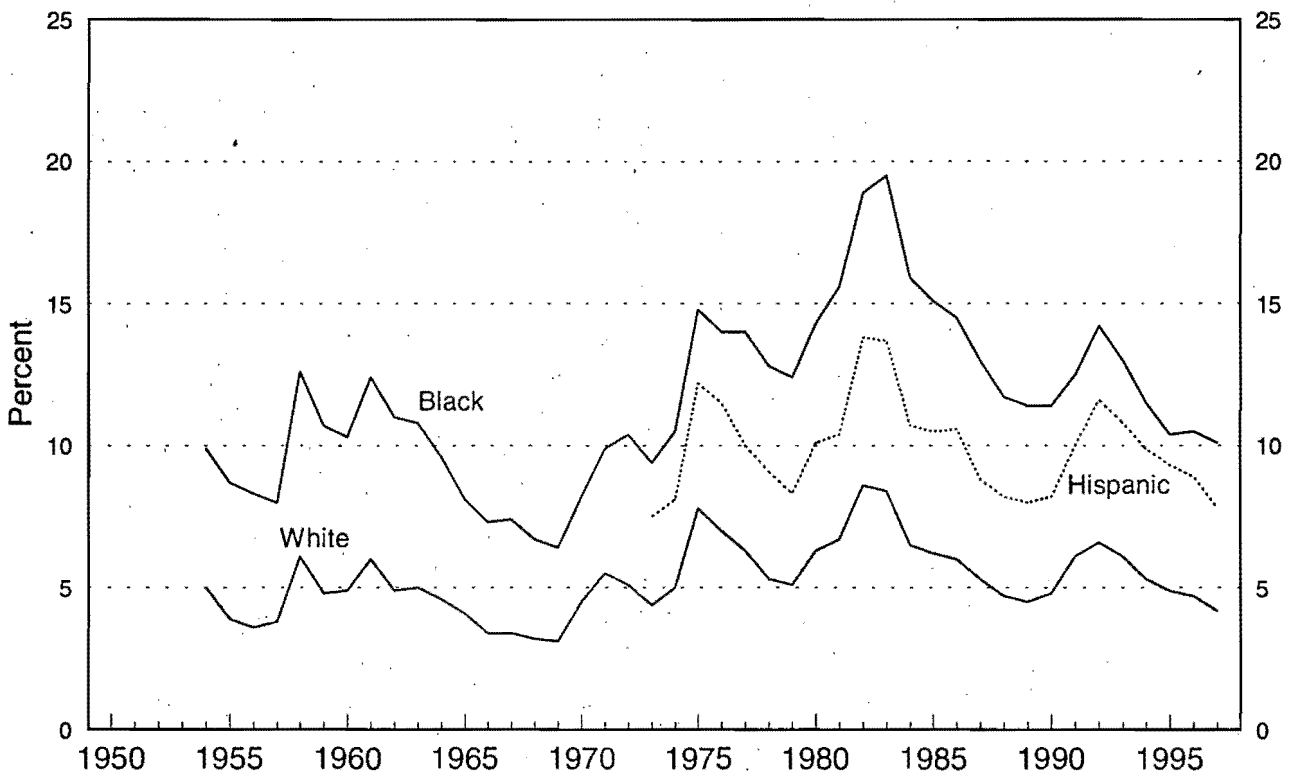
- Over the second half of the 20th century, labor force participation rates have risen sharply for all groups of women and have fallen for men.

- Participation rates of black women historically exceeded those of white women, but participation rates for white women surpassed those of black women in the late 1980s. In the mid-1990s, the rate for white women has slowed, whereas the rate for black women has continued to increase. Participation rates of Hispanic women are lower than those of black and white women. Recent welfare reform legislation may encourage more single mothers with young children to enter the labor force.

- Participation rates for white men exceed those of black and Hispanic men. Participation rates have fallen more rapidly among black men than among white and Hispanic men. The decline in male labor force participation may result from a variety of factors, including increased school enrollment among persons in their late 20s, earlier retirement, and declining opportunities for lower-skilled workers.

Labor Markets

2. Unemployment Rates



Note: Prior to 1972, data for blacks includes all non-whites.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

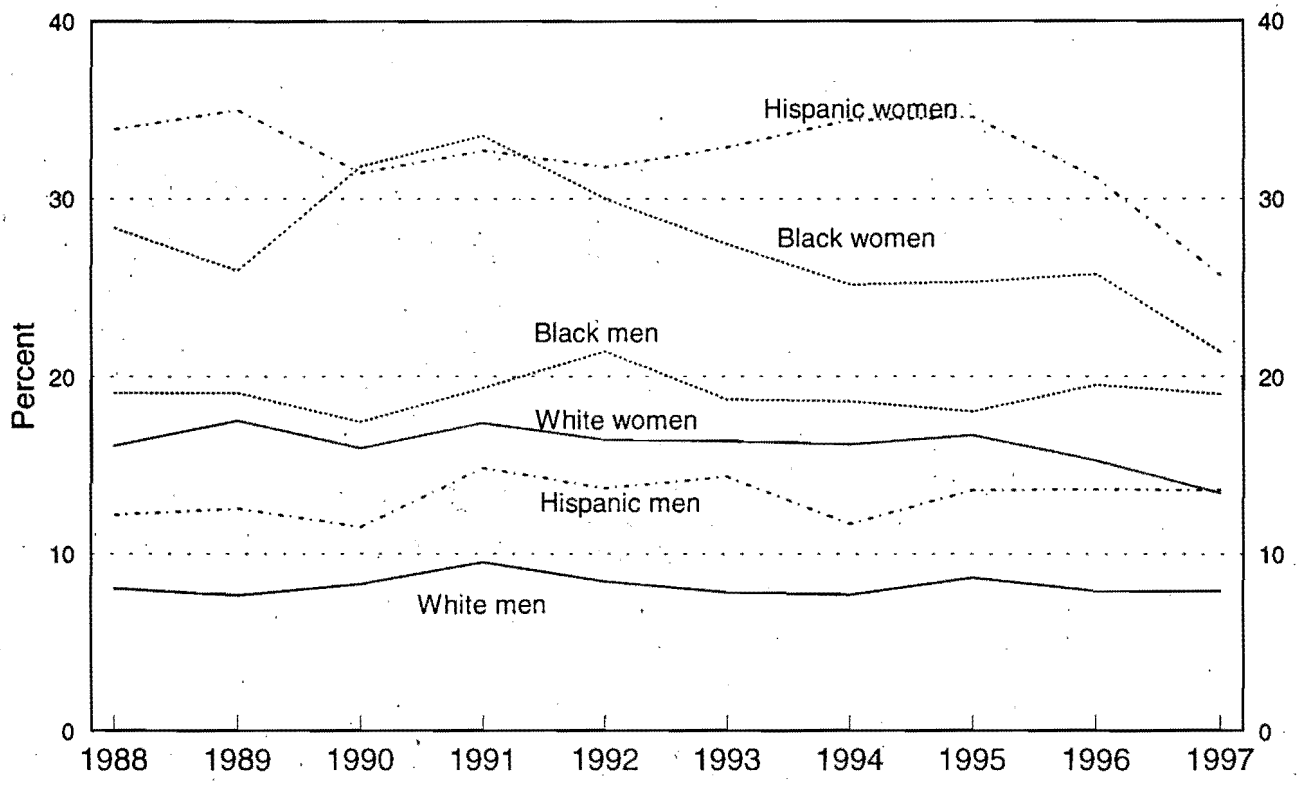
- The unemployment rate is a widely reported indicator of labor market distress. It is the percentage of the labor force without a job but actively seeking work. (Persons who are not employed but not seeking a job are not included in the labor force, and are therefore classified as neither employed nor unemployed.)

- Unemployment rates for Hispanics and blacks are higher than those for whites; they also tend to rise more in economic recessions and fall more in expansions.

- The unemployment rate for blacks has been twice that of whites for more than 20 years. It was above 10 percent from 1974 to 1997. This disparity reflects in part difference in educational attainment, but substantial differentials persist even among blacks, whites, and Hispanics with similar levels of education.

Labor Markets

3. "Idleness" among 16- to 24-Year Olds



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

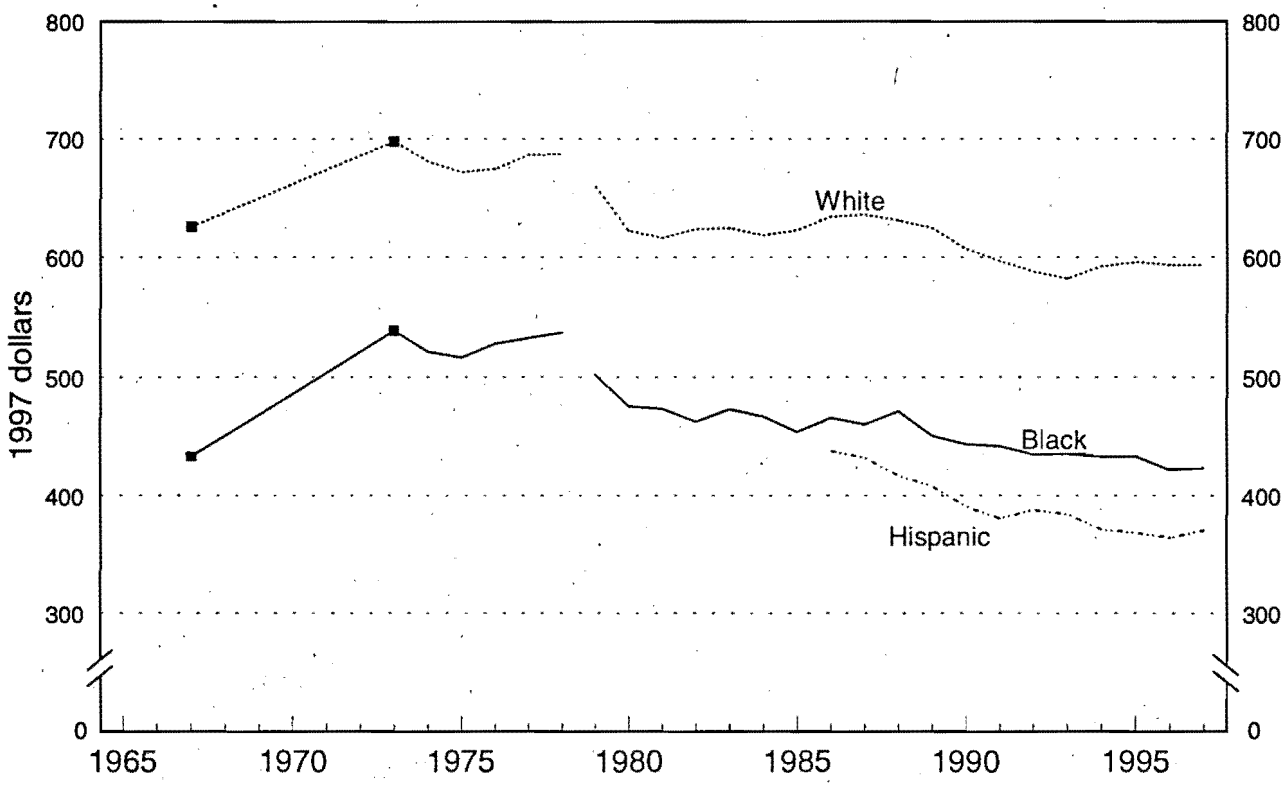
- Individuals are classified as "idle" if they are neither employed nor enrolled in school. Concerns about idleness are linked to youth crime and future employment prospects. For women, being neither employed nor enrolled in school is often related to child rearing. High idleness rates are partly the result of decreased labor market demand for younger, less-educated workers.

- Idleness rates of black and Hispanic youths exceed those of white youths. For young men of all groups, idleness has been relatively flat since 1988.

- For women, idleness rates have fallen substantially in the 1990s, especially since 1995. For black and Hispanic women, most of this decrease was due to increases in school enrollment.

Labor Markets

4. Median Weekly Earnings of Full-Time Male Workers



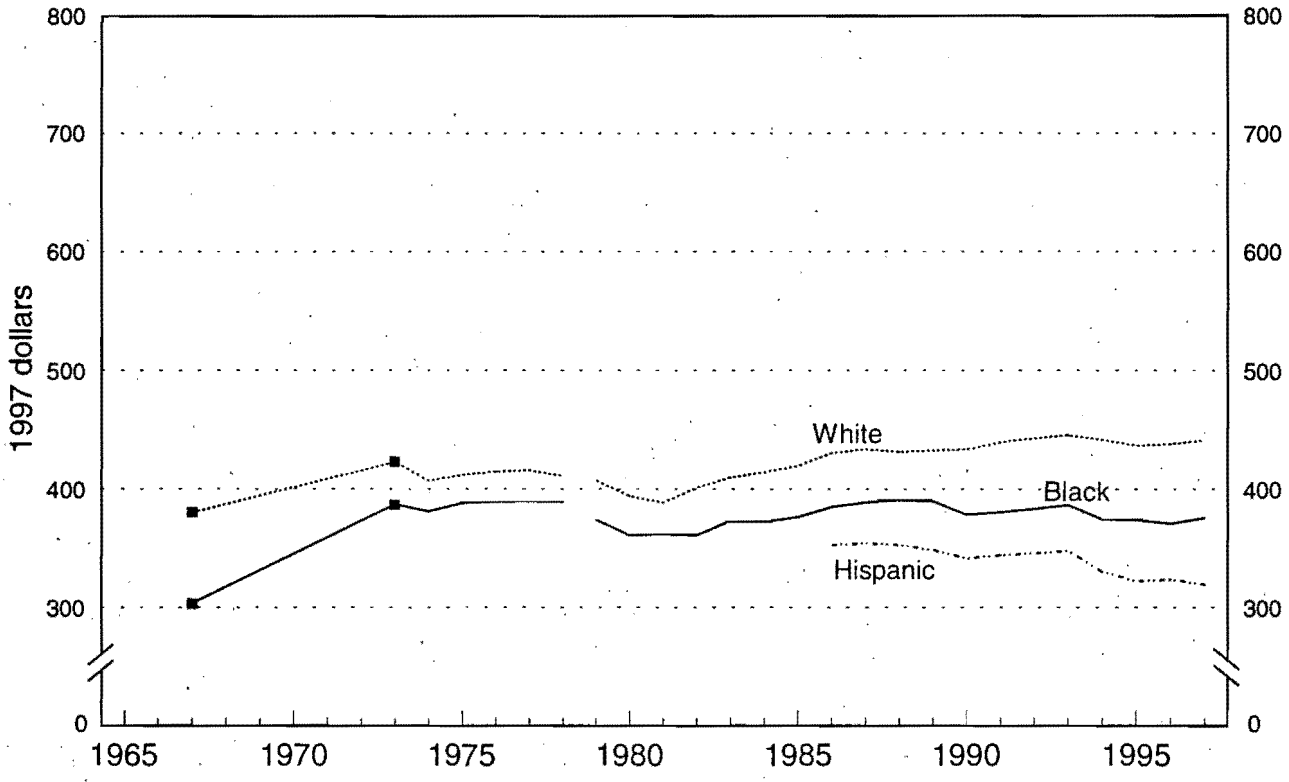
Notes: Straight lines between dots indicate data are unavailable in intervening years. Prior to 1979, the series for blacks includes other non-whites. Beginning in 1979, data are for workers ages 25 and over.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

- Male labor market earnings are the largest source of household income.
- Median wages of black and Hispanic men are substantially below those of white men.
- Median wages of men have generally declined since the mid- to late 1970s. The gap in pay between whites on the one hand and blacks and Hispanics on the other generally widened over that period, owing in part to differences in educational attainment.

Labor Markets

5. Median Weekly Earnings of Full-Time Female Workers



Notes: Straight lines between dots indicate data are unavailable in intervening years. Prior to 1979, the series for blacks includes other non-whites. Beginning in 1979, data are for workers ages 25 and over.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

- Women's earnings constitute a rising share of household income. Earnings of women are particularly important for understanding differences between the economic status of black families and those of other racial and ethnic groups, because black married-couple families have typically relied more heavily on women's earnings than other families, and because the fraction of single female-headed families is highest among black families.

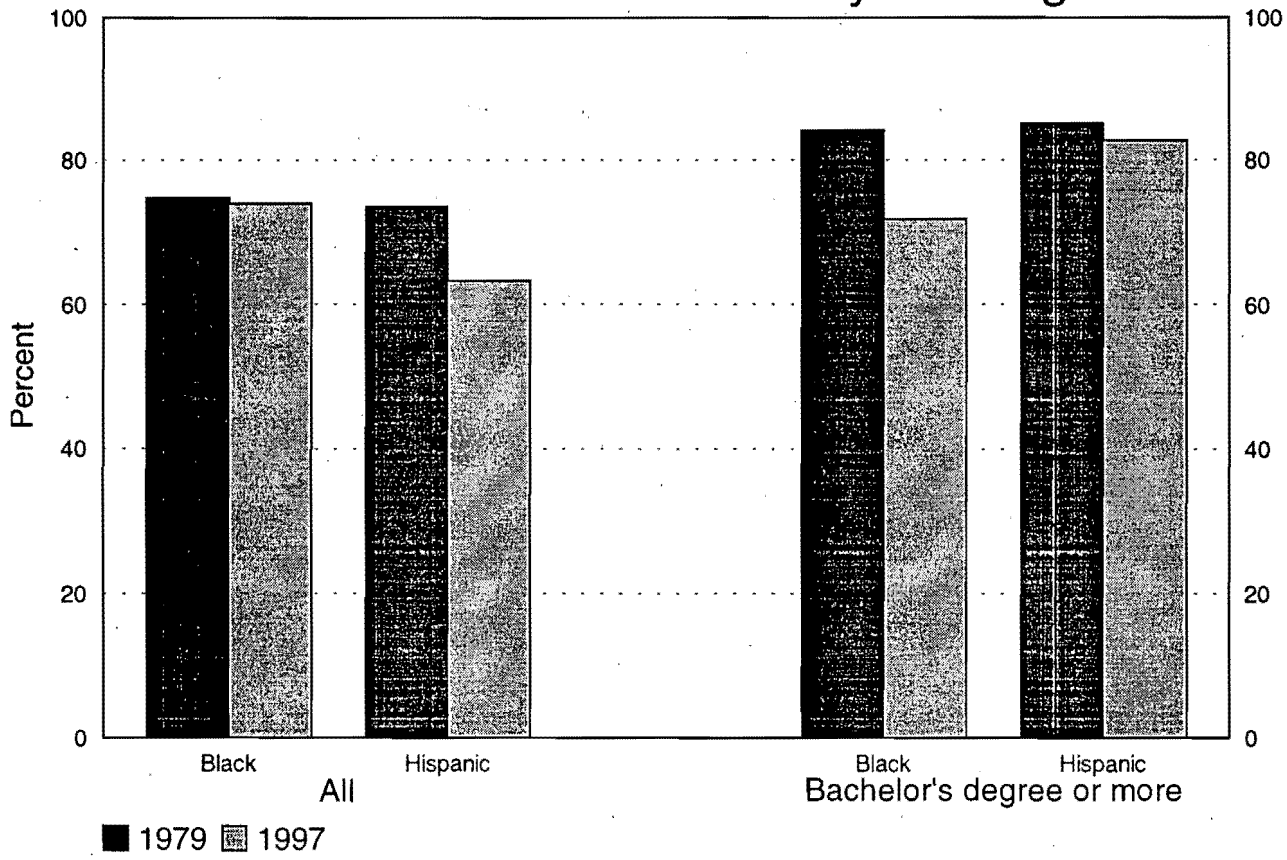
- After adjusting for inflation, weekly earnings of black and white women were higher in 1997 than in 1967. The black-white gap in pay narrowed in the 1960s and early 1970s but has widened since the early 1980s, possibly reflecting differences in educational attainment.

- Hispanic women's full-time earnings have fallen in real terms over the past decade.

- Although, on average, male earnings (not shown in chart) are higher than female earnings, white female median weekly earnings surpassed Hispanic male earnings in 1987 and black male earnings in 1992. Black female earnings have been roughly equal to Hispanic male earnings since 1991.

Labor Markets

6. Ratios of Black and Hispanic Male to White Male Median Weekly Earnings



Note: Ratios reflect usual weekly earnings of full-time workers on their main job.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

- Differences in wages can reflect differences in the education of workers and differences in wages paid to workers with similar levels of education. The latter differences may provide information about pay discrimination, although they can also result from differences in other characteristics such as labor market experience.

