

ELECTION 2000 SPECIAL EDITION

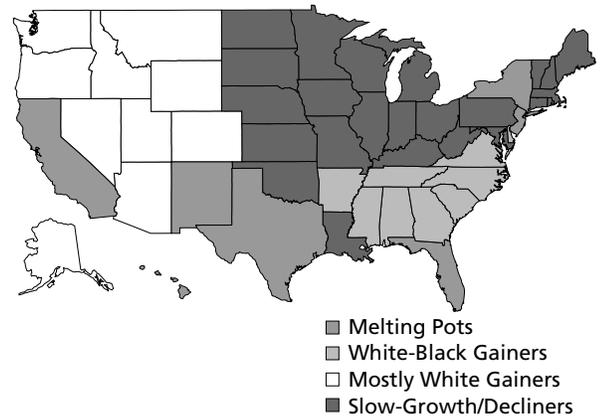
# The New, Regional U.S. Politics

by William H. Frey

The results of the 2000 presidential election and those of several to come will be influenced by sharp regional shifts in America's voting population, shifts that began in 1990. These new voting blocs are shaped by the continued concentration of new immigrant minorities—Hispanics and Asians—into selected “melting-pot states”; by shifts of white middle-class suburbanites from large coastal metropolises to fast-growing parts of the “New Sun Belt” (states in the South Atlantic and western regions); by the return of African Americans to the South; and by the nonmigration of some of the most sought-after swing groups of voters that George Bush and Al Gore are vying for.

These trends are beginning to cement distinct regional differences in the demographic profiles of the country's voting population. While the new migration patterns may have a bigger impact on fast-growing destination states, they also affect stagnating states of origin by increasing the political clout of the groups left behind. In fact, three highly prized constituencies in the current election—white working wives, white “forgotten major-

## Voters on the Move



Source: Author's analysis of U.S. Census Bureau sources.

ity” men (the male half of the neglected white working class profiled in a recent book by political analysts Ruy Teixeira and Joel Rogers), and whites ages 65 and older—make up a

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# Voting for the Voiceless

by William P. O'Hare

With the 2000 presidential election just around the corner, the characteristics of voters are being analyzed and reanalyzed by political pundits and pollsters. Little attention, though, has been given to the 71 million U.S. children under age 18 who have no direct voice in the outcome of the election but who will be just as directly affected by the election results as their parents.

Although it is commonly assumed that children's political interests are reflected in the votes cast by their parents, this assumption depends on parents' exercising their vote. But will they? How will the voting behavior of parents compare with that

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# Migrating Votes *Continued from page 1*

disproportionate share of the residual populations in slow-growing interior states that form the battleground for the contest ahead.

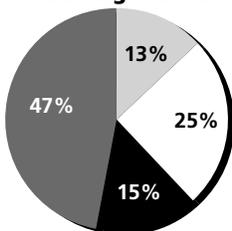
## Melting-Pot States

The most dramatic migration-related change in the nation's voting-age population since 1990 has been the influx of new immigrant minorities.

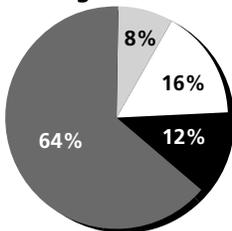
### How Shares of Key Demographic Groups Differ Across States

Voting-age populations, 1999

#### Interior Battleground States\*



#### Melting-Pot States\*\*



- White working wives
- White "forgotten majority" men
- Older whites
- Others

\* Interior battleground states include Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Missouri.

\*\* Melting-pot states include New York, New Jersey, Florida, Texas, New Mexico, California, and Hawaii.

Notes: White working wives are currently married white (non-Hispanic) women, ages 18 to 64, who work 20+ hours per week. White "forgotten majority" men are white (non-Hispanic) men ages 18 to 64 who are not college graduates. Older whites are (non-Hispanic) whites ages 65 and older.

Source: Author's analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data.

Between Census Day 1990 and Election Day 2000, the combined voting-age populations of Hispanics and Asians will have increased from 19.9 million to 29.5 million. Four states—California, Texas, Florida, and New York—have garnered 61 percent of these gains and are now home to almost two-thirds of the combined Hispanic and Asian voting-age population. These states, combined with Hawaii, New Jersey, and New Mexico, are considered "Melting Pots" (see map on page 1) and represent constituencies that are very different from those in other parts of the country. Non-Hispanic whites constitute only 61 percent of the voting-age population in these states (compared with 74 percent of the voting-age population in the United States), while Hispanics and Asians make up 29 percent.

Although new immigrant minorities tend to vote in significantly lower numbers than do other members of the population, Bush and Gore are still paying attention to them, both symbolically—by speaking Spanish when visiting Hispanic

neighborhoods—and in policy prescriptions for greater efficiency in the Immigration and Naturalization Service, improved public education, and increased support for family values. Both candidates are aware that the combined Hispanic and Asian share of California's voting-

age population is projected to increase (from 40 percent in November to 52 percent in 2015).

Immigration is not the only factor increasing the visibility of Hispanics and Asians in these melting-pot states. New York, New Jersey, and California lost white voting-age population during the 1990s because white suburbanites in large, congested metropolises like New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco chose to reside in smaller, less-populated communities. These moves continue to change the demographics of both origin and destination states.

