

# Latino Population Growth, Demographic Characteristics, and Educational Stagnation: An Examination of Recent Trends

Jorge Chapa  
Richard R. Valencia  
*University of Texas at Austin*

*This article is an introduction to the special issue of the Hispanic Journal of the Behavioral Sciences on Latino demographic trends and educational concerns. It provides a broad overview of Latino population trends in light of 1990 Census and other recent data. One focus in this article will be on the phenomenal increase of Latinos. Population counts from the 1990 Census indicate that the Latino population grew many times faster in the 1980s than did the total population. An analysis of socioeconomic characteristics such as educational attainment, income, and language status with respect to educational trends is also presented here. The high rate of immigration in the 1980s has resulted in a rapid increase in the non-English language background (NELB) and limited-English proficient (LEP) populations. We discuss three issues that have marked impacts on Latino access to college: school segregation, growth of youth population, and low socioeconomic status. A major conclusion is that Latino education will continue to stagnate in face of the dramatic growth of the Latino population, if the status quo goes unchallenged.*

Given the rapidly changing ethnic complexion of the United States, it is now essential to deepen our understanding of the increasingly diverse nature of the United States. The marked increase in the proportion of ethnic minority populations will have dramatic impact on the configuration of education in the decades ahead.

Our focus in this article will be on the phenomenal increase of Latinos—the fastest growing population of our nation’s large ethnic minority groups. “Latino” is growing in preference over the term “Hispanic.” To reflect this, and still be consistent with those who use “Hispanic,” we will use the terms

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interchangeably. Population counts from the 1990 Census indicate that the Latino population grew by more than 50% since 1980 (compared to a 9% increase for the total population). The current Latino population numbers about 22.4 million, and will, in all likelihood continue to grow at very rapid rates.<sup>1</sup>

Recent scholarship has underscored the “changing demography” of the Latino people and their accompanying educational problems. For example, Valencia (1991a, 1991b) and his colleagues (an interdisciplinary group) focus on the Chicano school population as a Latino case in point and analyze a host of schooling issues (e.g., segregation, dropouts, special education neglect, and test abuse) in the context of Latino demographic changes (e.g., age-group trends, increasing urbanization, and linguistic patterns).<sup>2</sup> Also, Latino educational issues are increasingly capturing the interests of some scholars who directly specialize in demography (e.g., Chapa, 1988, 1990, 1991). Chapa (1990) analyzed the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of preschool-age children in 1988 in order to get a clearer profile of minorities and the college graduating class of 2010. He concludes that the best chance to have impact on the minority college-age population in 2010 is to emphasize the schooling of these children today (e.g., make Head Start programs more widely available). In another study, Chapa (1991) sought to use new analytic procedures to provide estimates of the school-age language minority and limited-English proficient populations. His conclusions have valuable implications regarding future needs in the delivery of bilingual education and the training of bilingual teachers.

Suffice it to say, the study of demographic characteristics and trends of the Latino population regarding educational issues has much to offer regarding both research and policy agendas for the 1990s and beyond (see Valencia, 1991a). Of particular importance are gathering accurate and recent demographic data on schooling attainment, language background of preschool and school-age students, school densities, age-cohort trends, and so forth. The objective of this article is to push further along this area of study by providing analyses of 1990 Census and other recent data with respect to Latino demographic characteristics and educational issues. This analysis, by design, is intended to be primarily descriptive. For sustained discussion of these and related issues and trends presented here, we refer the reader to the other authors who have provided sharp coverage of their respective topics in this special issue of the *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences (HJBS)*.

Our article is divided into three sections: (a) national population size, growth and distribution, (b) sociodemographic characteristics, and (c) educational implications.

## Data, Definitions And Methods

The analyses that will be presented in this article were based on the following sources: (a) population counts from the 1990 Census, (b) data taken from the Census Bureau's Current Population Reports on the Hispanic Population, and (c) tabulations from the machine readable data files of various Current Population Survey (CPS) data sets. The CPS is a monthly survey of approximately 53,000 households across the nation. The CPS is conducted by the Bureau of the Census to determine employment levels and other labor force and economic characteristics. Each CPS questionnaire also contains a set of supplemental questions asked on a rotating or ad hoc basis. The major problems with CPS data are that they are relatively tricky and complicated to use and that 53,000 households is, in some cases, a relatively small sample size for discussing the characteristics of population subgroups at the state or regional level.