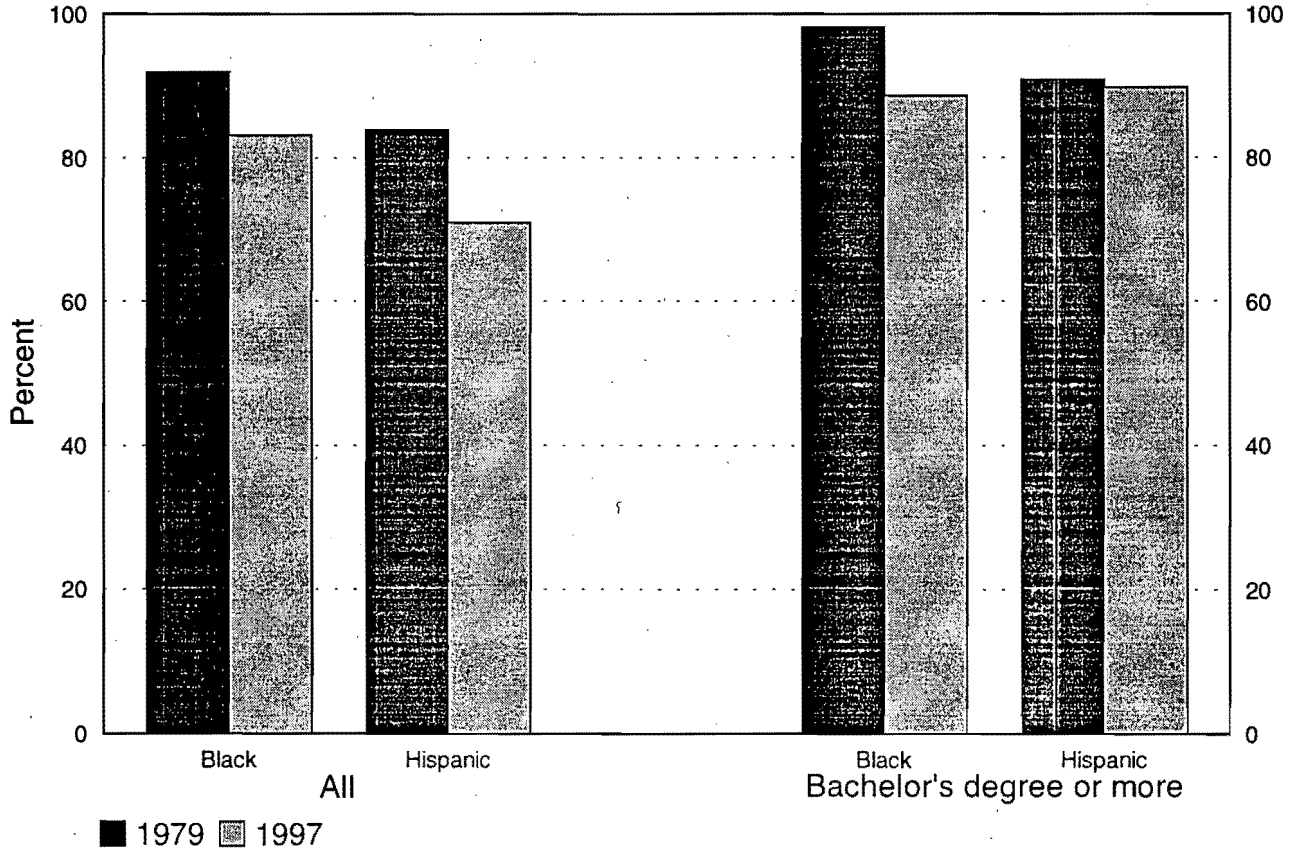
- Differences in pay across racial and ethnic groups are larger for men than for women. The median black male worker earns 74 percent, and the median Hispanic male worker earns 63 percent of the median for white men.

- The median wage of black men has changed little relative to that of white men since 1979. The relative pay of college-educated black men has fallen more than 10 percentage points. This may reflect in part differences in educational attainment beyond the bachelor's degree.

- The Hispanic-to-white ratio of median male wages has fallen since 1979, reflecting the growing gap in educational attainment. However, college-educated Hispanic men have lost little ground relative to white men and now earn substantially more than college-educated black men.

Labor Markets

7. Ratios of Black and Hispanic Female to White Female Median Weekly Earnings



Note: Ratios reflect usual weekly earnings of full-time workers on their main job.

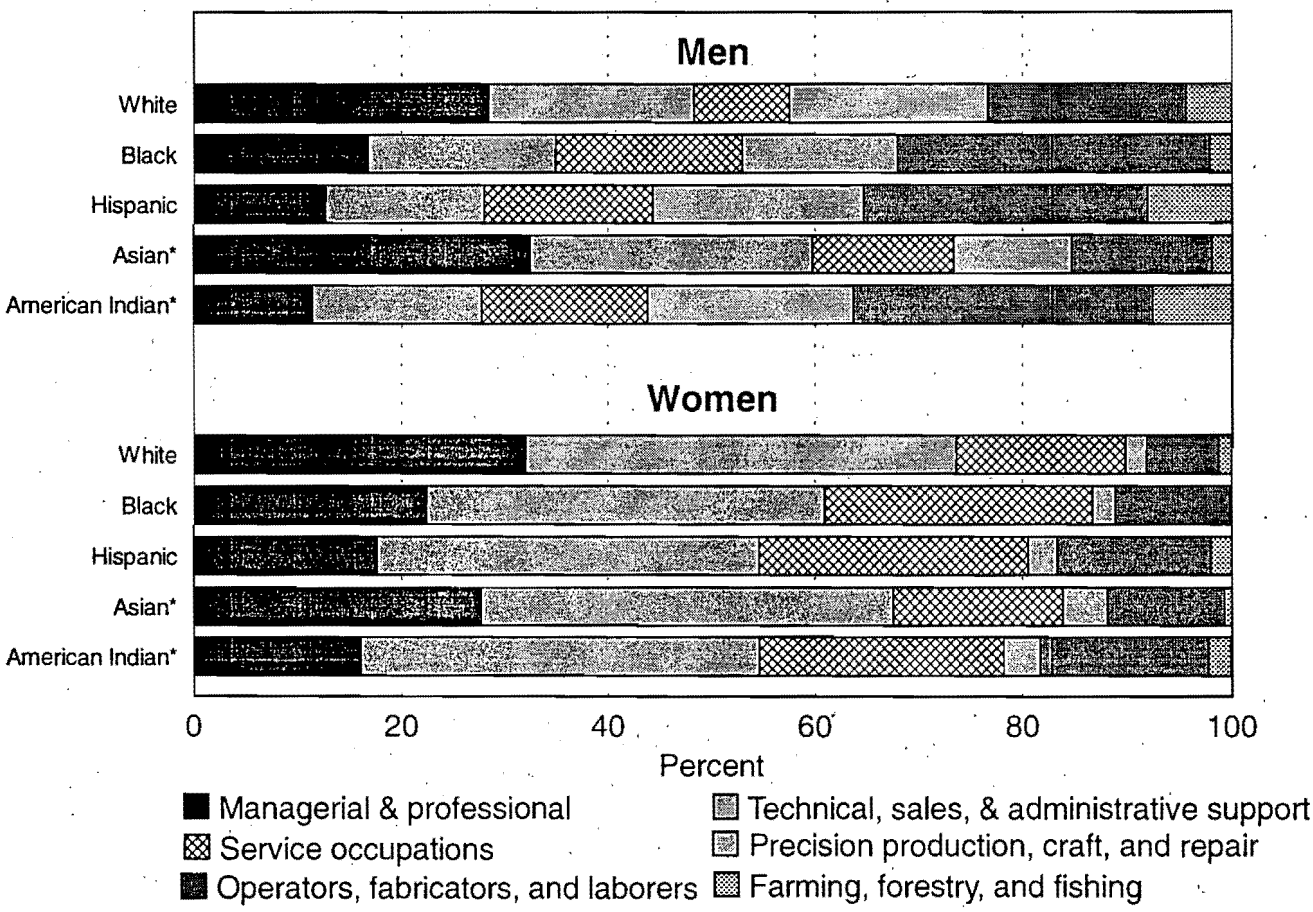
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

- Between 1979 and 1997, the pay of black women relative to that of white women fell by nearly 10 percentage points. In 1979 the median wage of black women with a college degree was 98 percent that of college-educated white women, but by 1997 their earnings had fallen to only 89 percent of the earnings of white women. This decline may reflect differences in the level of educational attainment beyond the bachelor's degree.

- Hispanic women's wages have also fallen relative to white women's wages. However, the decline in Hispanic women's relative pay is much smaller for women with similar education levels. Differences in educational attainment have grown increasingly important for Hispanic-white differences in pay among women.

Labor Markets

8. Occupational Distribution of Employed Persons, 1997



*Data for Asians and American Indians are from 1990.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics and Bureau of the Census.

- Occupation is a better indicator of permanent social and economic status than are employment or wages.

- Except among Hispanic men, the fraction of employed persons in managerial and professional occupations grew considerably between the early 1980s and 1997 (not shown in chart). Growth in managerial and professional employment has been greatest among white women. A high percentage of Asians are employed in these jobs as well. American Indians are least likely to be employed in the managerial and professional occupations.

- The percentage of employed men in the lower-paying manual occupation of "operators, fabricators, and laborers" has declined (not shown in chart). Among blue collar employees, black and Hispanic men are more likely than white men to be employed in these lower-skilled, lower-paid occupations than in previous years.

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Economic Status

No single indicator can be expected to capture fully all facets of economic status for entire populations, but median annual income is the most often used. The economic status of most individuals, especially children, is better reflected by the pooled resources of family or household members than by their individual incomes.

The incomes of American families have generally increased markedly over the past 50 years. Between the mid-1970s and the 1990s, however, the median family incomes of blacks and Hispanics were stagnant, whereas incomes for non-Hispanic whites generally increased (Economic Status 1). Since the early 1990s, black family income has risen, but Hispanic income has generally fallen. As a result, the ratio of black to non-Hispanic white median family income is about the same today as it was 30 years ago, whereas the ratio of Hispanic to non-Hispanic white income has fallen markedly since the early 1970s.

The decline in the relative position of Hispanics is due, at least in part, to immigration of Hispanics with relatively low levels of education and income. The lack of relative progress among black families is in part due to the large rise in single parent families among blacks (see Population 7). However, these changes in family structure since 1967 can account for only about a fifth of the gap in average family income between blacks and whites in 1996.[1] Other factors include differences in educational attainment, unemployment rates, and wage rates. Median family income of Asians is slightly higher than that of non-Hispanic whites, consistent with Asians' high levels of educational attainment.

Differences in median incomes provide only a partial description of differences in the income distributions of racial and ethnic groups. A second indicator of the economic status of a population is the poverty rate: the proportion who lack the economic resources needed to purchase a minimally acceptable standard of living. There is no scientifically adequate method for determining the minimally acceptable living standard: this will vary from society to society and

over time as living standards and social norms vary. The poverty rates presented here are based on the Office of Management and Budget's "official" definition. Although there is growing consensus among economists that the official measure has limitations and could be improved by revision, alternative measures produce similar disparities in poverty rates among racial and ethnic groups.[2]

Despite their higher median income, the rate of poverty among Asians in the United States is nearly 50 percent higher than the poverty rate of non-Hispanic whites (Economic Status 2). This reflects the economic, educational, and cultural diversity of the Asian population. Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians have much higher rates of poverty and child poverty than non-Hispanic whites and Asians. Hispanic poverty rates have generally risen since the 1970s and surpassed the rate for blacks in the early 1990s. Although still very high, rates of poverty among blacks have declined since the early 1990s and reached an all-time low in 1996. In 1990, the poverty rate for American Indians was higher than that of any of the other group.[3]

Poverty among children is of particular concern. Child poverty not only indicates current economic disadvantages among families with children, but it is also associated with inequality of opportunity, risks to health and development in childhood, and lifetime socioeconomic disadvantage. Although child poverty rates exceed overall individual poverty rates, trends in child poverty mirror trends in overall poverty, and black, Hispanic, and American Indian children have higher poverty rates than non-Hispanic white and Asian children (Economic Status 3).

While many of the disparities in poverty rates between racial and ethnic groups can be explained by differences in factors such as age distribution, family structure, and educational attainment, substantial differentials persist even among individuals with similar characteristics (Economic Status 4). For example, poverty rates among the elderly are considerably higher among blacks and Hispanics than among whites and Asians. Similarly, while poverty rates are relatively high for all children in single-parent families maintained by women, they are considerably higher for Hispanic and black children in such families than for white children. Among persons aged 25 and over without a high school degree, poverty rates for blacks, Hispanics, and Asians are well above

those of whites.

Asset holdings are another important indicator of economic well-being. Greater wealth allows a household to maintain its standard of living when income falls because of job loss, health problems, or family changes such as divorce or widowhood. Wealth also provides resources that can be used to finance education or to start a business. Disparities in asset holdings across racial and ethnic groups are large and exceed disparities in income (Economic Status 5). In 1993, the net worth (assets minus liabilities) of households headed by whites was more than 10 times that of households headed by blacks or Hispanics. Even among households with similar monthly incomes, net asset holdings are far higher among whites than blacks or Hispanics.[4]

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1. Council of Economic Advisers. 1998. *Economic Report of the President.* Washington, DC.

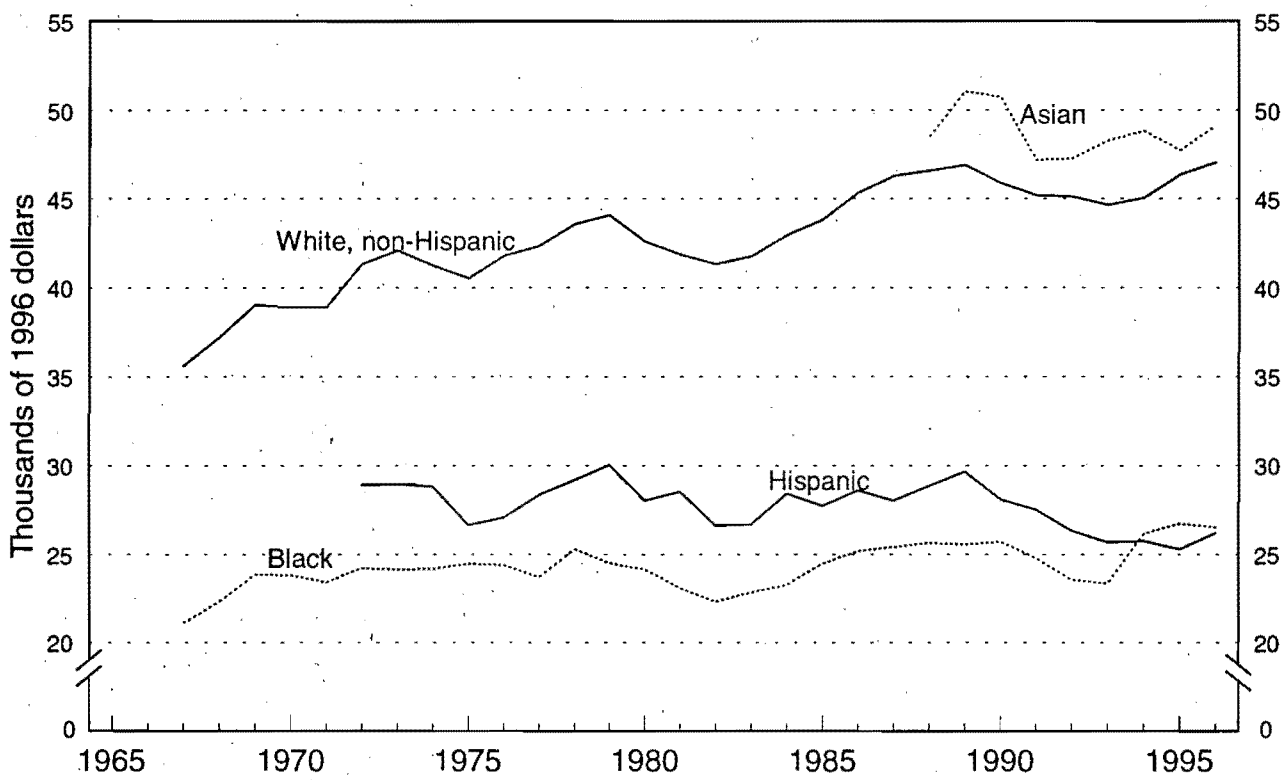
2. Citro, Constance F., and Robert T. Michael, eds. 1995. *Measuring Poverty: A New Approach.* Washington, DC: National Academy of Science.

3. U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1997. *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1997* (117th edition.). Washington, DC.

4. Eller, T.J., and Wallace Fraser. 1995. *Asset Ownership of Households: 1993.* U.S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, P70-47. Washington, DC.

Economic Status

1. Median Family Income



Note: Prior to 1972, data for whites include Hispanic whites.

Source: Bureau of the Census.

- Median annual family income is the most commonly used indicator of current family economic status. (Half of families have incomes below and half have incomes above the median.)

- Asian and non-Hispanic white families have much higher median incomes than black or Hispanic families. The median income of black families as a percentage of non-Hispanic white median family income was about the same in 1997 as in 1967. Hispanic median family income has fallen in absolute terms (and relative to that of non-Hispanic whites) since 1972, in part due to immigration.

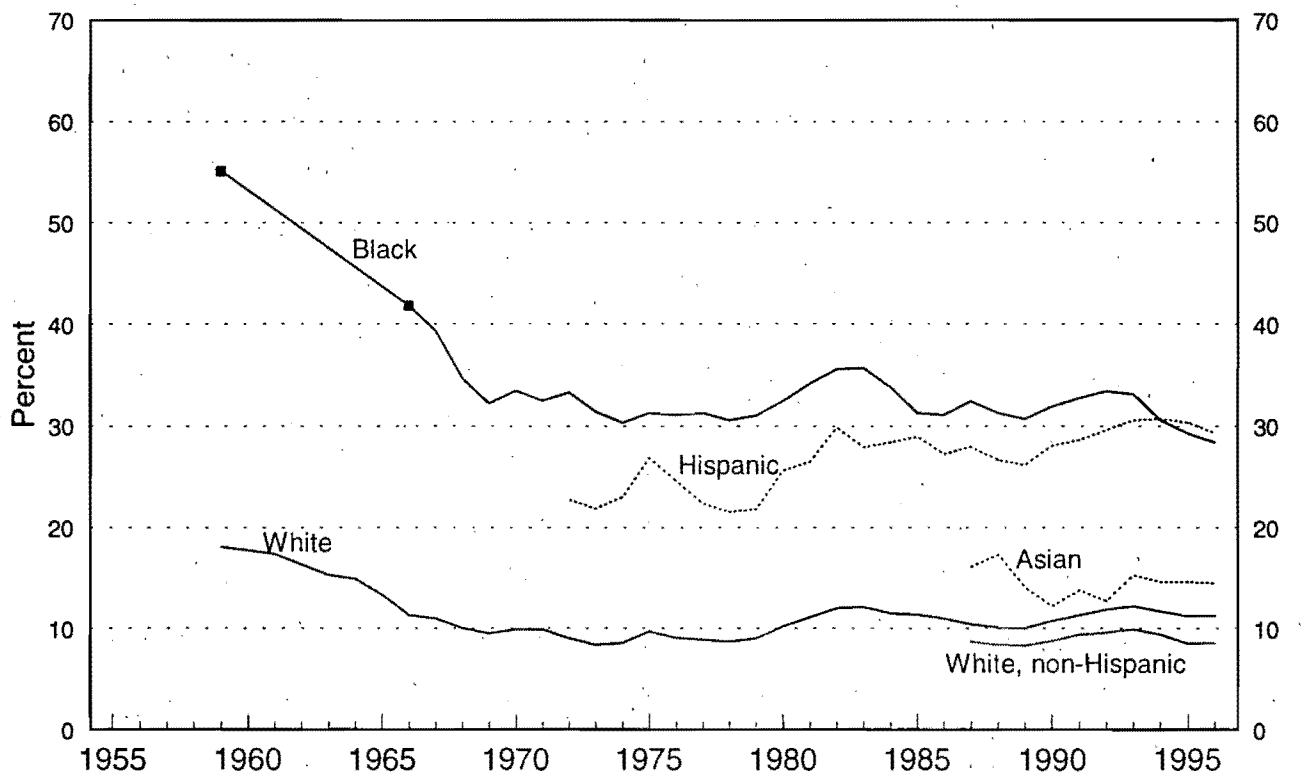
- There are great differences in income among different groups of Asians and Hispanic. For example, according to the 1990 Census, the median family income of Cubans and Japanese Americans exceeded that of non-Hispanic white families, whereas the income of Mexicans and Vietnamese was lower than that of median black families.

- A portion of the family income gap between non-Hispanic whites and blacks is associated with the higher prevalence of single-parent families among blacks. Differences in family structure account for only a small part of the difference in median income between Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites.

- According to the 1990 census, the median family income of American Indians (not shown in chart) was lower than that of blacks.

Economic Status

2. Poverty Rates for Individuals



Notes: Straight lines between dots indicate data are unavailable in intervening years.

