

# Latino Demographics And Education in the U.S. Southwest

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According to the 2001 census, Latinos are the largest minority in the United States, with 35.3 million, or 13 percent, of the U.S.'s total 284.8 million inhabitants.<sup>1</sup> This is partly the result of a 57.9 percent growth rate in the Latino population from 1990 to 2000, a trend that will

continue for the next 20 years. The census classifies Latinos as an ethnic group, but also creates sub-categories by country of origin: 60 percent are of Mexican descent. These demographic changes will determine the future role that Latinos will play as leaders and workers, participants in the U.S. domestic and the world economies (see graph 1).

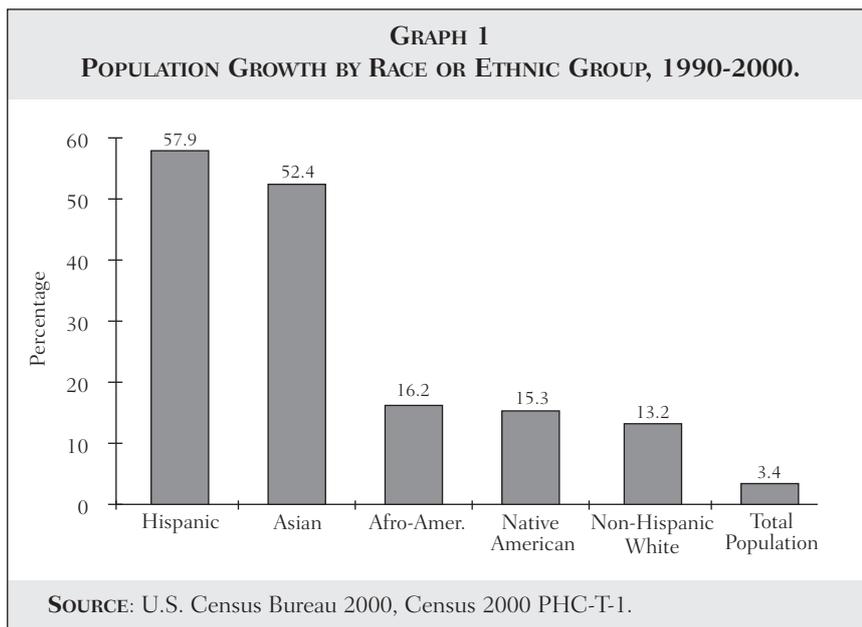
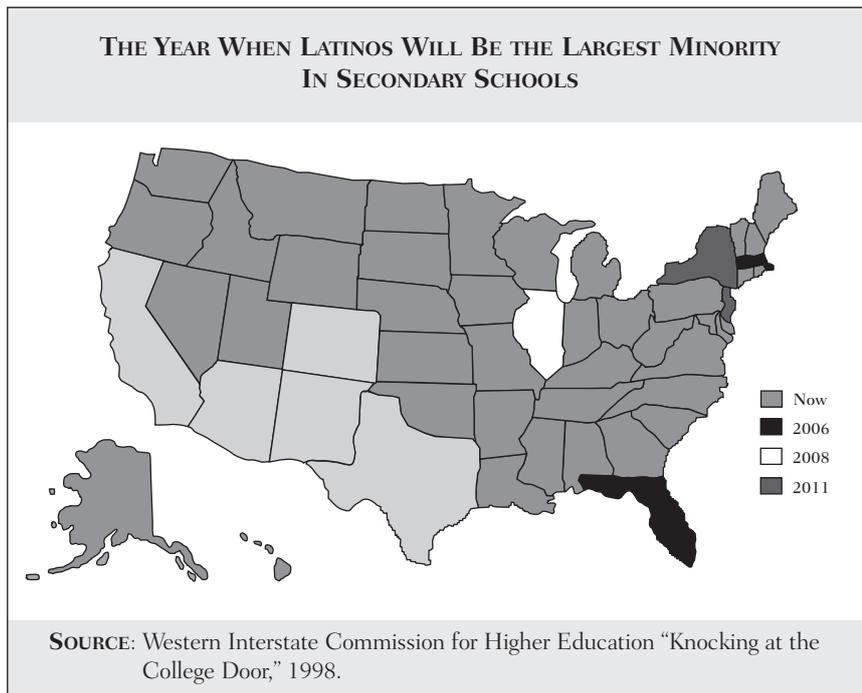
Seventy-nine percent of the Latinos in the U.S. live in seven states: Cal-

ifornia (10.9 million); Texas (6.6); New York (2.8); Florida (2.6); Illinois (1.5); Arizona (1.1) and New Jersey (one million).