## Whites Move to the New Sun Belt

Migration to the Sun Belt is an old story. What's new in the past decade is a large component of nostalgic white suburbanites who seek more traditional suburban communities no longer available in the expensive, congested suburbs of the Northeast or in California coastal metropolises. Many of these suburbanites from New York head to Southeast coastal states, and many from California head to the western states. Since 1990, the white voting-age population has increased by more than 22 percent in Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Arizona, and Colorado. Thirty-six percent of the nation's gain in the white voting-age population took place in the non-California West. Georgia, the Carolinas, and Tennessee increased their white voting-age populations by more than twice the national rate of 6 percent.

The new residents of these "New West" and "New South" states have come from all parts of the country, but largely from California and metropolitan New York. They have brought with them a host of "suburban" demographic attributes that should reinforce middle-class, moderate conservative voting constituencies in the new areas. The West has also attracted young, itinerant professionals who tend to be political independents. The third group for both the West and the Southeast is made up of white retirees who, while probably economically conservative and somewhat financially stable, like to be assured of the solvency of the Social Security system.

While the white newcomers to the New Sun Belt may share some suburban, middle-of-the-road values with the whites who have grown up in these states, the more cosmopolitan origins of the former may make them more socially liberal on issues such as gun control (in the West) or abortion and religion (in the South). In the South, the influx of suburban whites has been accompanied by another influx that should moderate the tenor

**William H. Frey** is a demographer with the Population Studies Center, University of Michigan, and with the Milken Institute in Santa Monica, Calif. This article is based on his analysis of projected state and regional shifts in the voting-age population between Census Day 1990 and Election Day 2000. He examined migration patterns and the regional distribution of voters using annual Current Population Survey data from 1990 to 1999.

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# Rebounding Unions Target Service Sector

by Michael Goldfield

After decades of continuous decline in membership, the U.S. labor movement is finally showing signs that it is coming out of its slump.

The year 1999 marks the first time since the 1970s that the percentage of eligible workers who are members of unions did not decrease from the previous year. Union membership increased in 1999 by 266,000, while the share of workers who belong to unions remained the same at 14 percent of the labor force (see figure).

Still, there are huge variations in membership by state. The Carolinas have the lowest rates of unionization (3 percent for North Carolina, 4 percent for South Carolina), and New York has the highest at 25 percent.

Union membership also varies greatly by economic sector. Of the 19 million government employees, 37 percent were unionized in 1999. (Among the 10.4 million local government employees, 43 percent were union members.) In contrast, only 9 percent of the 100 million private-sector employees belonged to unions. Overall unionization rates tend to mask the steep decline in private sector unionization, which hit a high of 42 percent in 1945.

Within the private sector, unionization varies by line of work. One in four workers in the transportation and public utilities sector belongs to a union, while only one in 50 in the finance, insurance, and real estate sector is a union member.

Finally, men are more unionized than women (16 percent vs. 11 percent), African Americans more unionized than whites (17 percent vs. 14 percent), and Hispanics slightly less unionized than either blacks or whites (12 percent). These differences primarily reflect differences in occupations and industries. Part-time workers are decidedly less likely to be union members than are full-time workers (7 percent vs. 15 percent).

## Recruitment Efforts

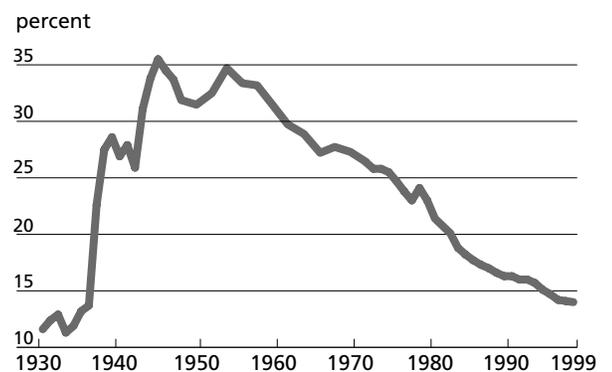
Government employment and unionization rates have been relatively constant over the past 20 years, so the key to union growth is new organizing in the rapidly growing and changing private sector. And this sector has not been easy to penetrate.

Unions are focusing in particular on low-wage workers in the service sector. Janitorial and health care workers, for example, have been organized in large numbers. While manufacturing employment over the last several decades has remained relatively constant at around 20 million, service employment—including transportation, communications, other public utilities, and financial services—with only 6 percent unionization, has increased 2.5 times to approximately 48 million. Because the service sector is also disproportionately female, minority, and immigrant, unions trying to organize these workers have diversified their top leadership and increased the number of organizers who

are female, members of a minority group, and bilingual.

Enormous service-sector employers with large profits—typified by Wal-Mart, Starbucks, and McDonald's—have adopted a comprehensive approach to thwart union organization. Wal-Mart, for instance, was vehe-

## Union Membership Rate Among Non-agricultural Workers, 1930 to 1999



Sources: 1930–1976: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Handbook of Labor Statistics, Bulletin 2070*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1980), p. 412; 1977–1984: Barry T. Hirsch and David A. Macpherson, *Union Membership and Earnings Data Book* (Washington, DC: Bureau of National Affairs, 1998), p. 11; 1985–1999: *Employment and Earnings*, January issues.

mentally opposed to the leafletting of one of its stores by the United Food and Commercial Workers. To get them legally removed from the front of the store, Wal-Mart management instituted a ban on all soliciting at all the chain's U.S. stores, which included banning the Salvation Army during the holiday season. In addition, McDonald's has a history in Canada of pushing its anti-unionism to the point of closing its restaurants when its low-wage workers opt for a union.