This discussion will analyze and present data for four different and mutually exclusive racial/ethnic groups; Blacks, Anglos, Hispanics, and Asian and Others. In this article we use the terms Hispanic and Latino interchangeably, but we prefer the term Latino (see Hayes-Bautista & Chapa, 1987 for a discussion of the use of Latino rather than Hispanic). Anglos might be more familiarly known as White non-Hispanics or White non-Latinos. In our tabulations, the relatively small proportion of Blacks who are also Hispanic are grouped with Hispanics. Thus Blacks or African Americans do not overlap with Latinos in the tabulations. Finally, the group Asian and Other races are also exclusive of Hispanics. The small number of Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, or Aleutian Islander respondents in the CPS sample only permits this group to be referred to in the aggregate.

## National Population and Distribution

### *Population Growth*

Latino population growth is the future. The 1990 Census counted 22,354,059 Latinos—9% of the total U.S. population. The Latino population increased by 53% between 1980 and 1990 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1991b). About half of this growth was due to foreign immigration and half was due to births to Latinos in the United States. The total U.S. population increased by 9% in the same time period. By all projections, the Latino population will continue to grow at a faster rate than the U.S. population. Based on a 1986 Bureau of the Census report titled *Projections of the Hispanic Population: 1983 to 2080* (U.S. Department of

Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1986), the Hispanic population will continue to outpace the national growth rate well into the 21st century. Using 1982 as a baseline year, a time in which Hispanics numbered 15.8 million, it is projected that they will double in size (30.8 million) by 2010. The actual rate of Hispanic growth in the last decade, however, has far exceeded those used for these projections. If the Latino population increases by 35% between 1990 and 2000, there will be more than 30 million Latinos living in the United States at the start of the next century. The percentage increase necessary to reach this number is substantially less than the 53% increase that occurred between 1980 and 1990. In sharp contrast, the White non-Hispanic population is projected to grow very slowly for the next 50 years and then will decrease in size.

A more precise method of analyzing population growth is to examine annual percentage changes—not just absolute amounts—across ethnic groups. This procedure allows adjustments for possible confounding effects of any variation in the sizes of different groups (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1986). After 1995, the general population is projected to grow more slowly than ever recorded in U.S. history. By 2040, the growth rate will likely be zero. Once again, in profound contrast, during the 1980s the Hispanic population grew at more than the 3% a year assumed by the Census Bureau publication. Here is a revealing quote from the Census report (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1986) in reference to a 3% annual growth rate of Hispanics:

The total American population has not grown so quickly for a century or more. Even at the height of the most dramatic periods of population growth in American demographic history, the population growth of the United States was only 1.8 percent a year. In the middle series, the Hispanic population growth rate would not decline to that level for 30 years. (p. 10)

Again, we can emphasize the tremendous rapidity of actual Hispanic population growth by repeating the fact that recent growth has outstripped the expectations of this Census Bureau report published 7 years ago.

### *Distribution of Latinos and Latino Subgroups*

Hispanics, like the group Asian and Other races, is an aggregation of several distinct national origin subgroups: Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, and Other Hispanics. Table 1 shows that the total size of the 1990 U.S. population exceeds 22 million. Table 1 also shows how this total is distributed among the different subgroups. The Mexican-origin population is by far the largest, constituting 60% of the total Hispanic

**Table 1. Distribution of the Hispanic Population by Subgroup, 1990**

Group	Population (in Millions)	Percentages
All Hispanic origins	22,354	100.0
Mexican origin	13,496	60.4
Puerto Rican	2,727	12.2
Other Hispanic	5,086	22.8
Cuban origin	1,043	4.7

population; Puerto Ricans are 12% of the population in the 50 states, and Other Hispanics are 22%. Cuban-origin people comprise the smallest proportion, less than 5%, of the total Hispanic population. The proportion of Other Hispanics is higher now than in 1980, an increase that reflects the out-migration from civil wars and revolutions in Central America in the 1980s.

The distribution of Hispanic origin subgroups in the Census regions show a marked variation from group to group. The different Latino groups are concentrated in different regions of the country. Mexican-origin Latinos are the predominant Hispanic group in the Southwest and Midwest. Puerto Ricans are concentrated in the Northeast. Cubans are concentrated in the Southeast. The Other Latinos are found in areas with concentrations of Mexican, Puerto Rican or Cuban Latinos.

The observation that large numbers of the Hispanic population are concentrated in just a few states is confirmed by the percentages of the national Hispanic population in various states as well as by the cumulative percentages. As seen in Table 2, one state—California—has more than a third (34.4%) of the nation's Hispanics. Three states combined, California, Texas, and New York, have nearly two-thirds (63%) of the national Latino population. Thus the data also suggest that a few states are particularly germane to an analysis of the characteristics of the Hispanic population. Two states, California and Texas, have a little more than half of all Latinos. Ten states have about 85% of all Latinos.

Latinos are more highly urbanized than non-Latinos. Sixteen metropolitan areas have more than two-thirds of all U.S. Latinos. Table 3 shows that nearly 15 million Latinos, or 67% of all U.S. Latinos, reside in 16 metropolitan areas.