Source: Bureau of the Census.

- The poverty rate--a widely used indicator of economic disadvantage--measures the proportion of a population whose cash income is below the offical poverty line. The poverty line varies with family size and changes from year to year. In 1996 the poverty line for a family of four was $16,036.

- Poverty rates for all racial and ethnic groups fell over the 1960s and early 1970s but improved little over the next 20 years. Poverty rates have fallen since 1993, however, particularly among blacks.

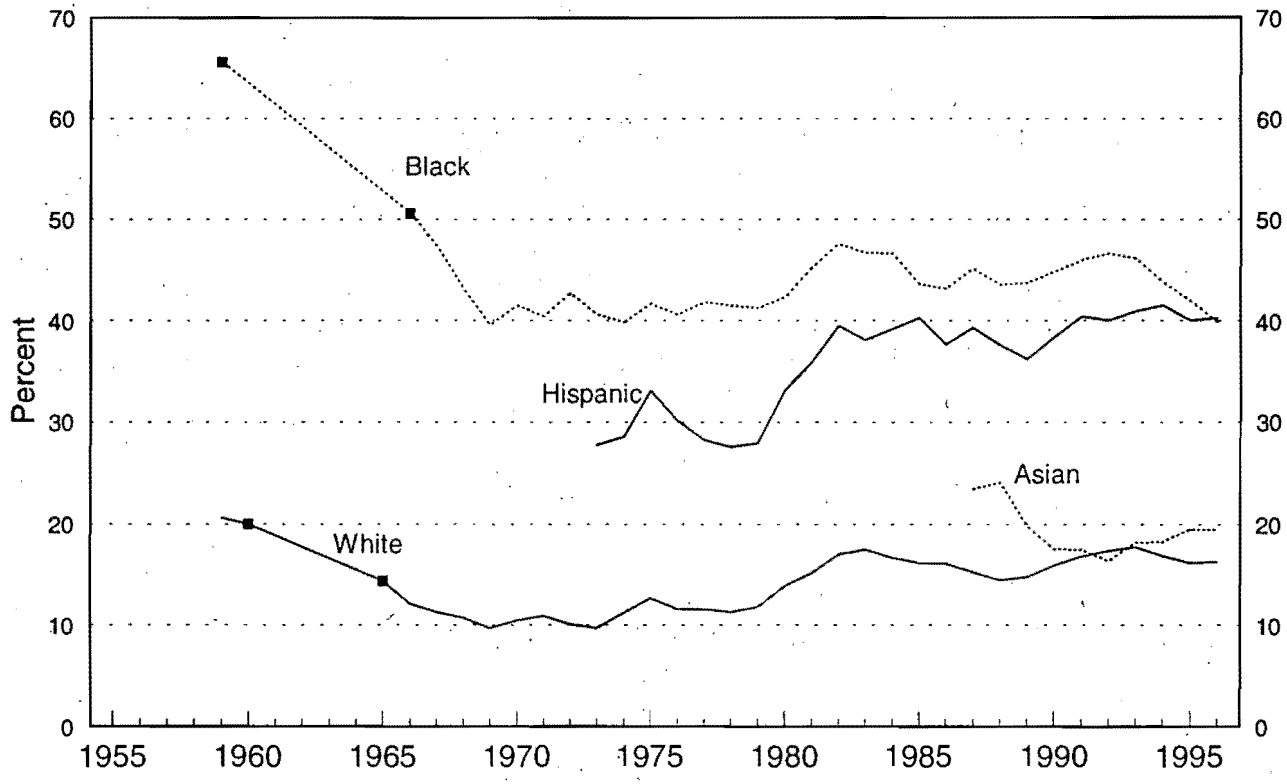
- The poverty rate for non-Hispanic whites remains well below that of Asians, blacks, and Hispanics. According to the 1990 Census, the poverty rate for American Indians was the highest among the five racial and ethnic groups.

- The poverty rate for Hispanics increased from the 1970s until the early 1990s. It has been above the rate for blacks since 1994. The increase in Hispanic poverty is partly the result of the lower levels of educational attainment of many Hispanic immigrants.

- Although their median family income exceeds that of non-Hispanic whites, Asians are more likely than non-Hispanic whites to be poor. This combination of relatively high poverty and high median income reflects the great economic diversity within the U.S. Asian population.

Economic Status

3. Poverty Rates for Children



Notes: Straight lines between dots indicate data are unavailable in intervening years. Prior to 1974 for whites and blacks, and prior to 1976 for Hispanics, poverty rates are for related children in families.

Source: Bureau of the Census.

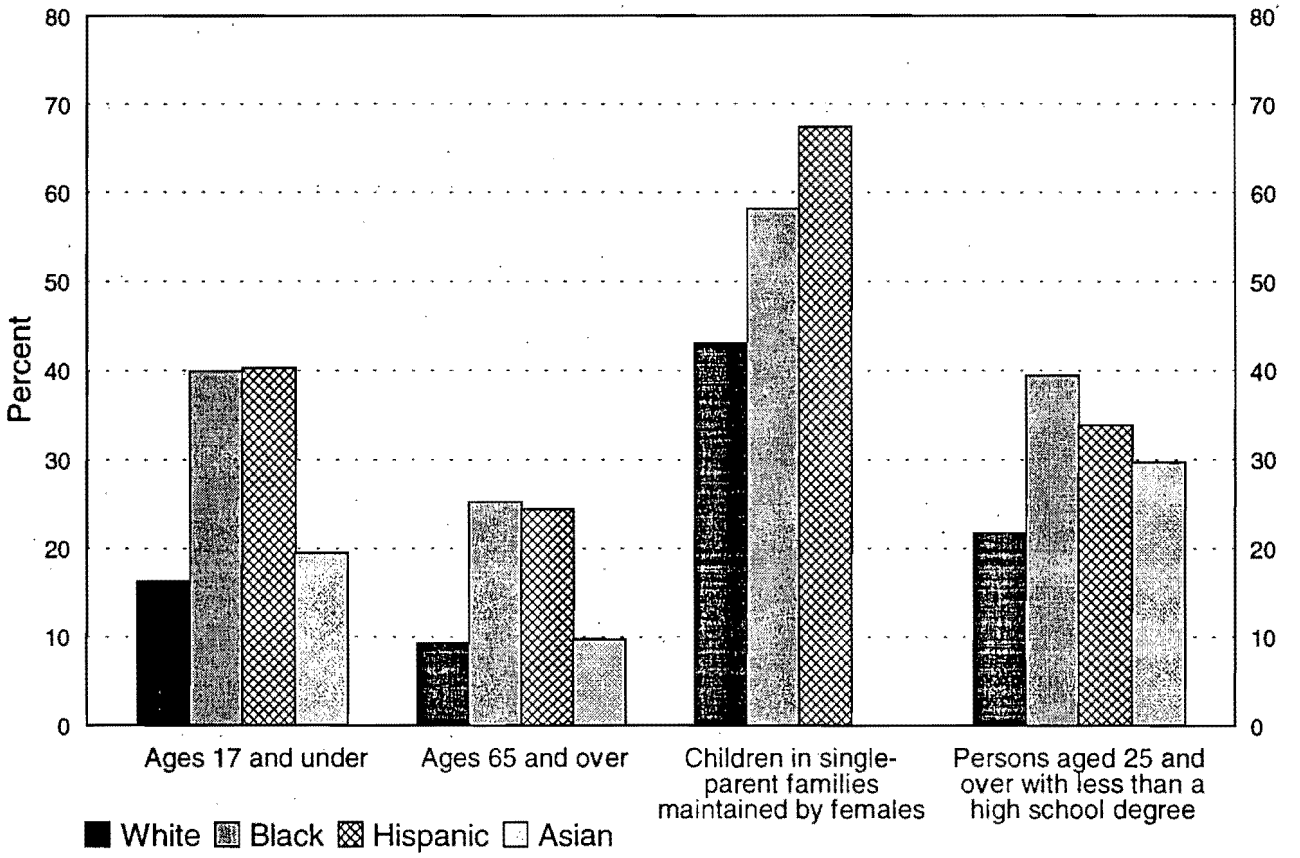
- Child poverty measures current economic hardship among familes with children. Poverty in childhood is also associated with poor child health, delayed cognitive development, and poverty in adulthood. As such, it is also an indicator of inequality of opportunity and a predictor of long-term economic disadvantage.

- Child poverty rates for all groups declined sharply in the 1960s. Since then, child poverty rates have fluctuated with the economy and edged up for most groups.

- Poverty rates for Hispanic children have increased more rapidly than among other groups and are currently about equal to those of black children. According to the 1990 Census, American Indian children had poverty rates that were second only to blacks (not shown in chart).

Economic Status

4. Poverty Rates by Selected Individual Characteristics, 1996



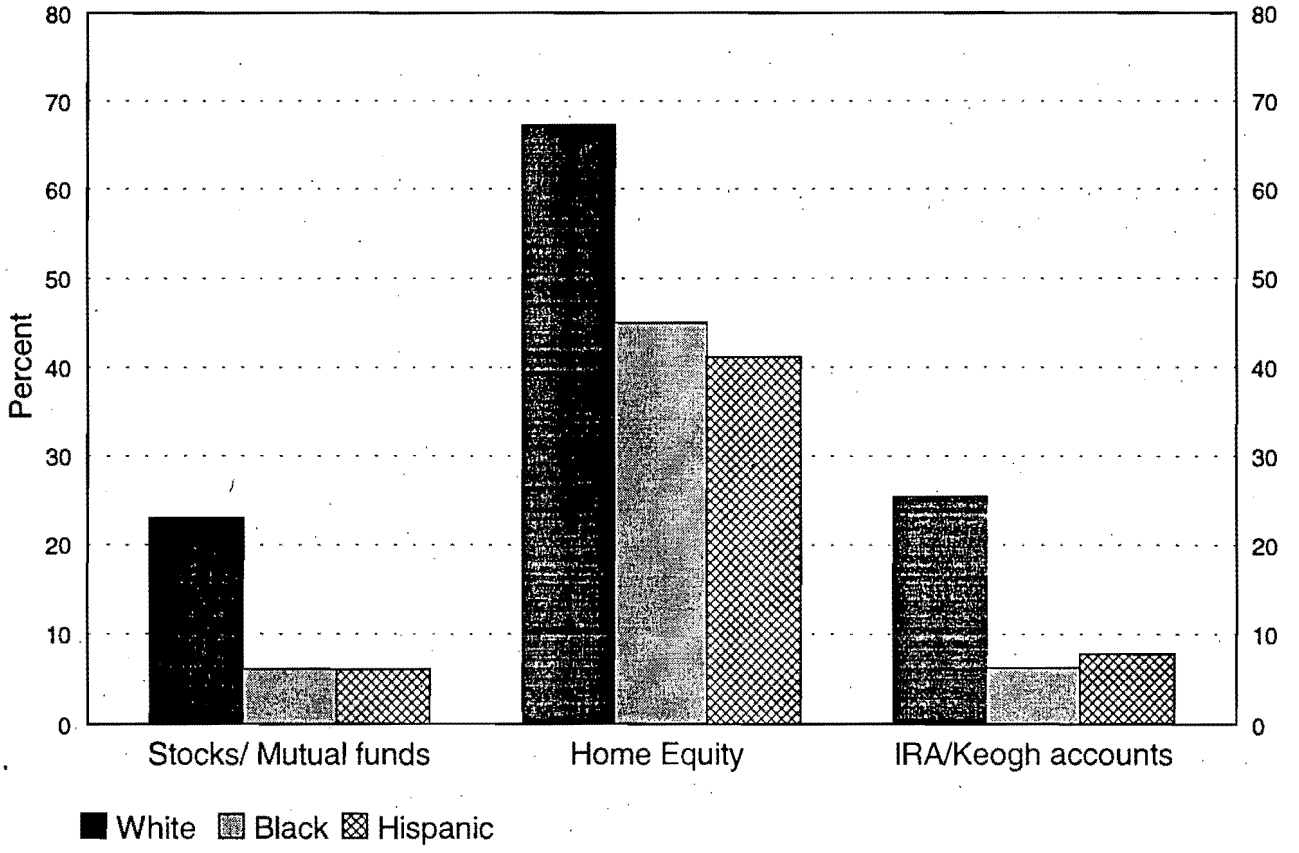
Source: Bureau of the Census.

- The higher poverty rates of blacks, Hispanics and American Indians (not shown in chart) are in part linked to educational attainment and single-parent families. But even for children in households maintained by single mothers or for persons aged 25 and older without a high school degree, poverty rates for blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians are higher than poverty rates for whites.

- Poverty rates for black and Hispanic children and elderly are markedly higher than those of their white counterparts.

Economic Status

5. Households Owning Selected Assets, 1993



Source: Bureau of the Census.

- Wealth (assets minus liabilities) is a better indicator of permanent economic status than is income in a single year. Wealth can provide a cushion against temporary economic hardship.

- Households maintained by whites were more likely than those maintained by blacks or Hispanics to own stocks or mutual funds, have equity in their home, or own a private pension plan such as an IRA or Keogh account.

- Differences in stock ownership in 1993 are notable, because the value of stock has increased markedly since that time; for example, the Standard and Poor's 500 Index has more than doubled in value since 1993.

- Among those who own assets of each type, the median value of assets held by whites is higher than that of assets owned by blacks and Hispanics (not shown in chart). In 1993, the median net worth of households maintained by whites was 10 times that of households maintained by blacks or Hispanics.

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Health

Advances in public health practice and medical technology have contributed to dramatic improvements in the average longevity of the U.S. population. On average, Americans in 1900 could not expect to live to the age of 50. By 1996 the they could expect to live past the age of 76. Although all racial and ethnic groups have experienced gains in life expectancy, differences between groups in longevity and in many other measures of health status have been apparent for as long as these measures have been collected separately by race. This is true for measures of health status at the beginning, middle, and end of the life span. For some groups and some measures, these differences are persistently large. For others, the differences are small.[1]

In general, blacks fare worse than any other group, and American Indians and Hispanics are often disadvantaged in health status relative to whites. On average, Asians fare as well as and sometimes better than whites on most measures of health. While many of the observed differences are large, average differences between racial and ethnic groups may understate important differences within the society. For instance, there is evidence that blacks who live in very poor urban areas suffer extreme health disadvantages not only relative to whites but also relative to blacks who live in poor rural areas or middle class urban neighborhoods.[2] In addition, there are differences by national origin, socioeconomic status, and age, particularly within the Hispanic and Asian populations, that are not apparent when statistics are reported at this level of aggregation. For example, there is some evidence that the health status of younger cohorts of Hispanics may be declining,[3] and among Asian/Pacific Islanders, those with low incomes and those with origins in south and southeast Asia are disadvantaged relative to whites and other Asian groups.[4]

Infant mortality is often used to compare the health and well-being of populations across countries as well as within countries. Although the United States has a lower rate of infant mortality than a typical developing country, it has long had one of the highest infant mortality rates of any industrialized country in the world. Within the United States, blacks and American Indians have higher infant mortality rates than other groups, and although mortality rates have been falling for all groups, differences among groups have persisted over time (Health 1).

Declines in infant mortality and infectious diseases among the young contributed much to the increase in overall life expectancy in the early part of the 20th century. In the latter part of the century, the large declines in chronic disease death rates among the middle aged and older groups have led to an acceleration of life expectancy. However, differences in life expectancy between

whites and blacks have persisted throughout the period, and, among men, they have actually grown since the 1980s (Health 2).

Childhood infectious diseases, once a significant cause of illness and death among children, have largely been conquered through widespread use of vaccination. Mandatory vaccination requirements for enrollment in most schools in the United States virtually assure vaccination by age 5. However, a large majority of children in the United States receive vaccinations much earlier, following the recommended schedule that begins at birth and is largely complete by 18 months. Whether or not a child aged 19 to 35 months is up to date with this schedule is a key indicator of access to basic medical care. Although there are differences among racial and ethnic groups in the United States, these are largely a reflection of differences in economic status among groups (Health 3).

Smoking contributes to nearly 400,000 cancer and heart disease deaths annually, and the reduction of smoking rates has been an important goal of public health efforts for many years.[5] Because of the addictive property of nicotine, and because most current smokers began smoking at young ages, efforts at smoking reduction have focused on youth. Between 1965 and 1990, there were large reductions in smoking among 18- to 24-year olds, especially for men and for black women (Health 4). Rates of smoking fell more for blacks than for whites. Since 1990, however, there is concern that this decline has stopped.

The other major areas of concern for adolescent and young adult health are injuries and AIDS. Adolescents and young adults, particularly males, face higher rates of death due to motor vehicle injuries, suicides, and homicides than any other age group. There are also racial and ethnic differences within this age group. American Indians face much higher death rates due to suicides and unintentional injuries than any other group, while blacks face much higher rates of homicide than any other group (Health 5). Hispanics and American Indians also face higher than average homicide rates. HIV disease kills black and Hispanic young adults at significantly higher rates than non-Hispanic whites, Asians, or American Indians.

At middle age, chronic diseases are much more important indicators of health. Heart disease and cancer are the two most important causes of premature death for those aged 45 to 64, and much of this mortality is directly attributable to smoking.[6] Asians in this age range face the lowest death rates due to heart disease (Health 6). Blacks, on the other hand, are at greater risk of mortality from these chronic diseases than any other group in this age range. To a large extent, these differences in death rates from chronic diseases are responsible for the relatively low probability

that blacks survive to old age. While only two out of three blacks can expect to live to age 65, nearly 90 percent of Asians can expect to live that long.

At middle age, chronic diseases are much more important indicators of health. Heart disease and cancer are the two most important causes of premature death for those ages 45 to 64, and much of this mortality is directly attributable to smoking.[7] Relative to other groups, blacks face large health disadvantages in mortality due to these chronic diseases (Health 6). Asians face lower death rates due to heart disease at these ages than other groups.

While not presented in this volume, there is also evidence that health differences persist into old age. Black and Hispanic elderly are more likely to have disabilities and chronic diseases than white elderly, but to some extent these differences are explained by differences in socioeconomic status.[8]

Research into the reasons for health differences between racial and ethnic groups has focused largely on differences in socioeconomic status.[9] On average, white Americans have better access to the social and economic resources necessary for healthy living environments and better access to preventive medical services; they also make healthier lifestyle choices. Other research suggests that stress leading to poor health among members of racial minority groups, particularly blacks, is created by discrimination and racism.[10]

To the extent that access to medical care can prevent the onset of disease or ameliorate its effects, the portion of the population without health insurance (either public or private) will be correlated with ill health. Among men especially, Hispanics and blacks are less likely to have health insurance than non-Hispanic whites (Health 7). Insurance coverage is highly correlated with income, however, and the difference between white and black men (though not the difference between Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites) is almost entirely explained by differences in income.

Disparities in health status also have economic consequences. For example, poor health can lead to high expenditures on medical care at the expense of other goods (for example, housing or education). Perhaps more important, poor health can also reduce earning potential. Thus, the disparities observed in health between race and ethnic groups in the United States are tied to differences in many other economic and social realms.

[1] Schoenbaum, Michael, and Timothy Waidmann. 1997. "Race, Socioeconomic Status, and Health: Accounting for Race Differences in Health." *Journals of Gerontology* 52B (Special issue):61–73; Smith, James P., and Raynard Kington. 1997. "Demographic and Economic Correlates of Health in Old Age." *Demography* 34 (1):159–70.

[2] Geronimus, Arline, et al. 1996. "Excess Mortality among Blacks and Whites in the United States." *New England Journal of Medicine* 335 (21):1552–58.

[3] Liao, Youlien, et al. 1998. "Mortality Patterns among Adult Hispanics: Findings from the NHIS 1986-1990." *American Journal of Public Health* 88 (2):227–32.

[4] Tanjasiri, Sora P., Steven P. Wallace, and Kazue Shibata. 1995. "Picture Imperfect: Hidden Problems among Asian Pacific Islander Elderly." *The Gerontologist* 35 (6):753–60; Klatsky, Arthur L, et al. 1994. "The Risk of Hospitalization for Ischemic Heart Disease among Asian Americans in Northern California." *American Journal of Public Health* 84 (10):1672–75.

[5]Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1993. "Smoking Attributable Mortality and Years of Potential Life Lost—United States, 1990." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 42 ([[**Issue number**]]):645-48.