Demographic change can also be seen in other figures: in 1900, 85 percent of U.S. immigrants came from Europe; by 2000, 51 percent were Latino.<sup>2</sup> The fertility rate (2.1) and the birth rate (95.1 percent) indicate that the growth will continue until this new generation “replaces” the previous one.<sup>3</sup>

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Considering age, Latinos are the youngest segment of U.S. population and they will remain the same way, at least until 2020 (see graph 2).

Today, Latinos make up 13 percent of the student body in primary schools and 23 percent in secondary schools. Projections state that by 2005, 38 per-

cent of students will be Latino, and by 2008, Latinos will be the largest minority among secondary school students (see map).<sup>4</sup>

Commission for Higher Education figures show that more than 325,000 Latinos finish high school every year. During the last decade, the number of

students that need to learn English increased 105 percent, since the number of immigrants enrolled in school systems was over 8.6 million (see graph 3).

These demographic changes have a significant impact on the Latinos' getting degrees at universities and community colleges, especially in the Southwest, where more than 50 percent of the Hispanic population is concentrated.

In 2002, of the 928,013 people awarded bachelor's degrees, 74,963, or eight percent, were Latinos. More than 59 percent of these were women. Of the 317,999 master's degrees given out, 19,093, or six percent, went to Latinos; of these, 11,550, or 60 percent, went to women. Of the 27,520 doctorates awarded, Latinos received 1,291, or 4 percent. Again, Latina women received a majority of this number, with 53 percent.

At professional schools (medicine, dentistry, veterinary, pharmacology, law, engineering and architecture), women received 45 percent of the 59,601 degrees granted, and Latinos, 6 percent, or 3,865, 45 percent of which, in turn, went to Latina women (see table 1).

Although the participation of Latinos in higher education continues to grow, it has still not reached a representative number compared to the minority's total population.

## THE SOUTHWEST

### TEXAS

In southwestern states like Texas, Latino children make up 51 percent of public kindergarten and primary school enrollment. They are 41 percent of all the state's students and projections say that by 2005, they will be the majority (see

**TABLE 1**  
**DEGREES AWARDED BY RACE AND ETHNIC GROUP**

	TOTAL	U.S. CITIZENS AND RESIDENT ALIENS					NON-RESIDENT
		AMERICAN INDIAN	ASIAN ALIENS	BLACK	HISPANIC	WHITE	
Associate							
Men	224,721	2,224	12,001	20,951	20,933	164,197	4,415
Women	340,212	4,270	15,763	39,230	30,608	244,311	6,030
Total	564,933	6,494	27,764	60,181	51,541	408,508	10,445
Bachelor's							
Men	530,367	3,459	35,789	36,972	30,255	402,368	21,524
Women	707,508	5,252	42,004	70,919	44,708	525,645	18,980
Total	1,237,875	8,711	77,793	107,891	74,963	928,013	40,504
Master's							
Men	191,792	829	10,853	11,093	7,543	126,522	34,952
Women	265,264	1,403	12,046	24,532	11,550	191,477	24,256
Total	457,056	2,232	22,899	35,625	19,093	317,999	59,208
Doctorate							
Men	25,028	56	1,329	863	603	14,241	7,936
Women	19,780	103	1,051	1,357	688	13,279	3,302
Total	44,808	159	2,380	2,220	1,291	27,520	11,238
Professional							
Men	44,239	285	4,368	2,312	2,095	33,982	1,197
Women	35,818	279	4,208	3,240	1,770	25,619	702
Total	80,057	564	8,576	5,552	3,865	59,601	1,899

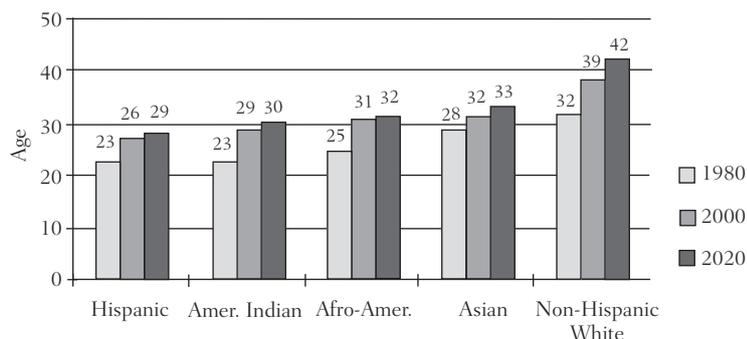
**SOURCE:** U.S. Department of Education.  
"The 2002-03 Almanac," The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2002.

