



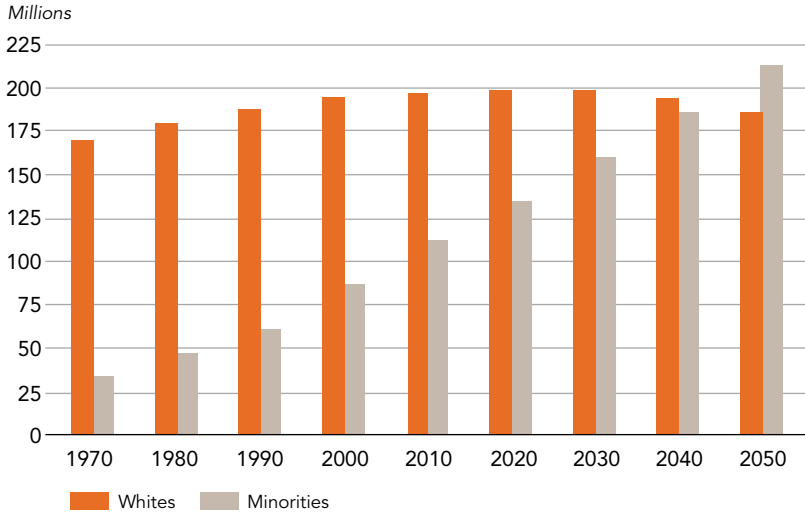
A Pivotal Period for Race in America

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America reached an important milestone in 2011. That occurred when, for the first time in the history of the country, more minority babies than white babies were born in a year.¹ Soon, most children will be racial minorities: Hispanics, blacks, Asians, and other nonwhite races. And, in about three decades, whites will constitute a minority of all Americans (see figure 1-1). This milestone signals the beginning of a transformation from the mostly white baby boom culture that dominated the nation during the last half of the twentieth century to the more globalized, multiracial country that the United States is becoming.

Certainly in the past, the specter of a “minority white” nation instilled fear among some Americans, and to some extent it continues to do so today—fear of change, fear of losing privileged status, or fear of unwanted groups in their communities. These fears were especially evident during the decades following World War II, when immigration was low and phrases such as “invasion,” “blockbusting,” and “white flight” were

FIGURE 1.1
U.S. White and Minority Populations, 1970–2050



Source: U.S. censuses and Census Bureau projections, various years.

commonly used in the context of black-white segregation. Such fears are evident today in the public backlashes that sometimes occur against more permissive immigration and voter registration laws.

Yet if demography is truly destiny, then these fears of a more racially diverse nation will almost certainly dissipate. In many communities, a broad spectrum of racial groups already is accepted by all, particularly among the highly diverse youth population. Moreover, as this book illustrates, a growing diverse, globally connected minority population will be absolutely necessary to infuse the aging American labor force with vitality and to sustain populations in many parts of the country that are facing population declines. Rather than being feared, America's new diversity—poised to reinvigorate the country at a time when other developed nations are facing advanced aging and population loss—can be celebrated.

The sweep of diversity that has just begun to affect the nation is the theme of this book, which draws from my examination of the most recent U.S. census, census projections, and related sources. As a demog-

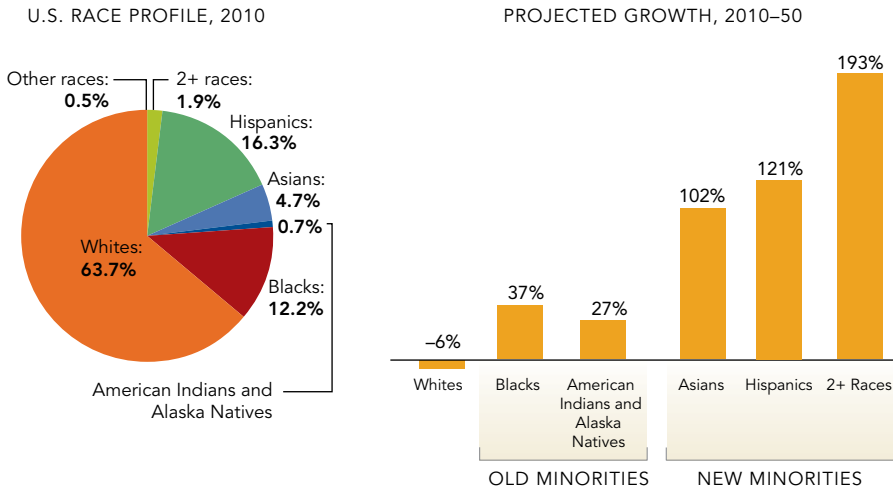
rapher who has followed U.S. population trends for decades, even I was surprised by the sheer scope of racial change that came to light with the 2010 census. The story that the data tell is not just more of the same. I am convinced that the United States is in the midst of a pivotal period ushering in extraordinary shifts in the nation's racial demographic makeup. If planned for properly, these demographic changes will allow the country to face the future with growth and vitality as it reinvents the classic American melting pot for a new era. In my experiences speaking publicly and answering press inquiries, I have seen the intensity of Americans' questions and thoughts about issues surrounding race. After having absorbed these startling census results and their implications, I wanted to interpret and expound on the dramatic shifts that they illustrate so that a general audience of readers can appreciate their force, promise, and challenges. Key among these changes are