[6] *ibid.*

[7] *ibid.*

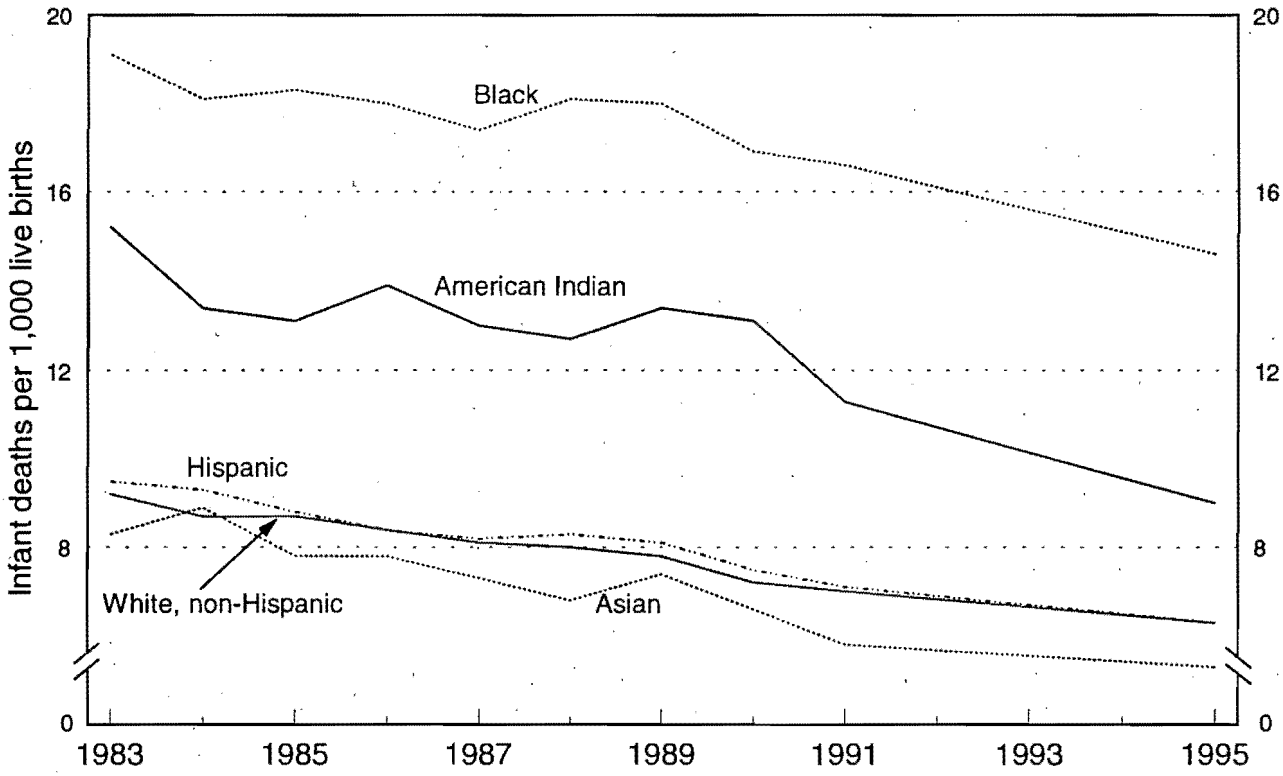
[8] Schoenbaum, Michael, and Timothy Waidmann. 1997. "Race, Socioeconomic Status, and Health: Accounting for Race Differences in Health." *Journals of Gerontology* 52B (Special issue):61–73; Smith, James P., and Raynard Kington. 1997. "Demographic and Economic Correlates of Health in Old Age." *Demography* 34 (1):159–70.

[9] Williams, David R. 1990. "Socioeconomic Differentials in Health: A Review and Redirection." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 53 (2):81–99.

[10] James, Sherman A., Sue A. Hartnett, and William D. Kalsbeek. 1983. "John Henryism and Blood Pressure Differences among Black Men." *Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 6 (3):259–78.

Health

1. Infant Mortality Rates



Source: National Center for Health Statistics.

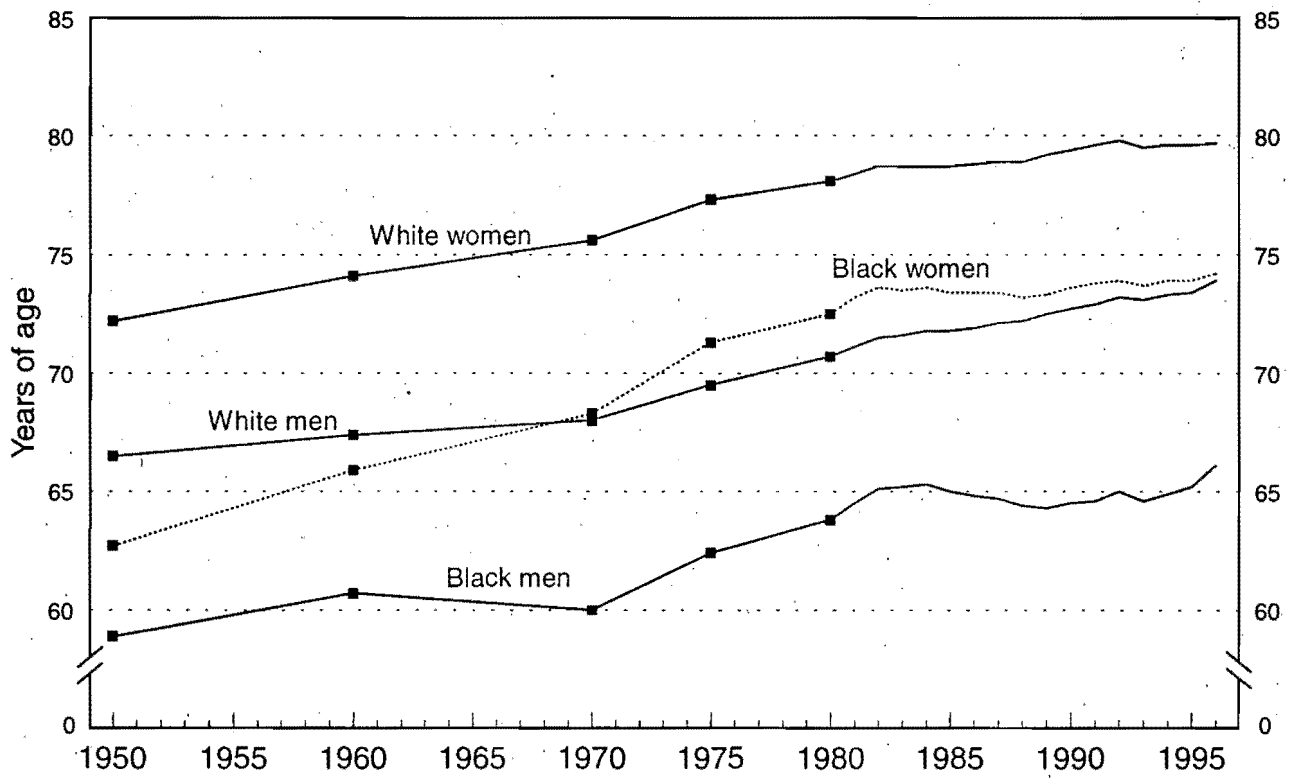
- The infant mortality rate is often used as a primary indicator of the overall health status of a population. It is defined as the number of deaths that occur before a child's first birthday per 1,000 live births.

- Although infant morality rates have fallen over time for all racial and ethnic groups, differences between groups have persisted. In 1968 (not shown in chart), black infants died at a rate of more than 35 per thousand, while white infants died at a rate of just under 20 per thousand.

- Wide disparities in infant mortality among racial and ethnic groups remain. In 1995 the rate for blacks was more than twice the rate for non-Hispanic whites, Hispanics, and Asians. American Indians also had relatively high rates. It is notable that Hispanic infant mortality rates are equivalent to those of non-Hispanic whites, despite the considerably lower socioeconomic status of Hispanics.

- For most groups, the infant mortality rate is much higher for babies born to teenage mothers. The notable exception is black mothers, for whom the infant mortality rate is no higher for teenage mothers than for other mothers. This means that higher teenage birth rates do not account for higher overall black infant mortality rates.

2. Life Expectancy at Birth



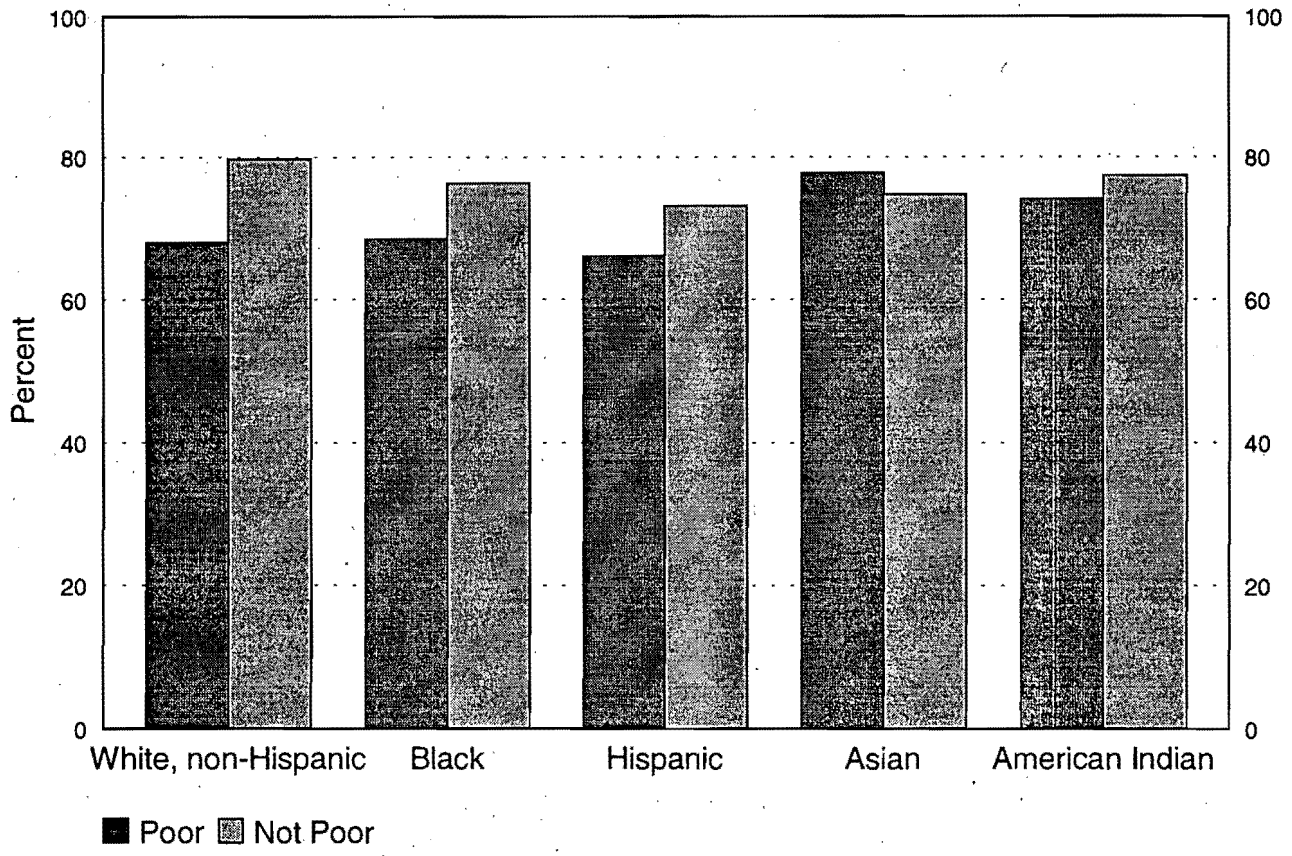
Note: Straight lines between dots indicate data are unavailable in intervening years.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics.

- A key summary measure of mortality risk is life expectancy at birth. This represents the length of time that an average baby born today would live if current death rates at each age remained constant
- For both men and women, whites can expect to live longer than blacks, although black women now slightly outlive white men.
- Women of both race groups can expect to live longer than their male counterparts.
- Although life expectancy has increased substantially for all groups, the differences between whites and blacks have not narrowed and have actually increased since 1982, particularly among men.

Health

3. Up to Date with Recommended Vaccinations at 19 to 35 Months, 1995-96



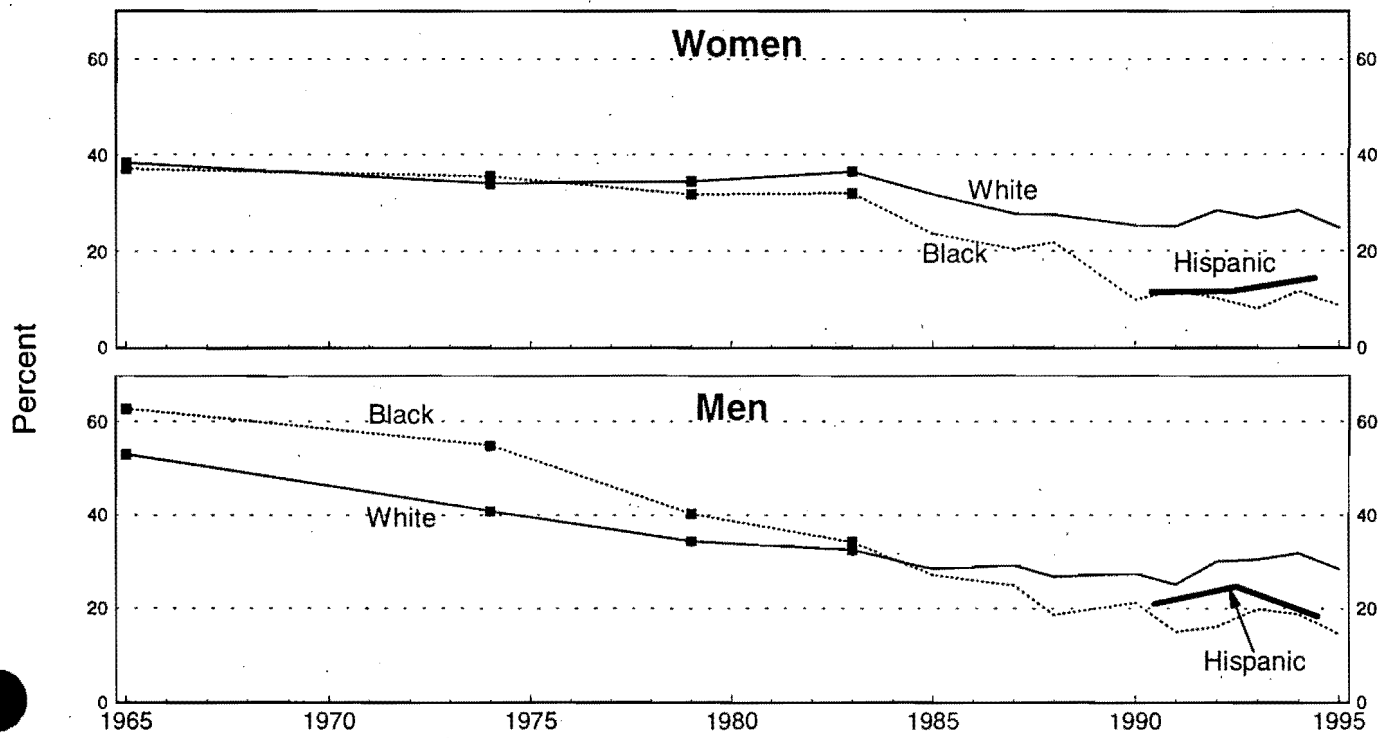
Source: National Center for Health Statistics.

- Immunization is a fundamental component of regular medical care for children. In addition to measuring the extent to which children are protected from childhood diseases, this measure also indicates whether children have at least some access to medical care. This chart shows the percentage of children aged 19 to 35 months who were up to date with the recommended schedule of vaccinations in 1995 and 1996.

- Non-Hispanic white, black, Hispanic, and American Indian children who live in poverty are less likely than nonpoor children to be up to date with recommended vaccinations.

- Among children in similar economic circumstances, there are relatively small differences between racial and ethnic groups. Non-Hispanic white, black, and Hispanic children in poverty have roughly equal chances of being currently vaccinated. Among children above the poverty line, Hispanic children are somewhat less likely to be vaccinated than nonpoor children in other groups.

4. Prevalence of Smoking among 18- to 24-Year Olds



Notes: Straight lines between dots indicate data are unavailable in intervening years. Data for Hispanics are from 1990-91, 1992-93, and 1993-94.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics.

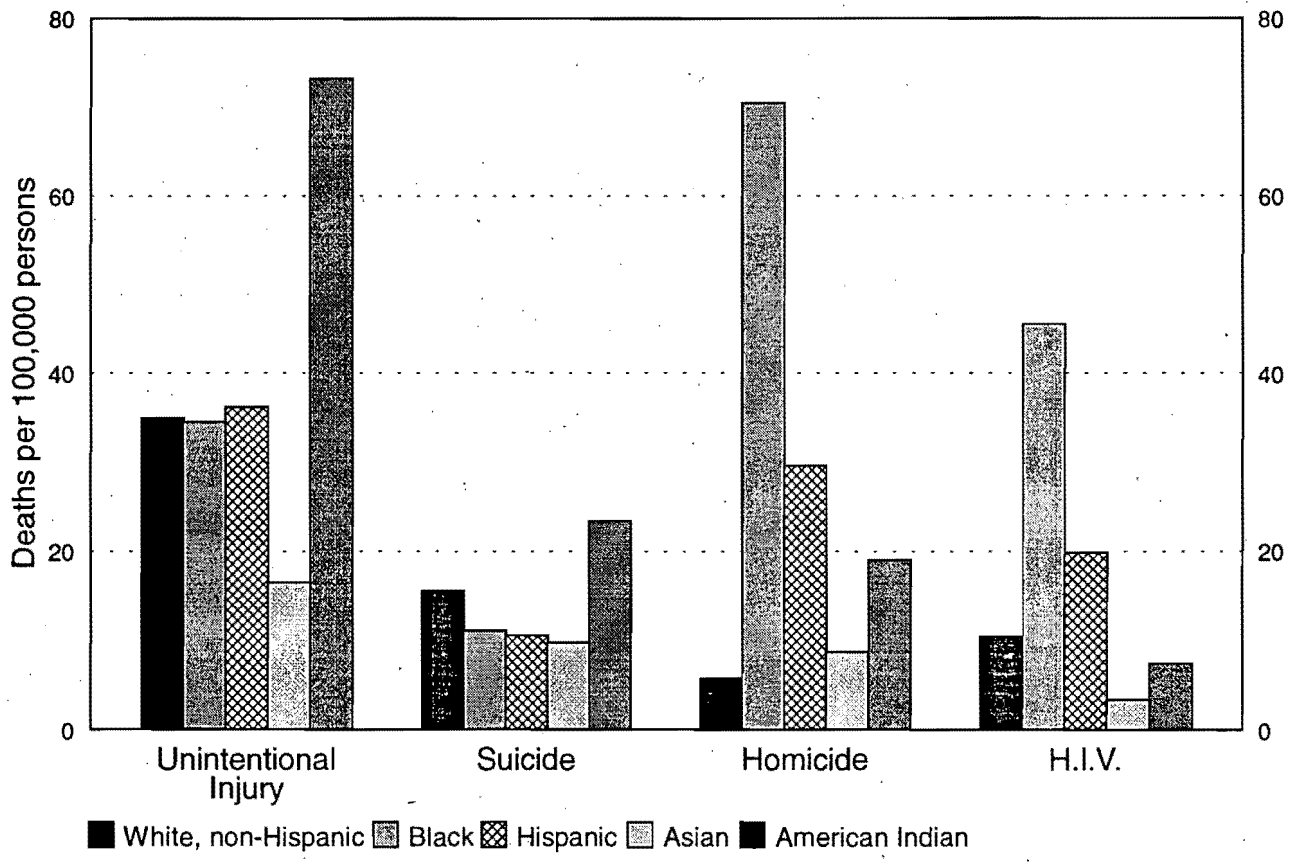
- Cigarette smoking is one of the most important public health concerns in the United States, contributing to nearly 400,000 deaths each year. Most smokers begin smoking early in life, and much effort to reduce smoking has been focused on young people.

- Approximately 25 percent of 18- to 24-year-old whites smoke, compared with approximately 10 percent of blacks and Hispanics. For men, smoking rates for this age group have fallen substantially since 1965, when more than 60 percent of black males and more than 50 percent of white males smoked. For women, reductions since 1965 have been less dramatic, although rates among black women have fallen by more than half.

- Since the mid-1980s, smoking prevalence among black young adults has fallen faster than among whites.

- Data for Hispanics are only available beginning in 1990-91. Smoking is less prevalent among Hispanics than among whites but is slightly more prevalent than among blacks.

5. Death Rates by Cause for Ages 15 to 34, 1994-95



Note: HIV data on American Indians are from 1993-95.