## Inroads

The current wave of economic prosperity in the United States—the longest continuous expansion of monthly gross

# Flat Birth Rates in Bangladesh and Egypt Challenge Demographers' Projections

by Carl Haub

Population projections give us an idea about where a country is headed demographically—if we can accurately predict a country's trends in fertility. Mortality (AIDS in Africa) and migration (in the United States) play a significant role as well, but fertility is the driving force behind population growth in the majority of less developed countries.

Projections aside, most, if not all, observers expect that high fertility will decline in all less developed countries, at some point ending the well-known population “explosion.” In fact, most projections assume that fertility rates in less developed countries will decline to about two children per woman. That assumption has a tidy result: population growth someday ends since couples just “replace” themselves with two children.

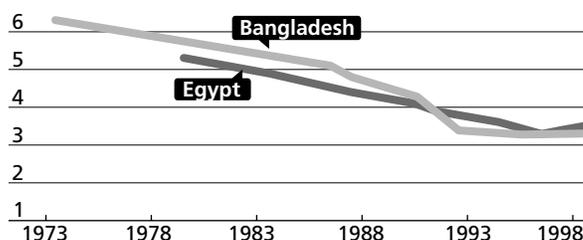
But how realistic is that assumption? Is it reasonable to assume that the preferred family size in less developed countries will track with, say, the United States, where the two-child family has become the norm? Or to assume that fertility will drop well below two children, as in Europe? Recent fertility surveys from two key countries illustrate how much in doubt the outcome really is.

The 1999–2000 Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) and the 2000 Egypt DHS (both conducted by ORC Macro) offer some insights. Fertility in Bangladesh was over six children per woman as recently as the mid-1970s and declined slowly, despite government efforts to encourage family planning. A big break occurred in the early 1990s, when the 1993–1994 DHS showed a rather sudden drop to just 3.4 children per woman, a report that caused lively debate. The latest figures represent an equally unexpected development: The total fertility rate, which dropped almost imperceptibly to 3.3 between 1994 and 1996, has remained constant for the last three years.

More surprising still, along with the Bangladesh survey came the release of the Egypt survey, which showed exactly the same thing. The total fertility rate from this survey (for 1997

## Total Fertility Rate in Bangladesh and Egypt

Average number of children per woman



Source: Successive fertility surveys of both countries.

to 2000) was 3.5, not statistically different from the 3.6 measured for the period 1993 to 1995 in a previous DHS. (Successive surveys may measure fertility a bit differently due to variations in samples and other factors, but the examples cited here are believed to be sufficiently comparable for analysis.)

Other examples of this kind of slowdown in fertility decline—in Argentina, Paraguay, and Jamaica—show that the trend is far from isolated. Argentina is particularly noteworthy in that its total fertility rate has been about three children per woman or a little less for almost 50 years.

To be sure, examples of all types of fertility decline can be shown. Thailand experienced a relatively uninterrupted decline to below-replacement fertility, while Indonesia experienced a slowdown only to resume a gradual decrease.

Still, both the Bangladesh and the Egypt surveys indicate that long-term assumptions about fertility decline should be treated with considerable caution and monitored continuously. It is possible that the earlier stages of fertility decline can be accounted for by couples who were the most receptive to the idea of limiting family size and to the use of modern contraceptive methods to achieve that goal. It may be that a fertility decline from six children to, say, 3.5, will prove much easier than from 3.5 to 2.0. And it may well be that two children will never be the norm in some countries. ■

### For More Information:

Copies of the Bangladesh and Egypt surveys are available from MEASURE DHS+, ORC Macro, phone: 301/572-0200.

Carl Haub holds the Conrad Taeuber Chair of Population Information at PRB.

# Reimert T. Ravenholt, USAID's Population Program Stalwart

by *Duff G. Gillespie*

*This is the seventh in a series of profiles of the people who have most influenced thinking about population over the past century. The profiles bring you the insights of today's population specialists on the contributions of their predecessors and contemporaries. For the previous six profiles, go to [www.prb.org](http://www.prb.org) and click on Population Today.*

As director of USAID's Office of Population from 1965 to 1979, Reimert T. (Rei) Ravenholt created a family planning juggernaut that still provokes both praise and disdain. Ravenholt was a remarkable leader, full of perplexing contradictions. He dazzled people with his brilliance one moment and shocked them with his myopic ethnocentrism the next. He could be strategically wise and tactically reckless. Ravenholt's controversial reputation masks his many contributions, which are still evident 20 years after he was forced from his leadership of USAID's population program.

When Ravenholt took charge of USAID's nascent population program, the setting was not auspicious for success. The program had no staff, budget, or mandate. Few developing country governments outside of Asia wanted anything to do with subjects as controversial as population control and family planning. And there was great debate about whether family planning programs worked. Many doubted that couples would use family planning services and, if couples did use them, that the services would have any impact. But Ravenholt believed that people would use family planning and that it would have a global demographic impact.

