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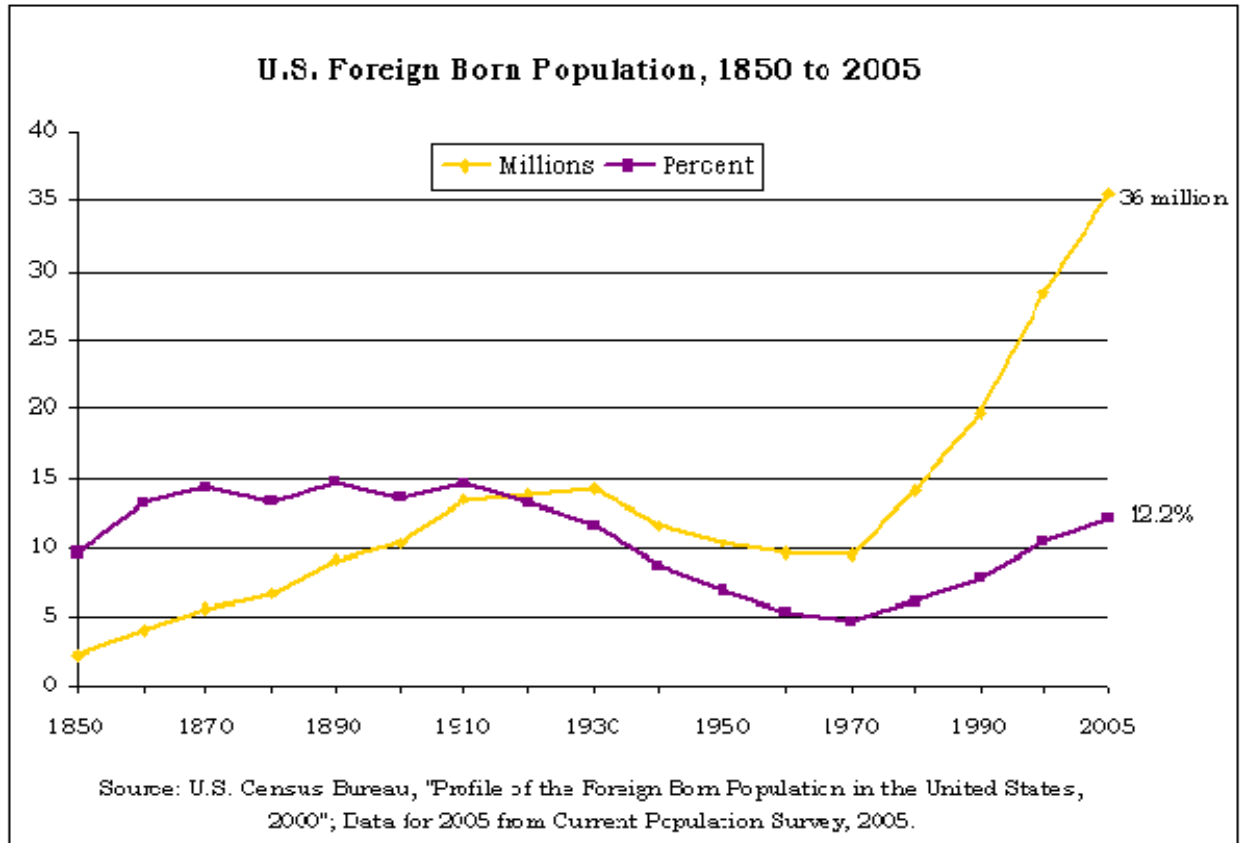
Demographics

[Labor Markets](#) | [Demographics](#) | [Family](#) | [Inequality](#) | [Policies & Programs](#)