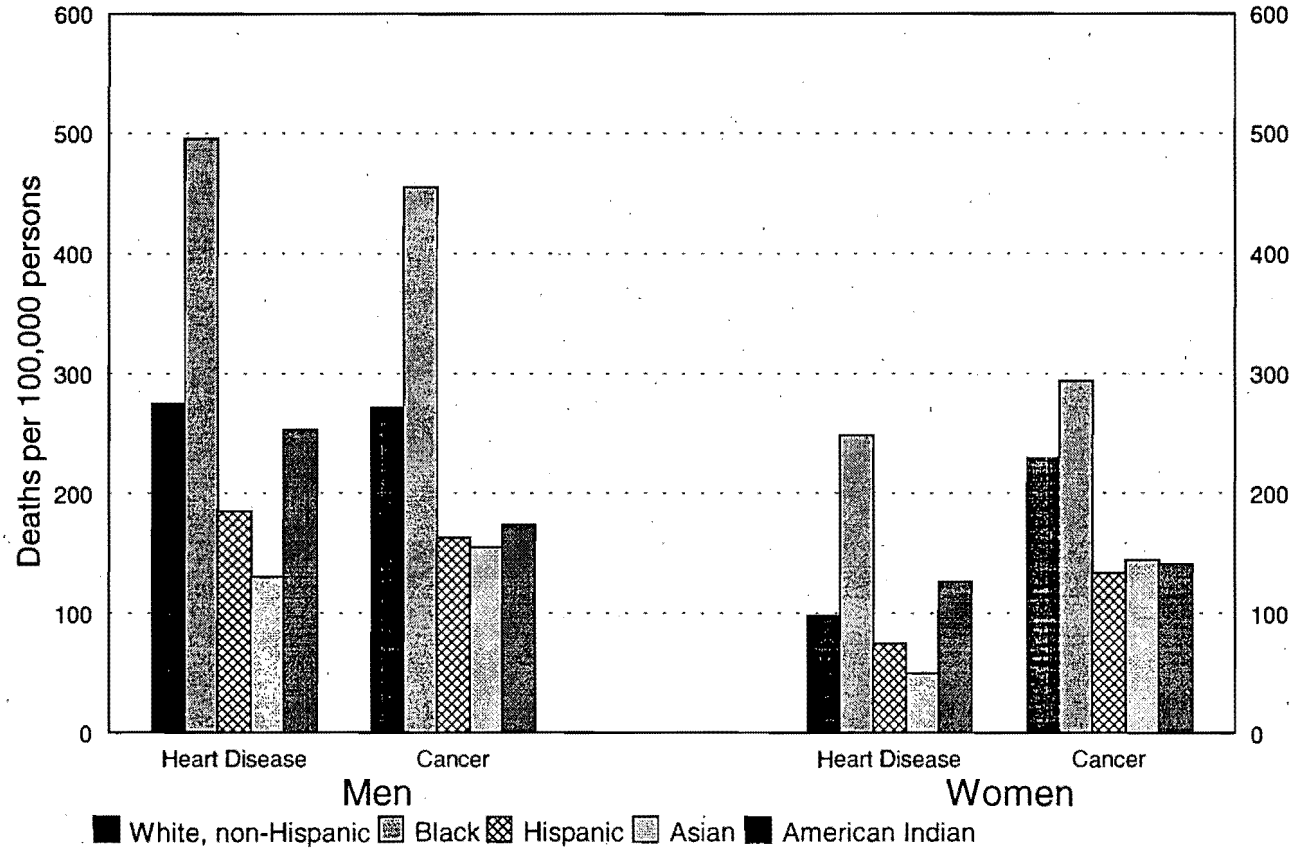
Source: National Center for Health Statistics.

- Although deaths to adolescents and young adults are rare relative to deaths among older adults and the elderly, several causes of death are particularly important for this age group. The most common cause of death in this group is not disease but injury, either intentional or unintentional, which accounts for more than half of all deaths in this age group. The one fatal disease that affects this age group significantly is HIV. However, more than 90 percent of HIV deaths between ages 15 to 34 are among those aged 25 to 34.

- Deaths due to injuries (accidental and intentional) are more prevalent among men than women in all age groups (not shown in chart), but this difference is particularly apparent for persons between the ages of 15 and 34. In this group, more than 80 percent of injury deaths are to men.

- American Indians are much more likely than members of other groups to die accidentally (the most common cause is motor vehicle accidents) or to commit suicide. Blacks are much more likely to be a victim of homicide (with Hispanics and American Indians ranked a distant second and third but still with higher rates than non-Hispanic whites). Blacks and Hispanics are also more likely to die from AIDS-related diseases than other groups. Asians have the lowest rates of death due to injuries and AIDS in this age group.

6. Death Rates by Cause for Ages 45 to 64, 1995

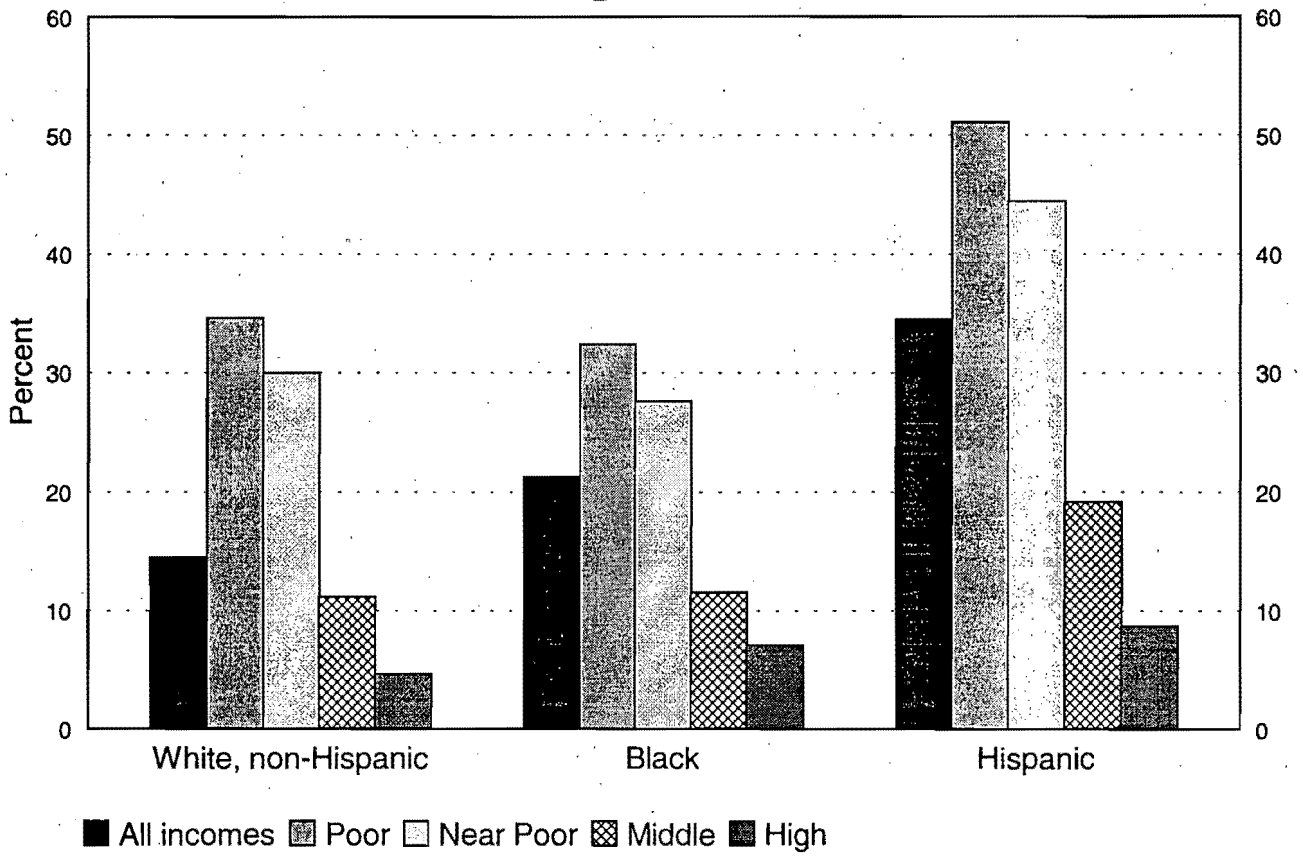


Source: National Center for Health Statistics.

- In this age group, chronic diseases like heart disease and cancer account for the largest fraction of deaths. Smoking is implicated in many of these deaths.
- Black men and women have the highest death rates from heart disease and cancer. Hispanics have lower death rates than non-Hispanic whites for these diseases. Asians have among the lowest death rates, particularly for heart disease. American Indians have relatively high rates of heart disease.
- Overall, men are more likely to die in this age range than women, largely because of differences in rates of death from these diseases, particularly heart disease.

Health

7. Persons Aged 18 to 64 without Health Insurance Coverage, 1994-95



Source: National Center for Health Statistics.

- Coverage by health insurance, either private or public (like Medicaid), is a key indicator of access to medical care.
- Hispanics have the highest rates of uninsurance, while non-Hispanic whites have the lowest.
- For every group, the rate of uninsurance is lower for those with higher incomes.
- The overall difference in uninsurance rates between non-Hispanic whites and blacks stems from the relative concentration of blacks in lower income categories, as non-Hispanic whites and blacks with similar incomes have similar rates of uninsurance. Hispanics, on the other hand, have higher rates of uninsurance at every level of income.
- In large part because they are more likely to be eligible for Medicaid, women tend to have lower rates of uninsurance than men (not shown in chart).

6

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Crime and Criminal Justice

A safe environment is important for stable childhood development, good health, and successful involvement in education and the job market. No single summary measure can capture the difficulties that crime creates in the lives of individuals and communities. This section discusses three important aspects of crime and justice: victimization—the experience of being a victim of crime—,criminal activity, and the criminal justice system. Victimization is down in recent years after rising in the 1980s. The prison population, however, has grown substantially over the past 20 years, and increasing numbers of individuals have other involvement in the criminal justice system. The differences by race and Hispanic origin in experiences with crime and involvement in the justice system are stark.

The measured level of criminal activity and criminal justice supervision is the result of actions by many individuals and institutions, including offenders, victims, the police, the courts, and the prison system. Because of these many actors, it is difficult to interpret differences in observed rates of criminal activity and victimization, either over time or across different groups. For example, if individuals perceive that their risk of being victimized has increased, they may take precautions—such as staying inside more or taking a taxi instead of walking—to reduce that risk. If those precautions are successful, the crime rate may not rise, but crime is still playing a larger role in their lives, and they are certainly worse off.

Crimes fall into three major categories: crimes against persons (including violent crimes), property crimes, and victimless crimes (traditionally, crimes such as drug sales and prostitution have been included in this category). Information about the number of crimes is available from two types of sources, victimization surveys and data collected by law enforcement officials (the FBI crime index, for example). Since surveys provide more reliable information about the characteristics of victims, victimization data from the National Crime and Victimization Survey, rather than FBI data, are presented in this section.

In 1996, Americans were victims of an estimated 27.6 million property crimes and 9.1 million violent crimes. Both property and violent crime rates have fallen in the 1990s. Victims of crime bear psychological, economic, and health costs, and offenders may be arrested and punished for their crime. Although they are not costless to society, "victimless" crimes cannot be accurately counted by surveys of households that ask about incidents of victimization. The effects of crime reach beyond victims and offenders to their families and communities. Offenders can support neither themselves nor their families while in prison or jail—more than half of male prisoners have children under 18, and a criminal record can continue to impair individuals' labor market opportunities for years.[1] Crime costs the economy hundreds of billions of dollars each year, including property losses and damage, as well as public and private spending to control crime. But these numbers do not capture the heightened sense of insecurity that crime imposes on individuals and neighborhoods.

Minorities, particularly blacks, are much more likely than non-Hispanic whites to be victims of crime. Differences in victimization are particularly striking for violent crimes. For example, the homicide victimization rate of blacks is more than twice that of Hispanics and 6 times that of non-Hispanic whites and Asians. American Indians' homicide victimization rate falls between that of Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites and Asians (Crime and Criminal Justice 1). The differences in victimization by race and Hispanic origin are much smaller for property crimes than for violent crimes, although differences have grown somewhat since the 1970s. Hispanics have the highest rates of property crime victimization, followed by blacks and whites (data for other groups are unavailable) (Crime and Criminal Justice 2).

Unfortunately, reliable national data on involvement in the criminal justice system are available only for blacks, whites, and "others," so this subject is discussed here only in terms of black-white differences. Blacks have higher rates of involvement in the criminal justice system than do whites. Although blacks comprise only 12 percent of the population, nearly equal numbers of blacks and whites were admitted to prison in 1995 (Crime and Criminal Justice 3). Black adults are much more likely than white adults to be under the supervision of the criminal justice system—probation, parole, jail, or prision (Crime and Criminal Justice 4).

Blacks represented 43 percent of arrests, 54 percent of convictions, and 59 percent of prison admissions for violent crimes in 1994 (Crime and Criminal Justice 5), indicating that arrested blacks are more likely to be convicted, and convicted blacks are more likely to be imprisoned, compared with whites. America's criminal justice system has clearly been biased against blacks in the past —for example, between 1930 and 1964, six southern jurisdictions put to death 67 black men and no white men for the crime of rape.[2] More recent instances of discrimination on the part of police and elsewhere in the criminal justice system have been documented in personal and media accounts,[3] and perceptions of discrimination in the criminal justice system may undermine its effectiveness. But assessing how much continuing discrimination contributes to the large black-white difference in criminal justice system involvement is difficult. Research suggests that most or all of the differences in the likelihood of conviction and imprisonment can be explained by other factors, such as severity of crime or prior record of the offender.[4] Less is known about the extent of discrimination at the arrest stage, in part because underlying rates of criminal activity by race cannot be easily assessed. Some evidence comes from comparing the race distribution of "offenders" derived from victims' surveys with the racial composition of individuals arrested for the same crime. Two studies have found that these distributions are roughly comparable for many violent crimes.[5]

A variety of factors contribute to differences in victimization, criminal activity, and involvement in the criminal justice system, including neighborhoods, economic status, and education. Those who have poorer earnings prospects in the legal job market may be more likely to engage in criminal activity. Since the 1970s, earnings for low-skilled men have deteriorated markedly, increasing the attractiveness of illegal compared to legal job prospects. This trend may explain some of the rise in prison admissions and criminal justice system involvement. In addition, since blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians are over represented at the bottom of the earnings distribution, those groups have been disproportionately affected by deteriorating earnings. Crime policy and enforcement decisions also influence differences in victimization, criminal activity, and punishments. Some policies can have different effects on different groups. For example, the War on Drugs (launched in the early 1980s) resulted in larger increases in incarceration and criminal

supervision rates among blacks than among whites. This was due, in large part, to differences in sentencing and enforcement for crack cocaine—which is more commonly used by blacks—relative to powder cocaine. Drug use also contributes to nondrug crimes—50 to 80 percent of persons arrested for nondrug offenses tested positive for drugs in 1992.[6]

Besides perceptions of discrimination in the criminal justice system, lack of racial and ethnic diversity among those working in criminal justice may also undermine the perceived legitimacy of the system. However, minority representation on local police departments has increased in recent years and is much higher in large cities, which tend to serve more diverse populations (Crime and Criminal Justice 6). Differences in perceptions about the fairness of the police, the courts, prisons, and jails among racial and ethnic groups have been widely noted. National survey data indicate that blacks and Hispanics have less confidence in the police (Crime and Criminal Justice 7), and research based on particular groups or cities also indicates that a majority of both whites and minorities believe that discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity is a problem in police departments and throughout the criminal justice system.[7]

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1. U.S. Department of Justice. 1991. *Survey of State Prison Inmates.* Washington, DC. 201-37; Freemen, Richard. 1992. "Crime and Employment of Disadvantaged Youth." In Peterson, George and Wayne Vroman, eds., *Urban Labor Markets and Job Opportunity.* Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, 1992. 201-37.

2. BJS: Source?[[Incomplete reference.]]

3. Russell, Kathryn K. 1998. *The Color of Crime.* New York: New York University Press. (In a study of the Maryland State Troopers and the searches they made of motorists on the Interstate Highway 95, black motorists were subject to 409 out of 533 searches. The police justified this procedure by explaining the blacks were 50 percent higher chance of being found with contraband. However, blacks were searched more than 400 percent more often.)

4. Stone, Christopher. 1998. "Race, Crime and the Administration of Justice: A Summary of the Available Facts." (Presented to the Advisory Board of the President's Intiative on Race).

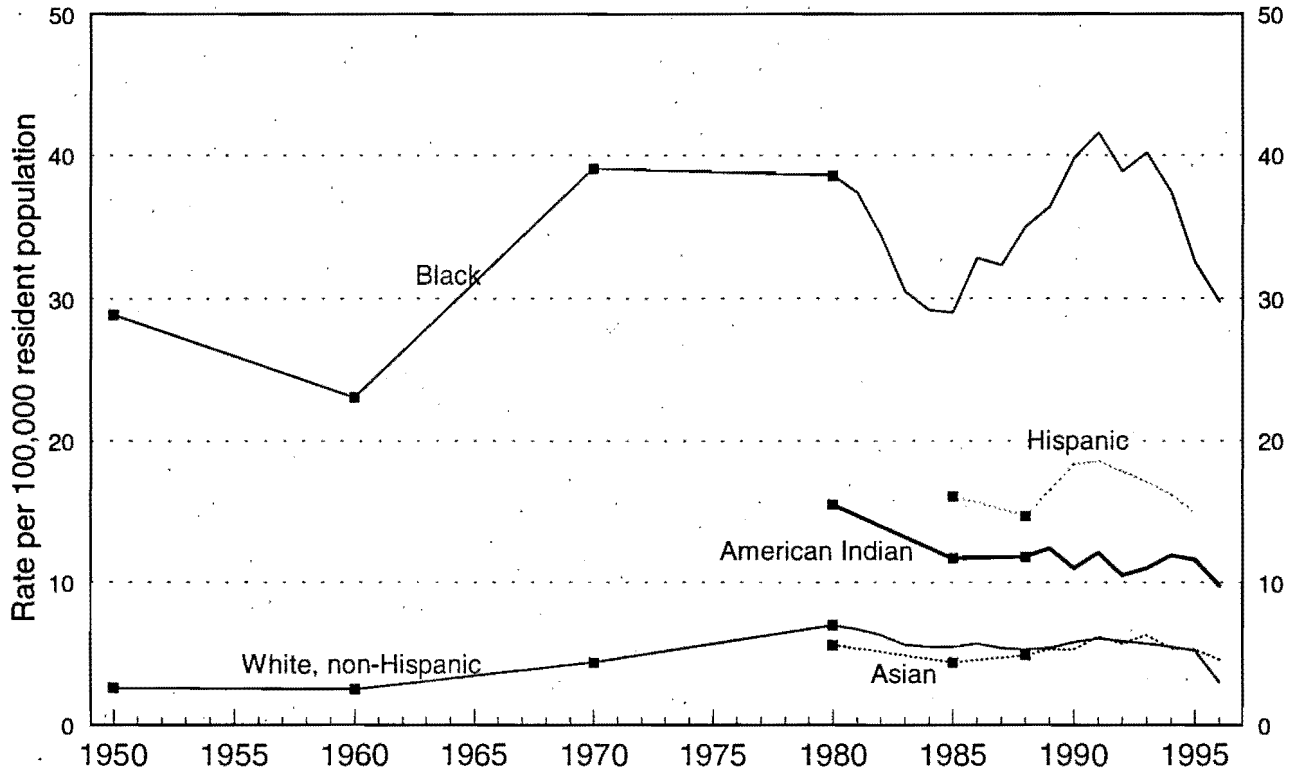
5. General Accounting Office. 1994. *Racial Differences in Arrests.* Washington, D.C.

6. National Institute of Justice, *Drug Use Forecasting.*

7. Carter, David. 1995. "Hispanic Perception of Police Performance: An Empirical Assessment." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 13 (vol): 487-500; *The Gallup Monthly Poll*, October 1995; The Gallup Orgaization. 1997. *The Gallup Poll Social Audit: Black White Relations in the United States.*

Crime and Criminal Justice

1. Victims of Homicide



Notes: Straight lines between dots indicate data are unavailable in intervening years. Data include deaths from "legal intervention" (use of police force). Prior to 1985, series for whites includes white Hispanics. Prior to 1970, series include nonresidents.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics.