Ravenholt succeeded in a hostile environment primarily because he considered the word "no" to be operative only when he used it. If governments said "no" to family planning assistance, Ravenholt got nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to implement USAID-supported family planning activities. If the physician-dominated

health programs did not make family planning easily available, then community-based and social marketing programs would. If couples said "no" to existing contraceptives, new methods would be developed. Circumventing naysayers was a crusade that all staff were expected to join. If you went to a country that forbade contraceptives, you were to carry two suitcases—one for clothes, the other for contraceptives. Such a tactic led to awkward situations, like explaining to a disbelieving, but amused, custom official that the suitcase of condoms were for one's personal use.

Examples of Ravenholt's legacies abound. In response to governmental indifference to AIDS, donors turned to NGOs—typically family planning NGOs whose antecedents can be traced to Ravenholt's initiatives—to combat the spread of the disease. The World Fertility Survey, which Ravenholt established despite much resistance, has evolved into the Demographic and Health Survey, perhaps the most valuable source for health data on the developing world.

Why was Ravenholt relieved of his job after so many accomplishments? Besides ignoring his superiors' direct orders, Ravenholt simply wore out his welcome at USAID. Although much was being accomplished, Ravenholt was impatient with the pace of change and became driven by a self-imposed urgency to solve the population problem. But his notion of a population problem (too many people), whose solution was greater availability of voluntary family planning, was being dismissed. Yet Ravenholt was unswerving in the certainty of his approach. He had to go.

Ravenholt began a program that has devoted \$8 billion to population and reproductive health. In 1965 the world's fertility rate was 4.9 children per woman. Today it is 2.9. While today's program differs from his, especially in its emphasis on reproductive health, its programmatic underpinnings remain Ravenholt's. Few people have had a more positive impact on the developing world than Reimert Ravenholt. ■



*Reimert T. Ravenholt is now president of Population Health Imperatives, in Seattle.*

Duff G. Gillespie is deputy assistant administrator for Population, Health and Nutrition in the Global Bureau of USAID.

Note: The views expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

# White Voters Exercise Staying Power *Continued from page 2*

of political discourse on social issues: Blacks have been moving back to the South.

## Blacks Return to the South

Currently, 53 percent of the nation's black voting-age population resides in the South. Between 1990 and 1999, the South received a net gain in black voting-age migrants of 326,225 from the rest of the United States. The newcomers are a mixed group: middle-class blacks drawn to the booming New South economies; working-class blacks who turned away from manufacturing restructuring in the North; and retirees who preferred to relocate in southern communities than in the West. While most African American newcomers will be receptive in November to issues such as affirmative action, those in the middle class are apt to be receptive to targeted tax cuts, school vouchers, and partial privatization of the Social Security system.

The reconsolidation of blacks in the South, combined with the influx of northern suburban whites, will keep the South a distinct but more liberal region than in the past. Recent Republican-to-Democratic gubernatorial shifts in Alabama, South Carolina, and Mississippi can be attributed in part to the votes of these new migrants. The states categorized as "White-Black Gainers" in the map are emblematic of these new trends. On Election Day, their voting-age population will be 74 percent white, 22 percent black, and less than 4 percent Hispanic and Asian.

## Minimum Growth, Maximum Impact

There are states in the interior of the country whose gains in voting-age populations have been relatively modest, but the swing voters in these states are important for the upcoming election. (See states shown as "Slow Growth/Decliners" in the map on page 1.)

These states have larger shares of older, middle-income, and white populations than other parts of the country. Three particular groups of swing voters with a large presence in these states are white working wives, white "forgotten majority" men, and older whites. The first two groups have long been taken for granted by Democrats and Republicans. According to Ruy Teixeira and Joel Rogers, authors of *America's Forgotten Majority*, these groups seem to have gotten lost in the shuffle as attention was paid to more upscale "soccer moms" in the 1992 and 1996 presidential races. This time around, though, both major presidential contenders are courting these swing voters by

emphasizing "compassionate" policies or a willingness to fight for working-class families. Both candidates are also courting white older people, who consistently vote in large numbers. Candidates assure them that Social Security will remain solvent and that they will not have to bear high prices for prescription drugs.

The shares of these three groups in the combined voting populations of key "battleground states"—Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Missouri—show the groups' inflated political clout, compared with other states and with the country as a whole. Together these three groups made up 53 percent of the voting-age population of these states in 1999. In contrast, the groups constituted only 36 percent of the voting-age population of melting-pot states and only 46 percent of the total U.S. voting-age population.

Because of the two-year lag in translating Census 2000 results into congressional seats (and Electoral College votes), the 2000 election offers states a final chance to cast electoral votes based on their 1990 populations. For most of the six battleground states discussed above, this is a bonus; Pennsylvania is likely to lose two electoral votes and Ohio, Illinois, and Wisconsin are likely to lose one each in the reapportionment that will take place after the 2000 census. Thus, voting residents of the states, and especially white working women, "forgotten majority" men, and older whites, will have a disproportionate impact when selecting the next president.

## All Politics Is Regional

It's clear that new demographic divides have emerged across the country. More so than in the past, presidential candidates' speeches, public service announcements, and debates are seen nationwide and must try to bridge those divides. No wonder the candidates craft their messages carefully to appeal to and not offend important groups in these different regions. Who could not agree with a candidate espousing to be "a uniter and not a divider"? Or with one who is not afraid to champion traditional family values through frequent public displays of affection with his spouse? In the politics of the future, with the regions becoming more demographically distinct, presidential campaigns will become ever more careful balancing acts. ■

### WebExtra!

Additional graphics and statistics for individual states can be found on PRB's website: [www.prb.org](http://www.prb.org).