Changing Demographics and Poverty

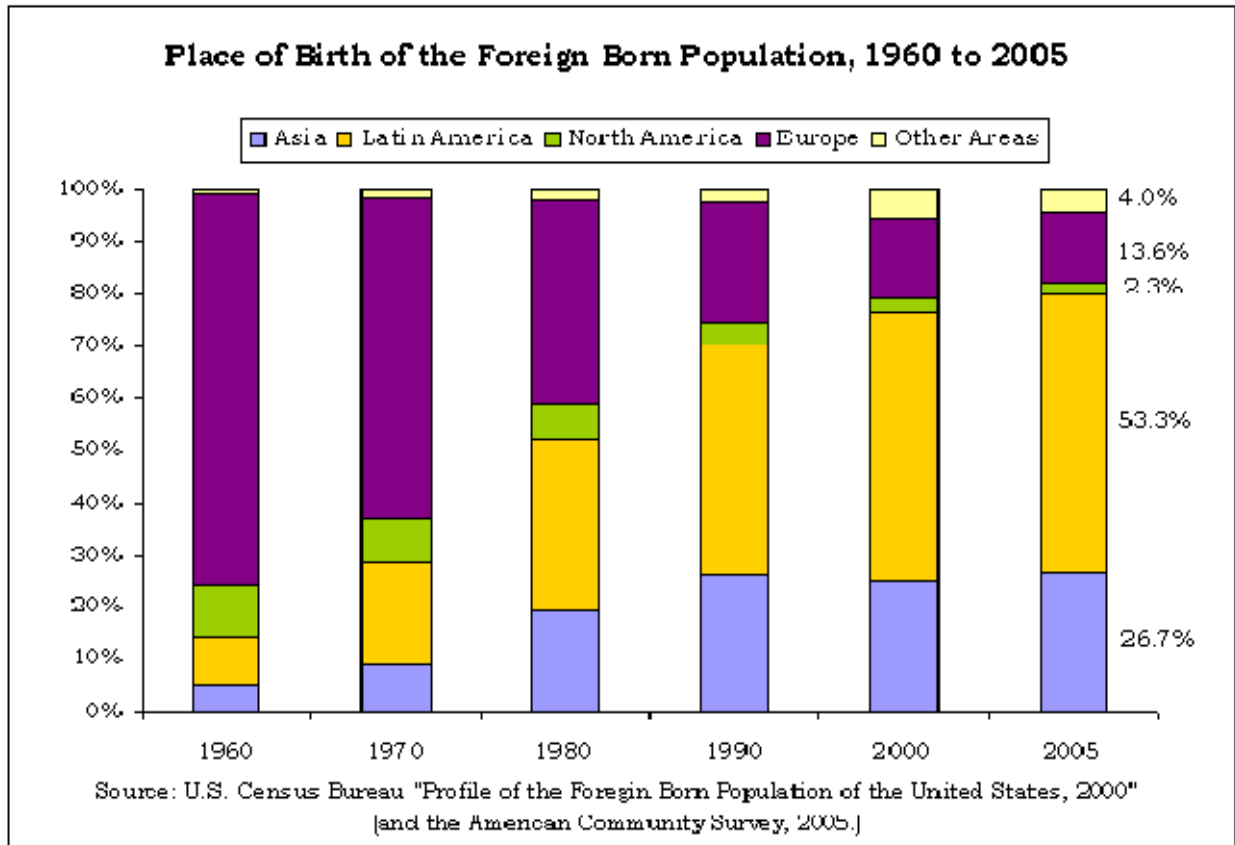
The rapid influx of immigrants to the U.S. in recent years is one of the more dramatic demographic developments with implications for both the number and profile of poor people in the U.S. In absolute terms the number of immigrants currently living in America is at an historic high, as shown in the figure below. However, in relative terms, the share of the U.S. population that is foreign born at the start of the 21st century (12.2%) is actually lower than the share of the population that was foreign born at the start of the 20th century (14.7%). The period in between, particularly the years from World War I to 1964 were marked by very restricted immigration flows, so in comparison to this period of recent memory, current immigration rates may seem particularly high.

