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*Latino Poverty and Immigration
in California and Orange County:
an analysis of household income in the 1990 census*

**Center for Research on Latinos in a Global Society
Working Paper No.1**

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ABOUT THE CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON LATINOS IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY

The goal of the Center for Research on Latinos in Global Society is two-fold: to examine the emerging role of Latinos as actors in global events (economic, political, and cultural) and to promote Latino scholarship, enhance the quality of research in Latino studies, provide a forum for intellectual exchange, facilitate the exchange of scholars, disseminate research findings, and promote the participation of graduate students in research on Latino issues. In addition, we anticipate that the research conducted by the Center's affiliated researchers will help guide policy makers in their decisions concerning a society with a growing Latino presence. California has become ethnically and linguistically more diverse than many countries in the world -- over a hundred languages are spoken in the public schools of Southern California alone. The research undertaken supported by the Center is expected to make a contribution towards the understanding of cultural, social, and political dimensions of demographic change such as that which has been occurring in California. Although this research will focus on the population of Latinos within California and the United States, it shall do so in the context of the U.S. in a global society.

*Latino Poverty and Immigration in California and Orange County:
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>TABLE OF TABLES</u>	III
<u>TABLE OF FIGURES</u>	III
ABSTRACT	IV
INTRODUCTION	1
OUTLINE AND METHODOLOGY	2
GROWING SOCIAL INEQUALITY	3
DEMOGRAPHIC AND BACKGROUND ISSUES	4
INCOME DISTRIBUTION	8
MEDIAN INCOME STATISTICS FOR THE U.S., CALIFORNIA, AND ORANGE COUNTY	13
POVERTY	16
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE	20
EMPLOYMENT	22
EDUCATION	24
MULTIPLE POVERTY "RISKS"	28
CONCLUSION	29
APPENDIX A:	33
DIMENSION OF POVERTY IN ORANGE COUNTY, 1968	33
ABOUT THE CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON LATINOS IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY	36

TABLE OF TABLES

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS IN POVERTY TN CALIFORNIA AND ORANGE COUNTY 1979, 1980	4
TABLE 2: COMPARATIVE PROFILE OF LATINO AND NON-LATINO POPULATIONS	8
TABLE 3: U.S. NATIVE & FOREIGN BORN MEDIAN FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD INCOMES, 1989	14
TABLE 4: PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS TN POVERTY TN CALIFORNIA & ORANGE COUNTY 1979 1989	16
TABLE 5: INCOME DISTRIBUTION BY HISPANIC ORIGIN AND NATIVITY	22
TABLE 6: JOB SECTOR DISTRIBUTION BY HISPANIC ORIGIN AND SEX	23
TABLE 7: POVERTY HIGH RISK FACTORS, FEMALES <25, BY RACE AND ETHNICITY: CA & OC	29

TABLE OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: CHANGE IN RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF ORANGE COUNTY.	7
FIGURE 2: QUINTILE DISTRIBUTION, BY RACE OF HOUSEHOLDER: CALIFORNIA 1989.	9
FIGURE 3: QUINTILE DISTRIBUTION, BY RACE OF HOUSEHOLDER: OC, 1989.	10
FIGURE 4: QUINTILE DISTRIBUTION, BY HISPANIC ORIGIN OF HOUSEHOLDER: CA, 1989.	11
FIGURE 5: QUINTILE DISTRIBUTION, BY HISPANIC ORIGIN OF HOUSEHOLDER: OC, 1989.	12
FIGURE 6: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, BY HISPANIC ORIGTN OF HOUSEHOLDER: CA, 1989.	15
FIGURE 7: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, BY HISPANIC ORIGIN OF HOUSEHOLDER: OC, 1989.	15
FIGURE 8: POVERTY OF PERSONS TN POVERTY, BY FOREIGN-BORN STATUS, SEX, AND RACE: CA	17
FIGURE 9: POVERTY STATUS OF PERSONS, BY FOREIGN-BORN STATUS, SEX, AND RACE: OC	18
FIGURE 10: POVERTY STATUS OF PERSONS, BY FOREIGN-BORN STATUS, SEX, AND HISPANIC ORIGIN: CA	19
FIGURE 11: POVERTY STATUS OF PERSONS, BY FOREIGN-BORN STATUS, SEX, AND HISPANIC ORIGIN: OC	19
FIGURE 12: SELECTED LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF THE POOR BY HISPANIC ORIGIN: OC	20
FIGURE 13: PUBLIC ASSISTANCE BY IMMIGRNT STATUS: OC	21
FIGURE 14: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF NATIVE BORN PERSONS BY RACE: CA	24
FIGURE 15: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF NATIVE BORN PERSONS BY RACE: OC	25
FIGURE 16: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF FOREIGN BORN BY RACE: CA	26
FIGURE 17: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF NATIVE BORN BY HISPANIC ORIGTN: OC	27
FIGURE 18: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF FOREIGN BORN BY HISPANIC ORIGIN: OC	28

***Latino Poverty and Immigration in California and Orange County:
an analysis of household income in the 1990 census***

ABSTRACT

Descriptive statistics of the 1990 Census Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS) 5% file and published data is analyzed to examine income and poverty variables of Latinos in California and Orange County. The study aims: 1) to describe the trends of income distribution, and the trends in the growth of poverty, for the general population and the Latino population in California and Orange County; 2) to assess the importance of immigration in the growing poverty of Latinos in Orange County; and 3) to disaggregate the "Hispanic" category so as to make comparisons among different Latino ethnic groups and thus qualify the conclusions one might draw from a total category of Latinos in the state and county.

The analysis reveals the heterogeneity of the Latino population and the obfuscation inherent in a Hispanic aggregate category. More Latinos were living in or near poverty in 1989 than other ethnic groups but among Latinos those of Mexican and Central American descent were far worse-off than other Latino ethnic groups. Latinos of South American, Cuban, and Puerto Rican origin in Orange County were found to have socio-economic characteristics more similar to non-Hispanics than Latinos of either Mexican or Central American origin which more likely to suffer from poverty than other racial and ethnic groups. In addition, the analysis demonstrated the greater risk of poverty for women as compared to men and the foreign-born compared to the native born which are in part a result of class related variables such as educational attainment.

an analysis of household income in the 1990 census

Orange County, which has so quickly been transformed from a quiet rural environment into a booming urban metropolis, is just beginning to recognize the existence of pockets of poverty in its midst. However, those of us who live in Orange County are fortunate. we still have an unequalled opportunity to avoid much of the strife that is plaguing other urban communities. The sharp lines between the "haves" and "have-nots" are not as clearly drawn, and little time still remains for constructive remedial action.

- Dr. Daniel G. Aldrich,
Jr.
Chancellor, University of California, Irvine
Opening Address, "Poverty in Orange County" Conference, June 1968

Introduction

In the course of the Johnson administration's "War on Poverty," in 1968 community leaders, scholars, public servants, and concerned citizens convened at newly built campus of the University of California, Irvine to discuss the issue of "Poverty in Orange County."¹ Having recognized "the existence of pockets of poverty in [their] midst" the attendees hoped to strategically attack the problem of poverty in Orange County which was a barrier to their vision of the "Great Society. The "pockets of poverty" which were of particular concern to the attendees in 1968 were twenty tracts in the county (see appendix A), 75 percent of which had "a higher than average percentage of Negro and/or Mexican-American populations" and were located in the general proximity to the cities of Santa Ana, Garden Grove, and Fountain Valley (University of California, Irvine, 1968).

Nearly thirty years later poverty in Orange County may still be described, at least in comparison to other areas of the country, as existing in pockets among the affluence for

¹"Poverty in Orange County" was a one day conference held at the UC Irvine campus June 8, 1968 that was attended by over 1,200 people (UCI 1968).

which the county is known. However, poverty is a much more common and visible characteristic of the county than it was in 1968 and even more so among the county's Latino population

Outline and Methodology

This report has three aims: 1) to describe the trends of income distribution, and the trends in the growth of poverty, for the general population and the Latino population in California and Orange County; 2) to assess the importance of immigration in the growing poverty of Latinos in Orange County; and 3) to disaggregate the “Hispanic” category so as to make comparisons among different Latino ethnic groups and thus qualify the conclusions one might draw from a total category of Latinos in the state and county.

The first section of the paper briefly discusses national socio-economic trends and then takes a closer look at the socio-economic picture of California and Orange County. The section includes a brief demographic and contextual sketch of the social location of Latinos in the United States, California, and Orange County. The next section focuses on the socio-economic condition of Latinos in California and Orange County. In this section we examine how Latinos differ by ethnic origin and nativity (Le. whether they are native or foreign born) across various dimensions of social inequality and poverty such as income, employment, education, and gender.

Analysis is primarily based on the 1990 Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS) 5% file of the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Descriptive statistics such as cross-tabulations and frequency Inns of household data were computed across variables such as race, ethnicity, sex, occupation, income, poverty, public assistance and living arrangements. In addition, statistics

are drawn from published reports of the U.S. Bureau of the Census and other federal, state, and county agencies as well as other archival resources.