—*the rapid growth of “new minorities”: Hispanics, Asians, and increasingly multiracial populations.* During the next 40 years, each of these groups is expected to more than double (see figure 1-2). New minorities have already become the major contributors to U.S. population gains. These new minorities—the products of recent immigration waves as well as the growing U.S.-born generations—contributed to more than three-quarters of the nation's population growth in the last decade. That trend will accelerate in the future.

—*the sharply diminished growth and rapid aging of America's white population.* Due to white low immigration, reduced fertility, and aging, the white population grew a tepid 1.2 percent in 2000–10. In roughly 10 years, the white population will begin a decline that will continue into the future. This decline will be most prominent among the younger populations. At the same time, the existing white population will age rapidly, as the large baby boom generation advances into seniorhood.

—*black economic advances and migration reversals.* Now, more than a half-century after the civil rights movement began, a recognizable segment of blacks has entered the middle class while simultaneously

FIGURE 1.2

U.S. Race Groups and Projected Growth

Source: 2010 U.S. census and Census Bureau projections.

reversing historic population shifts. The long-standing Great Migration of blacks out of the South has now turned into a wholesale evacuation from the North—to largely prosperous southern locales. Blacks are abandoning cities for the suburbs, and black neighborhood segregation continues to decline. Although many blacks still suffer the effects of inequality and segregation is far from gone, the economic and residential environments for blacks have improved well beyond the highly discriminatory, ghettoized life that most experienced for much of the twentieth century.

—*the shift toward a nation in which no racial group is the majority.*

The shift toward “no majority” communities is already taking place as the constellation of racial minorities expands. In 2010, 22 of the nation’s 100 largest metropolitan areas were minority white, up from just 14 in 2000 and 5 in 1990. Sometime after 2040, there will be no racial majority in the country. This is hardly the America that large numbers of today’s older and middle-aged adults grew up with in their neighborhoods, workplaces, and civic lives. One implication of these

shifts will be larger multiracial populations as multiracial marriages become far more commonplace.

The “diversity explosion” the country is now experiencing will bring significant changes in the attitudes of individuals, the practices of institutions, and the nature of American politics. Racial change has never been easy, and more often than not it has been fraught with fear and conflict. Yet for most of the nation’s history, nonwhite racial groups have been a small minority. Partly because of that, blacks and other racial minorities were historically subjected to blatant discrimination, whether through Jim Crow laws, the Asian Exclusion Act, or any of the many other measures that denied racial minorities access to jobs, education, housing, financial resources, and basic rights of civic participation.

What will be different going forward is the sheer size of the minority population in the United States. It is arriving “just in time” as the aging white population begins to decline, bringing with it needed manpower and brain power and taking up residence in otherwise stagnating city and suburban housing markets. Although whites are still considered the mainstream in the United States, that perception should eventually shift as more minority members assume positions of responsibility, exert more political clout, exercise their strength as consumers, and demonstrate their value in the labor force. As they become integral to the nation’s success, their concerns will be taken seriously.

GENERATIONS AND GEOGRAPHY ON THE FRONT LINES OF CHANGE

Change will not come without challenges. In fact, a big part of the impending clashes related to race will have demographic roots because of how diversity spreads across the country—both generationally and geographically.