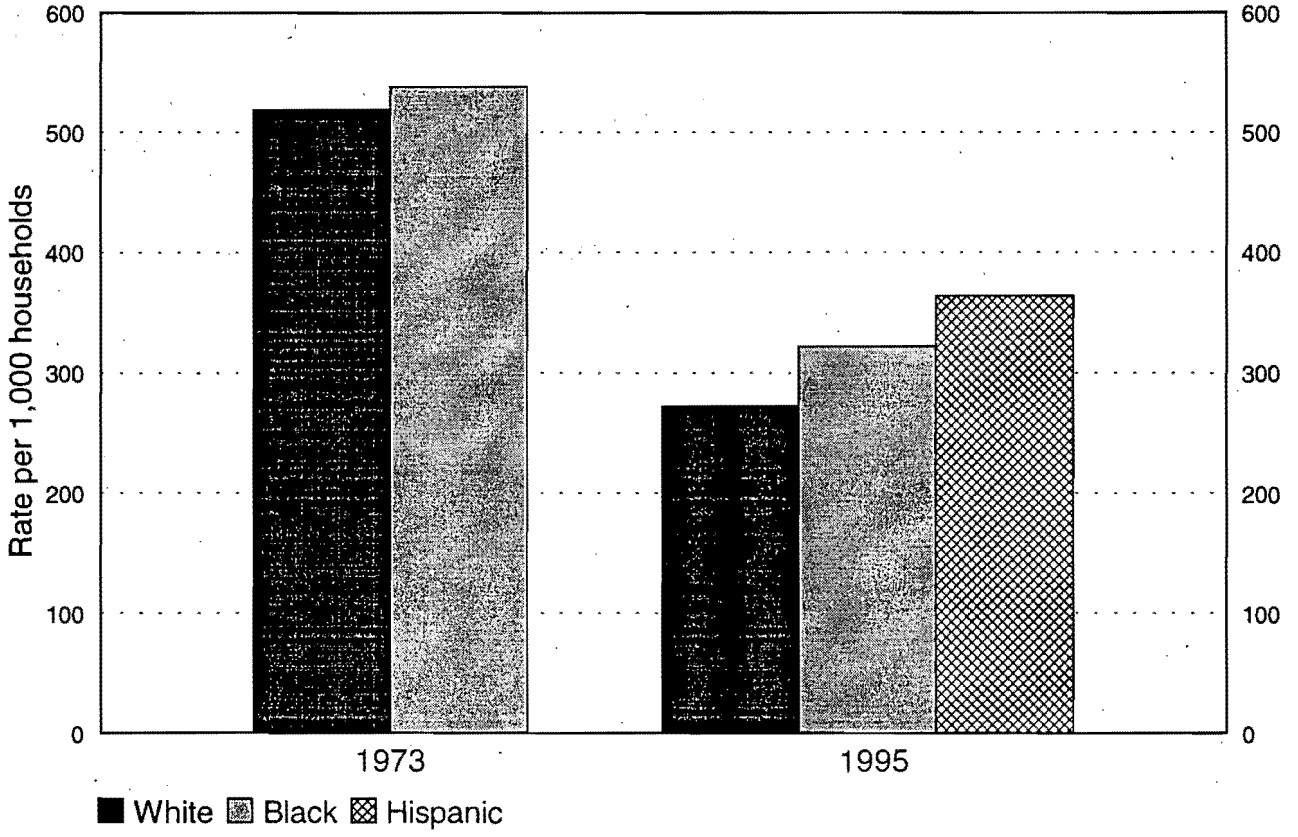
- Homicide victimization rates for blacks have been at least five times those of whites for the last half century, sometimes reaching more than ten times the white rate. In 1995, non-Hispanic whites had the lowest homicide victimization rate (5.1 per 100,000 resident population), followed by Asians (5.3), American Indians (11.6), Hispanics (14.9), and blacks (32.5).

- Males are almost four times more likely than females to be victims of homicide (not shown in chart).

- Fifteen- to 24-year-old males (not shown separately in chart) have the highest homicide victimization rate, and the differences across racial and ethnic groups are even larger for this group: Blacks have by far the highest rate (132.0 per 100,000 population), followed by Hispanics (63.5), American Indians (32.3), Asians (19.4), and non-Hispanic whites (7.3).

Crime and Criminal Justice

2. Property Crime Victimization

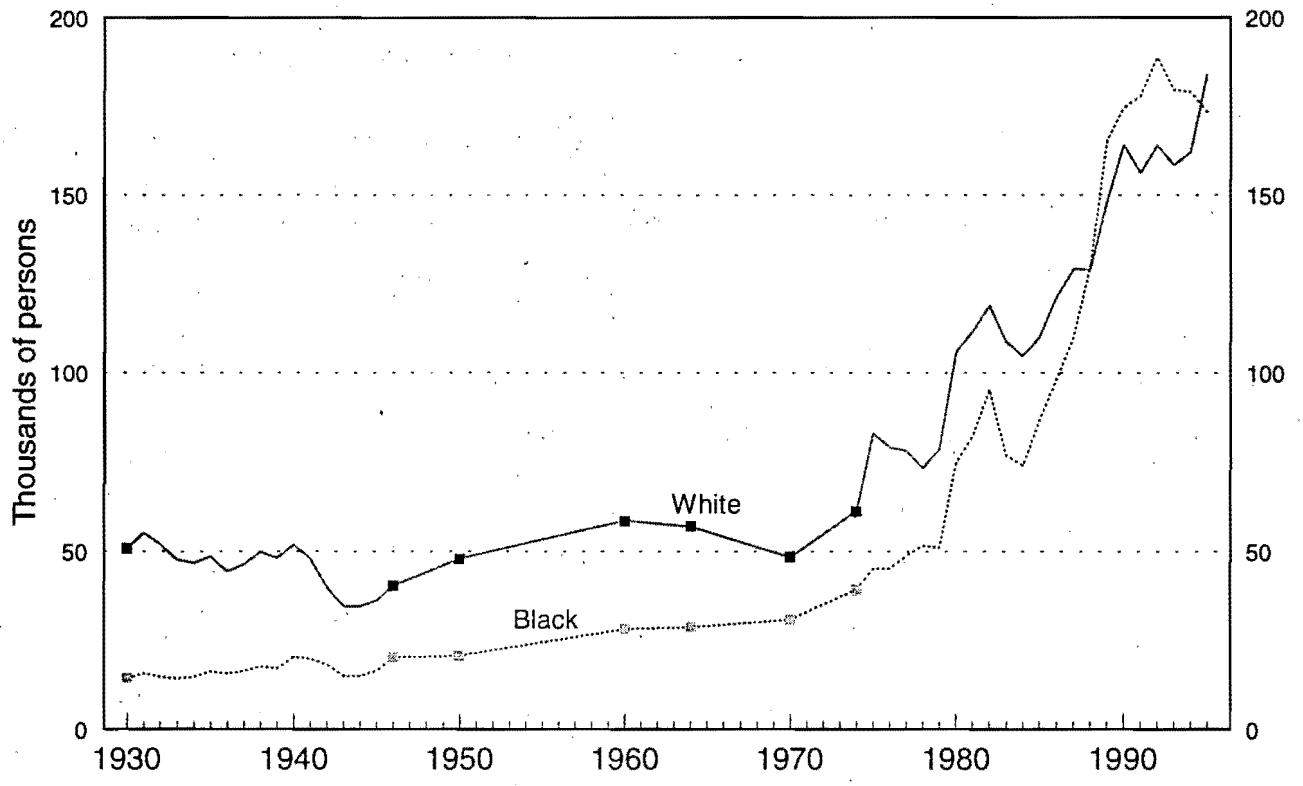


Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

- Property crimes include burglary, motor vehicle theft, and personal theft. Both attempted and completed crimes are reported.
- Differences in property crime victimization rates across racial and ethnic groups are much less pronounced than for violent crimes like homicide (not shown in chart).
- Property crime victimization was less frequent in 1995 than 1973 among both black and white households, although differences between these groups grew somewhat. (Data for Hispanics are not available for 1973.)

Crime and Criminal Justice

3. Admissions to State and Federal Prisons



Note: Straight lines between dots indicate data are unavailable in intervening years.

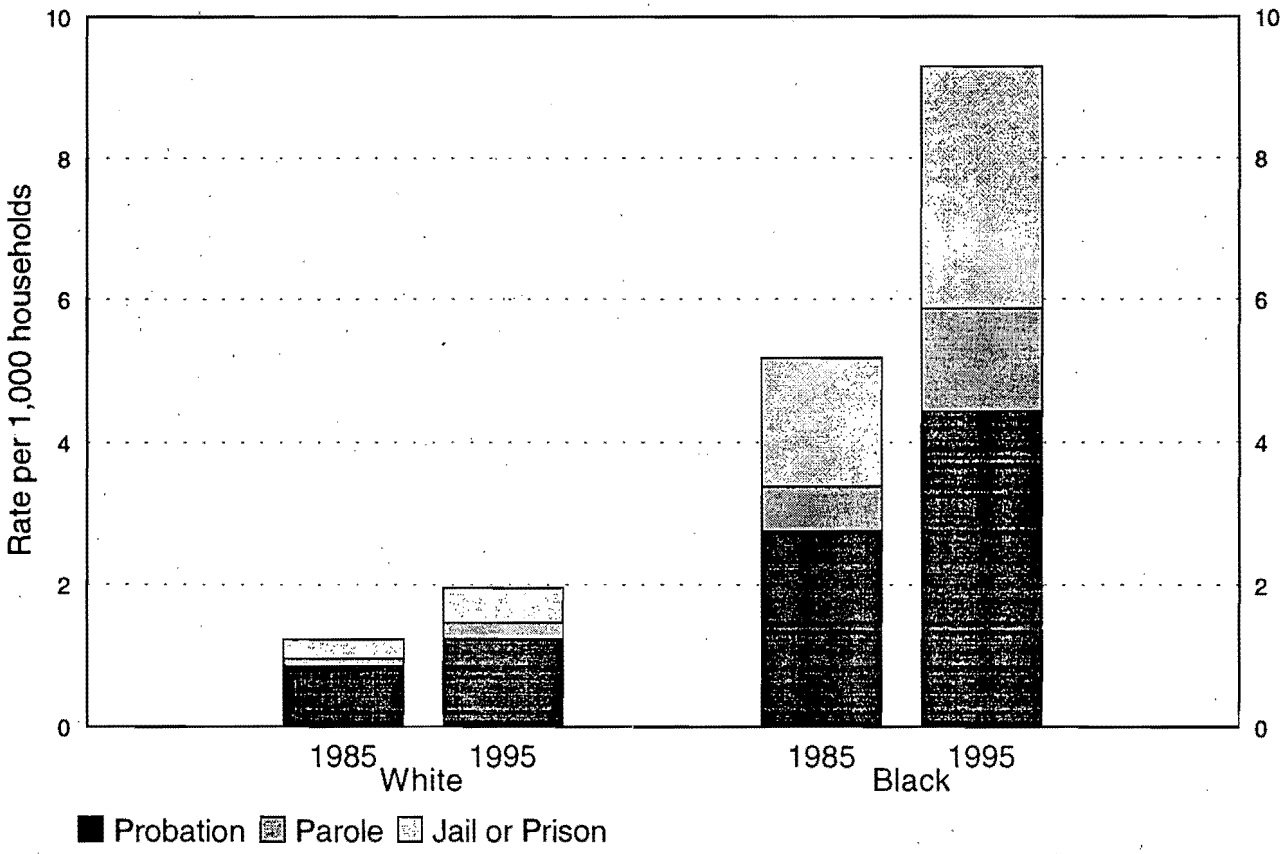
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

- Prison admissions were flat or rose slowly between 1930 and the 1970s and have risen substantially since then. Between 1980 and 1995, white admissions more than doubled, and black admissions nearly tripled. Admissions of blacks leveled off in the 1990s, and actually fell slightly between 1992 and 1995.

- Rapidly rising admissions for drug offenses explain much of the recent increase in total admissions. Between 1985 and 1995, the fraction of admissions to state and federal prisons that were for drug offenses grew from 16 to 32 percent (not shown in chart). The fraction of new admissions for drug offenses was similar for blacks and whites in 1985; however, the increase in drug-crime admissions has been much larger for blacks.

- In 1995 women comprised less than 10 percent of new court commitments to state and federal prisons, but prison admissions have been growing faster among women than men (not shown in chart).

4. Adults Under Correctional Supervision

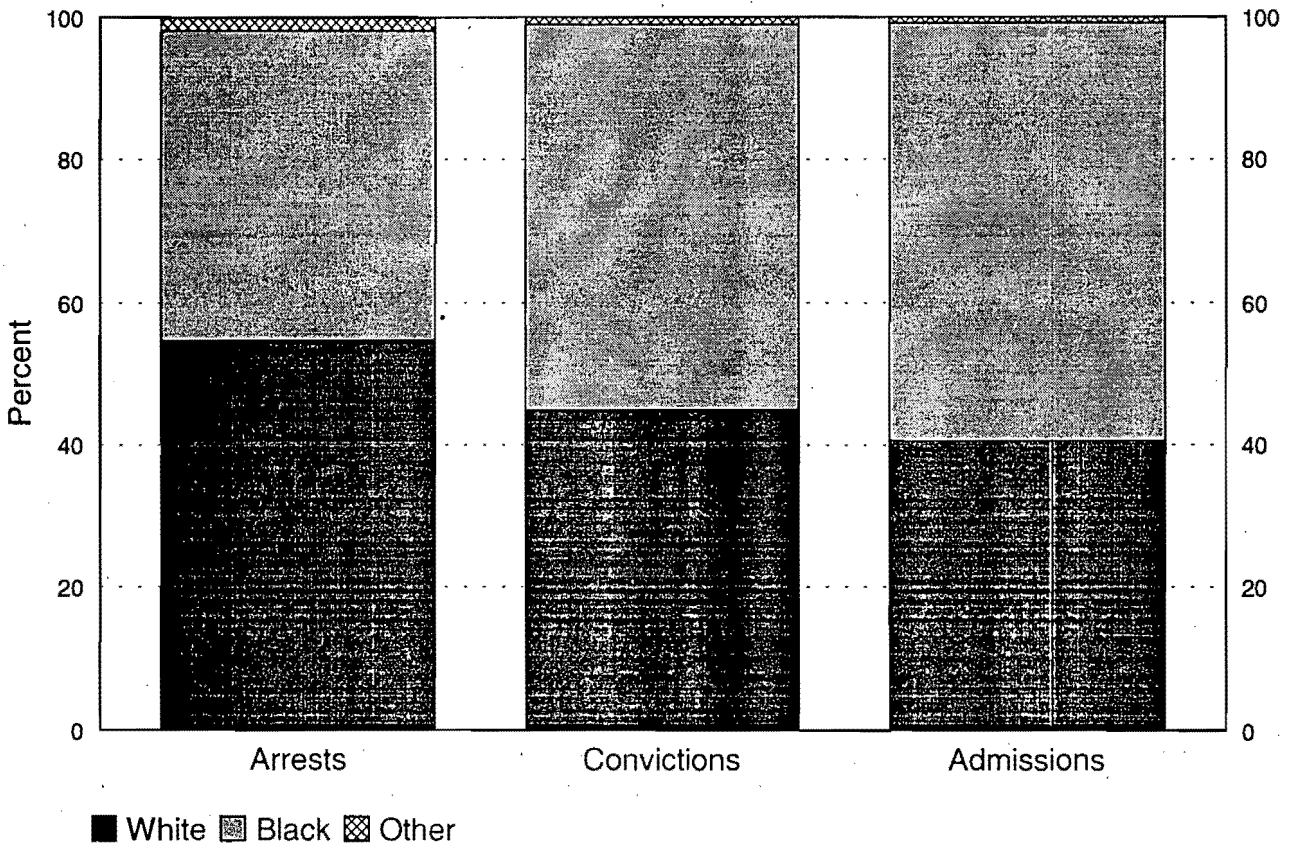


Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

- The fraction of the adult population under correctional supervision provides an indication of the extent to which the criminal justice system is involved in the lives of individuals and communities.
- The fraction of the population that is involved in the criminal justice system -- on probation or parole or in jail or prison -- has grown substantially. Between 1985 and 1995, the fraction of white and black adults in each category of supervision nearly doubled.
- Black adults were nearly 5 times more likely than white adults to be under supervision of the criminal justice system in 1995.
- Twenty- to 29-year-old men are the most likely to be under correctional supervision (not shown in chart). In 1991, about 7 percent of white men and 26 percent of black men in their twenties were under correctional supervision.

Crime and Criminal Justice

5. Arrests, Convictions, and Prison Admissions for Violent Crimes, 1994



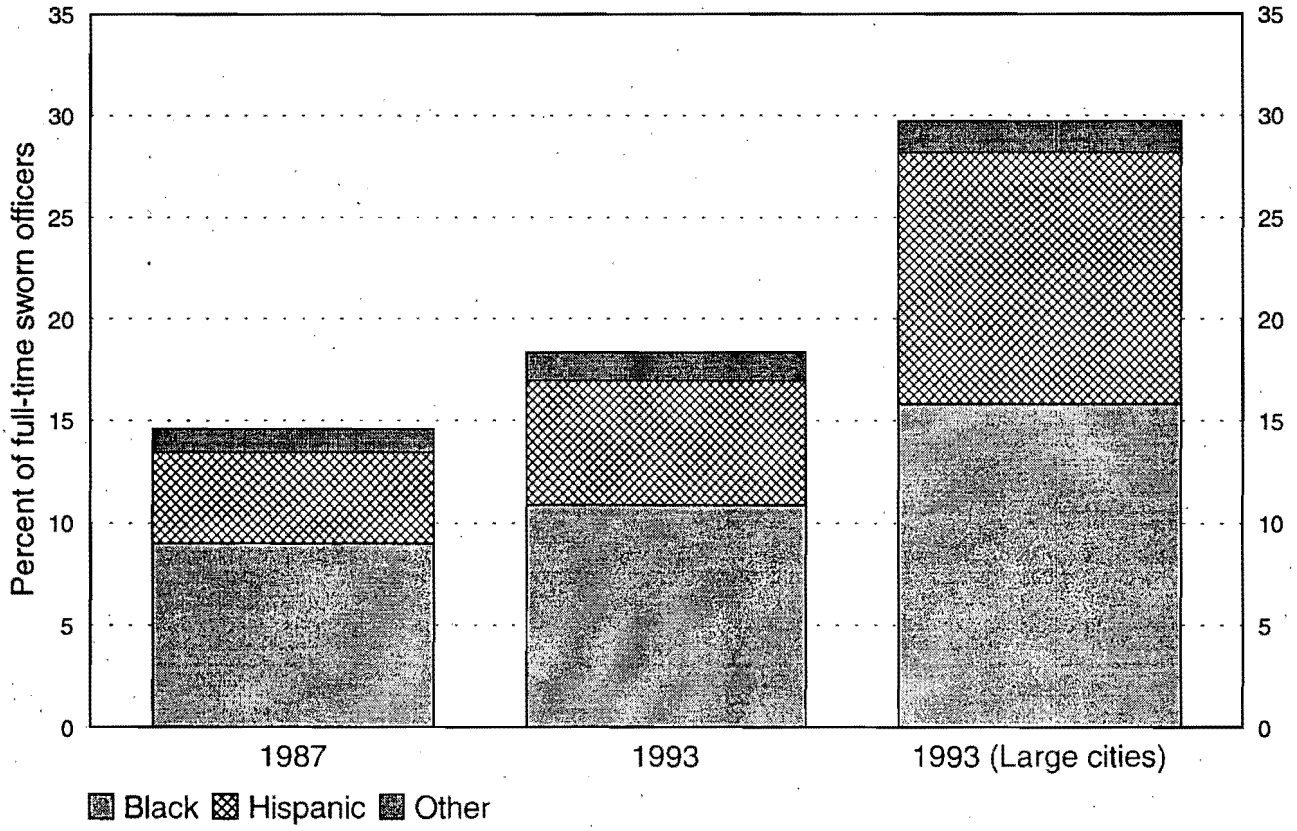
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

- This chart shows the racial composition of arrests, convictions, and prison admissions for violent crimes in 1994, including murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

- Blacks represented 43 percent of arrests, 54 percent of convictions, and 59 percent of prison admissions for violent crimes in 1994. Thus, compared with whites, arrested blacks are more likely to be convicted, and convicted blacks are more likely to be imprisoned.

- Discriminatory behavior on the part of police and elsewhere in the criminal justice system may contribute to blacks' high representation in arrests, convictions, and prison admissions. While incidences of discrimination in arrest situations have been clearly documented, research suggests that much of the black-white differential in arrest rates for violent crimes may be explained by differences in rates of criminal activity. Several studies have concluded that factors other than race, including severity of crime and prior record, may explain most or all of the black-white difference in the likelihood of conviction and imprisonment.

6. Minority Composition of Local Police and Sheriffs' Departments



Note: Large cities are police departments serving a population of one million or more.