Growing Social Inequality

In *The State of Working America: 1994-95*, Mishel and Bernstein report an alarming trend of growing social and economic disparities among Americans. In summary, 'Mishel and Bernstein's analysis of a variety of data revealed that while the wealth and incomes of the richest 20% of families grew (receiving 46.2% of all income²) the median family income in 1993 had fallen \$2,737 below 1989 levels. Despite the political rhetoric of a growing American economy, Mishel and Bernstein demonstrate that Americans were working longer hours for less pay. Also a growing number of Americans were working in either temporary or part-time positions with few if any of the work "benefits" that many Americans had taken for granted in earlier times. Thus, while the American economy has grown and the upper echelon (i.e. the upper 20%) of American society has prospered a majority of Americans (the other 80%) have met with economic hardship leading Mischel and Bernstein to argue that, "the particular structure of economic growth over the 1980s and early 1990s has severed the historic link between growth and falling poverty" (1994:7). While Mishel and Bernstein report that poverty rates have increased for all Americans, irrespective of race, U.S. Latinos have been particularly impacted: Latino poverty rates have risen consistently from 21.8% in 1979 to 30.6% in 1993.

While these general national trends are important, this paper examines these economic trends for California and Orange County in particular. As Table 1 shows,

² Mischel and Bernstein report that, "this is the largest share recorded for that group since data collection began in 1947" (1994:3).

Latinos (at the individual not household level) have suffered from poverty to a greater extent than non-Latinos at both state and county levels. Furthermore, Latino poverty increased between 1979 and 1989 by 2.5 % at the state level and 3.9% in Orange County even as it declined by .1% and .9% for non-Latinos at those respective levels. In addition, while Latino poverty is almost double *that* of non-Latinos in California, it is more than three times that in Orange County in 1989.

Table 1: Percentage of Persons in Poverty in California and Orange County 1979, 1989

	Year	Total	Non-Hispanic	Hispanic
California	1979	11.4%	9.5%	19.1%
	1989	12.5%	9.4%	21.6%
Orange County	1979	7.7%	6.6%	14.7%
	1989	8.7%	5.7%	18.6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. *1990 Census of Population: Persons of Hispanic Origin in the United States*. (August 1993), 1990 CP-3-3: 153-190.

Clearly then, Latino poverty in California and Orange County *had* been persistent. As those who gathered *at* UCI in 1968 feared, despite the county's overall prosperity, Latino poverty in Orange County *has* remained a serious social problem and has increased over time. Before relating these outcomes to economic variables, however, it is necessary to analyze demographic and background issues.

Demographic and Background Issues

Latinos represent a growing proportion of the United States' diverse ethnic composition. In 1993 the "The Hispanic³ origin" population was approximately 8.9 percent of the population (22.8 million people) and is estimated to be 14.7 percent (or 47 million) by the year

³The U.S. Bureau of the Census uses the term Hispanic to refer to people whose ancestry is from

2020 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1993, Enchautegui 1995). Of the 22.8 million who comprise the Hispanic origin population approximately 64.3 percent were Mexican, 10.6 percent were Puerto Rican, 4.7 percent were Cuban, 13.4 percent were Central and South American and 7.0 percent were "Other Hispanic"⁴ (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1993). Although the Latino population is growing in many states, it is geographically concentrated in *California* (which has the largest Hispanic population of any state), Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas.

California seems to epitomize the immigrant myth of "the land of milk and honey" and the diversity of the state's population is testimony to past migrant waves. Since 1970, California has undergone a significant demographic transformation. For instance, from 1990-91 to 1993-94 the state's growth rate declined from 2.07% to 0.87% with a net loss due to net migration of 212,000 "White" residents from California from 1992 to 1994 alone. At the same time, the state's Hispanic population grew by a yearly average of 235,800 by "natural increase"⁵ only" (i.e. not including migration). By 2025 the Bureau of the Census projects that Hispanics will comprise approximately one quarter of the state's population while the non-Hispanic white population will decline to less than half at approximately 43 percent (State of California, Dept. of Finance 1996; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1994).

Between 1990 and 1995, the average number of *legal* foreign migrants to the state per year was 206,211⁶ with Los Angeles, Orange, and Santa Clara counties being the top three

Spanish speaking countries. The terms Latino and Hispanic will be used interchangeably in this paper.

⁴The term "other Hispanic" refers to persons whose origins are from "Spain, or they are Hispanic persons identifying themselves generally as Hispanic, Spanish, Spanish-American, Hispano, Latino, and so on" (Montgomery, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993).

⁵ "Natural increase" is a demographic term which refers to the excess of births over deaths and therefore does not include migration which will be discussed in a later section of this paper.

⁶This number does not include immigration and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) immigrants.

receiving counties in the state⁷ (State of California, Dept. of Finance 1996). According to Census data (1990 PUMS 5% File), immigrants comprise 23.6 percent of Orange County's population compared to the native born population but 52.5 percent of Orange County's Hispanic population are immigrants.

Orange County is a 782 square mile area located in Southern California between Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Diego counties. With 2,410,556 inhabitants counted in the 1990, Orange County is the fifth largest county in the nation and the fifth largest growing county in the state. Well known for its tourist industry (including Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, and beach cities), Orange County is a

home to numerous multinational increasingly diverse population.

County⁸ include services (30.5%), (25%), and Manufacturing (18%)

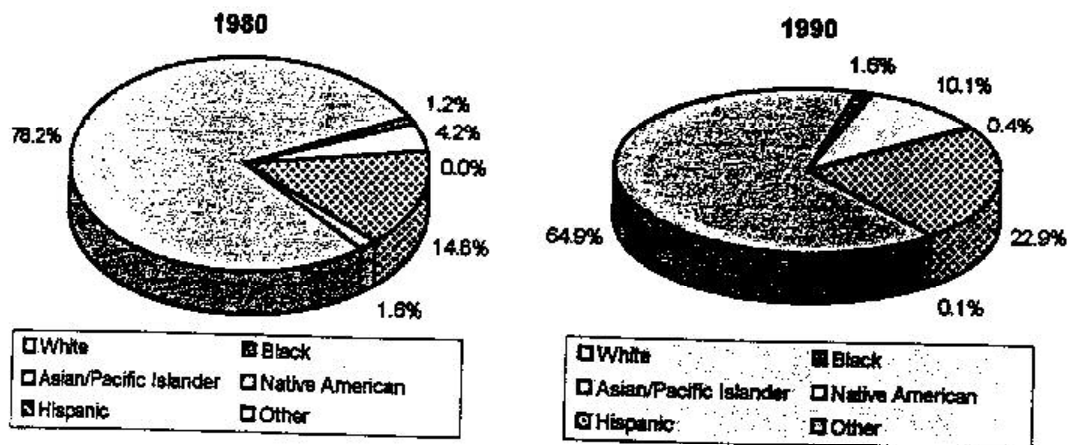
1 (below) demonstrates how much Orange County has changed in a County's population remains less



prosperous area that is businesses with an Key industries in Orange Wholesale and Retail (Focus OC 1997). Figure the ethnic composition in decade. Although Orange diverse than other

metropolitan areas in California, such as Los Angeles or San Francisco, the ethnic composition of the county has changed dramatically since 1980.—most notably in the proportion of those in the Asian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic categories. A diverse population with all its people positive dimensions, does not necessarily mean, however, that economic prosperity is an equally shared attribute.

⁷ For the 1990-95 period the counties received as follows: Los Angeles (475,577 or 38.4%), Orange (115,756 or 9.4%), and Santa Clara.



(98,559 or 8.0%). The state total for this period was 1,237,263.

Figure 1: Change in Racial and Ethnic Composition of Orange County.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file.

Table 2 provides a comparative profile of Latinos and Non-Latinos in the United States, California, and Orange County in 1990. Several points are particularly noteworthy. First, Latinos tend to have larger families and households with children and subfamilies (i.e. more than one family per household) but a smaller percentage of households with elderly members (due to the relative youth of the Latino population compared to non-Latinos). Second, while a greater percentage of non-Latino households have two workers than do Latino households, a far greater percentage of Latino households have three or more workers per household. And third, the values for Latino characteristics in Orange County are greater than those at the national at state level (with the exception of the percentage of households with elderly members).

⁸Estimates are for January **1997** and percentages are proportions of county employment

7

Table 2: Comparative Profile of Latino and Non-Latino Populations

Characteristic	United States		California		Orange County	
	Latino	Non-Latino	Latino	Non-Latino	Latino	Non-Latino
Mean household	4.6	3.4	4.01	2.54	4.45	2.59
Mean family size	3.9	3.1	3.53	2.04	3.78	2.1
% of HH with children	58.1%	31.4%	62.4%	32.6%	63.7%	32.3%
% of HH with elderly	14.3	22.6%	12.6%	24.3%	9.5%	21.0%
% of HH with subfamilies	6.9%	2.1%	8.2%	2.5%	9.8%	2.3%
<i>Number of workers per HH:</i>						
% with 1 worker	31.6%	27.9%	30.6%	28.2%	25.6%	25.9%
% with 2 workers	39.6%	45.7%	39.9%	45.8%	43.0%	49.9%
% with 3 or more workers	17.4%	12.9%	21.1%	12.3%	27.0%	15.2%

Source: Enchautegui 1995, and estimates calculated from U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990 PUMS 5% file.

By themselves these figures are merely descriptive, but they do reveal a striking pattern.

Though Orange County is one of the most affluent counties in the nation, Latino households are larger than Latino households in California, have more children than Latino or non-Latino households in other categories, and are more likely to have three or more workers. Orange County households are also less likely than others to have elderly persons.