The high concentration of Latinos in a few states and cities is an important point for both research and policy considerations. The concentration of Latinos indicates that the geographic scope and focus of research projects may, in some cases, be appropriately limited to states or cities with high concentrations of Latinos. The potential effects of this concentration on

**Table 2. Size and Growth of the Hispanic Population by State, 1980-1990**

State	1990 (in Thousands)	1980 (in Thousands)	Percentage Change 1980-90	Percentage Hispanic 1990 <sup>a</sup>	Cumulative Percentage 1990 <sup>a</sup>
California	7,687	4,544	69	34	34
Texas	4,340	2,986	45	19	53
New York	2,214	1,659	33	10	63
Florida	1,574	858	83	7	70
Illinois	904	636	42	4	74
Arizona	740	447	66	3	77
New Jersey	688	485	42	3	80
New Mexico	579	482	20	3	83
Colorado	424	341	24	2	85

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1991b).

a. Percentages are rounded to nearest whole.

**Table 3. Size of the Latino Population in Major Metropolitan Areas, 1990**

Metropolitan Area	Population
Los Angeles-Anaheim-Riverside	4,799,000
New York-New Jersey	2,778,000
Miami-Ft. Lauderdale	1,062,000
San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose	970,000
Chicago-Gary	893,000
Houston-Galveston	772,000
San Antonio	620,000
Dallas-Fort Worth	519,000
San Diego	511,000
El Paso	412,000
Phoenix	345,000
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	327,000
Fresno	237,000
Denver-Boulder	226,000
Philadelphia-Wilmington-Trenton	226,000
Washington, DC	225,000
Total	14,922,000

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1991c).

Latino educational prospects is a subject that merits further deliberation. From the policy perspective, the concentration of Latinos also indicates where interventions and programs may have the greatest numerical impact.

**Table 4. Median Age of the Non-Hispanic, Hispanic, and Hispanic Subgroups, 1990**

Group	Median Age (Years)
Non-Hispanics	33.5
All Hispanics	26.0
Mexican origin	24.1
Puerto Rican	27.0
Cuban origin	39.1
Central and South American	28.0
Other Hispanic	31.1

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1991a)

Table 4 presents data on age distributions between non-Hispanics and Hispanics and within the Hispanic subgroups. Two major points can be gleaned from this table. First, Latinos have much younger age distributions (median age of 26 years) compared to non-Latinos (median age of 33.5 years)—a difference of nearly 8 years. Second, there are discernible within-Latino age distributions. For example, the median age of Mexican-origin Latinos is 24.1 years, and for Cuban-origin Latinos it is 39.1—a difference of 15 years.

Another way of looking at demographic trends by age is to analyze youth growth patterns. In a recent national demographic report (Pallas, Natriello, & McDill, 1989), long-term projections (from 1982 to 2020) of the youth population were made. Youth was defined as newborns through 17 years of age. For the time span studied, it is projected that the national youth population will increase 17% (from 63 million in 1982 to 73 million in 2020). When one disaggregates the overall 10 million youth growth, clear patterns can be seen along ethnic lines. As Table 5 shows, two different forces are at work. First, the White population number will decline 13% (6 million) over the 38-year period. Second, and in sharp contrast, Latino youth will triple in size—increasing from 6 million in 1982 (a year in which they made up 9% of the national youth population) to nearly 19 million in 2020 (a time by which they will comprise 25% of the nation's youth). The rapid growth of Latinos in the younger age groups demonstrates that we must all pay more attention to issues, problems, and policies that pertain to Latino youth.

In sum, the projected increase in the Latino youth population of nearly 13 million more than offsets the anticipated decline of 6 million White youth. Because the Black and Other minority youth populations will demonstrate small growth in absolute numbers (2.6 million and 1.2 million, respectively),

**Table 5. Projections Of Racial/Ethnic Youth Populations; 1982-2020**

Year	White		Latino		Black		Other	
	% of Total	Millions	% of Total	Millions	% of Total	Millions	% of Total	Millions
1982	73.0	45.9	9.3	5.9	14.7	9.3	2.9	1.8
2020	54.5	40.0	25.3	18.6	16.5	11.9	4.2	3.0

SOURCE: Adapted from Pallas et al. (1989).

NOTE: "Youth" refers to newborn to age 17 years.

the remarkable increase in the Latino youth population, will account "for most of the overall [youth] population growth expected between 1982 and 2020" (Pallas et al., p. 19 [emphasis added]).

The concentration of Latinos in the younger ages further emphasizes the previous discussion of the growing concentration of Latinos. Latinos are becoming a major population group in several states and many cities. Their youthful age distribution will result in an even higher proportion of Latinos among the school-age population and the preschool population.