**TABLE 2**  
**TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT (2001-2002)**

Grade	AFRO-A		LATINO		AM. IND.		ASIAN		ANGLO-S		SUB-TOTAL #	SUB-TOTAL %
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Early Education Pre-K & Kinder	67,935	14.32	242,288	51.06	1,528	.32	13,359	2.82	149,413	31.49	474,523	100
1st-6th	276,899	14.45	822,761	42.94	6,299	.33	51,362	2.68	758,960	39.61	1,916,281	100
7th-11th	223,727	14.45	595,894	38.50	4,374	.28	43,642	2.82	680,228	43.95	1,547,865	100
Senior	29,800	13.16	74,973	33.11	576	.26	7,877	3.48	113,205	50.00	226,431	100
<b>Totals</b>	<b>598,361</b>	<b>14.37</b>	<b>1,735,916</b>	<b>41.68</b>	<b>12,777</b>	<b>.31</b>	<b>116,240</b>	<b>2.79</b>	<b>1,701,806</b>	<b>40.86</b>	<b>4,165,100</b>	<b>100</b>

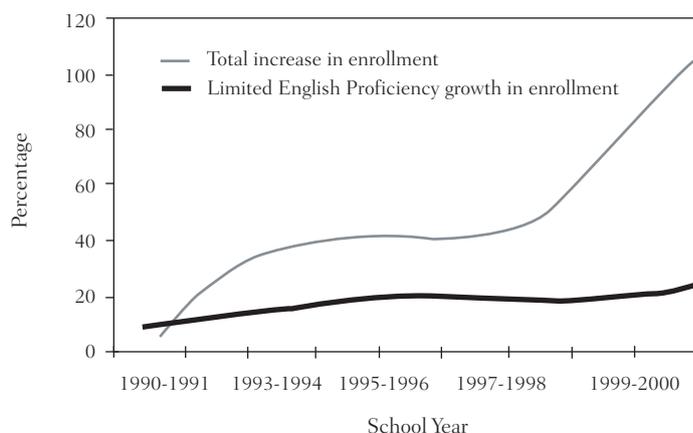
**SOURCE:** TEA, 2001.

**GRAPH 2  
LATINOS ARE YOUNGER**



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Census 2000.

**GRAPH 3  
STUDENTS WHO NEED TO LEARN ENGLISH**



SOURCE: THECB, 2001.

**TABLE 3  
ENROLLMENT IN TEXAS PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES  
BY ETHNIC GROUP (2002)**

ETHNIC GROUP	NUMBER ENROLLED	PERCENT
Anglo Saxon	245,639	55.9%
Latino	93,003	20.4%
Afro-American	48,271	10.6%
Asian	27,201	6.0%
American Indian	2,320	0.5%
International	26,684	5.8%
Unknown	3,600	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>455,718</b>	<b>100%</b>

SOURCE: THECB, 2001.

table 2). There are more than 93,000 Hispanics enrolled in Texas universities, or 20 percent of the total 455,718 students (see table 3).

In 2002, technical community colleges, which only offer the first two years of a bachelor's degree, enrolled 515,770 students. Of these, 129,308, or 29 percent, were Latinos. This is the same percentage as the overall Hispanic population in the state: 29.5 percent.<sup>5</sup>

ARIZONA

In Arizona, of a total public school population of 893,446 students in 2002, more than 33 percent, or 303,101, were Latinos. Over the last decade, Arizona's population grew from 3,665,228 in 1990 to 5,130,632 in 2000. Of this total, 1.3 million are Latinos, most young and of Mexican origin.

Of university students, 11 percent (12,407) of a total of 109,373 are Latinos, enrolled in the state's three public universities: Northern Arizona, Arizona State and the University of Arizona (see graph 4).