Income Distribution

When we examine household income distribution by quintiles, that is, household income broken into fifths (or 20%), as Mishel and Bernstein (1994) did at the national level; we get a glimpse of income equity (or disparity) at the state and county levels⁹.

⁹ Quintiles are derived from state household income statistics and are used as the standard for both the

Figure 2 is a quintile distribution of household income by the race of the householder for California in 1989 constructed from the 1990 Census PUMS 5% file. Since 20 percent of the nation's households can be found in each category, deviations from 20 percent in figure 2 tell us what the relative concentration of households is in California and Orange County for each of these state quintiles. More than 20 percent of the state's white and Asian households earn over \$64,675, while only 10.2 percent of Hispanics' do (Black and "Other" households are similar). About half, 50.8 percent, of California Hispanics are in the lower 40 percent of household income (less than \$28,800).

Quintile Distribution, by Race of Householder: California, 1989

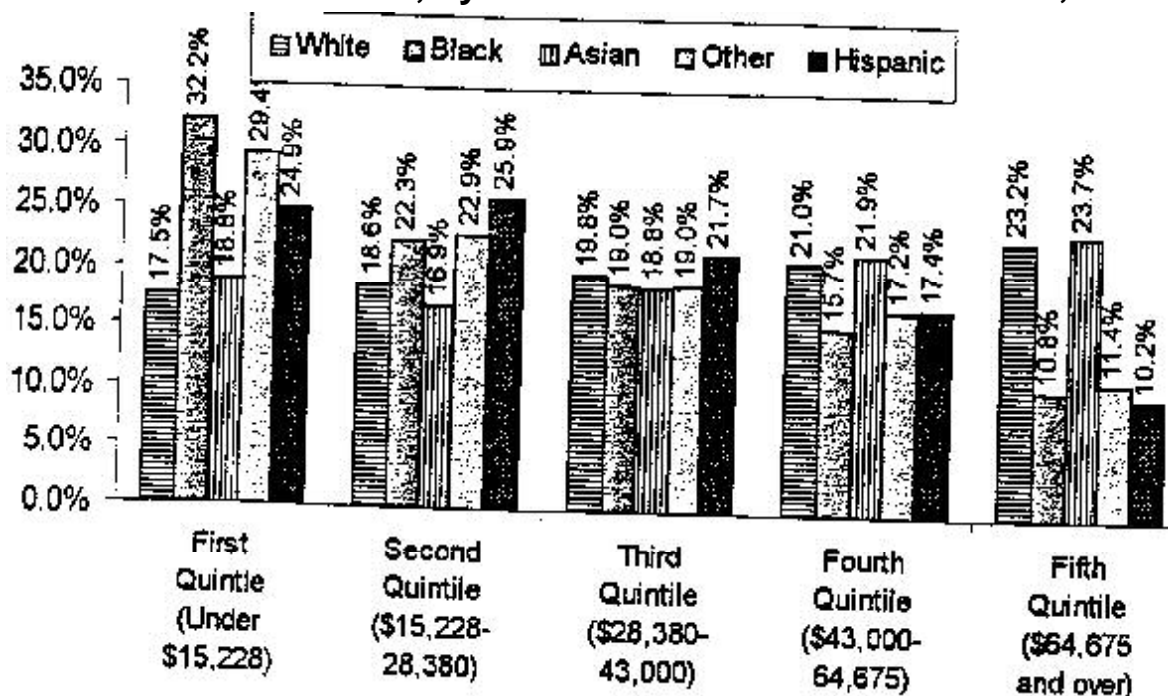


Figure 2: Quintile Distribution, by Race of Householder: California 1989. (Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file).

A similar examination of household income distribution in Orange County (Figure 3) shows that a greater percentage of households, irrespective of race, are in the upper quintile.

state and county.

However, while nearly one-fourth of White and Asian households are in this category only 15.2 percent of Latino households are so placed. Also note that there is an approximate increase of

**Quintile Distribution, by Race of Householder:
Orange County, 1989**

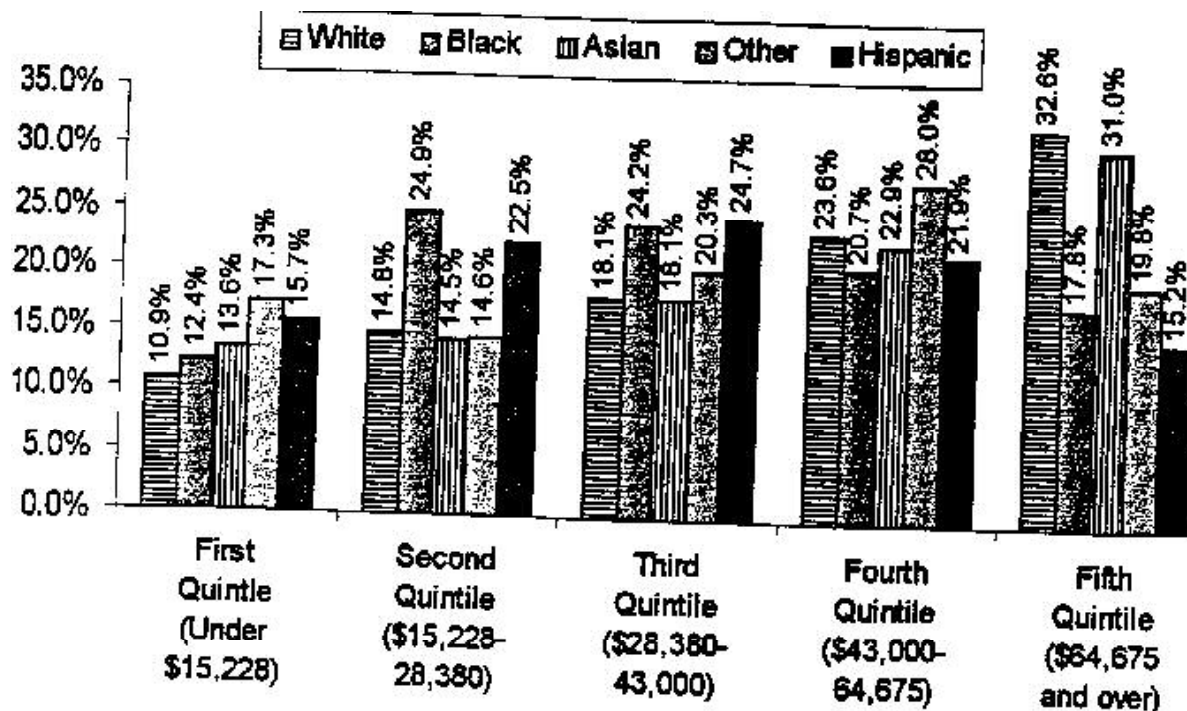


Figure 3: Quintile Distribution, by Race of Householder: OC, 1989.
(Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file).

ten percent for Asian and White households while the percentage of Latino households in the upper quintile increase by only five percent. An inverse relationship is found in the lowest quintile where there is a lower percentage of households making less than \$15,228, irrespective of race, compared to state levels. Yet in Orange County, a greater percentage of Latinos fall in this category than other racial groups (with the exception of “other”).