## Immigration Impedes Wider Health Insurance Coverage

A report by the Center for Immigration Studies finds that the United States' health insurance crisis is being driven to a great extent by immigration policy. The report faults health insurance initiatives advanced by both the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates, saying that the plans fail to address immigration as a core factor behind the high percentage of people without health insurance.

The report finds that immigrants who arrived between 1994 and 1998 and their children accounted for 59 percent of the growth in the uninsured population since 1993.

Immigrants' low rate of insurance coverage is explained in large measure by their lower levels of education relative to native residents and by the kinds of jobs available to less educated workers. Many immigrants hold jobs that do not offer health insurance, and they are unable to purchase insurance on their own.

The report can be found on the Web at: [www.cis.org/articles/2000coverage/index.html](http://www.cis.org/articles/2000coverage/index.html).

New data released by the Census Bureau in late September show an overall improvement in health insurance coverage, but continued disparities in coverage between natives and immigrants. The number and proportion of people without health insurance declined between 1998 and 1999,

from 44.3 million to 42.6 million and from 16.3 percent of the population to 15.5 percent. This decrease is the first year-to-year decline since 1987. Still, immigrants were more likely than natives to be uninsured—33.4 percent vs. 13.5 percent.

The data are on the Web at [www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins.html). For more data, see "Spotlight Statistic," page 11.

## Pakistan Plans Further Cut in Population Growth

Pakistan, the sixth largest country in the world, has revised its goal for reducing population growth. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Pakistan, instead of trying to achieve a population growth rate of 2.1 percent by 2003, the government will work toward an even more ambitious 1.9 percent rate.

UN estimates put the population growth rate of Pakistan for 1995 to 2000 at 2.8 percent. That rate matches the average for Western Africa; the 1.9 percent goal would bring Pakistan in line with the average for South Central Asia and just above the 1.8 percent rate for Bangladesh, where family planning is practiced much more widely.

Since July, when Pakistan's military leader, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, declared that slowing growth was necessary for economic development, the government has proposed various measures to reduce population growth, including promoting in-

creased use of contraceptives, deploying more health workers in remote rural areas, and reforming the nation's Ministry of Population Welfare.

In a related development, the Pakistani government has launched a new national commission on the status of women. Education and reproductive health care are at the top of the commission's agenda.

## Australia to Restrict In Vitro Fertilization

In a move that has angered lesbians and gays, women's groups, and many others, Prime Minister John Howard has announced that the Australian government plans to amend federal legislation to prevent single women from obtaining in vitro fertilization (IVF).

Two states in Australia have enacted laws to block IVF for women who are not married or are not in stable partnerships with men. Those laws have been ruled inconsistent with a federal law on sex discrimination. The action that Prime Minister Howard proposes would change the federal law, allowing the states' measures to stand.

Howard justifies his involvement on the grounds that federal resources are made available through Medicare for IVF services. In defense of his position, he said: "Every child born in this world should have the expectation ... of the care and love of a mother and a father." ■

## Announcements

### Population Policy Communication Program

The Population Reference Bureau is accepting applications for the 2001-2002 Fellows Program in Population Policy Communication. The program, for developing-country researchers pursuing doctoral degrees in the United States and Canada, builds participants' skills in communicating their research findings to policy audiences. The deadline for apply-

ing is Jan. 12. For more information and application forms, contact Elizabeth Ransom (e-mail: [eransom@prb.org](mailto:eransom@prb.org)), or go to the PRB website: [www.prb.org/inside/jobinfo.htm#comfellow](http://www.prb.org/inside/jobinfo.htm#comfellow).

### UN Demographic Yearbook

The UN Statistics Division has just released a collection of basic demographic statistics in the *Demographic Yearbook, Historical Supplement 1948-1997*. The year-

book contains population and vital statistics for 229 countries for a 50-year period. For the first time, these statistics are available on CD-ROM.

For more information, contact the Demographic Statistics Section, UN Statistics Division, 2 UN Plaza—Room DC2-1516, New York, NY 10017; phone: 212/963-4972; e-mail: [statistics@un.org](mailto:statistics@un.org). ■

of nonparents? And if not all parents vote, will some children's interests be better represented than others'?

## Deciphering the Data

Since behavior exhibited in the last presidential election may be the best guide to what is likely to happen in the 2000 presidential election, this analysis is based on data from the presidential election of 1996. The November 1996 Current

these adults as parents, the truth is that children are more likely to influence the political behavior of parents living in the same household than of parents living elsewhere. Therefore the distinction between having children in the household (parents) and not having children in the household (nonparents) may be more critical than biological parenthood.

Most voters are not parents. Table 1 shows that, of the 105 million adults who voted in the 1996 presidential election, 71 million were adults without any children under age 18 in the household. Even if all of the 66 million parents had voted in the election of 1996, the nonparents who voted would have outnumbered them.

Not only do nonparents outnumber parents, but data also show that among all adults, nonparents register and vote at slightly higher rates than parents: 55 percent of nonparents reported voting in the 1996 presidential election, compared with only 52 percent of parents. Table 1 also shows that the 3 percentage-point differential in voter turnout between parents and nonparents parallels the difference in voter registration.