At the end of 2002, community and technical colleges had an enrollment of 183,104, 19 percent (35,357) of whom were Latino. These colleges are the first opportunity for Latino students interested in a bachelor's or technical degree.<sup>6</sup>

CALIFORNIA

California is the most highly populated state with 33,871,648 inhabitants, and the largest number of Latinos, with 10,966,556, or 32.4 percent.<sup>7</sup> Latinos make up 44.2 percent of public school enrollment, with 2,717,602 students. From 2001 to 2002, 33.7 percent

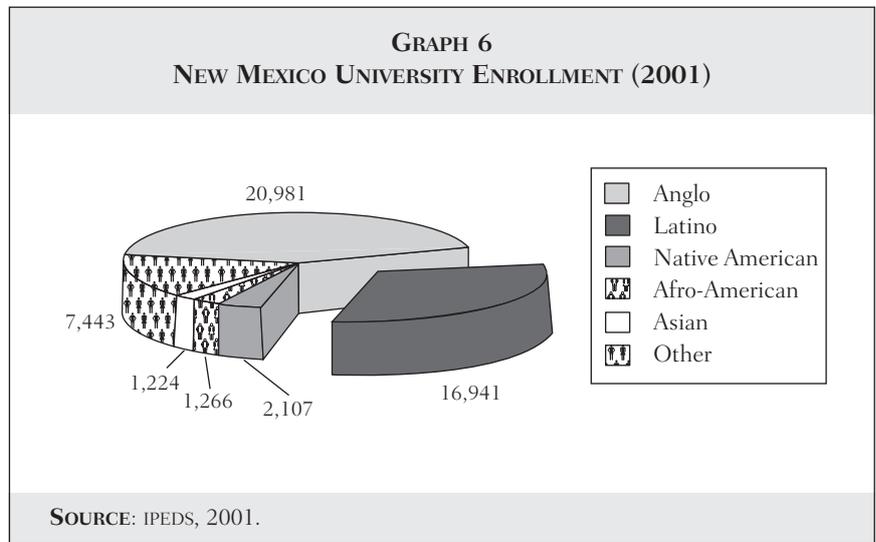
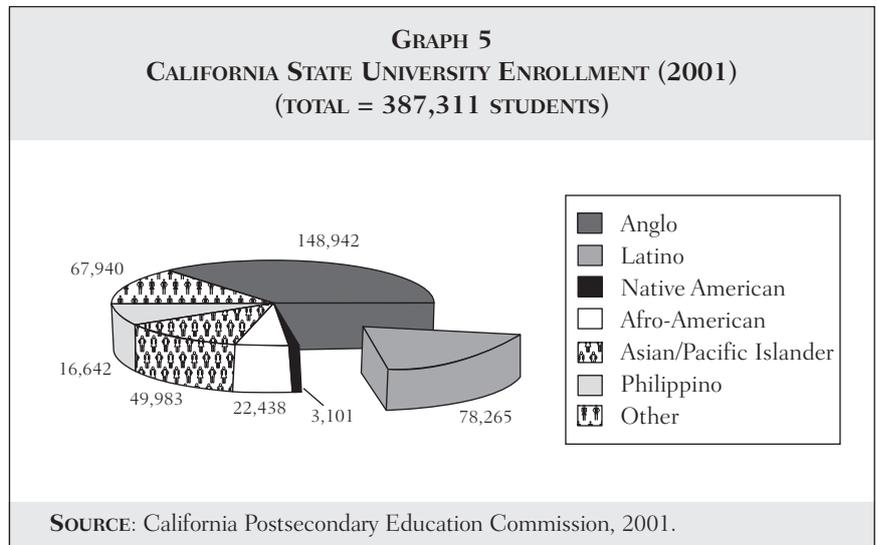
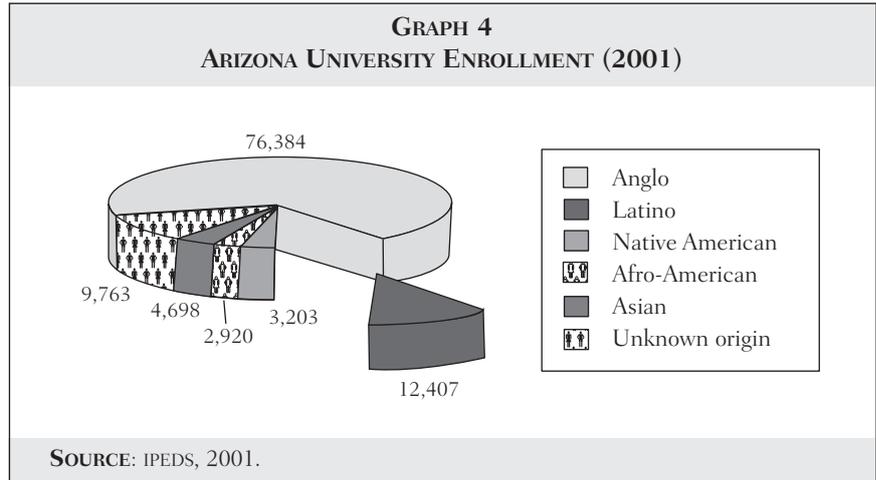
(98,644) of high school graduates were Latinos. This number continues to grow and by the end of this decade, the majority of those who finish high school in California will be Latinos.<sup>8</sup>