Quintile Distribution, by Hispanic Origin of Householder: California, 1989

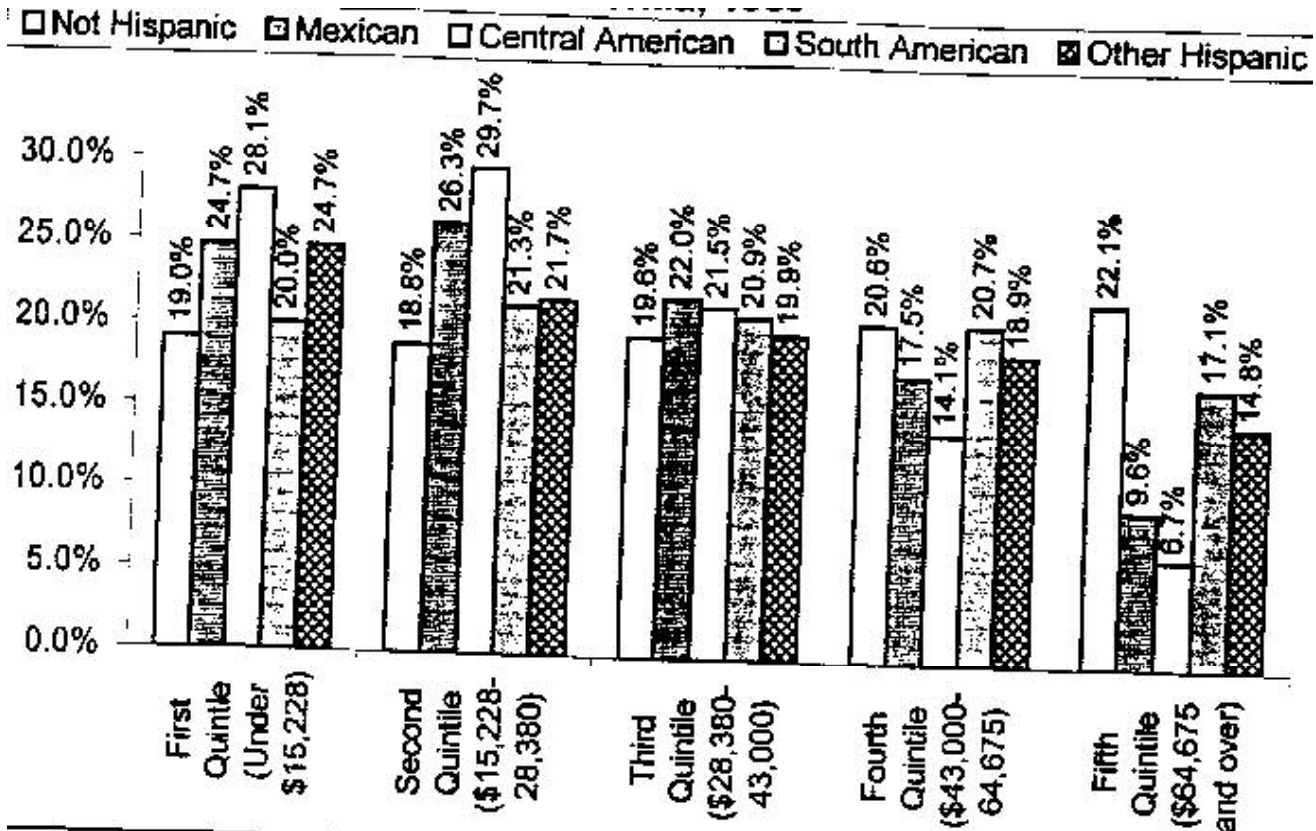


Figure 4: Quintile Distribution, by Hispanic Origin of Householder: CA, 1989.

(Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file).

Figures 4 and 5 present distributions of household income for California and Orange County respectively by State quintile income interval. Note the differences between the quintile distributions for non-Hispanics in California and Orange County. While non-Hispanic income is pretty evenly distributed among income quintiles in California, in Orange County it rises progressively so that more than half of non-Hispanic household income is in the upper 40 percent of the county's income distribution and nearly one-third is in the top 20 percent.

In comparison, Mexican and Central Americans household income has a declining pattern

Quintile Distribution, by Hispanic Origin of Householder: Orange County, 1989

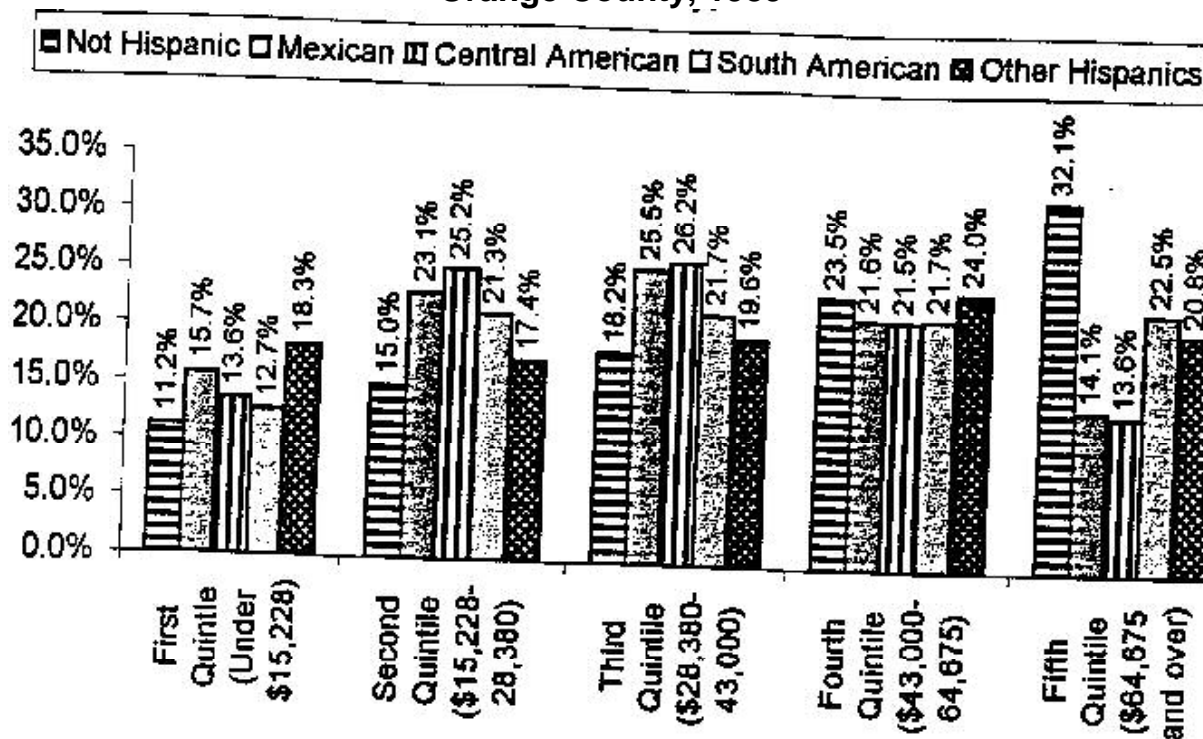


Figure 5: Quintile Distribution, by Hispanic Origin of Householder: OC, 1989.

(Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file).

(with greater distribution in the lower 40 percent) and a more central distribution in Orange County keep in mind that this still means that approximately 65% of Mexican and Central Americans *households earn* less than \$43,000).¹⁰ With the exception of the first quintile distribution (a greater percentage of these subgroups are found in the first quintile at the state level than compared to Orange County), South Americans and “other Hispanics” have similar distributions at both the state and county level.

¹⁰It is important to note that part of the non-Hispanic differences at state and county levels are due to Orange County's relatively small African-American population and larger White population. However, Orange County's *Asian* population is approximately the same as that of the state. In order to better understand how these populations compare to those of Hispanic origin it is necessary to disaggregate both

the non-Hispanic category and the Asian/Pacific Islander populations (which have an greater income variance than Latino subgroups).

12

While these statistics demonstrate some important economic differences between Latinos and non-Latinos, they are too general to draw new conclusions. While these statistics do help to illustrate how poverty affects "Hispanics" as a group, the "Hispanics" category is problematic in that Hispanics of different national background have varying levels of incidence of poverty (Aponte 1991, 1993). It is important then to examine socio-economic variables by Latino ethnic groups to investigate these differences. Furthermore, it is important to examine how native-born Latinos compare to Latino immigrants in the U.S., especially in light of the tremendous backlash against Latino immigrants in the recent past. In the following sections we examine median income statistics, poverty rates and variables commonly linked to poverty such as educational attainment, type of employment, and gender by Latino. In each section we look at differences not only among Latino subgroups but also between native and foreign-born Latinos.

Median Income Statistics for the U.S., California, and Orange County

The growing trend of social and economic disparities in the United States has left many Latinos in a situation where, as Arturo Vargas (director of the National Association of Latino Elected Officials) put it, "It is the American nightmare, not the American dream" (NY Times 1/30/97). As Table 3 demonstrates, both native and foreign born "Hispanics" in the United States have a significantly lower median income than non-Hispanics. However, when the "Hispanic" category is disaggregated it becomes clear that not all Hispanics share this burden of economic disparity. Latinos of Mexican ancestry (both native and foreign born) have median incomes well below that of non-Hispanics (\$4,987 less for native born households and \$9,670

for foreign born households) and those of South American ancestry which in turn are even higher. South American household incomes for the native born are \$1,012 higher than the national average for native born households, while the foreign born household is \$2,318 greater than the average foreign-born American household.

<i>U.S. Native and Foreign Born Median Family and Household Incomes, 1989</i>		Total	Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Mexican	Central American	South American
Native Born	Family	\$35,898	\$35,898	\$26,164	\$26,766	\$33,671	\$36,389
	Household	\$30,706	\$30,383	\$24,585	\$25,396	\$31,472	\$31,718
Foreign Born	Family	\$31,785	\$38,539	\$23,900	\$21,658	\$23,141	\$31,890
	Household	\$28,314	\$31,583	\$23,723	\$21,913	\$24,251	\$30,632

Table 3: U.S. Native & Foreign Born Median Family and Household Incomes, 1989

Source U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1990 *Census of Population: Persons of Hispanic Origin in the United States*. (August 1993), 1990 CP-3-3: 153-190.

At the state level, Figure 6 depicts a similar outcome; households headed by persons of South American ancestry fare better than those headed by those of other Hispanic origin groups. Central Americans fare worse in California than at the national level, with median incomes \$10,432 less than non-Hispanics (and \$3,412 less than the Hispanic aggregate). Finally, Californians of Mexican ancestry have a median household income \$7,020 less than that of non-Hispanics.

At a glance, Latinos in Orange County fare better than at the state level (Figure 7). However, compared to the median income of non-Hispanics (in the county the median income is \$13,760 less for the Mexican category (nearly double the state levels), \$12,674 less for Central Americans, and even \$7,760 less for South Americans.

¹¹The median household income *for* the Hispanic aggregate in Orange County in **1990** was \$45,200.