- [Link to data in Microsoft EXCEL file](#)
- [Link to reference document](#)



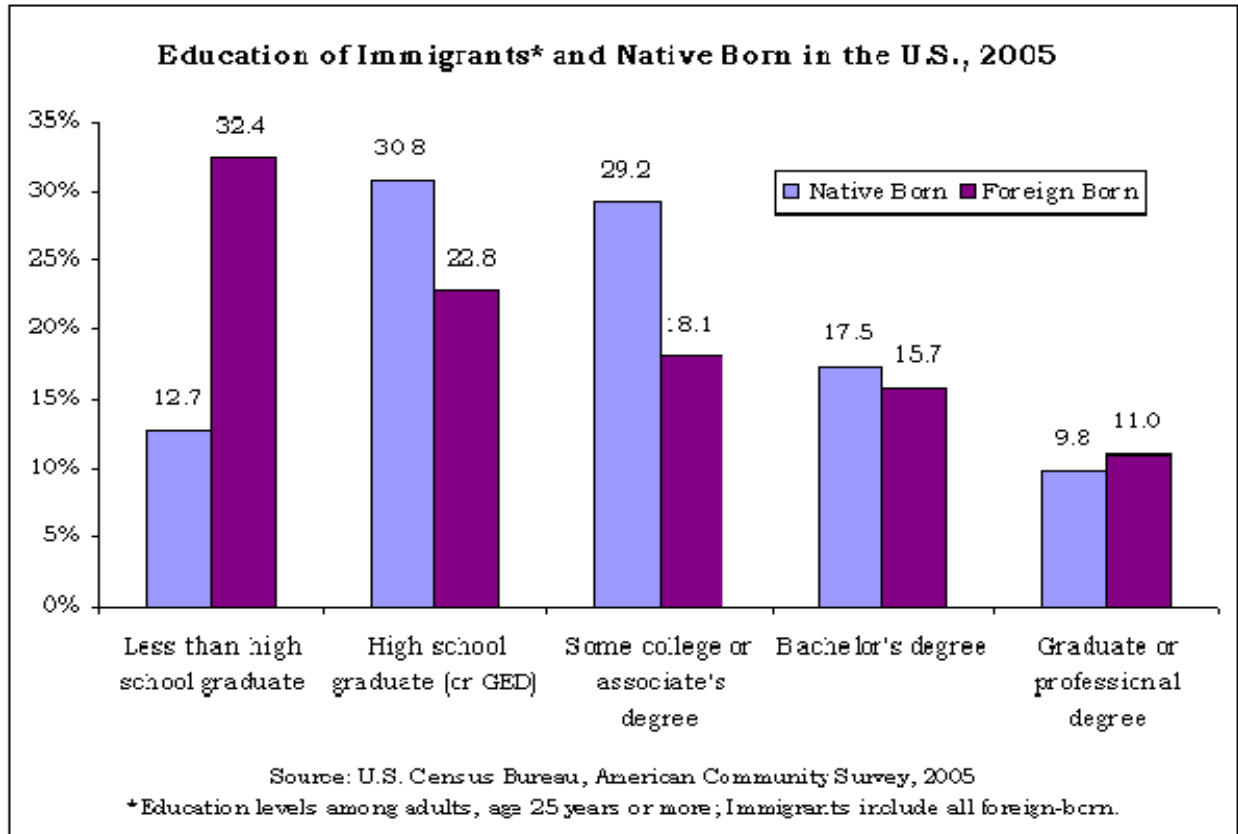
A distinguishing feature of immigrant flows since 1965 is that they are more racially and ethnically diverse than previous waves that primarily brought immigrants first from Northern and Central Europe (largely pre 1900), and later from Southern and Eastern Europe (from around 1890 to 1924). As shown below, the share of the foreign born population hailing from Latin America has grown from less than ten percent (9.4%) in 1960 to over half (53.3%) in 2005. The share from Asia has also greatly increased from 5.1% to 26.7%.