In conclusion, recent Census data—as well as several reports on Hispanic population projections—informs us that Latinos will continue to grow at very high rates and will continue to comprise larger and larger portions of the preschool, school-age, college-age, and general populations. Before discussing these demographic realities vis-à-vis educational issues, we turn to an overview of sociodemographic characteristics of Latinos.

### Sociodemographic Characteristics of Latinos

In this section, we provide an overview of salient sociodemographic characteristics of the Latino population. We cover the following features: (a) educational attainment, (b) employment, earnings, and poverty, (c) generation and immigration, (d) family income, (e) family size, (f) family type, and (g) language status.

#### *Educational Attainment*

Although Latino educational attainment levels are increasing, they continue to be lower compared to non-Latinos. As reported in Table 6, 1990 data (adult, ages 25 years plus) inform us that only 1 in 2 Latinos completed high school.<sup>3</sup> This percentage compares quite unfavorably with the 80% high school completion rate of non-Latinos. For within-Latino comparisons, the



**Table 6. Adult Educational Attainment of Non-Hispanics, Hispanics, and Hispanic Subgroups, United States, 1990 (in Percentages)**

Educational Attainment Within Age Groups	Non-Hispanics	Hispanics	Puerto Rican			Central and South American		Other Hispanic
			Mexican	Cuban	Cuban	South American	Other Hispanic	
<b>Adults, ages 25 plus</b>								
Percentage who completed:								
Less than 5 years of school	1.7	1.2	15.5	9.7	5.8	8.8	3.9	
Less than high school	20.4	49.2	55.9	44.5	36.5	41.5	31.3	
4 years of high school or more	79.6	50.8	44.1	55.5	63.5	58.5	68.7	
4 years of college	22.2	9.2	5.4	9.7	20.2	15.6	15.2	
<b>Adults, ages 25 to 34</b>								
Percentage who completed:								
Less than 5 years of school	.5	7.4	9.1	1.6	1.2	8.2	.4	
Less than high school	10.7	42.4	48.7	28.5	19.4	40.1	19.1	
4 years of high school or more	89.3	57.6	51.3	71.5	80.6	59.9	80.9	
4 years of college	25.5	9.0	5.3	11.8	20.0	15.4	18.7	
<b>Adults, ages 35 plus</b>								
Percentage who completed:								
Less than 5 years of school	2.2	15.3	20.1	13.6	7.4	9.3	5.5	
Less than high school	23.9	53.4	61.0	51.9	41.6	42.5	36.9	
4 years of high school or more	76.1	46.6	39.0	48.1	58.4	57.5	63.1	
4 years of college	21.0	9.3	5.5	8.7	20.3	15.7	13.6	

SOURCE: Calculated from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1991a)

Mexican-origin subgroup had the lowest completion rate (44%), and the "Other Hispanic" had the highest completion rate (69%). For college completion (adult, age 25 plus), only 9% of Hispanics had attained 4 years of college—compared to 22% of non-Hispanics. Mexican-origin people had the lowest college completion rate (5%), and Cubans had the highest (20%).

### *Employment, Earnings, and Poverty*

Table 7 presents data on employment rates, earnings, and poverty. Although the Hispanic labor force participation (males, 16 years of age plus) is higher (80%) than non-Hispanics (74%), unemployment rates for Hispanic males and females are considered higher compared to non-Hispanics. Median earnings are quite lower for Hispanic males and females (\$14,047 and \$9,861, respectively) compared to non-Hispanic males and females (\$22,081 and \$11,885, respectively). Regarding within-Hispanic subgroup comparisons, Mexican-origin males and females have the highest unemployment and lowest median earnings, and Cubans have the best measures in these two categories.

Regarding percentage of all persons below the poverty level (as well as the percentage of children under 18 years of age below the poverty line), Hispanics fare quite poorly compared to non-Hispanics. About 1 in 4 Hispanics (and more than 1 in 3 Hispanic youth) live in poverty. With respect to differences among Latino groups, Puerto Ricans have the highest percentage of people living in poverty, and Cubans the lowest.

### *Generation and Immigration*

Table 8 presents estimates of the number of children by generation and race-ethnicity between the ages of 5 through 17 years based on the analysis of the June 1988 CPS. For the nation as a whole, Table 8 indicates that 21% of the school-age Latino children in 1988 were first-generation immigrants, 47% were second generation children of immigrants or of one immigrant, and 32% were the third or third-plus generation U.S.-born children of U.S.-born parents. In addition to all of the social and economic factors that impede Latino education success, first and second generation children also have to contend with the differences between the language and culture of the United States and a foreign country. The first and second generations comprise two-thirds of all Latino school age children and they were first exposed to a foreign language and culture through their own experience or through their immigrant parent or parents.