Median Household Income, by Hispanic Origin of Householder: California, 1989

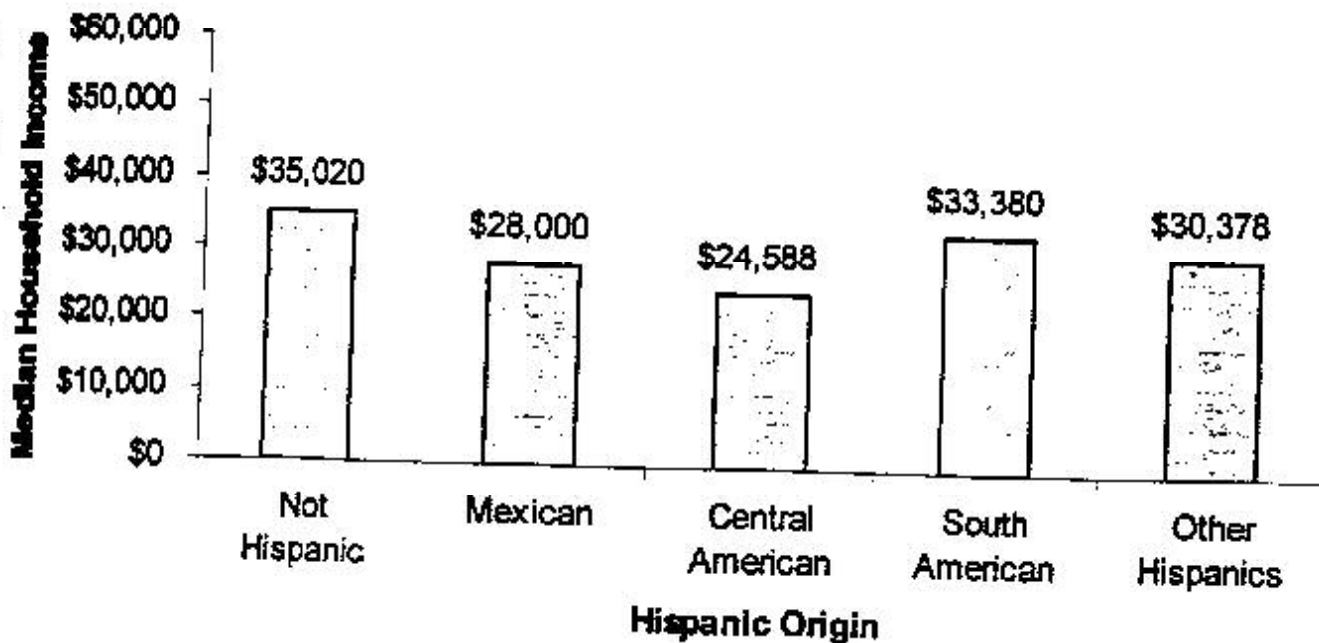


Figure 6: Median Household Income, by Hispanic Origin of Householder: CA, 1989.
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file.

Median Household Income, by Hispanic Origin of Householder: Orange County, 1989

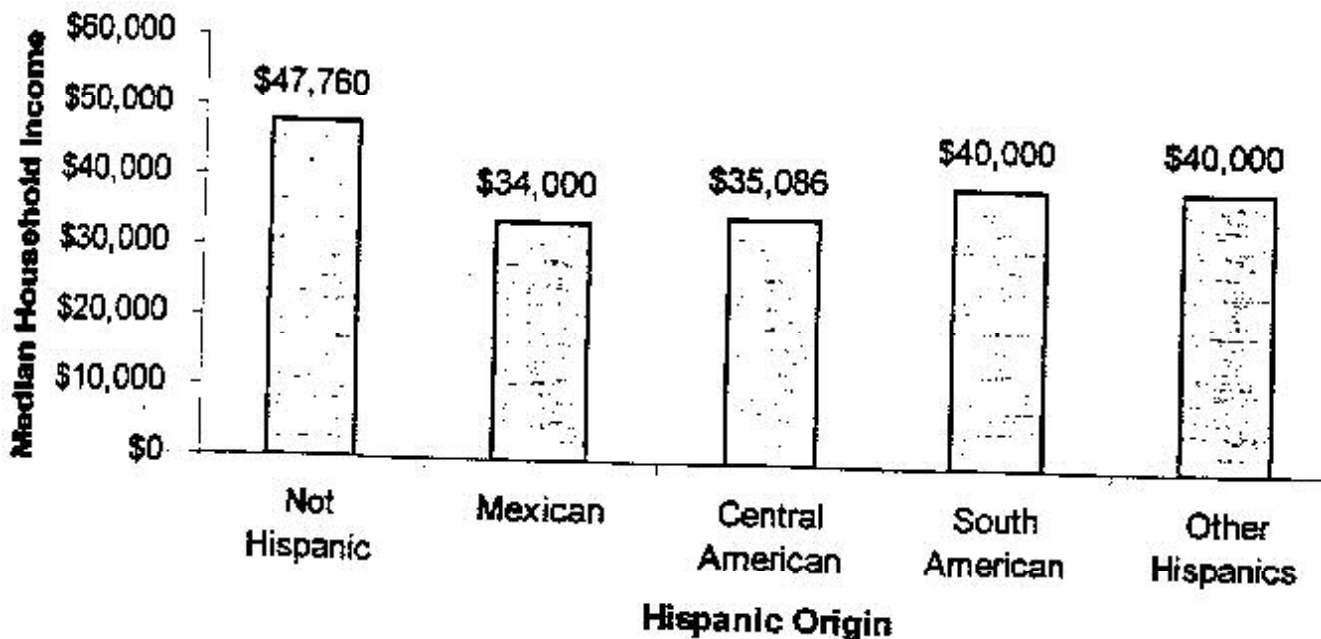


Figure 7: Median Household Income, by Hispanic Origin of Householder: OC, 1989.
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file.

Poverty

In 1990, 28.1 percent of "Hispanic origin" respondents to the census were living below the poverty level while constituting only 8.8 percent of the population in the United States. Broken into subgroups, 29.6% of Puerto Rican families were living in poverty compared to 23.4% of Mexican families in 1989. However, although Puerto Ricans have an unfortunately long history of being one of the most impoverished groups in the United States these 1989 rates marked an actual *decrease* of 3.8% for Puerto Ricans while increasing 2% for Mexicans.

Similarly, when we examine poverty rates (for individuals) in California and Orange County, as in Table 4 below, it is really apparent that Hispanics have a greater poverty rate than both poverty rates for non-Hispanics and the general population at both state and county levels. In addition, while poverty rates declined modestly for non-Hispanics by .1% in California and .9% in Orange County they increase for Hispanics by 2.5% and 3.9% at state and county levels respectively.

	Year	Total	Non-Hispanic	Hispanic
<i>California</i>	1979	11.4%	9.5%	19.1%
	1989	12.5%	9.4%	21.6%
<i>Orange County</i>	1979	7.7%	6.6%	14.7%
	1989	8.7%	5.7%	18.6%

Table 4: Percentage of Persons In Poverty In California & Orange County 1979, 1989

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. *1990 Census of Population: Persons of Hispanic Origin in the United States*. (August 1993), 1990 CP-3-3: 153-190.

Census data analysis reveals that, in 1989, 32 percent of the Hispanic population in Orange County *was living below or near* the poverty level compared to 7.3 percent of Whites. Yet again a closer examination reveals that this figure is more representative of Mexicans

(33.6%) and Central Americans (36.8%) than Cubans (19.4%), Puerto Ricans (16.3%), and South Americans (17.2%). At this juncture, it is important to further disaggregate these statistics by looking at two more important factors: sex and nativity.

Figures 8 and 9 are bar graphs which demonstrate poverty distributions by nativity, race, and sex in California and Orange County in 1989. The data demonstrate something we already know: immigrants (Le. foreign-born persons) are more likely to suffer from poverty than the native born and women are more likely to suffer from poverty than men.

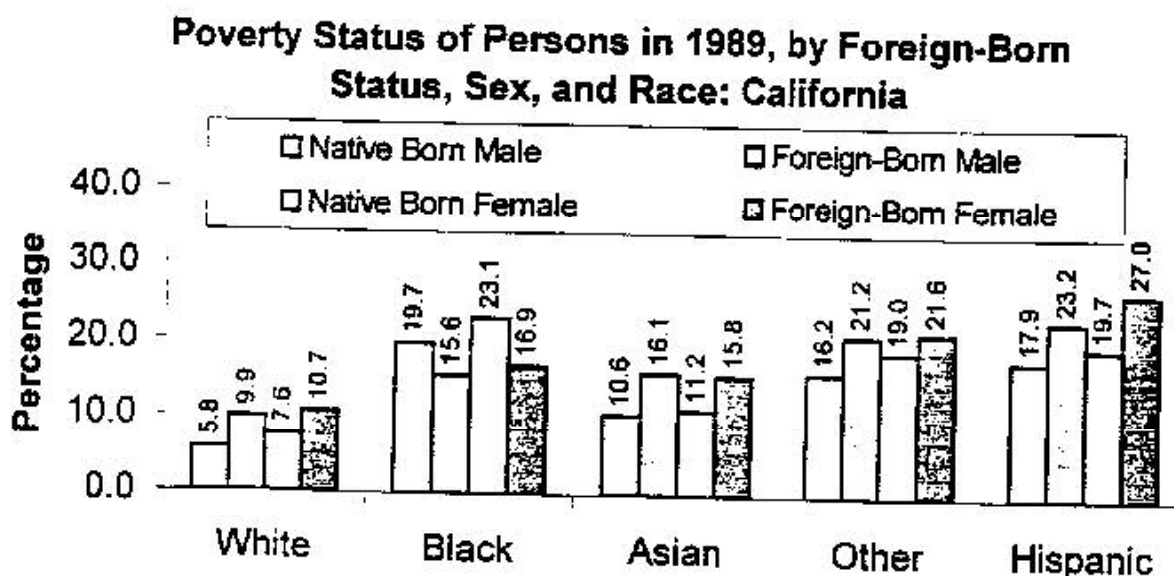


Figure 8: Poverty of Persons in Poverty, by Foreign-Born Status, Sex, and Race: CA

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file.