- [Link to data in Microsoft EXCEL file](#)
- [Link to reference document](#)



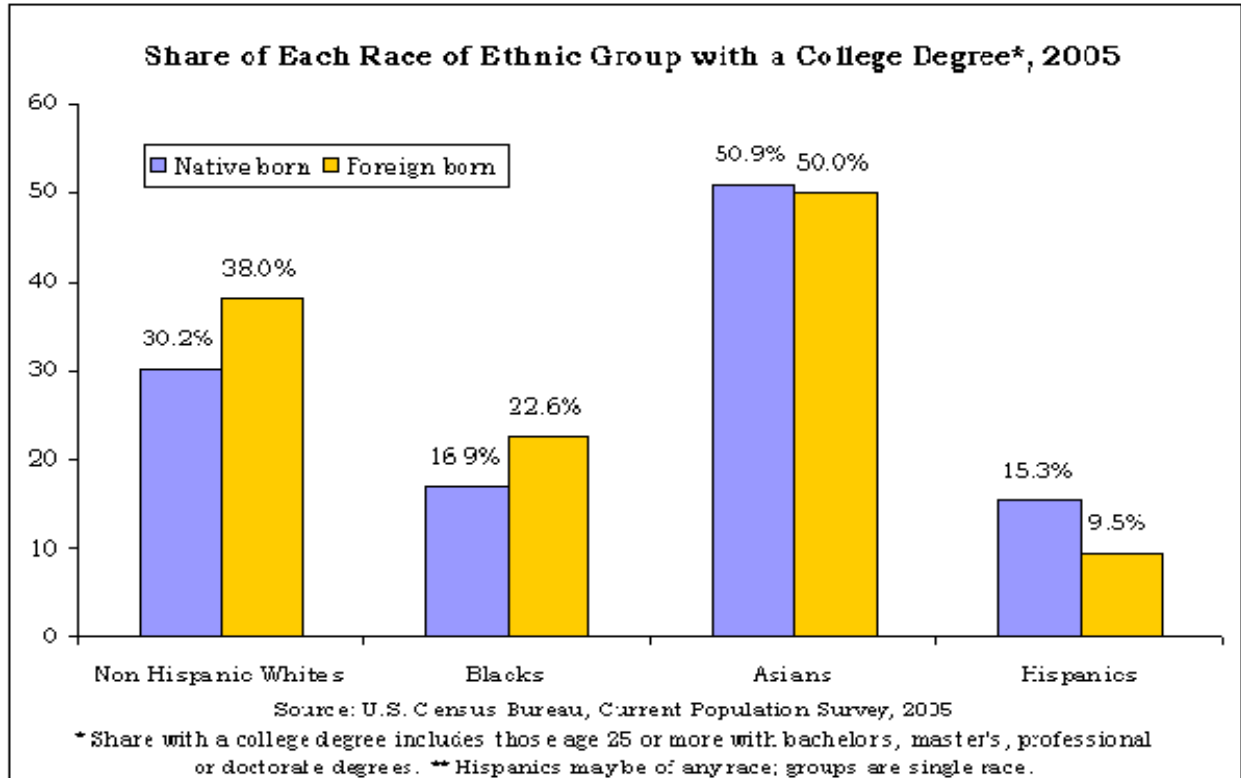
A second important distinction between old and new immigrant waves lies in their educational characteristics. While immigrants arriving since 1965 tend to be better educated than the largely illiterate turn-of-the-twentieth century immigrants, they have less education, on average, than the mostly professional class permitted to enter the U.S. between 1924 and 1964. Among the foreign born, there is great diversity in the educational distribution. Immigrants are more likely than U.S. natives to have very little education, as shown in the figure below.

- [Link to data in Microsoft EXCEL file](#)



There are important ethnic distinctions, as shown in the second figure below. Asians – whether native or foreign born – are more likely to have a college degree than U.S. natives of any ethnicity. Among non Hispanic whites and blacks, the share that is college educated is higher among the foreign born than among the native born. For Hispanics, the reverse is true. Because Hispanics represent over half of the foreign born population, their educational background has a large influence on the overall educational profile of the immigrant population.