In the State University System, from 191,903 enrolled students, 21,836, or 11.1 percent, are classified as Latinos (see graph 5). With a total enrollment of 1,640,033 in California technical community colleges 440,436, or 26.8 percent, are Latino. The young Latino population continues to grow and the challenge for the state will be to increase their participation, investing in the development of public schools in order to increase these new generations of immigrants' capabilities to take advantage of all academic opportunities.

NEW MEXICO

New Mexico has 1,819,046 inhabitants, of whom 765,386, or 42.1 percent, are Latino. In 2001, 50.7 percent of the 318,035 students enrolled in public schools in the state were also Hispanic. Every year, more or less 17,000 students graduate from high school; of these 7,084, or 41.4 percent, are Latino.<sup>9</sup> In 2001, 49,962 students were enrolled in universities, of whom 16,941 (33.9 percent) were Hispanic (see graph 6).

Until the end of last year, technical community colleges in the state had an enrollment of 53,752, of whom 20,043, or 37.2 percent, were Latino. Given that Hispanic students are a majority in public schools and Latinos in general come to almost half of the population, participation continues to be high. However, these rates should increase to improve this group's capabilities and the state's economy.



CONCLUSION

Latinos:

- Have the highest birth and fertility rates.
- Estimated future growth rates surpass the current population.
- Have the fastest growing number of children enrolled in the Southwest's public school systems.
- Are the group with the largest young population, surpassing all other groups by a wide margin.
- Have high levels of participation in community colleges and technical schools.
- Have a low level of participation in the Southwest's universities and professional schools.
- Continue to be concentrated in seven states (79 percent). Half live

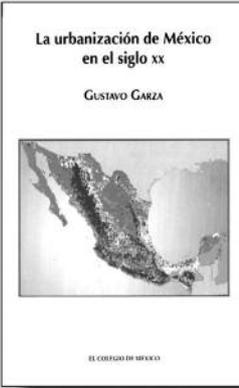
in the West, the majority in metropolitan areas.

School and academic systems must take into account language and community rules to create trust and more effectively incorporate Latinos. The effectiveness of public school education will determine performance in higher learning. At the same time, academic training will determine the economic, civic and leadership opportunities that Latinos will have in the U.S. Southwest. **MM**

NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Census, July 2001 at <http://www.census.gov/>
- <sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, CPA, March 2000.
- <sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *National Vital Statistics Reports* 40, no. 1 (17 April 2000) and *National Vital Statistics Reports* 49, no. 1 (17 April 2000), Table 4.
- <sup>4</sup> Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), "Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity," 1998, <http://www.wiche.edu/Policy/Knocking/>
- <sup>5</sup> Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), 2001, <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/>
- <sup>6</sup> Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2001, <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>
- <sup>7</sup> *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education Magazine*, 10 September 2001, <http://www.HispanicOutlook.com>
- <sup>8</sup> California Department of Education, 2001-2002, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/>
- <sup>9</sup> Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), op. cit.

## El Colegio de México

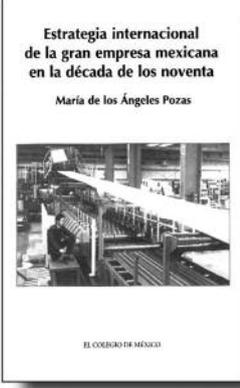


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