However, there are some significant details one may add from the analysis of this data to that well-known pattern. First, unlike other racial groups, a smaller percentage of foreign-born Blacks are living in poverty than compared to their *native-born* peers. Second, while native-born Hispanics fare better than Blacks at the state level, they are worse-off at the county level and a greater percentage of foreign-born Hispanics are living in poverty than any

other group. Finally, the graphs underscore a gendered pattern in the distribution of poverty. That is, in general, a greater percentage of women are living in poverty than men (which we discuss in further detail in a later section of this paper).

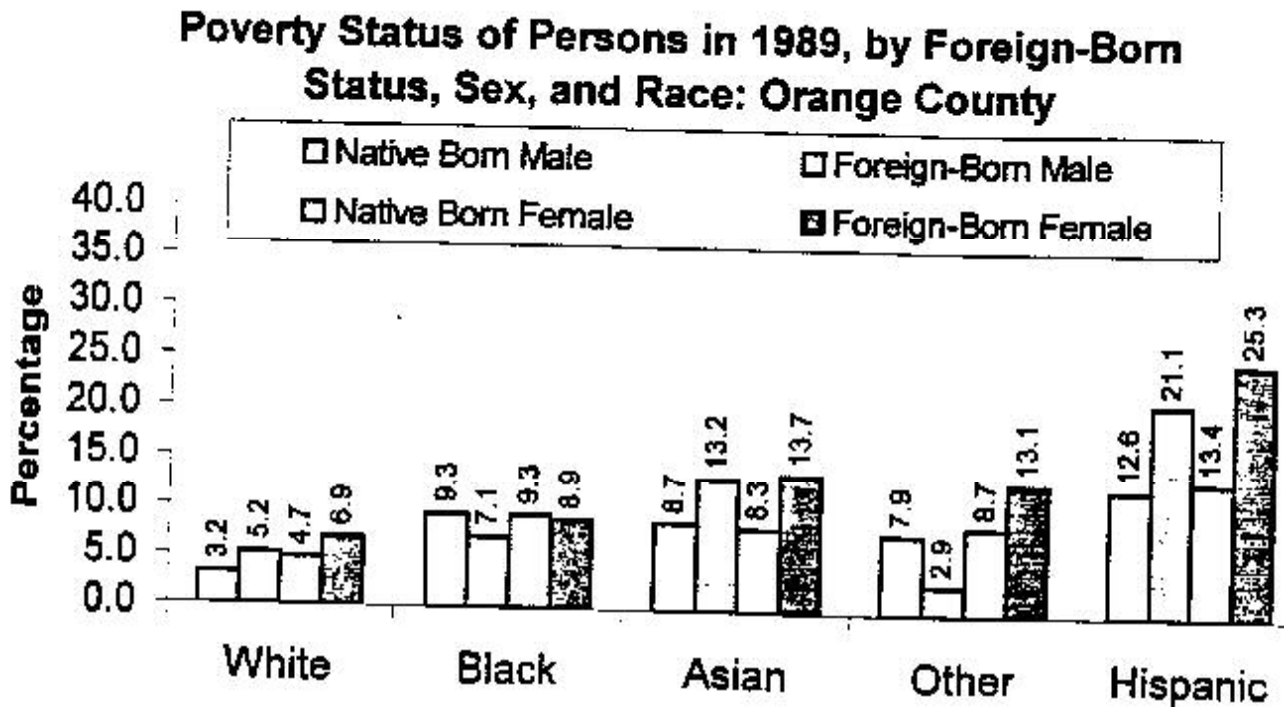


Figure 9: Poverty Status of Persons, by Foreign-Born Status, Sex, and Race: OC

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file.

Similar characteristics are revealed when we look at nativity and sex by Hispanic origin (Figures 10 & 11) but again we see the importance of disaggregating the “Hispanic” category. While in general women are poorer than men in the Hispanic population there is a dramatic difference in the Central American population. (Further analysis of the relationship between gender and poverty is needed and requires multiple regression analysis to examine such variables as living arrangements, occupation, children, education and language).

Poverty Status of Persons in 1989, by Foreign-Born Status, Sex, and Hispanic Origin: California

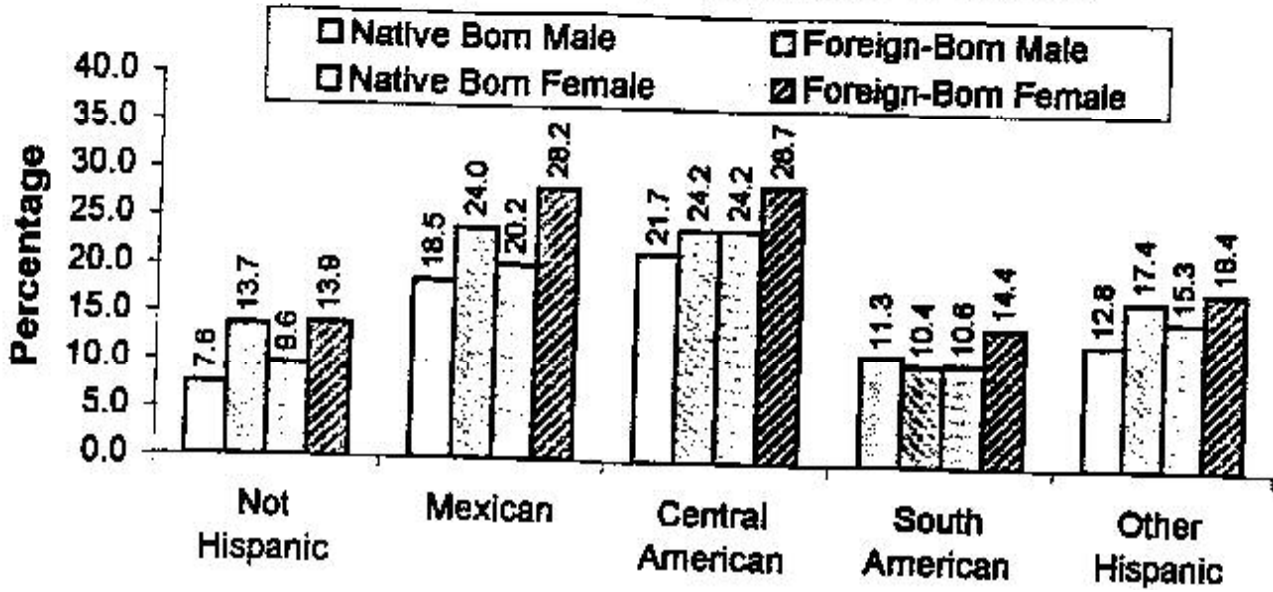


Figure 10: Poverty Status of Persons, by Foreign-Born Status, Sex, and Hispanic Origin: OC Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file.

Poverty Status of Persons in 1989, by Foreign-Born Status, Sex, and Hispanic Origin: Orange County

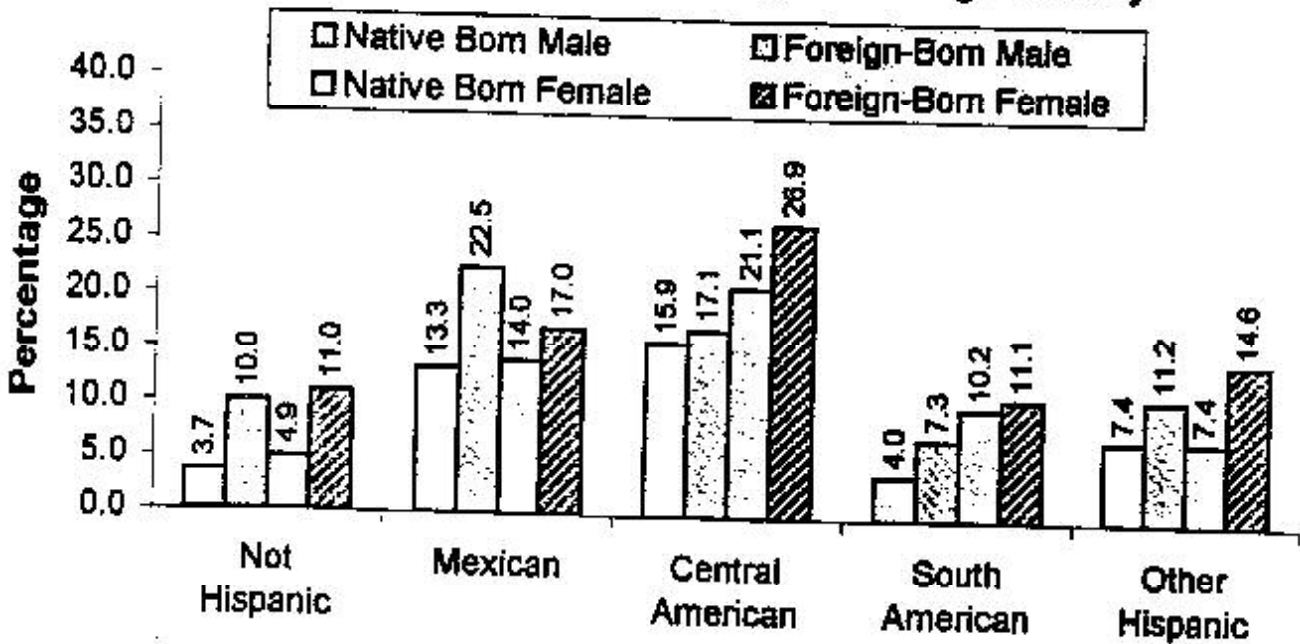


Figure 11: Poverty Status of Persons, by Foreign-Born Status, Sex, and Hispanic Origin: OC Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file.