Diversity by Generation, “From the Bottom Up”

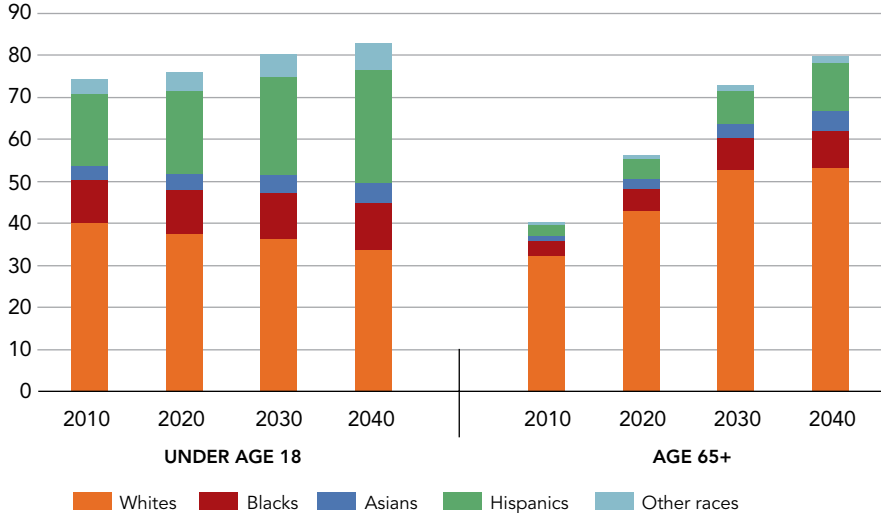
If nothing else, the diversity explosion is generational in character. New minority growth is bubbling up the age structure, from young to old.

Today, this growth is most visible among America's children. This has to do, in part, with the more youthful population of Hispanics, the nation's largest minority group. Due to recent waves of Hispanic immigrants who were younger than the total population and to their somewhat higher fertility, Hispanics are decidedly younger than the population at large. This relative youthfulness, with many adults in peak childbearing ages, ensures continued sizable contributions to births, irrespective of future immigration. Asians, the second-largest new minority, also contribute to population gains among youth. In addition, the still tiny multiracial population, with a median age of just around 20 years, has the greatest potential for growth.

Nonetheless, the aging of the white population is a primary reason why racial churning is beginning at younger ages. During the first decade of the 2000s, the number of white youth in the United States already had declined as more individuals passed the age of 18 than were born. The white decline is projected to continue not only among children but eventually among younger adults and then middle-aged adults, as smaller white generations follow larger ones.² Barring unanticipated increases in white immigration, the long-term scenario for whites is one of lower fertility and increased aging. This means that the younger population will lead the way toward the nation's diversity surge. This diversity is already ubiquitous in schools, on playgrounds, and in other civic arenas that young people inhabit. Diversity means that new minorities, including Hispanic and Asian children whose parents or grandparents came from different nations and speak different languages, will become classmates, dating partners, and lifelong friends with younger generations of established minorities and whites.

Yet this youth-driven diversity surge is also creating a "cultural generation gap" between the diverse youth population and the growing, older, still predominantly white population. This gap is reflected in negative attitudes among many older whites toward immigration, new minority growth, and big government programs that cater to the real economic and educational needs of America's younger, more diverse population. It has shown up in politics, among other places, as was evident in the demographic voting patterns in the 2012 election of Barack Obama.

FIGURE 1.3

Children and Seniors, 2010–40**Size and Race Make-up of Populations Under Age 18 and Age 65+***Millions*

Source: 2010 U.S. census and Census Bureau projections.

The gap is not a result of racist attitudes per se. It reflects the social distance between minority youth and an older population that does not feel a personal connection with young adults and children who are not “their” children and grandchildren.

Yet the future well-being of seniors and the nation as a whole depends on the ability of today’s youth to succeed in tomorrow’s labor force. Youth will play a central role in contributing to the nation’s economy and to the retirement and medical care programs that directly benefit the older population. The financial solvency of those programs will be particularly challenging because the mostly white senior population will continue to swell as it absorbs the large baby boom generation (see figure 1-3). Attitudinal changes will occur but may take some time, as the long-held views of the baby boomers, who grew up in a highly segregated, low immigration, post-World War II America, slowly adapt to these inevitable generational shifts.