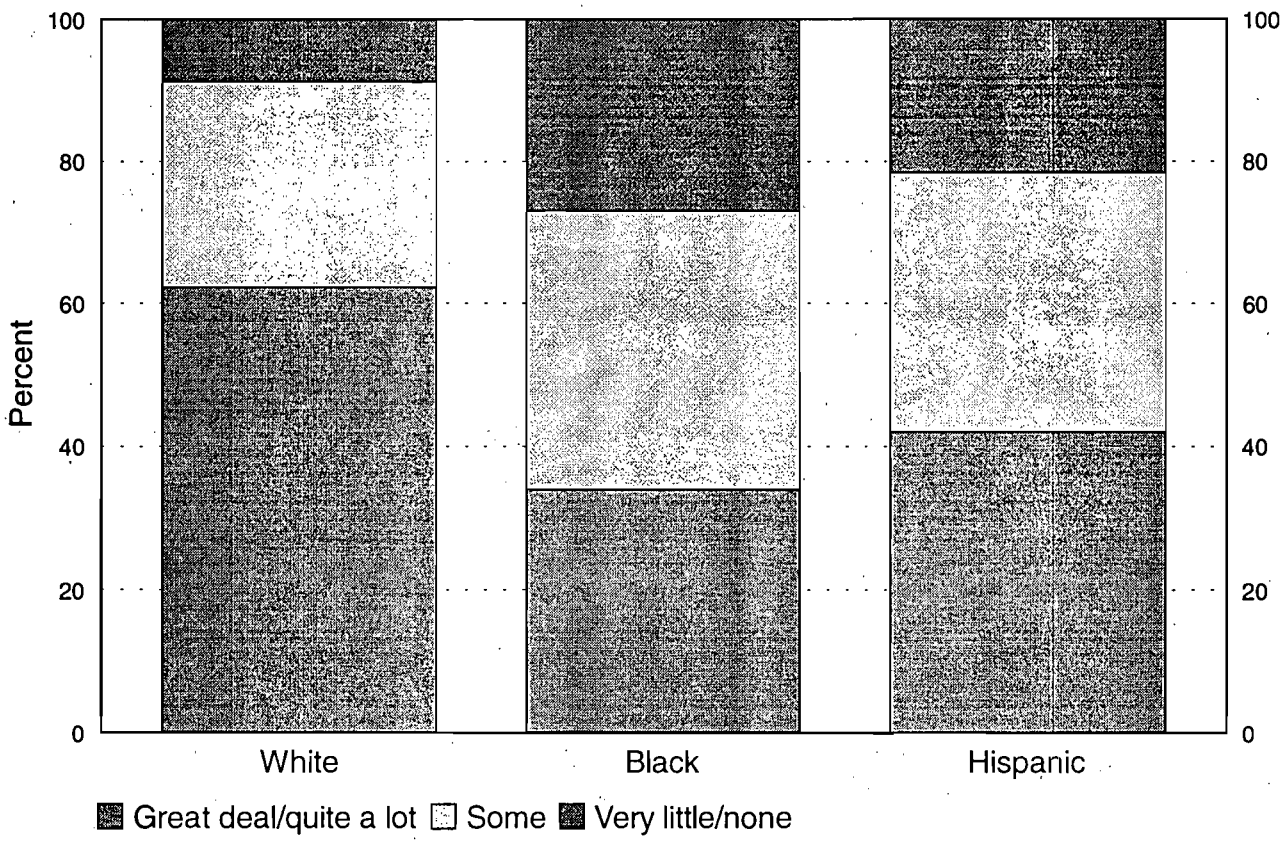
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

- The police are typically the first contact with the criminal justice system for both victims and offenders. Many have argued that higher minority representation among police officers can improve relations between police departments and those they serve, reduce discrimination, and improve police departments' ability to fight crime.

- Total minority representation among full-time sworn officers in local police and sheriffs' departments grew from 15 percent in 1987 to 18 percent in 1993. Representation of blacks grew from 9 to 11 percent, and Hispanic representation grew from 4 to 6 percent.

- Minority representation is higher in police and sheriffs' departments serving larger cities. For example, minorities comprise 30 percent of full-time sworn officers in cities with one million or more, compared with less than 10 percent for departments serving fewer than 50,000 people (not shown in chart).

7. Reported Confidence in the Police, 1994-97



Note: Totals exclude persons who did not respond.

Source: Gallup, C.N.N., U.S.A. Today poll.

- Lack of confidence in the police and perceptions of unfair practices may limit their effectiveness, especially since police rely heavily on community members to report crime and act as witnesses.
- This chart presents the opinions of a national sample of whites, blacks, and Hispanics, who were asked how much confidence they have in a variety of institutions, including the police.
- Whites have more confidence in the police, followed by Hispanics and blacks. Whites are much more likely to report "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the police and less likely to report "little" or no confidence, compared with blacks and Hispanics.

Clinton Library Photocopy

4

Clinton Library Photocopy

7

Housing and Neighborhoods

The housing in which people live and the neighborhoods where they reside are important factors affecting child development and opportunities for adults. Poor housing may contribute to a number of adverse health and educational outcomes, particularly in children. For example, severe crowding, indoor air pollution, or deteriorating lead paint may cause or exacerbate diseases such as asthma or lead poisoning, sometimes with long-term effects.[1]

There are currently about 100 million occupied housing units in the United States, of which about two-thirds are owner-occupied. Homeownership has increased in recent years to the highest level in history. The national homeownership rate was 66 percent in 1997, but less than half of black and Hispanic householders owned their homes (Housing and Neighborhoods 1). About 5 million of the 35 million renters receive some form of federal subsidy.

High housing burdens, moderate or severe physical housing problems, and crowding are three commonly used measures of adverse housing conditions.[2] Between the mid-1970s and 1990s, the fraction of households with moderately high housing cost burdens (30 to 50 percent of income) rose (Housing and Neighborhoods 2). Over the same period the physical condition of housing improved markedly, although the fraction of households experiencing severe physical problems rose (Housing and Neighborhoods 3). The fraction of households that are crowded (more than one person per room) also fell substantially, from 4.6 percent in 1976 to 2.6 percent in 1995 (Housing and Neighborhoods 4). With the exception of crowding among Hispanic households, these trends have been consistent across groups for which data are available.

Non-Hispanic white households have the best housing conditions according to all three of these measures, but the relative position of the other groups varies depending on the measure. Non-Hispanic black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian households are about equally likely to have very high housing cost burdens, and non-Hispanic white households are least likely to have high housing cost burdens. Non-Hispanic black households are most likely to be living in units with moderate or serious physical problems, followed by American Indians, Hispanics, Asians, and

non-Hispanic whites. Hispanic households are the most likely to be crowded, followed by Asians and American Indians, non-Hispanic blacks, and non-Hispanic whites.

An individual's neighborhood influences the availability and quality of important amenities such as a safe environment, primary education and other public services, as well as economic opportunities. Growing up in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty, high crime, and poor public schools is associated with poorer educational outcomes and may reduce chances of success for years to come.[3] Neighborhood quality and the quality of associated services vary considerably according to the racial and ethnic composition of the population. Non-Hispanic black and Hispanic households tend to report more problems in their neighborhoods, including crime, litter and housing deterioration, and poor public services (Housing and Neighborhoods 5). Concern about crime in neighborhoods rose considerably between 1985 and 1995.

Neighborhoods have long been segregated by race and Hispanic origin, although segregation has fallen somewhat since 1970, particularly between blacks and all others.[4] Because neighborhoods have historically been segregated, public services and other amenities associated with neighborhoods have also been unequally distributed. In addition, the racial and ethnic composition of neighborhoods can play an important role in determining how much interaction individuals have with members of other racial and ethnic groups. Members of each group live disproportionately with members of the same group (Housing and Neighborhoods 6). According to several measures of segregation, whites and blacks live in more segregated neighborhoods than Asians or Hispanics.[5]

The 1968 Fair Housing Act prohibited discrimination on the basis of race or ethnic origin in housing and mortgage lending. Evidence suggests that the Act may have helped reduce discrimination in housing markets and contributed to declining segregation.[6] Attitudes about racial integration have also changed dramatically: The fraction of whites saying they would move if a black family moved in next door fell from 44 percent in 1958 to 1 percent in 1997 (Housing and Neighborhoods 7). Still, segregation remains high. And continued discrimination in housing and mortgage lending has been clearly documented through audit studies, in which similar white

and minority candidates are sent to rent apartments or apply for home mortgage loans. One national study found that the incidence of unfavorable treatment in the housing market was 23 to 30 percentage points higher for a black or Hispanic applicant compared with his or her matched white counterpart.[7]

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[1] Children's Defense Fund. 1994. *Wasting America's Future*; Council of Economic Advisers. 1998. *To "Save" One Dollar*; Needleman, H. L., et al. "Bone Levels and Delinquent Behavior." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 275 (5): 363-69; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1997. "Update: Blood Lead Levels- United States, 1991-1994." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 46 (7): 141-46.

[2]For a description, see *American Housing Survey for the United States in 1995*, U.S. Department of Commerce and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

[3] Rosenbaum, James. 1993. "Black Pioneers- Do Their Moves to the Suburbs Increase Economic Opportunity for Mothers and Children?" *Housing Policy Debate* 2 (4): 1179-1213.

[4] Cutler, David M., Edward L. Glaeser, and Jacob L. Vigdor. 1997. "The Rise and Decline of the American Ghetto." *National Bureau of Economic Research* Working Paper No. 5881; Farley, Reynolds and William H. 1994. "Changes in the Segregation of Whites from Blacks during the 1980s: Small Steps Toward a More Integrated Society." *American Sociological Review* 59 (vol): 23-45.

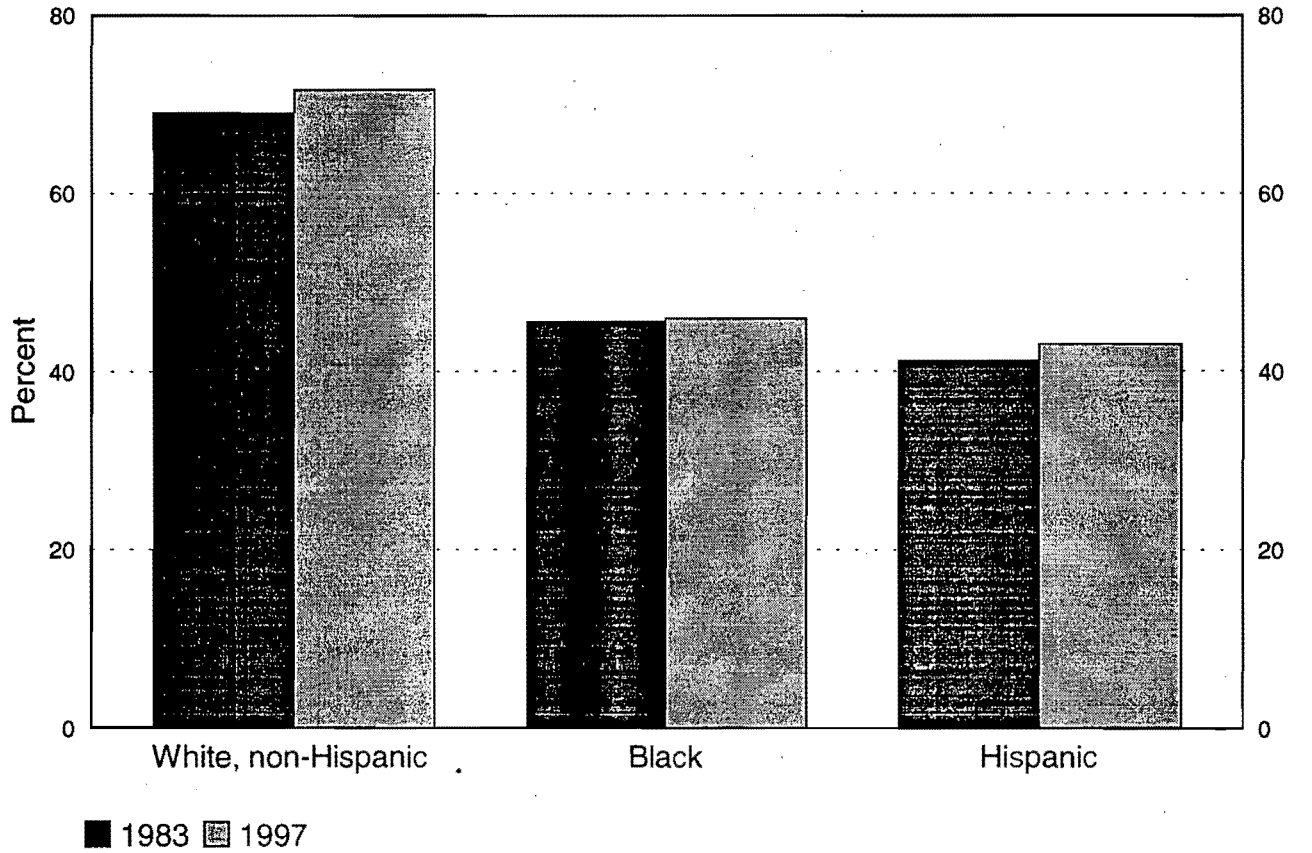
[5] Farley, Reynolds and William H. 1994. "Changes in the Segregation of Whites from Blacks during the 1980s: Small Steps Toward a More Integrated Society." *American Sociological Review* 59 (vol): 23-45.

[6] *ibid.*

[7] Council of Economic Advisors. 1998. *Economic Report of the President*. Washington, DC.

Housing and Neighborhoods

1. Homeownership Rates

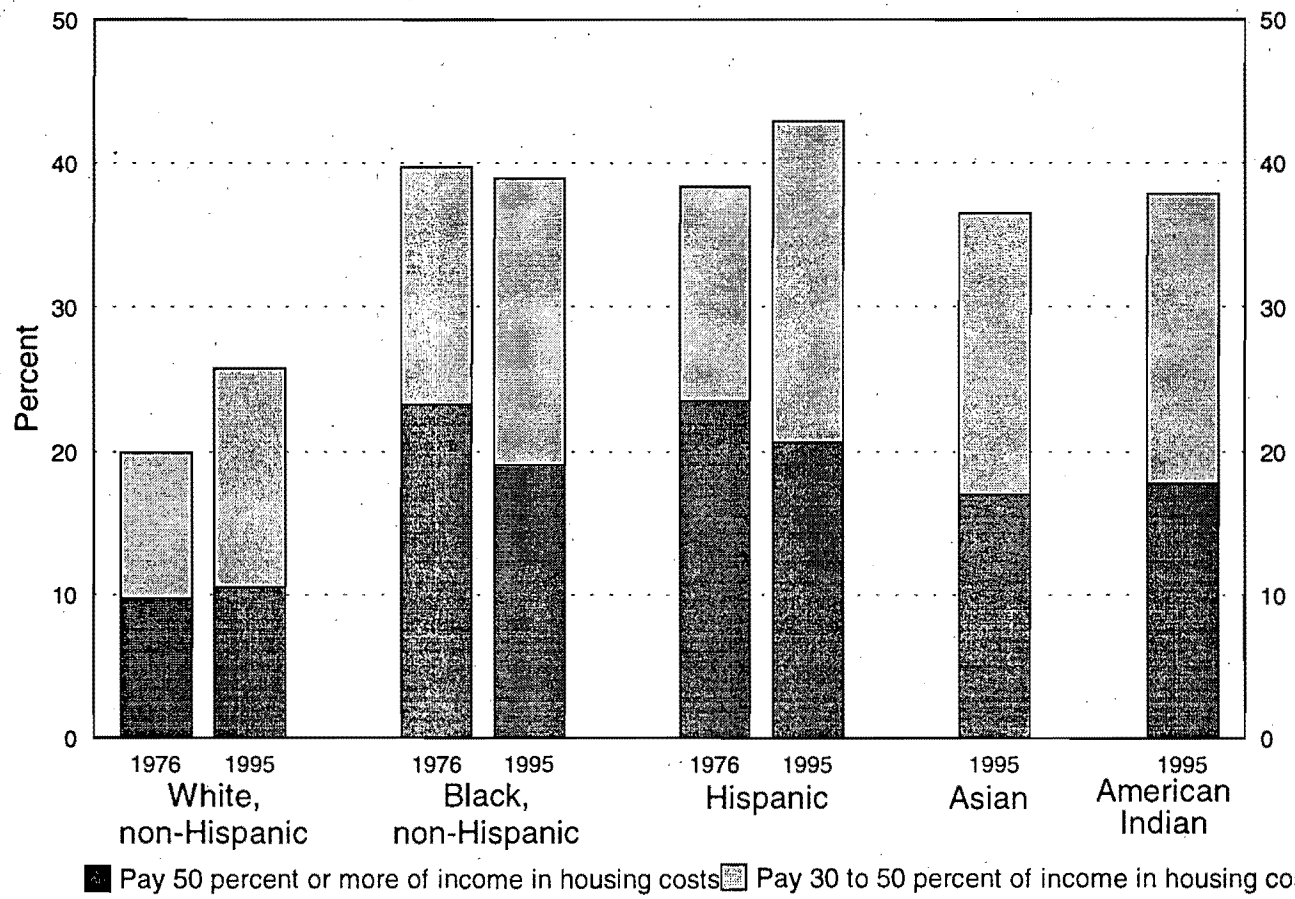


Source: Bureau of the Census.

- Homeownership is an indicator of financial well-being and may also contribute to the stability of families and neighborhoods. The homeownership rate is the percentage of households that own their own home.
- The homeownership rate of non-Hispanic whites is about 25 percentage points above that of blacks and Hispanics. Less than half of black and Hispanic householders own their own home.
- Homeownership rates were slightly higher in 1997 than in 1983 for all groups.

Housing and Neighborhoods

2. Households with High Housing Cost Burdens



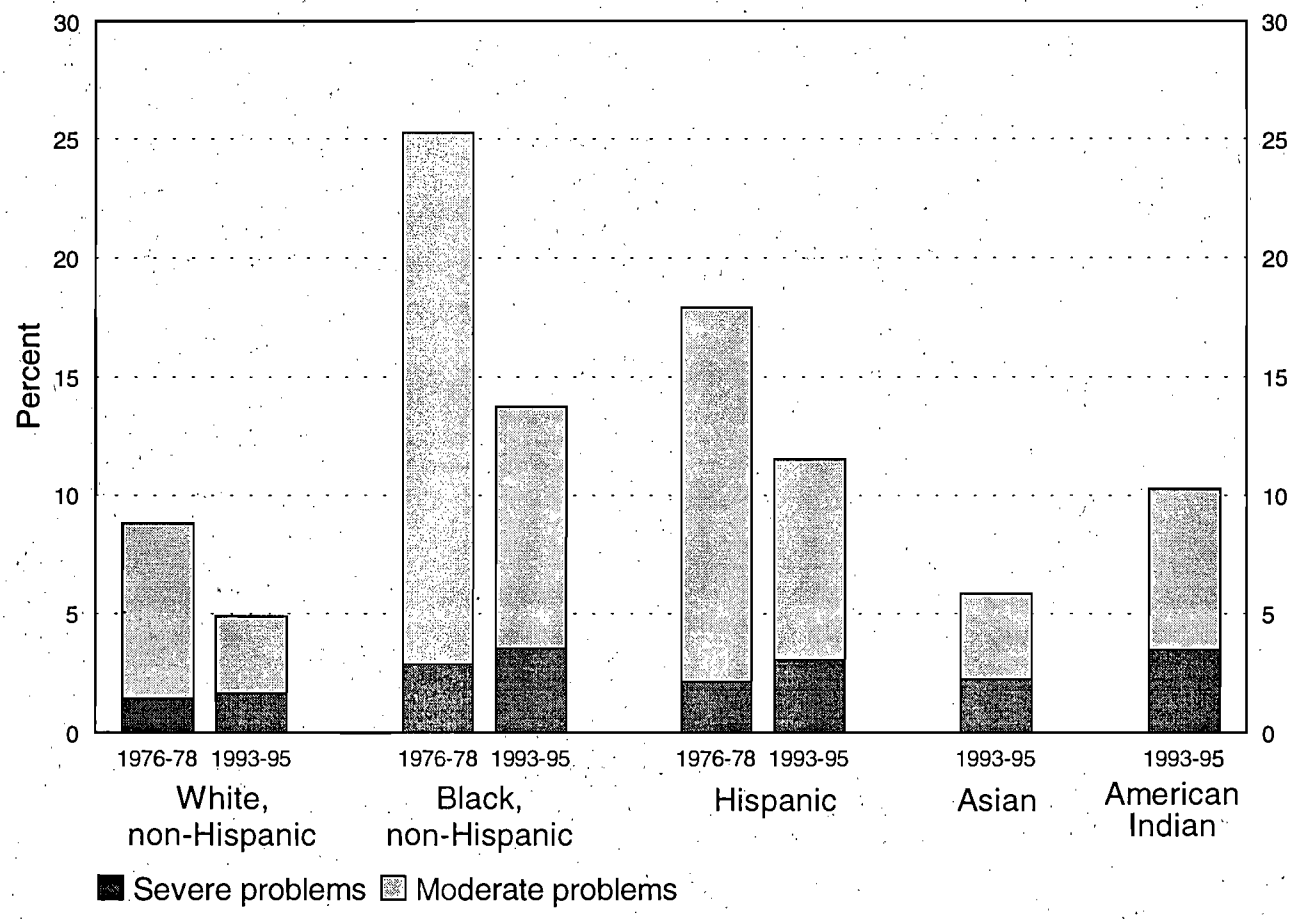
Note: Data for Asians exclude Asian Hispanics, and data for American Indians exclude American Indian Hispanics.