When we consider living arrangements as in Figure 12, which examines selected living arrangements of the poor by ethnicity in Orange County, it becomes clearer that poverty has a tremendous impact upon certain Latino groups even when they utilize financial pooling strategies such as co-habiting. Most notable on this chart is the large percentage of Hispanics, especially Central Americans, living with either other relatives or non-relatives.

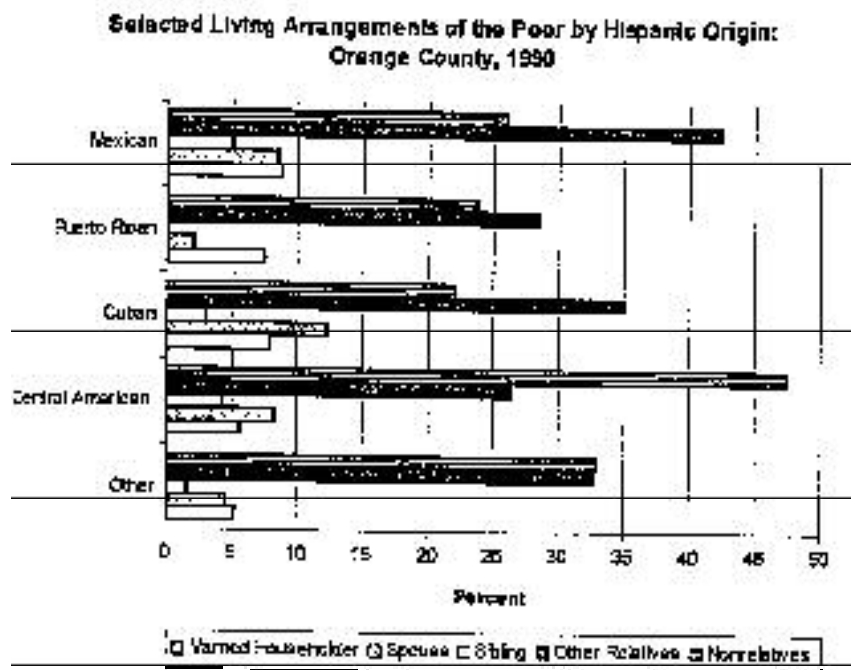


Figure 12: Selected Living Arrangements of the Poor by Hispanic Origin: OC

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file.

Public Assistance

While much anti-immigrant rhetoric has been espoused regarding immigrant's use (or abuse according to pundits) of state social services, our analysis of census data (Figure 13)

reveals that a greater percentage of the population receiving assistance is native born. In addition, over half of the immigrant population¹² who are on public assistance are Asian/Pacific Islander (many of whom were granted refugee status as a result of U.S. military involvement in Asia) and not Hispanic. Still, according to census data, 20.8 percent of Mexican immigrants

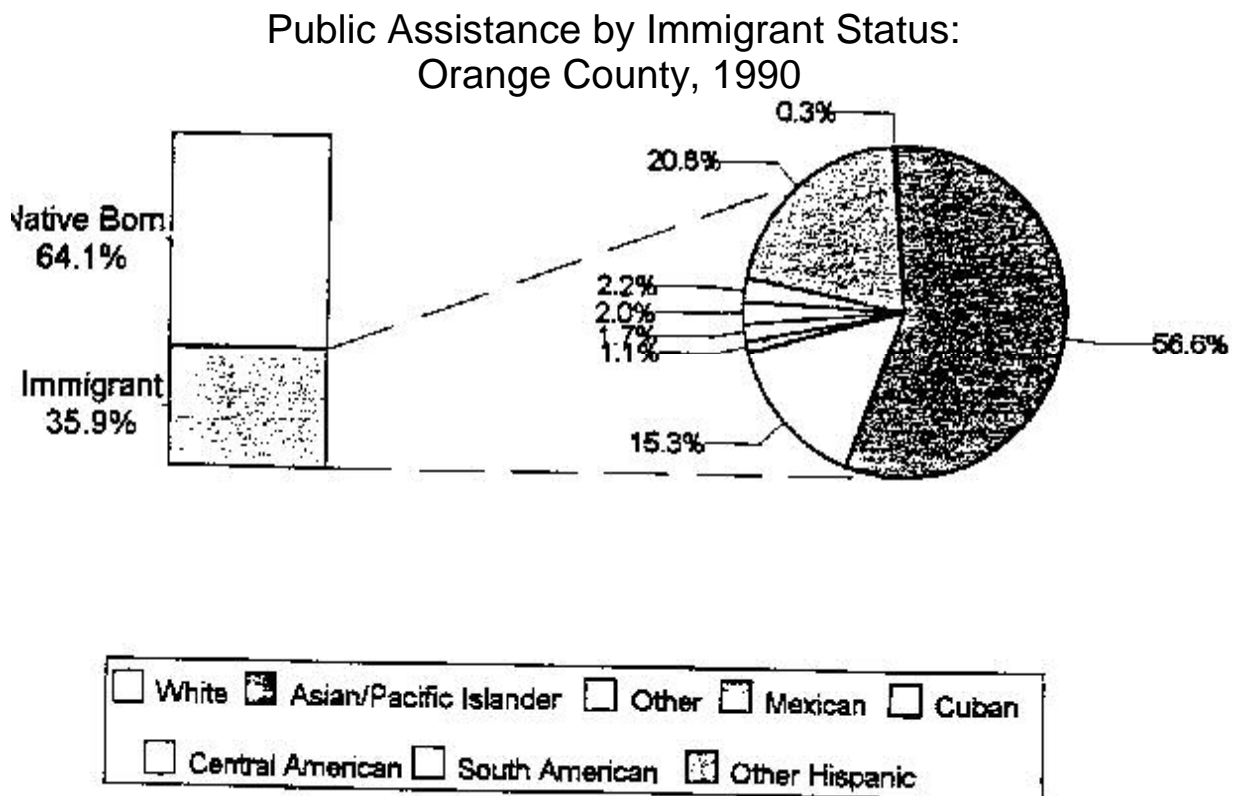


Figure 13: Public Assistance by Immigrant Status: OC
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file.

receive public assistance in Orange County compared to only 2 percent of Central American immigrants. As we've shown, in earlier sections of this paper, Mexican and Central American immigrants socio-economic status is more similar than not compared to other Latino ethnic groups; however, Central Americans suffer from poverty to a greater degree than do Mexicans. The relatively low representation of Central Americans amongst groups which

¹²This analysis does not control for refugee status individuals.

receive public assistance accounts in part for their status as the poorest of the poor in Orange County.

Employment

During 1994-1996, when the state had unemployment rates approximately 2 percent higher than the nation, Orange County maintained an unemployment rate usually several tenths of a point below (and as much as 1.5% in April 1996) U.S. rates. However, unemployment rates by city in Orange County reveal that cities such as Santa Ana and Garden Grove which have large Latino populations had the highest unemployment rates (at about 5.6%) while predominantly white cities had low unemployment rates, e.g., Laguna Beach, 1.2% (FocusOC, 1997).

In a study of poverty from 1977-1987, Joan Moore (1989) found that the income of one out of every 15 Hispanics who worked full time year round fell below the poverty level in 1985. The "working poor" suffer from poverty not because of unwillingness to work, or because of high participation in means-tested public assistance, as is sometimes assumed, but rather because the industries that employ them fail to pay a "living wage."

Income	Native Born					Foreign Born			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Central American	South American	Mexican	Cuban	Central American	South American
No Income	22.2	28.3	11.0	15.4	13.4	28.0	29.0	25.8	19.6
Under \$5,000	12.2	10.2	18.2	18.4	28.1	11.5	8.6	11.9	10.9
\$5-9,999	9.6	7.1	16.1	8.5	10.6	20.6	6.7	18.2	11.7
\$10-19,999	19.7	21.0	15.1	22.4	17.9	27.8	17.0	28.6	23.7
\$20-29,999	16.3	16.9	17.2	10.1	16.8	7.6	15.3	8.7	12.1
\$30-39,999	9.6	7.0	11.2	5.5	6.7	3.0	7.1	4.2	8.1
\$40-49,999	5.1	3.4	3.3	6.8	3.6	1.0	7.9	1.2	5.2
Over \$50,000	5.2	5.2	5.9	12.8	2.8	0.7	7.9	1.2	8.3

Table 5: Income Distribution by Hispanic Origin and Nativity

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file. NOTE: Numbers represent percent of group in income category.