While these figures are useful because they reflect the voter turnout rate of parents compared with that of all other potential voters, the difference between parents and nonparents is largely due to age differences between the two groups. Most parents are in the 20-to-49 age range (60 million of the 66 million people defined here as parents), and Census Bureau data show that older people are more likely to vote than people ages 20 to 49.

If one looks only at citizens in the prime parental ages (20 to 49), the relationship between parenthood and voter turnout is the opposite of that found among all potential voters. Among citizens ages 20 to 49, 57 percent of parents reported voting in 1996, compared with only 50 percent of those without children at home. In other words, among those ages 20 to 49, parents voted at a significantly higher rate than others.

The major reason people give for not voting is time pressure, and the impact of time pressure is reflected in the interaction of political participation and family structure. Among citizens ages 20 to 49, 54 percent of parents who were part of a married couple voted in 1996, compared with only 43 percent of single parents. As a result, children in single-parent families are much less likely to have their interests represented than are those living in married-couple families. In addition to the added time pressure on single par-

TABLE 1

### Registration and Voting Among Parents\* and Nonparents in the 1996 U.S. Presidential Election

Level of Political Participation	Parents (65.7 million)	Nonparents (127.9 million)	All Adults (193.7 million)
<b>Registered</b>			
Number (in millions)	42.1	85.5	127.7
Percent	64%	67%	66%
<b>Voted</b>			
Number (in millions)	34.1	70.9	105.0
Percent	52%	55%	54%

\* Excludes parent(s) whose only child under 18 at home is the head of a subfamily.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 1996 Supplement.

Population Survey is used to tabulate voter registration and voter turnout rates for parents with children under age 18 at home, and these figures are compared with similar rates for adults with no children at home. While these figures are self-reported, and while some people falsely report that they voted when they did not, there is no reason to believe that these biases vary across groups.

In this analysis, adults with related children under age 18 in the household are referred to as "parents," and adults without any children under age 18 in their household are referred to as "nonparents" (a person whose only child at home is the head of a family is not included as a parent). Parents who have children over age 18 are not included in the definition of parents, since young children tend to exert the most influence on their parents' political choices and ability to register and vote.

It is also important to recognize that many parents do not live with their children. Data from the 1997 National Survey of America's Families indicate that only 61 percent of children live with both biological parents. Although the Current Population Survey does not allow us to identify

William P. O'Hare is coordinator of KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, in Baltimore, Md.

ents, the higher voter turnout among married parents is due in part to certain characteristics of married couples that are related to higher levels of political participation, such as higher income, higher education, and higher home ownership.

Because time constraints have a major impact on voter turnout, it seems likely that the number of children in a household may affect the propensity of a parent to vote. The more children parents have to take care of, the less likely they are to have time available to vote. But the data suggest that the relationship between the number of children in the household and voter turnout is more complex. Among citizen-parents ages 20 to 49, those with two children and those with three children were more likely to vote (59 percent for each group) than those with only one child at home (55 percent). But those with four or more children at home were least likely to vote (53 percent). Parents with two or three children may be somewhat older (in their 30s rather than their 20s), and that may explain why they have a higher rate of voting than parents with only one child; data show that people in the 25-to-44 age group were significantly more likely to vote than those in the 18-to-24 age group. Those with four or more children probably face the most time pressure.

### Socioeconomic Status

There is a strong relationship between socioeconomic status and voter turnout among parents. Table 2, which presents differences in turnout by income, education, and employment for adult citizens ages 20 to 49, shows that low-income parents vote at much lower rates than higher-income parents. About one-third of parents in the poorest families (annual income under \$10,000) voted. On the other hand, nearly three-quarters of parents in wealthier families (annual income above \$50,000 a year) voted. Clearly the interests of middle- and upper-income kids are reflected much better at the ballot box than are the interests of poor kids.

Table 2 also shows an important interaction between parenthood and income. Both nonparents and parents in the lowest income category voted at roughly the same rate (about 35 percent). In contrast, parents with annual incomes above \$50,000 voted at a higher rate than nonparents (74 percent for parents compared with 64 percent for nonparents).

Higher voter turnout is also linked with higher education. Parents who graduated from college are more than three times as likely to vote as parents who did not finish high school (79 percent for college graduates compared with

25 percent for high school dropouts).

While time pressure explains why some groups do not vote, it fails to explain why the voter turnout rate for parents who are unemployed (41 percent) is lower than the rate for the employed (59 percent). Presumably, those who are unemployed have more time available than those who work. One plausible explanation is that unemployed adults, particularly long-term unemployed, are—like low-income and less educated adults—apt to feel estranged from society. This feeling, often exacerbated by residing in isolated communities of concentrated poverty, may carry over to disengagement from civic life, including voting.

### What Would Help

The belief that children's political interests are reflected through the voting of their parents suggests that we need a more family-focused perspective on voter registration and voter turnout. While children have a political voice only through their parents, the data examined here clearly show that not all children are heard. In fact, only about half of today's children have a parent who votes, and the likelihood of having a parent who votes is closely connected with parents' socioeconomic status.