Diversity Dispersal “From the Melting Pot Out”

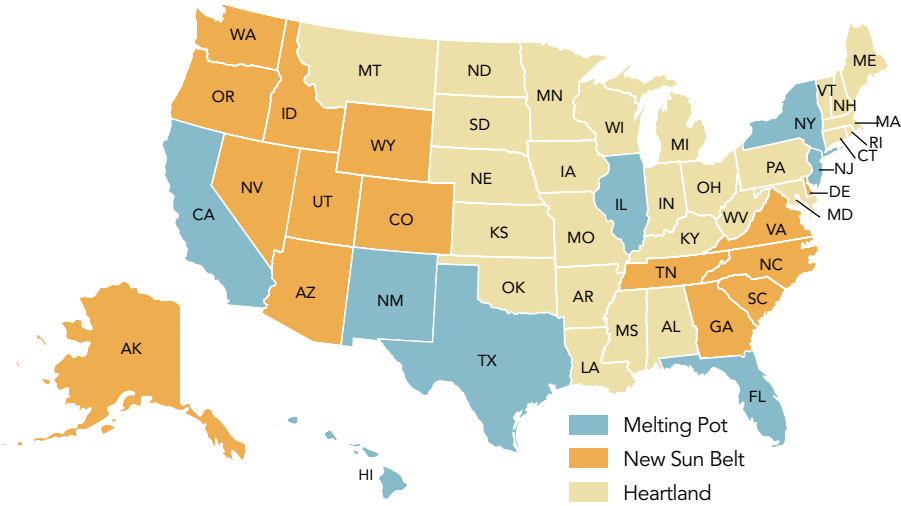
As the diversity surge spreads from younger to older generations, a parallel geographic spread of new minorities is occurring from traditional Melting Pot regions to the rest of the country. This trend is distinct from those of the 1980s and early 1990s, when Hispanic and Asian growth was heavily concentrated in large immigrant gateways like New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Miami, and Houston. Those largely immigrant minorities were content to cluster inside the traditional gateways within communities of the same race and language, where they could rely on friendship and family connections for social and economic support. At the same time, most mainstream domestic migrants, primarily whites, were moving to the economically ascendant interior West and Southeast—portions of the country that might be termed the New Sun Belt (shown in figure 1-4). Being more footloose than the new minorities, these migrants followed growing employment opportunities in places such as Atlanta and Phoenix.

Those separate migration flows—to Melting Pot areas by new immigrant minorities and to New Sun Belt areas by mostly white domestic migrants—seemed to portend a regional demographic balkanization.³ The scenario painted was one in which the Melting Pot regions would remain racially distinct from other growing parts of the country in much the same way that cities once were racially distinct from their growing suburbs. Such a division would have extremely adverse implications for racial integration nationally, not to mention for politics. Adding further support to that prediction was the fact that whites were moving away from the major immigrant magnets, suggesting a flight from diversity, even though the move had more to do with the availability of jobs in the New Sun Belt and high housing costs in large coastal areas.⁴

Fortunately, the predicted balkanization proved temporary. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, new minorities began to follow the broad-based migration flows to the New Sun Belt for many of the same reasons as white domestic migrants. Hispanics and Asians dispersed not only to New Sun Belt states but also to the Heartland region of the country—defined here as slow-growing portions of the nation’s interior and New England—in response to jobs in low- and high-skilled industries. Like whites and blacks, they wished to escape higher costs of living in many

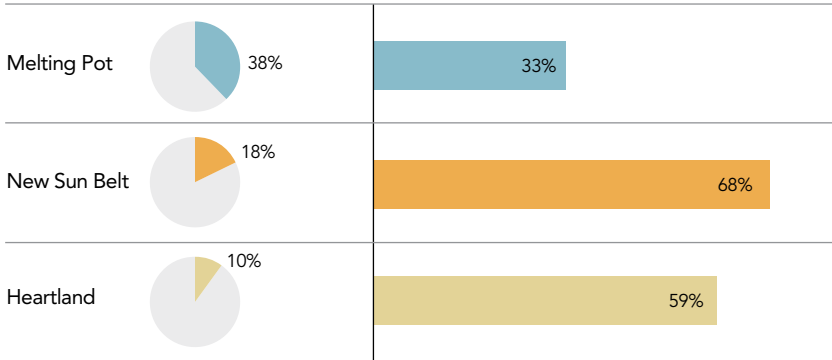
FIGURE 1-4

New Minorities in the Melting Pot, New Sun Belt, and Heartland Regions



NEW MINORITY SHARE OF POPULATION, 2010

NEW MINORITY GROWTH, 2000-2010



immigrant gateways, and in the process, they began to form new same-race communities away from the Melting Pot areas.⁵