Source: Department of Housing and Urban Development and Bureau of the Census.

- High housing cost burdens limit households' ability to afford other necessities. Housing expenditures less than 30 percent of income are considered "affordable," while the Department of Housing and Urban Development considers a household to have "worst case" housing needs if housing costs are more than 50 percent of household income (and income is below 50 percent of the area median).
- Non-Hispanic black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian households are nearly twice as likely as non-Hispanic whites to spend at least 50 percent of their income on housing costs. Differences across groups in the fraction paying 30 to 50 percent of income for housing are much less pronounced.
- Between 1976 and 1995, the fraction of non-Hispanic black and Hispanic households facing housing cost burdens 50 percent or more of income fell slightly, while the fraction facing housing cost burdens between 30 and 50 percent increased. The fraction of non-Hispanic whites in both categories rose. (Data for Asians and American Indians are not available for 1976.)

Housing and Neighborhoods

3. Housing Units with Physical Problems



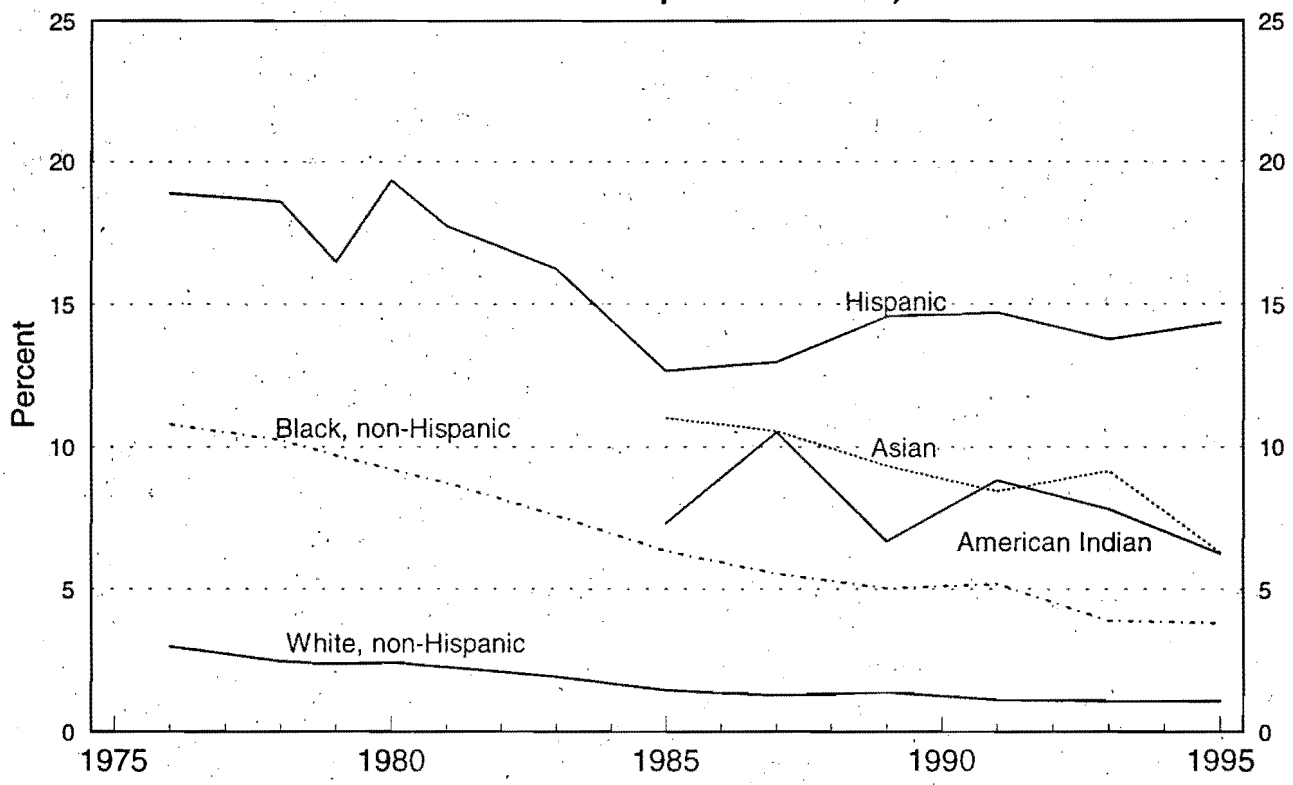
Note: Due to small sample sizes for some categories, two years of data are averaged to provide more reliable estimates. Data for Asians exclude Asian Hispanics, and data for American Indians exclude American Indian Hispanics.

Source: Department of Housing and Urban Development and Bureau of the Census.

- Poor physical housing quality can contribute to poor health, particularly in children. Severe physical problems include lack of indoor plumbing, inadequate heating, electrical problems, and other serious upkeep problems. Moderate physical problems include problems with heating or plumbing or the lack of a kitchen sink, refrigerator, or stove burners.
- In 1993-95 non-Hispanic blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians were more likely than non-Hispanic whites or American Indians to live in housing units with serious or moderate physical problems.
- Between 1976-78 and 1993-95, the fraction of households living in units with moderate physical problems fell substantially for all groups for which data are available. The fraction of households living in units with serious problems has risen but is still less than 5 percent for all groups.

Housing and Neighborhoods

4. Crowding (Households With More Than One Person per Room)



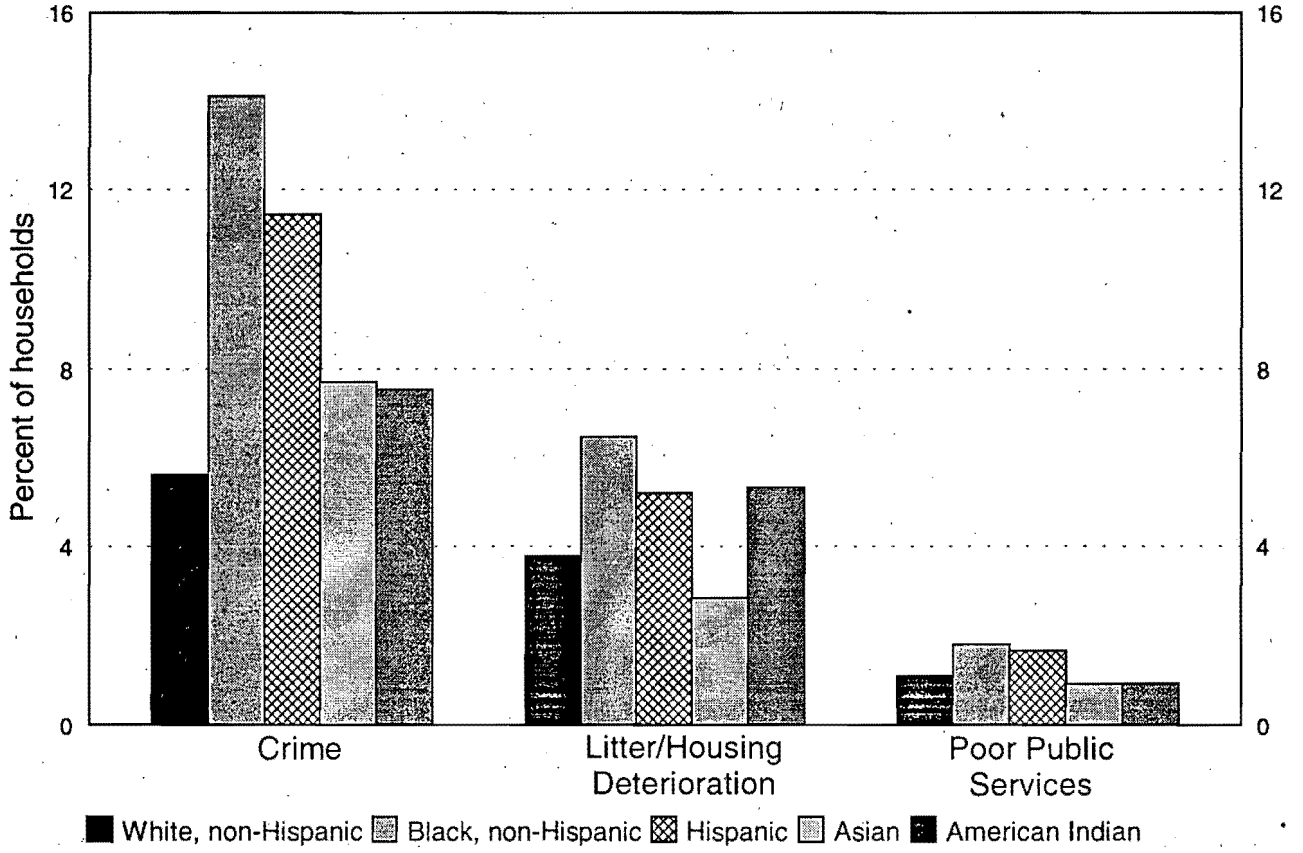
Note: Data for Asians exclude Asian Hispanics, and data for American Indians exclude American Indian Hispanics.

Source: Department of Housing and Urban Development and Bureau of the Census.

- Crowding is another widely used measure of housing conditions. A household is considered crowded if it contains more than one person per room. (Rooms used for living space are counted, including bedrooms, living rooms, and kitchens, but bathrooms or rooms created with temporary partitions are not included.)
- In 1995, only about 1 percent of non-Hispanic white households were crowded, with greater crowding among non-Hispanic blacks (4 percent) and Asians and American Indians (6 percent each). Hispanic households were more than twice as likely as any other group to be crowded (14 percent).
- Crowding has declined for all groups since 1976. Among Hispanics, however, crowding rose slightly between 1985 and 1995 after falling considerably between 1975 and 1985.

Housing and Neighborhoods

5. Reported Problems in Neighborhood, 1995



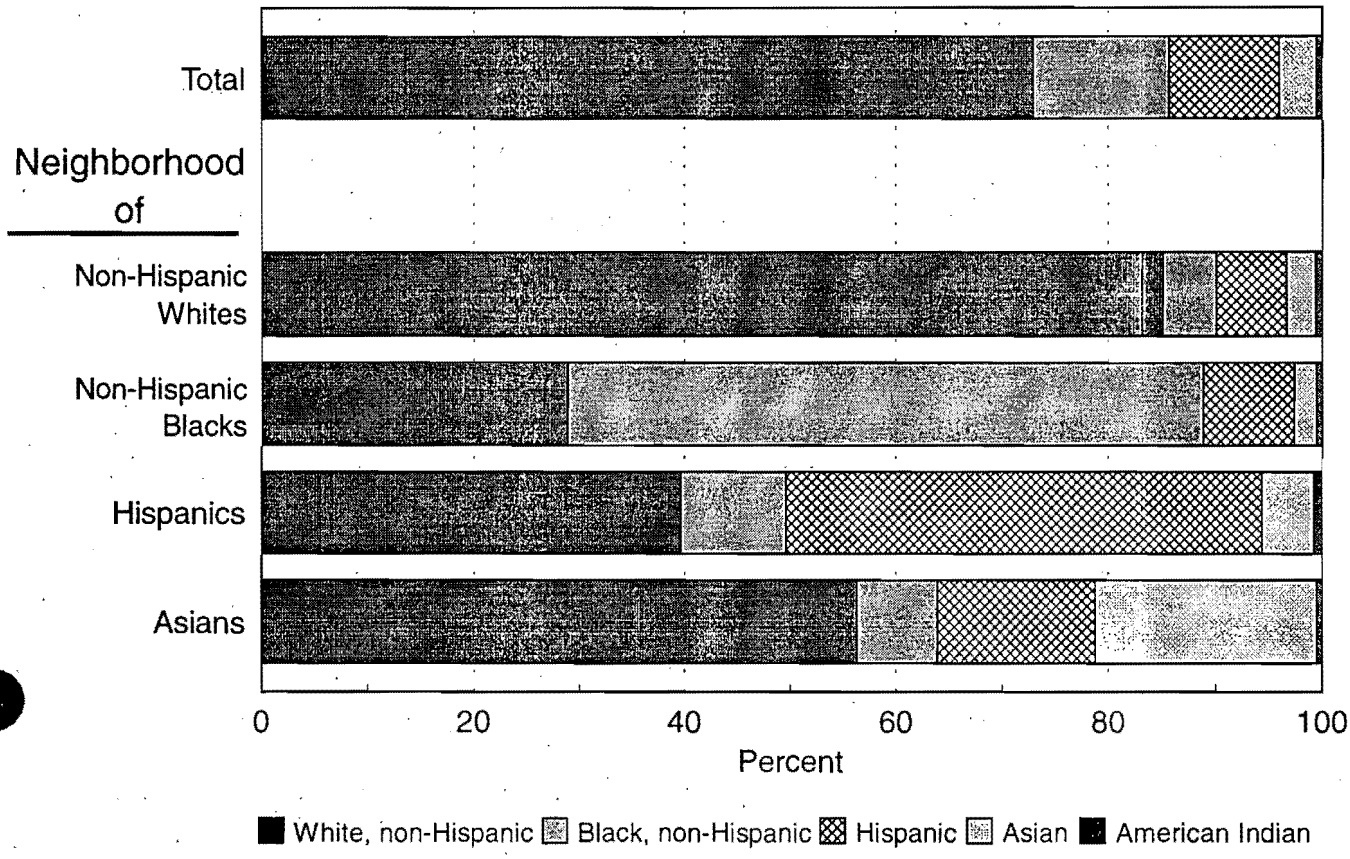
Note: Data for Asians exclude Asian Hispanics, and data for American Indians exclude American Indian Hispanics.

Source: Department of Housing and Urban Development and Bureau of the Census.

- Households' reports of problems in their neighborhood most likely reflect a combination of objective conditions, expectations, and overall satisfaction with their housing and neighborhood.
- In 1995, about 14 percent of non-Hispanic black households reported that crime was a problem in their neighborhood, compared with 11 percent of Hispanics, 8 percent of Asians and American Indians, and 6 percent of non-Hispanic whites. The fraction of households reporting concern about crime rose between 1985 and 1995 for all groups (not shown in chart).
- Non-Hispanic black, Hispanic, and American Indian households are more likely to report problems with litter and housing deterioration, compared with Asians and non-Hispanic whites.
- Reported dissatisfaction with public services is less than 2 percent for all groups.

Housing and Neighborhoods

6. Average Racial and Ethnic Composition of Metropolitan Neighborhoods, 1990



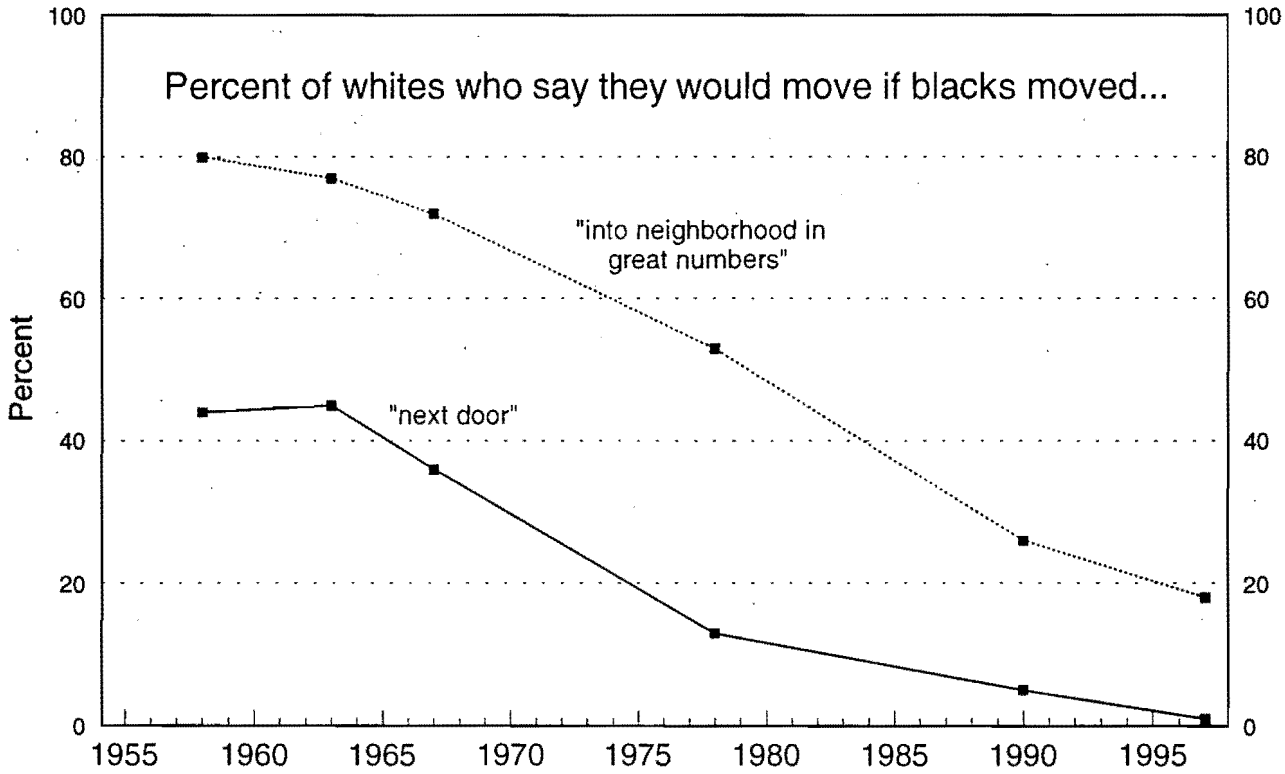
Note: Data for Asians exclude Hispanic Asians, and data for American Indians exclude Hispanic American Indians.

Source: Bureau of the Census (from *The New American Reality* by Reynolds Farley).

- The racial and ethnic composition of neighborhoods plays an important role in determining how much interaction individuals have with members of other racial or ethnic groups. This chart shows the average racial and ethnic composition of metropolitan neighborhoods for members of each group.
- Members of each racial and ethnic group live disproportionately with members of the same group.
- Residential segregation of non-Hispanic blacks from other groups declined slightly between 1970 and 1990 (not shown in chart). Between 1980 and 1990, residential segregation of Asians and Hispanics from other groups changed little but is still lower than for non-Hispanic blacks.

Housing and Neighborhoods

7. Whites' Attitudes towards Integration



Note: Straight lines between dots indicate data are unavailable in intervening years.

Source: Gallup.

- A variety of questions have been used to examine America's changing views on race and racial tolerance. Beginning in 1958, a national sample of whites has been asked whether they would move if "black people came to live next door" or if "black people came to live in great numbers" in their neighborhood.
- The fraction of whites saying they would move if blacks moved in next door fell dramatically from 44 percent in 1958 to 1 percent in 1997. The fraction saying they would move if blacks moved into their neighborhood in large numbers fell from 80 percent to 18 percent over the same period.
- These questions have been consistently asked only of whites, so similar indicators of other groups' views of integration are not available.

Appendix

For further information on the topics covered in this book, see the following government websites and publications:

Population

Government websites

U.S. Bureau of the Census (http://www.census.gov)

Census data and publications on population
(http://www.census.gov/prod/www/titles.html#pop)

Census data and publications on race
(http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/race.html)

Census data and publications on Hispanic origin
(http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hispanic.html)

Education

Government websites

National Center for Education Statistics (http://www.nces.ed.gov)

Government publications

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Digest of Education Statistics 1997.* Washington, DC: 1997.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *The Condition of Education 1998.* Washington, DC: 1998.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Projections of Education Statistics to 2008.* Washington, DC: 1998.

Labor Markets

Government websites

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) (http://stats.bls.gov)

Current Population Survey page of BLS (http://stats.bls.gov/cpshome.htm)

Monthly Labor Review page of BLS (http://stats.bls.gov/mlr/opub/mlrhome.htm)

Government publications

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Employment and Earnings.* Washington, DC: January 1998 and previous issues.

Economic Status

Government websites

U.S. Bureau of the Census (http://www.census.gov)

Census data and publications on income
(http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income.html)
Census data and publications on wealth (http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/wealth.html)
Census data and publications on poverty
(http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty.html)

Government publications

Lamison-White, Leatha, 1997. *Poverty in the United States: 1996.* U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P60–198, , Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Health

Government websites

National Center for Health Statistics (http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww)
Healthy People 2000 (http://www.web.health.gov/healthypeople)
Center for Disease Control (http://www.cdc.gov/cdc.html)
The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (http://www.samhsa.gov)
The Office of Minority Health Resource Center (http://www.omhrc.gov)
Improving Services for Hispanics (http://www.dhhs.gov/about/heo/hispanic.html)
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