Some simple measures could be implemented to facilitate political participation among parents. Because parents are more likely to be constrained by time than nonparents, keeping polls open longer, putting them in more convenient locations, and providing easier access to absentee ballots may increase voter turnout among parents. ■

### WebExtra!

For data on parental voting by state and for related publications, go to [www.prb.org/pt/](http://www.prb.org/pt/) on PRB's website and click on this article.

TABLE 2

### Voter Turnout Rates of Parents and Nonparents\* by Socioeconomic Characteristics, 1996

	Percent Voting	
	Parents	Non-Parents
<b>Family Income</b>		
Under \$10,000	34	35
\$10,000 to \$19,999	37	37
\$20,000 to \$29,999	46	46
\$30,000 to \$39,999	54	51
\$40,000 to \$49,999	61	55
\$50,000 or more	74	64
<b>Education</b>		
Less Than High School	25	22
High School Graduate	46	39
Some College	64	53
College Graduate	79	69
<b>Employment Status</b>		
Employed	59	53
Unemployed	41	38
Not in Labor Force	49	39

\* Parents and nonparents who are adult citizens ages 20 to 49.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 1996 Supplement.

# Caribbean Faces AIDS Epidemic

by Tony Fraser

With the highest HIV prevalence rate of any region besides sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean has sprung into virus prevention and treatment mode. The Caribbean Meeting on HIV/AIDS, held in Barbados in September, highlighted governments' responses so far and brought together international organizations with the resources to coordinate and intensify action against the disease.

Donors and development agencies stepped up with pledges. The World Bank committed to provide \$100 million in funding. The European Union, the Canadian International Development Agency, and the United Kingdom Department for International Development promised another \$20 million in grants.

The funds are desperately needed. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimates that 360,000 persons are living with the virus in the Caribbean—a region that includes Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Suriname, and Haiti. The Caribbean

Epidemiological Centre (CAREC), which advises governments on policies to combat the disease in 21 countries, says the number of persons affected with HIV/AIDS is closer to 500,000 because of a high level of underreporting of the disease.

CAREC's most recent report on the spread of the disease in the Caribbean observes "an inexorable trend upward over the last decade." In the last four years, 8,399 AIDS cases have been reported in the Caribbean—a number similar to the known AIDS cases during the first 14 years of the epidemic in the region. In 1982, the virus was found exclusively in the homosexual population. Today, 64 percent of all AIDS cases are in the heterosexual population. Of particular concern to CAREC is the spread of the virus among women, especially those in the 15-to-25 age group.

A Caribbean Task Force on HIV/AIDS has identified a number of priorities for the region, including: the development of nondiscriminatory policies and legislation; care and support for infected persons, including access to basic and anti-retroviral drugs; and the targeting of high-risk groups (homosexual men, prostitutes, and youths) for counseling in safe-sex practices. ■

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Tony Fraser is a freelance writer based in Trinidad and Tobago.

## Reorganizing Labor *Continued from page 3*

domestic product in the nation's history (1991 to present)—has emboldened workers and their unions.

A number of successful strikes have helped create greater optimism among unionists. Among these was the 1997 strike by 180,000 United Parcel Service workers, which lasted several weeks and won most of the union demands. In 1998, 9,200 General Motors workers in Flint, Mich., forced the company to make major concessions by shutting down all of GM's North American operations, in a protest over workloads and staff levels. And in the fall of 1999, 11,500 members of the Detroit Teachers Federation overrode their elected leaders and engaged in a 10-day strike that forced the city to grant key

demands. This year Verizon workers struck and gained greater facility to organize the growing number of workers in wireless communications.

Unions also have won two high-profile campaigns in previously resistant areas. In 1999, the United Auto Workers organized Mexican Industries, a Detroit auto parts manufacturer that had successfully resisted unionization of its more than 4,000 workers. And in Kannapolis, N.C.—a company town that had blocked unions for decades—the Union of Needle Trade, Industrial, and Textile Employees organized 5,200 workers at Fieldcrest Cannon, the largest domestic textile manufacturer.

In a period of prosperity and low unemployment, how-

ever, unions might be expected to make bigger gains in both new organizing and wages than they have so far. Many unions are still reluctant to increase organizing, because it means shifting resources away from serving current members and reaching out to different demographic groups. The uncertainty associated with these changes threatens entrenched bureaucratic leaderships averse to taking risks.

As a result, the jury is still out on the prospects for U.S. unions. A key question for unions is whether they can improve their organizing to make breakthroughs in both traditional areas and the rapidly expanding, new service sectors. ■

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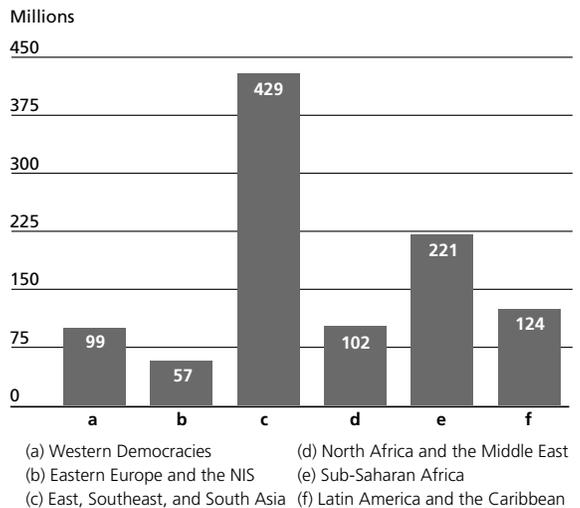
# Numbers You Can Use