Yet as they disperse to new destinations, Hispanics, Asians, and other new minorities are not always welcomed with open arms. Although they are filling important niches in the economy by taking jobs in construction, services, and software engineering and are, especially in the Heartland, providing a much-needed increase in population, they also are standing on the front lines of racial integration. White backlash is common in places where the cultural generation gap is most evident and where the growth of young new minorities is most rapid. Still, this ongoing dispersal of new minorities can lead to a softening of the rigid racial and political divisions that I feared would develop as separated migration patterns were taking shape in the 1980s. The integration and assimilation of new minorities across the country will occur unevenly, but the pattern is showing no sign of letting up.

RACIAL CATEGORIES IN THE UNITED STATES

It is probably fair to say that there is no definitive classification of race in the United States. Racial categories are neither completely biologically nor scientifically determined. They have a history of being constructed in ways that play into national politics and stereotypes, and they are constantly in need of revision.⁶ That said, the categories used in the recent U.S. census and by other government agencies maintain important social and legal distinctions and have more recently come to characterize a renewed pride in the cultural identity of the groups represented. For this reason, this book uses a racial classification that is broadly, though not completely, consistent with that used in the 2010 U.S. census, in which Americans self-reported their race.

The racial classification used here differs from census and federal guidelines that treat Hispanic origin as an item separate from race—that is, that ask census respondents separate questions about their Hispanic origin and their race.⁷ Instead, this book treats Hispanic origin as a racial category. As a result, other racial categories—including whites, blacks, Asians, and American Indians or Alaska Natives—pertain to non-

Hispanic members of those groups. This approach permits establishing a set of mutually exclusive racial categories in which Hispanic origin is one of the categories.⁸ It also is broadly consistent with common use of race labels in national surveys, media reporting, and everyday parlance, wherein, in standard usage, “whites” or “Anglos” refers to non-Hispanic whites.

In focusing on Hispanics in chapter 4 and Asians in chapter 5, I discuss the origins of these groups in more detail (distinguishing, for example, between Mexicans and Cubans or Asian Indians and Chinese). In some parts of the book, due to data restrictions, alterations to these definitions are made and noted.⁹ In response to the growth of the multiracial population in the United States, an important innovation was introduced in the 2000 and 2010 censuses that permits respondents to identify with two or more races.¹⁰ However, because the official census definition does not consider Hispanic origin as a race, the “two or more race” population is probably considerably larger than the one reported in the censuses. I discuss the latter undercount more fully in chapter 10, along with the possibility that federal agencies will adopt Hispanics as a separate category, on par with other racial categories, as is done in this book.

There will, no doubt, be other alterations as well. Although the country is far from having achieved “postracial” status as a society, it is safe to predict that racial classifications will be modified in the future as multiracial marriages and populations proliferate and the nation’s diversity surge continues. For the present, I believe that the classification used here, consistent with common everyday usage, is appropriate for the task at hand.

A ROADMAP OF THE CHAPTERS THAT FOLLOW

The precedent-setting racial changes now under way in the United States are affecting the demographics of racial groups themselves and the places where their members choose to live. Together, these changes will impact many aspects of the nation’s demographic fabric, ranging from the future of neighborhood segregation to presidential politics. Yet

these shifts are occurring in the context of a varied national landscape, moving at different speeds in different places. Furthermore, the shifts are emanating from starting points that are different for new minorities, blacks, and whites.

This book provides a nuanced view of these shifts by highlighting new trends that stood out based on my examination of the 2010 census and related sources. They support the view that the nation is in the midst of a pivotal period in its racial demographic makeup. The story begins in chapter 2 and continues in chapter 3, which outline the broad parameters of change—generational and spatial—that the nation will experience as new minority growth spreads across the country.