**Table 7. Employment, Earnings, and Poverty Characteristics of Non-Hispanics, Hispanics, and Hispanic Subgroups, 1990**

Employment, Earnings and Poverty for Sex and Age Groups	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic		Mexican		Puerto Rican		Cuban		Central and South American		Other Hispanic	
Percentage of males 16+ in labor force	74.2		79.6		81.2		69.2		74.9		83.7		75.3	
Unemployment rate	5.7%		8.0%		8.6%		8.2%		6.3%		6.9%		6.2%	
Median earnings—males	\$22,081		\$14,047		\$12,527		\$18,222		\$19,336		\$15,067		\$17,486	
Percentage of females 16+ in labor force	57.4		53.5		52.9		41.4		57.8		61.0		57.0	
Unemployment rate	4.9%		8.5%		9.8%		9.1%		5.1%		6.3%		5.9%	
Median earnings—females	\$11,885		\$9,861		\$8,874		\$12,812		\$12,880		\$10,083		\$11,564	
Percentage of all persons below poverty level	11.6		26.2		28.4		33.0		15.2		18.5		17.8	
Percentage of children under 18 below poverty	17.5		36.2		37.1		48.4		23.8		26.1		28.4	

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1991a)

**Table 8. Percentage Distribution of Children Ages 5-17 by Generation and Race-Ethnic Group**

Generation	Anglo	Latino	Black	Asian	Total
First generation	1	21	3	36	5
Second generation	6	47	5	36	11
Third generation	92	32	93	28	84
Total <sup>a</sup>	99	100	101	100	100

SOURCE: Tabulations of U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1989).

a. Some totals do not add to 100% because of independent rounding.

**Table 9. Average Family Income of Families with Young Children by Generation and Race-Ethnic Group (in Dollars)**

Generation	Anglo	Latino	Black	Asian	Total
First generation	30,600	13,800	11,400	19,500	18,900
Second generation	29,900	16,100	18,300	29,100	23,600
Third generation	29,400	15,600	15,200	24,700	26,400
Group average	29,400	15,800	15,400	26,900	25,800

SOURCE: Tabulations of U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1989).

### *Family Income*

Table 9 shows the mean income of families with young children by race, ethnic group, and by generation. Among these groups as whole, Whites have the highest average, \$29,400 per year. Asians and Others have an average annual family income of \$25,800. There is a big gap between these groups and Hispanic and Black family incomes that are \$15,800 and \$15,400, respectively. These averages are about half of the White level. The fact that family incomes for third-generation Hispanics are less than for second-generation and less than the Hispanic average provides support for the argument that Hispanic attainment levels cannot be assumed to increase as the number of generations in this country increases. (See later discussion of "Socioeconomic Status" in the section on "Educational Implications.")

Table 10 shows the income distribution of families with children by race-ethnic group. Blacks have the greatest concentration in the lowest-income category; 46% of Black families with young children (newborn to 4 years of age) have incomes of less than \$10,000 per year. The Hispanic proportion of families with income below this amount is 38%, more than

**Table 10. Family Income Distribution of Families with Young Children by Generation and Race-Ethnic Group (in Percentages)**

Income Group	Anglo	Latino	Black	Asian	Total
Under \$10,000	12	38	46	21	21
\$10,000-\$14,999	9	19	13	9	11
\$15,000-\$19,999	19	20	17	20	19
\$20,000-\$24,999	11	6	6	11	9
\$25,000-\$29,999	10	5	6	7	9
\$30,000-\$39,999	20	7	8	16	17
\$40,000-\$49,999	7	2	2	7	6
\$50,000-\$74,999	5	1	1	3	4
\$75,000+	6	1	1	7	5

SOURCE: Tabulations of U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1989).

three times that of Whites, who are at 12%. Among the "Other" races category, 21% of the families have incomes below \$10,000. The concentration of Black and Hispanic children in the lowest income categories is further illustrated by noting that the majority (57% and 59%, respectively) of each group are in the lowest two categories and more than three-quarters are in the lowest three income categories. These are far higher concentrations than found among Whites.

### *Family Size*

Table 11 shows the distribution and average size of families with at least one child between the ages of newborn to 4 years old. Hispanics, compared to non-Hispanics, have the largest family size. The average is 3.8 members per family. For within-Hispanic comparisons, the Mexican-origin subgroup has the largest average family size (4.1), and the Cuban-origin subgroup the smallest (3.0). Large Hispanic families with low family incomes will result in a high proportion of Hispanic children living in or near poverty.<sup>4</sup> Black family size is between that of Hispanics and Anglos.