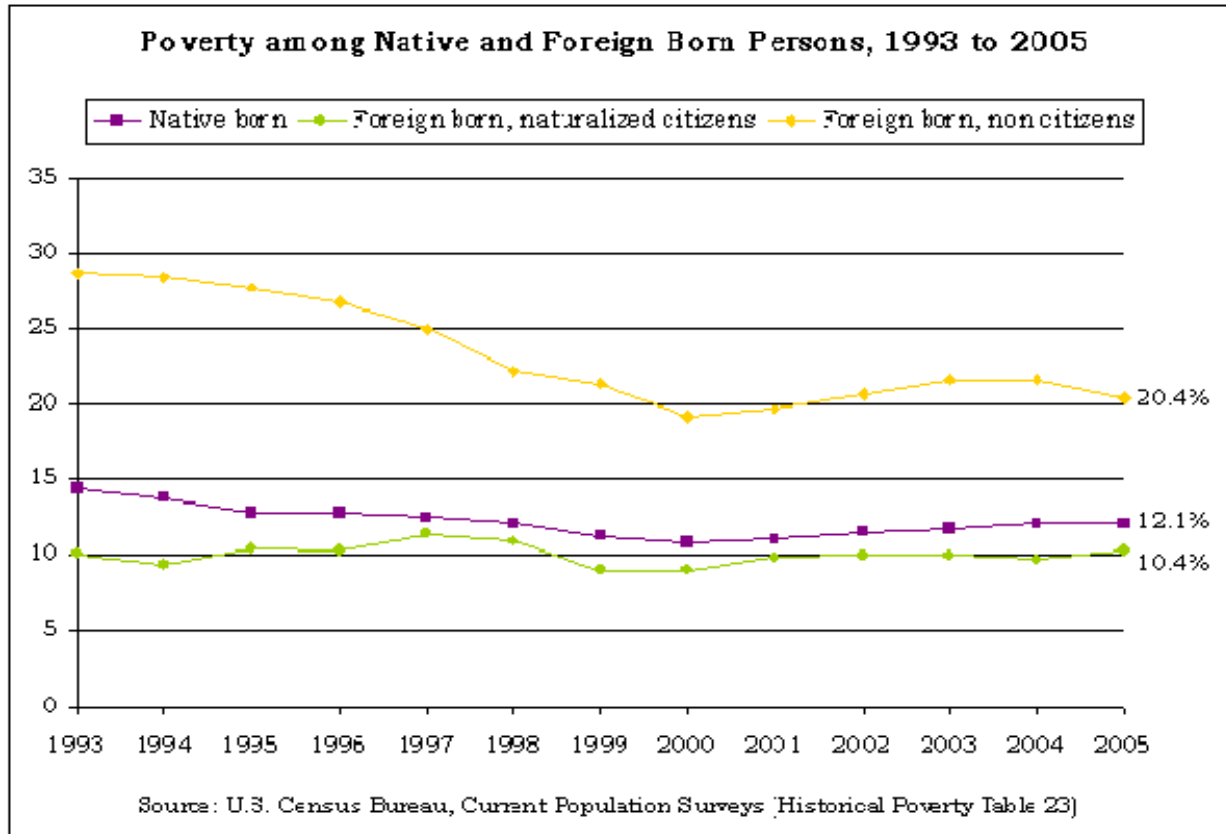
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How Are Immigrants Faring?