Shifting Upward and Outward

The spread of diversity from the bottom to the top of the nation's age structure, discussed in chapter 2, focuses first on the nation's youth. One might say that the experience with children in the early 2000s is the tip of the iceberg, foreshadowing what is in store for the rest of the population as these children age. In light of the absolute decline in the nation's white child population, the growth of the nation's child population was entirely due to Hispanics, Asians, and multiracials. In fact, the entire youth population declined in 23 U.S. states and in about one-third of large metropolitan areas—all places that did not attract enough new minorities to counter declines in the white population. In other states, child populations grew substantially—largely because of new minorities. Texas, for example, gained almost 1 million children from 2000 to 2010, with Hispanics accounting for 95 percent of that gain.

These shifts underscore the importance that new minorities will play in future U.S. growth. But they also call attention to the need to improve access to formal education and job training for minority children and, for some, to English language training. This is especially needed among Hispanic children, who will contribute mightily to workforce gains as white baby boomers retire and who continue to lag behind other groups in high school completion and higher education.

Yet improving educational opportunities may be politically difficult given the cultural generation gap between the increasingly diverse child

population and a largely white older population. Far into the future, Hispanic working-age adults will have a much higher “youth dependency burden” than working-age whites, for whom senior dependency will rise markedly. Therefore government spending on education and other youth-related programs will be more popular among Hispanic and other minority voters than among whites, who will be more concerned with government programs for seniors. Elaborating on this tension, chapter 2 outlines the ways in which differences between these generations in attributes and attitudes may affect their views of change and their choices of political candidates. At least for now, the generation gaps are widest on the West Coast and in the Southwest.

Chapter 3 discusses the nation’s evolving racial geography, highlighting key aspects of new minority dispersal in the context of other racial settlements across the country. This dispersal is largely directed from the Melting Pot states to rapidly growing New Sun Belt states, a phenomenon that did not come into its own until the late 1990s. Despite a temporary lull caused by the Great Recession, in 2007–09, the macro forces that drive this dispersal ensure its long-term continuation. Along with the dispersal, there will continue to be a softening of the divide that formerly existed between the more diverse and less diverse regions of the country.

The New Sun Belt region is becoming transformed by Hispanic, Asian, and multiracial populations that are turning southern and interior western communities into evolving melting pots. Many of these areas are gaining new minorities and blacks more rapidly than whites. In Las Vegas, for example, the white portion of the population decreased from 75 percent in 1990 to 48 percent in 2010. The rapid growth of Hispanic and Asian populations is changing state and metropolitan consumer markets and politics and, in some cases, bringing confrontation with longtime residents. At the same time, new minorities are also dispersing to slowly growing areas in the Heartland—areas that are losing whites and blacks at the same time. Overall, the vast majority of the nation’s 3,100 counties and 366 metropolitan areas became less white between 2000 and 2010, as minority white areas continued to spread across the New Sun Belt and beyond.

Hispanics, Asians, Blacks, and Whites

Chapters 4 through 7 focus on specific racial groups: Hispanics and Asians—which are the nation’s largest new minorities—blacks, and whites. The current demographic profiles of each of the groups arise from their distinct histories and settlements. Yet those historical patterns are changing—more dramatically for Hispanics and Asians, but also for blacks and whites—in ways that are setting the stage for their future integration, especially in the New Sun Belt.

Chapter 4 examines the rapid dispersal of the nation’s Hispanic population. Although classed here as a new minority, Hispanics (before they were given that name) have a long history in the United States, given its extensive border and involvement with Mexico. The newness of this group stems from the recent rapid growth of not just the Mexican American population but all residents of Hispanic origin, including immigrants and their descendants from many other Latin American countries. Each of these groups begins from somewhat different “starting point” settlements in the United States, and their latest dispersal patterns have shifted each group to new destinations of all sizes—located largely in New Sun Belt states but also in most other parts of the country. This broad spread is noticeable from 2000 to 2010, when Hispanic populations more than doubled in the 145 areas considered to be new Hispanic destinations.