### *Family Types*

The demise of the traditional family consisting of a father, mother and child (or children) has been widely trumpeted. Smaller proportions of the population marry and have children than was true in the past. Table 12 shows that for non-Latino children, the traditional family is relatively intact: 80% lived with married parents, 16% lived in a female-headed household, and 4%

**Table 11. Average Family Size of Non-Hispanics, Hispanics, and Hispanic Subgroups, 1990**

Group	Average Family Size
Non-Hispanics	3.1
All Hispanics	3.8
Mexican origin	4.1
Puerto Rican	3.3
Cuban origin	3.0
Central and South American	3.7
Other Hispanic	3.1

SOURCE: Tabulations of U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1989).

**Table 12. Distribution of Family Type for Non-Latinos, Latinos, and Latino Subgroups, 1990 (in Percentages)**

Family Type	Non-Latino	Latino	Mexican Origin	Puerto Rican	Cuban Origin	Central and South American	Other Latinos
Married couple families	80	70	73	57	77	69	70
Female householder	16	23	20	39	19	25	25
Male householder	4	7	8	4	4	6	6
Total <sup>a</sup>	100	100	101	100	100	100	101

SOURCE: Tabulations of U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1989).  
a. Some totals do not add to 100% because of independent rounding.

lived in male-headed households. For Latinos, 70% live with both parents, 23% with a female head, and 7% live in male-headed households. Regarding within-Hispanic differences, Puerto Rican children are less likely to live with both parents (57%), and Cuban-origin children are most likely to live in intact households (77%). The higher proportion of single-parent families among Latinos (compared to non-Latinos) adds another dimension to the consistent findings that many Latino youth grow up in economically disadvantaged homes.<sup>5</sup>

### *Language Status*

The high degree of immigration in the 1980s has resulted in a rapid increase in the non-English Language Background (NELB) and Limited

English Proficient (LEP) populations. The 1988 data in Table 13 show that there were about 5.7 million NELB children and 3.7 million LEP children in the United States between the ages of 5 through 17 years. The growth in the number and the proportion of school-age children who are NELB or LEP is highlighted by the fact that between 1979 and 1988, the total number of school-age children decreased by 2.9%, but the number of total NELB and LEP children each increased by 44% and 49%, respectively. The 1988 estimates again reflect the large increase in migration to the United States during the late 1970s and 1980s.

The estimated number of Anglo LEP students is lower in 1988 than it is in 1979. The data in Table 13 indicates that there are more than an additional million LEP Hispanic students in 1988 than there were in 1979. The number of Asian LEP students in 1988 is almost double that in 1979. Again, this increase is the inevitable result of the demographic trends that are reshaping America's population. It is startling, however, to see the consequences of these trends summarized in this manner.

These findings have immediate policy implications. First and foremost, the rapid growth of the LEP population indicates that funds devoted to bilingual education and the supply of bilingual teachers must also grow at a rapid rate even if only to maintain the status quo (see Valencia & Aburto, 1991). Looking beyond these immediate and obvious implications, the growth of LEP children parallels a growth of minorities in our school-age population and foreshadows the inevitable increase of minorities in our work force in the near future.

### **Educational Implications**

In this concluding section, we will discuss a number of educational implications for Latinos as related to current and future demographic trends. Particular focus will be placed on issues that have impact on Latino access to college. We discuss school segregation, youth growth, and socioeconomic status.

#### *Segregation*

School segregation has been, and continues to be, a major obstacle in the attainment of equal educational opportunity for a substantial proportion of Latino students. For example, Donato, Menchaca, and Valencia (1991) have traced the roots and contemporary conditions of segregation faced by Chicano students and underscore the tight connections between ethnic isolation and limited educational opportunities. Given the grounds well of immigra-

**Table 13. Estimated Numbers of All Children Ages 5-17 by Race-Ethnicity, Non-English Language Background (NELB) and Limited English-Proficiency (LEP), United States, 1979 and 1988**

Group	Anglo	Hispanic	Black	Asian	Total	% Change in Total, 1979 to 1988
Children 5-17, 1979	35,441,201	3,069,111	6,832,832	972,505	46,316,399	
Children 5-17, 1988	31,561,383	4,786,372	6,894,723	1,738,786	44,981,264	-2.9%
NELB children 1979	1,146,031	2,309,801	94,607	431,941	3,982,379	
NELB children 1988	1,030,919	3,754,003	137,914	849,486	5,772,321	44.9%
LEP children 1979	536,342	1,686,155	44,276	202,148	2,468,921	
LEP children 1988	482,470	2,740,422	64,544	397,559	3,684,995	49.3%

SOURCE: Chapa (1991).



tion patterns, the high birthrate of Latinos, and the foot-dragging of desegregation efforts, school segregation of Latinos is on the rise. In fact, segregation of Hispanics has been so dramatic that these students now have the unfortunate distinction of being the most segregated ethnic/racial group in our nation's schools (Donato et al., 1991; Orfield, 1992). Hispanic students attending schools in California and Texas experience greater segregation than Blacks in Alabama and Mississippi (Orfield, 1992).