Latest data and estimates

## Speaking Graphically

### Minorities at Risk of Ethnic Conflict, by World Region, 1998

Estimates in the accompanying figure come from a new book by Ted Robert Gurr—*Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (Washington, DC: The United States Institute of Peace, 2000). Gurr, the director of the Minorities at Risk project of the University of Maryland's Center for International Development, has developed a database on 275 politically active ethnic and other communal groups. He finds that, although there are hundreds of conflicts raging between identity groups or between such groups and governments, the overall trend for the mid- through the late 1990s is toward a decline in violence. (Ordering information for the book appears on the website of the United States Institute of Peace: [www.usip.org/pubs/catalog/pvs.html](http://www.usip.org/pubs/catalog/pvs.html). The project website is [www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar/](http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar/).)



## Estimated World Population

As of Oct. 2000 6,088,000,000  
Annual growth 82,000,000

Source: Extrapolated from the mid-2000 population on PRB's 2000 *World Population Data Sheet*.

## Estimated Population of the United States

As of July 1, 2000 275,372,000  
As of July 1, 1999 272,945,000

Source: From the U.S. Census Bureau, total monthly population estimates. Totals include armed forces overseas.

## U.S. Vital Stats

### 12 Months Ending With October

	Number		Rate	
	1999	1998	1999	1998
Live births . . . . .	3,931,000	3,940,000	14.4	14.6
Fertility rate . . . . .	—	—	65.3	65.9
Deaths . . . . .	2,351,000	2,340,000	8.6	8.7
Infant deaths . . . . .	27,000	27,300	6.9	6.9
Natural increase . . . . .	1,580,000	1,600,000	5.8	5.9
Marriages . . . . .	2,318,000	2,214,000	8.5	8.2
Divorces . . . . .	—	—	4.1	4.2

Note: Fertility rate is given per 1,000 women ages 15–44; infant deaths per 1,000 live births; other rates per 1,000 population. Number of divorces not available.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, *National Vital Statistics Reports* 48, no. 15 (2000).

## Spotlight Statistic

### Composition of the U.S. Population Without Health Insurance\*

Group	Number
Immigrant	9.5 million
Native	33.0 million

\*More than 42 million in the United States were uninsured in 1999. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Health Insurance Coverage: 1999," by Robert J. Mills, *Current Population Reports* P60-211 (Sept. 2000). For more information on this study, see "In the News," page 7.

## Sources of Voting Data

An ancient Indian fable tells of six blind men who, one by one, touch an elephant, surmise what it looks like based on what they feel, and come up with six different “big pictures,” none resembling an elephant. Researchers trying to interpret voting data for the United States encounter similar difficulties: The data come from a variety of sources, each with its own strengths and weaknesses, and they don't always agree.

The Federal Election Commission (FEC) obtains data on voter turnout for primaries and general elections for all federal offices, but not demographic or attitudinal data.

The U.S. Census Bureau asks questions on voting and registration in its November Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS asks nonvoters why they didn't vote and asks questions about region, race, Hispanic origin, sex, age, income, education level, and employment status.

National Election Studies (NES), from the Center for Political Studies at the University of Michigan, employ surveys that ask questions on region, race, sex, age, income, education level, employment status, union membership,

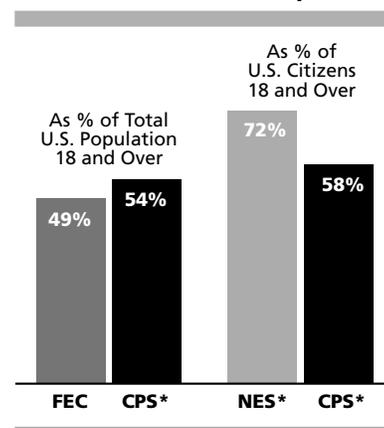
party affiliation, and ideology. The surveys also yield information on voters' perceptions about parties, partisanship, political values, and trust in government.

The Voter News Service collects data on voters as they are leaving the polls. The data provide an immediate snapshot of attitudes, opinions, and choices of different groups of voters.

The General Social Survey from the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago produces information on frequency of voting, ideology, partisanship, and voting behavior in past presidential elections. The biennial survey is conducted before an election takes place, with questions pertaining to the previous presidential election.

Official numbers of votes cast frequently disagree with the number of people who claim in surveys to have registered and voted (see figure). The numbers differ because of differences in how data are collected (whether surveys include a pre-election interview, as the NES surveys do) and in the populations sampled (including noncitizens, in the case of FEC data). Numbers also differ because of respondents' tendency to over-

## Voting in the U.S. Presidential Election, 1996



\*Civilian noninstitutional population only.

Sources: Federal Election Commission; U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Report, 1996*; National Election Studies, *The NES Guide to Public Opinion and Electoral Behavior, 1996*.

report (say they voted when they didn't). Also, FEC data refer to those who voted for the president in 1996, whereas the CPS and NES data in the chart refer to those who voted in the 1996 presidential and congressional election. ■

### WebExtra!

For more on sources, formats, and availability of data, go to [www.prb.org/pt/](http://www.prb.org/pt/) on PRB's website and click on this article.