Overall, Hispanics are younger, more family oriented, and less educated than the total population. That raises the question of how well recently arrived residents in new Hispanic destinations will fit in with a largely white or white-black resident population. In fact, many new migrants to these areas are “tag-along migrants,” lured to low-skilled jobs created by large mainstream migration surges. Even among Hispanics, these migrants tend to rank lower on education, English language usage, and several other measures, making it challenging for them to assimilate. Yet the continued broad outward spread of a mix of several Hispanic groups will infuse the younger populations in these and other areas with a new energy and vitality that will repay investments in their futures.

Often considered the “model minority,” the U.S. Asian population is the topic of chapter 5. The population of Asians—the second-largest new minority group—will continue to grow, especially if future immigration

policy places greater emphasis on attracting highly skilled individuals. Although some Asian groups, such as the Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos, have a long-standing presence in the United States, the very rapid growth of Asian Americans—spurred by the provisions of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act—is quite recent and involves people from a broad array of Asian origin countries. These Asian immigrants and their children tend to have a better education and more favorable economic attributes than other minorities or whites due, in part, to selective immigration from their countries of origin.

Each Asian American group began from a distinct settlement area, generally on the East or West Coast and in large metropolitan areas, and no one group dominates the Asian American population. Now, almost all Asian American immigrants are beginning to spread to new Asian destinations, with Asian Indians, the most highly educated group, leading the way. “Fitting in” for Asian Americans will not be immediate, given their relatively recent immigrant status and their continued flow into the country. They will, nonetheless, be a needed presence in the U.S. labor force and communities, facilitating links to an increasingly globalized economy.

Chapter 6 discusses the changing demography of blacks in America. Hardly a new minority, blacks were the largest racial minority until 2000, and for most of the nation’s history, it was the black population that people most associated with “minority” status. Yet, after centuries of blatant discrimination, the 1960s civil rights legislation planted the seeds for a growing black middle class, which has now developed, even as another segment of the black population continues to be weighed down by poverty. The chapter focuses on an important sign of the black population’s changing status—a reversal of its decades-long Great Migration out of the South to a nearly wholesale evacuation of former destinations in the North and West. The newest southward shift of the black population encompasses all blacks, but it is most prominent among the young, the well-educated, and retirees. The greatest growth surges are occurring in economically prosperous areas of the South, especially in Atlanta, and all signs point to a continuation of the trend. Therefore, although there has been a surge of new minorities to the South, blacks are reinforcing the South’s traditional image as a largely black-white region—but a more prosperous region than it was in the distant past.

Emerging changes in the majority white population is the topic of chapter 7. Whites, who are still considered the nation's mainstream and who fare better on economic measures than most minorities, will become a declining presence as their slow growth turns to population loss and accelerated aging. That means that regional shifts in the white population across the country amount to what is essentially a zero-sum game. For some areas to gain white migrants, others have to lose them—with little natural increase or white foreign immigration to make up the difference.

Among the 3,100 U.S. counties, 53 percent showed declines in the white population in 2000–10. Many of these are small, aging, mostly white counties in the Heartland. There also are declines in the white population in industrial Heartland metropolitan areas such as Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland. Yet some of the largest declines in the white population are in Melting Pot metropolitan areas such as New York and Los Angeles, whose gains are coming entirely from minorities.

White migrants are going mostly to the same New Sun Belt states that are also attracting Hispanics, Asians, and (in the South) blacks. Better employment opportunities and lower costs of living are drawing whites to the interior West and Southeast. The difference for white migration is in the destinations within those states—mostly smaller and exurban areas rather than large cities and suburbs. This “new white flight” is not racially motivated, but it does create a soft separation between whites and minorities, which will eventually be diffused as minority groups continue to disperse.

Race and the Remaking of America

The diversity explosion that has begun to take place is transforming the United States in fundamental ways—changing long-held stereotypes about who can live where, who can marry whom, and who can be elected to public office. Chapters 8 through 11 show how several previous “truths” were already being remade during the first decade of the 2000s and the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections.