Given relatively low levels of education among Hispanic immigrants, who represent the largest share of immigrants in 2005, it is not surprising that immigrants have a high poverty rate compared with native born Americans. In comparing the poverty rate of immigrants and natives, whether an immigrant is an American citizen is an important distinction, as shown in the figure below. In 2005, immigrants who were naturalized citizens were similar to native-born Americans with respect to their poverty rate. In contrast, immigrants who were not citizens had much higher rates of poverty, with about one in five (20.4%) in poverty. This gap in poverty between naturalized citizens and non-citizens likely reflects differences in a host of factors, including educational background, the length of time spent in the U.S., English language ability, legal status, and country of origin. Despite the generally higher rate of poverty among non citizens, poverty has declined considerably among this group since 1993.

- [Link to data in Microsoft EXCEL file](#)
- [Link to source table](#)



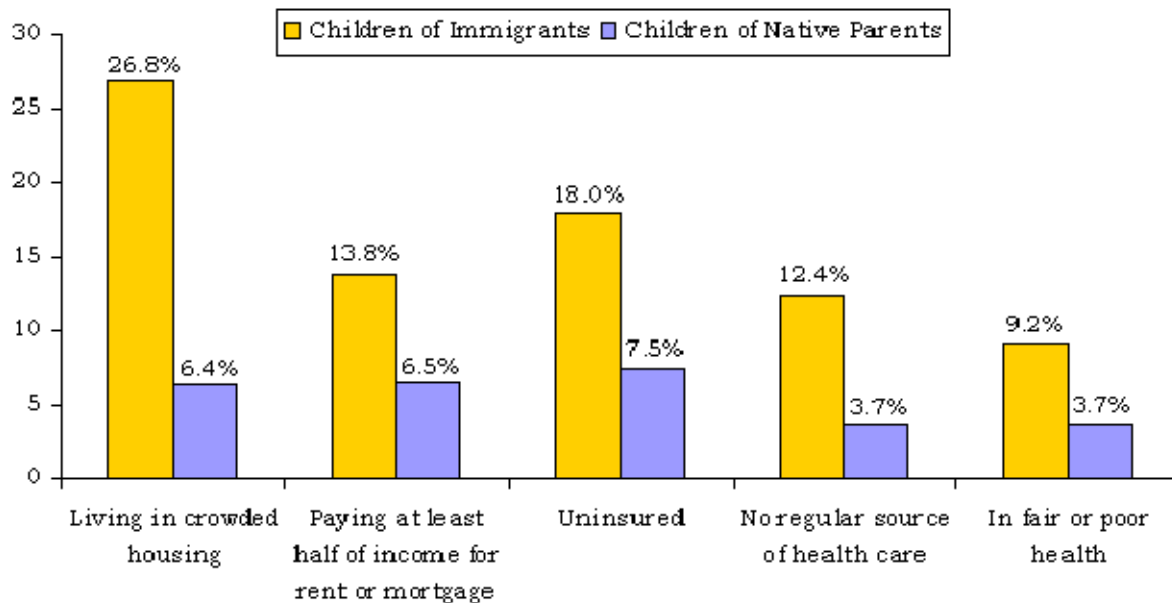
How Are the Children of Immigrants Faring?

Immigrants made up more than 12% of the U.S. population in 2005. Nearly one in five children is the son or daughter of an immigrant. Four fifths of these children were born in the United States, making them American citizens.

The children of immigrants are more likely to be poor than children of native born parents. According to the Urban Institute, more than one in five children of immigrant parents (21.5%) were poor in 2002, compared with 13.5% of children with U.S. born parents. Immigrant families were more likely to live in overcrowded housing (26.8%) and to be paying at least half of their income for rent or mortgage (13.8%). The children in these families were more likely to lack health insurance (18.0%) and a regular source of health care (12.4%), and to be in fair or poor health (9.2%).

- [Link to Urban Institute references: Children of Immigrants, Facts and Figures](#)
- [Link to Urban Institute references: Children of Immigrants Show Slight Reductions in Poverty, Hardship](#)

The Wellbeing of Children of Immigrants* and Native Born Parents



Source: The Urban Institute, National Survey of America's Families, 2002.

*Children of immigrants have at least one foreign born parent.