The linkages between school segregation and adverse learning/achievement outcomes are strong (Donato et al., 1991). Observed correlations between segregation and educational outcomes are negative and robust. As the Latino student body increases in size and concentration, achievement on numerous indexes decreases. Achievement scores on standardized tests (all grade levels) decline. At the secondary level, the dropout rate rises, number of college preparatory course offerings diminish, percentage of students taking college entrance examinations decreases, and the average college admissions test scores decline. Suffice it to say, there is a clear and direct implication here for postsecondary schooling: The segregation of school-age Latinos is highly related to their very low matriculation rate to higher education. Orum (1986), for example, has identified inferior college preparation at secondary schools as a major barrier in Latino college access. She reported two key points that limit the college eligibility pool. First, 75% of Latino high school graduates have not completed college preparatory course work. Second, about 33% of Latino high school graduates had extremely poor grades ("D" or "F" averages) in one or more academic subjects that are critical for college access.

In sum, as the nation progresses through the 1990s and beyond—and as Latinos continue to grow in large numbers—Latinos will attend even more segregated schools. Pessimistically speaking, the deleterious outcomes of attending segregated schools—especially low achievement, high dropout rates, and inferior college preparation—are likely to intensify. One must, however, be optimistic. There are a number of promising proactive policy strategies that can be implemented—for example, residential integration, busing, two-way bilingual education, equity in school financing, technical assistance in desegregation, and the embracement of integration (see Donato et al., 1991).

### *Youth*

Another significant sociodemographic indicator we have underscored in this article that has profound educational implications for Latinos is the growth in the youth population. As we earlier discussed, from now to the year

2020 it has been projected that Latino youth will account for most of the increase in the national youth population. This extraordinary growth pattern has critical implications for future Latino access to college.

With this in mind, let us take a case in point—future college graduating classes. In a formal, demographic sense, using today's very young children (birth to 4 years of age) as a starting point is the most solid and reliable basis for projecting the future college age population (e.g., graduating class of 2010; see Chapa, 1990). The demographic analysis of the current national population indicates that the graduating class of say 2010 or 2012, will be drawn from a significantly higher proportion of Latinos than today's population. This increase, based on data presented earlier, will be most pronounced in particular regions, states, and metropolitan areas. The linchpin, of course, is that current Latino youth (birth to 4 years of age) need to have equal opportunities as they progress through the educational pipeline so they can have a fair shot at being a member of the college graduating class of 2010 or 2012. Thus, in addition to the demographic rationale for focusing on today's Latino children in order to understand the potential makeup of future graduating classes, there is an obvious policy-oriented rationale as well. The best chance to have impact on the college-age population and graduating classes of the near future is to focus on the health, child care, and educational needs of Latino infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children today. Increased access to medical care, day-care service for working Latino parents, and preschool educational opportunities are good investments for the future. Unfortunately, these needs go unmet to a large degree. For example, Head Start, a national early childhood intervention program with proven efficacy, is available only to a fraction of children who qualify and could benefit from such a program (Ford Foundation, 1989). If the future for prospective Latino college graduates is to have a different cast than that implied by current sociodemographic characteristics and youth policies and programs, then effective early childhood strategies in care and education must be sought and implemented as Latino children start the busy and difficult work of progressing through the educational pipeline. We must underscore that the emphasis of the special needs of young children does not minimize the fact that close attention should also be paid to the needs of older Latino children.

### *Socioeconomic Status*

Income and other socioeconomic indicators (e.g., schooling attainment and occupation) show strong, significant associations with educational success. The preponderance of evidence shows a clear, robust, positive, and

consistent relation between parents' social class background and their children's educational attainment. One extensive annotated bibliography listed the research published on this topic between 1938 and 1965 and found that all studies concluded that affluent students do better in school than low-income children by every indicator of school achievement (Goldstein, 1967; cited in Persell, 1977, p. 1). This is true not only of the United States, but of all industrial countries generally (Persell, 1977). Beyond the general literature that demonstrates this connection between socioeconomic status (SES) and cognitive/schooling outcomes, there is ample evidence of this relation among Latinos (e.g., Laosa & Henderson, 1991; Valencia, Henderson, & Rankin, 1985).

As we reported in this article, considerably lower earnings and family income among Hispanics (especially the Mexican-origin subgroup) support the argument that one can expect lower schooling attainment from them in the years ahead. Low-income levels among third-generation Hispanics indicate that this is not a transitory situation for Hispanics as a whole. These considerations point to a continuation of Hispanic college enrollments at levels well below their population proportions.