The shorthand description of urban America as “chocolate cities and vanilla suburbs” still remains in the consciousness of many people, at least those of a certain age. Chapter 8 emphatically puts that stereotype

to rest by showing that white-only flight to the suburbs is a thing of the past. In fact, nearly one-third of large metropolitan suburbs showed a loss of whites between 2000 and 2010, and Hispanics are now the biggest drivers of growth of the nation's metropolitan population in both cities and suburbs. Today, it is racial minorities, in their quest for the suburban dream, who are generating new growth and vitality in the suburbs, just as immigrant groups did in the cities in an earlier era. The newest and most notable trend is the accelerated "black flight" to the suburbs. In 2010, for the first time, more blacks lived in the suburbs than in the cities of the biggest U.S. metropolitan regions—joining Hispanics and Asians as well as whites in having that distinction. Although there are vestiges of the old minority city–white suburb residential division, they are largely confined to the slowly growing Heartland. Going forward, suburbs will continue to become a microcosm of a more diverse America, as new generations of suburbanites grow up in communities that bear scant resemblance to suburbia's long-standing white middle-class image.

If there is one word that conjures up the extreme discrimination and isolation that blacks in particular have endured for decades, it is the word "segregation." Yet as chapter 9 reveals, the trends are pointing decidedly away from the highly ghettoized existence that separated blacks from whites for much of the twentieth century. A number of forces—the emergence of a black middle class, black migration to the suburbs and to growing New Sun Belt areas, and integration with new minorities who serve as buffers between racially segregated areas—are leading to pervasive reductions in black-white segregation. Black segregation is still high in many places, particularly in slowly growing northern cities, but the trend toward greater black-white integration seems locked in place.

The levels of Hispanic and Asian segregation remain decidedly lower than that of black segregation. Both groups are more likely than blacks to live among whites and other minorities, and both are more likely to reside closer to whites in new destination areas as they disperse across the country. In short, a new racial segregation paradigm appears to be at work that suggests greater residential *integration* of the races.

Just as long-held stereotypes about where racial groups can live are disappearing, so are those about whom they can marry. Chapter 10 exam-

ines the continued rise in multiracial marriages and their likely impact on populations classed as multiracial. Marriages between racial groups were nearly nonexistent as recently as 1970, and multiracial populations were not recorded in federal statistics until 2000. The rise of new minorities has changed that fact dramatically. Today about one in seven new marriages is multiracial, including nearly half of those involving Hispanics or Asians. Although most prevalent in Melting Pot states, they are growing rapidly in the New Sun Belt and even in some Heartland states.

Perhaps even more noteworthy is the increase in marriages between blacks and whites—marriages that would have been illegal in 16 states as late as 1967. Today black-white marriages are not only accepted but common—composing one-eighth of all marriages involving blacks. Just as important is the rising number, increasingly evident in the South, of persons who identify as both black and white, a group that now includes about one-seventh of all black toddlers. Together, these trends foreshadow a continued blurring of racial divisions at the household and personal levels that would have been unimaginable even a decade ago.

The political impacts of the nation's new diversity surge were made most vivid during the 2008 election of the first black president of the United States and his 2012 reelection. As chapter 11 points out, the political heft of minorities—both new and old—was responsible for the election and reelection of President Barack Obama. The minority vote was especially crucial for Democrats in 2012, when the Republican candidate, Mitt Romney, lost despite garnering a historically high voting margin among whites. Minority clout can only increase in future elections as more Hispanics and Asians turn age 18, register to vote, and turn out to vote. Yet gaps in voting interests between the increasingly diverse younger generation and the mostly white senior generation will make future elections more difficult to predict. The former are interested in good schools, affordable housing, and greater employment opportunities, while the latter are concerned about preserving their retirement incomes and covering future medical costs.

These divergent interests will also play out geographically. While the movement of more minorities to the New Sun Belt will expand the battleground for Democrats to previous Republican strongholds in

the South and Mountain West, the aging of whites in slowly growing Heartland states could turn former Democratic bastions in the industrial Midwest and Northeast toward the Republicans. Nonetheless, as the 2008 and 2012 elections have demonstrated, both parties will need to pay attention to the interests of the nation's growing minority populations to stay competitive in the future.

Chapter 12, the final chapter of the book, reflects on both the short- and long-term impacts of the new racial demographic tides, pointing to areas where the nation might be proactive in shaping their effects to its advantage. This is not the first time that the United States has had to incorporate new peoples into society. Almost always, doing so has made the country richer, more vibrant, and more economically successful. In many ways, the recent growth of new minorities is a gift to a nation that would otherwise be facing the specter of an aging, slowly growing, and eventually declining population.