It has been asserted, however, that the current, low SES attainment levels of Hispanic and other immigrant groups are only a transitory phenomenon. Over the years, claims have been made that immigrants will move up the ladder in the same manner as previous immigrant groups (for example, Chavez, 1989, 1992, provides a recent exposition of this argument). Those who make this assertion, however, typically do so without appropriately examining the evidence that applies to this issue. Chapa (1988) demonstrates that the recent historical experience of most Hispanics contradicts the assertion that they are achieving parity in measures of social or economic attainment with Whites. There is not even a tendency in that direction.

Instead, many educational and economic measures show no progress, and in fact, some indicate relative and absolute declines even among those Hispanics who have been in the United States for a number of generations (Chapa, 1988). Along these lines, Miranda and Quiroz (1989) recently provided data that contrary to the anticipated gains during the "decade of the Hispanic," the 1980s left many Latinos—especially Chicanos and Puerto Ricans—worse off. For example, Latinos benefited least from the economic recovery of the 80s, poverty rates increased, income disparities widened, and Latinos felt the full impact of the educational crisis. A particularly tragic outcome of the 80s was "about a million Latino children were added to the ranks of the poor, plunging 36.2% of them into poverty, compared with 43.7% of Blacks and 11.5% of Whites" (Puente, 1991, p. 1). Subdivisions of Latino

child poverty by national origin were: Puerto Rican, 48.4%, Mexican, 37.1%, Cuban, 23.8%, Central/South American, 26.1% (see Table 7).

Recently, arguments in favor of improving the SES of Latinos has been based on appeals to the enlightened self-interest of the majority population. These arguments are intertwined with both demographic and economic issues. For example, around the year 2010, Baby Boomers will begin reaching retirement age. The inevitable aging of the large proportion of these Americans born between 1945 and 1960 will create a challenge for our economy and our social welfare and social security systems. These demands and difficulties to be faced by our system at that time will only be compounded by a large, young, Latino (and other ethnic/racial minority) population with low educational levels and dim prospects in the labor force of the future. Further, the demographic dynamics of areas with large proportions of young minorities, on one hand, and older Whites on the other, give rise to the possible formation of an age-race gap. The bifurcated population structure that might result from this age-race gap could have negative social and political consequences, as well as negative economic consequences. Hayes-Bautista, Schink, and Chapa (1988) argue that this combination of demographic and economic change do provide a compelling call for action. Instead, we have to agree that besides posing potential political, social, and economic difficulties, permitting conditions to exist that may result in a society even more divided by race and class than today's is quite simply wrong.

## Conclusions

It is quite clear that the more Latinos grow, the more they get behind. The rapid growth of the NELB and LEP population demonstrates the need for increased attention and funding for these children. With respect to higher education, the proportion of high school graduates now is much lower than in 1975. The demographic future is certain to show an even more rapid increase in the number of young Latinos. In order to see who might be in college in the future, all we have to do is to look at the children in elementary or preschool today. We can see that the proportion of Latinos and minorities are greater among them than among the adult population now. We can also see that a very large number of Latinos live under poverty and other conditions that are often associated with school failure. The increase in Latino children parallels the inevitable increase of minorities in our future work force. Many analyses and examination of the demographic data can lead to pessimism about the future. One reason for hope is that there are groups mobilizing to change what could otherwise be a dismal future for

Latinos and for everyone. As well, there is recent scholarship that speaks not only to Latino school failure but also how Latino school success might be realized (e.g., Valencia, 1991a). We close with the hope that such concerns may be challenged into actions that could make the future better for Latino students than that projected by current demographic trends.

## Notes

1. Any discussion of Latino population counts based on Census data should note that a higher proportion of the Latino population was missed or underenumerated than any other group. According to the Census Bureau's own estimates, 5.2% of the Latino population was not counted in the 1990 Census.

2. See Valencia (1991b) for an overview that describes a number of current schooling conditions and outcomes that characterize the current plight of the Chicano student population. This treatise is couched in the context of changing ethnic demography and why workable school reform is needed now to realize Chicano school success. Although Valencia's analysis is particular to the Mexican-origin population, some generalizations can be drawn to cover other economically disadvantaged Latino students.

3. See Rumberger (1991) for a comprehensive treatment of the dropout problem among Chicanos. He approaches the dropout issues by examining the extent of the problem, correlates of dropping out, individual and social consequences, and some solutions.

4. See Laosa and Henderson (1991) for a review of pertinent research that bears on the socialization process and the academic development of Mexican American children. In their review, the authors provide some coverage of research on family constellation characteristics (e.g., family size) and connections to academic performance.

5. Laosa and Henderson (1991) also offer some discussion of research findings of the relation between solo parenting and Hispanic children's psychosocial adjustment and cognitive development.

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