Table 5 looks at income from work by immigrant status and ethnicity. While a majority of Hispanics make less than \$20,000.00/yr there are some contradictions that are worth noting. For instance, 12.8% of U.S. citizens who are of Central American ancestry earn more than \$50,000.00/yr which is a greater percentage than any other Hispanic group. Also, in general immigrant groups tend to earn less income per year then those members of their ethnic groups who are citizens.

Occupation	Non-Hispanic			Hispanic					
	White	Black	Asian	Total	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Central American	South American
Males									
Manag/Prof/Spec	33.8	20.6	29.5	9.3	7.5	17.4	19.3	8.3	29.1
Tech/Sales/Admin	25.2	30.8	28.1	12.5	11.4	24.4	20.3	13.7	16.5
Service	8.6	9.4	6.8	16.8	17.7	9.6	10.8	15.4	11.7
Prec/Craft/Repair	14.3	13.0	10.7	17.2	17.3	14.6	15.1	17.5	16.0
Oper/Fabr/Lab	10.1	15.3	11.8	28.3	29.4	15.2	13.7	32.3	19.2
Fam/Forestry/Fish	0.6	0.5	1.2	7.2	8.0	1.1	1.1	4.1	2.2
Females									
Manag/Prof/Spec	26.1	25.6	18.8	10.4	8.6	20.8	32.9	7.2	24.2
Tech/Sales/Admin	30.5	45.3	31.7	24.7	24.0	39.0	23.9	16.1	25.5
Service	8.1	11.2	8.1	18.2	18.1	9.6	8.9	32.5	18.2
Prec/Craft/Repair	1.3	2.0	4.1	4.0	4.3	2.2	4.0	3.0	3.0
Oper/Fabr/Lab	2.5	3.8	8.0	16.1	17.4	6.0	8.7	18.5	10.4
Fam/Forestry/Fish	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.7	0.8	0.0	0.5	0.2	0.0

Table 6: Job Sector Distribution by Hispanic Origin and Sex

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file. NOTE: Numbers represent percent of group in job sector.

Table 6 shows a breakdown of occupation by ethnicity for men and women in Orange County. Notable are the ratios for Cuban and South American in Managerial and Professional occupations which approximate that of Whites. Also there is a greater percentage of Mexicans

and Central Americans in the "Oper/Fabr/Lab" category (more manually intensive labor)

when

compared to other Hispanic ethnics. Also notable is the large percentage of Hispanic women in the Service category especially compared to White and Black women.

Education

Another factor which is often examined in poverty research is education. Educational attainment is held by many to be a key indicator of the likelihood of poverty. Figures 14 and 15 show how educational attainment differs by race for the native born in California and Orange County. They demonstrate that a greater percentage of Hispanics are more poorly educated

**Educational Attainment of Native Born Persons
25 Years and Older, by Race: California**

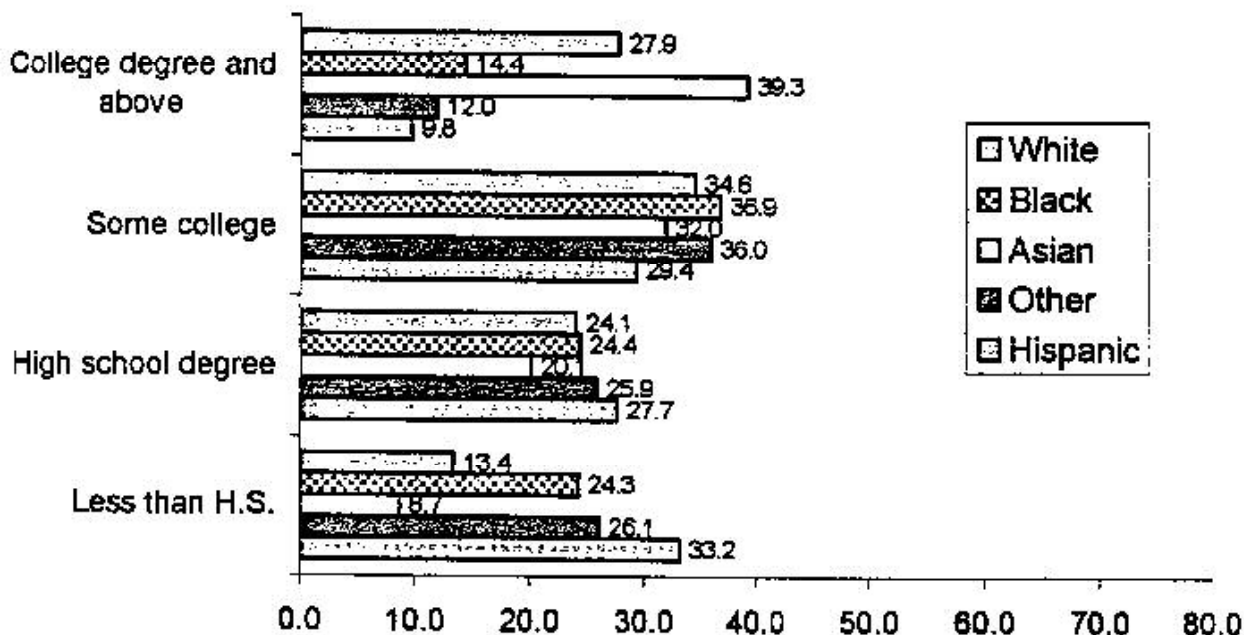


Figure 14: Educational Attainment of Native Born Persons by Race: CA

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file.

than other racial groups. One-third (33.2%) of Native-born Latinos 25 or older in California and 27.7 percent of those in Orange County have less than a high school

24

education. Only 9.8 percent of California and 13 percent of Orange County Latinos have a college degree compared to 27.9 and 31.6 percent, respectively, of Whites. Remember this figure is only for *native-born* Hispanics and that these statistics are drawn from 1990 Census during a time when Affirmative Action policies were in effect in California.

Educational Attainment of Native Born Persons 25 Years and Older, by Race: Orange County

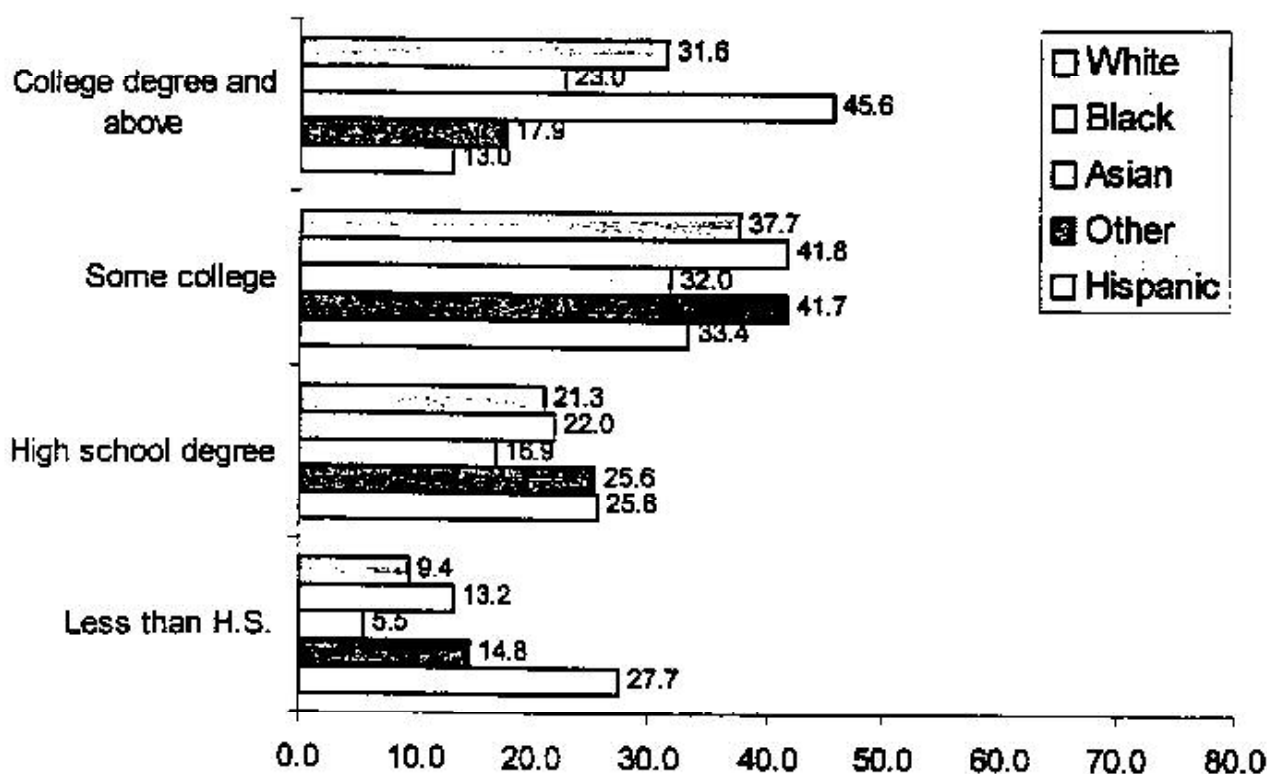


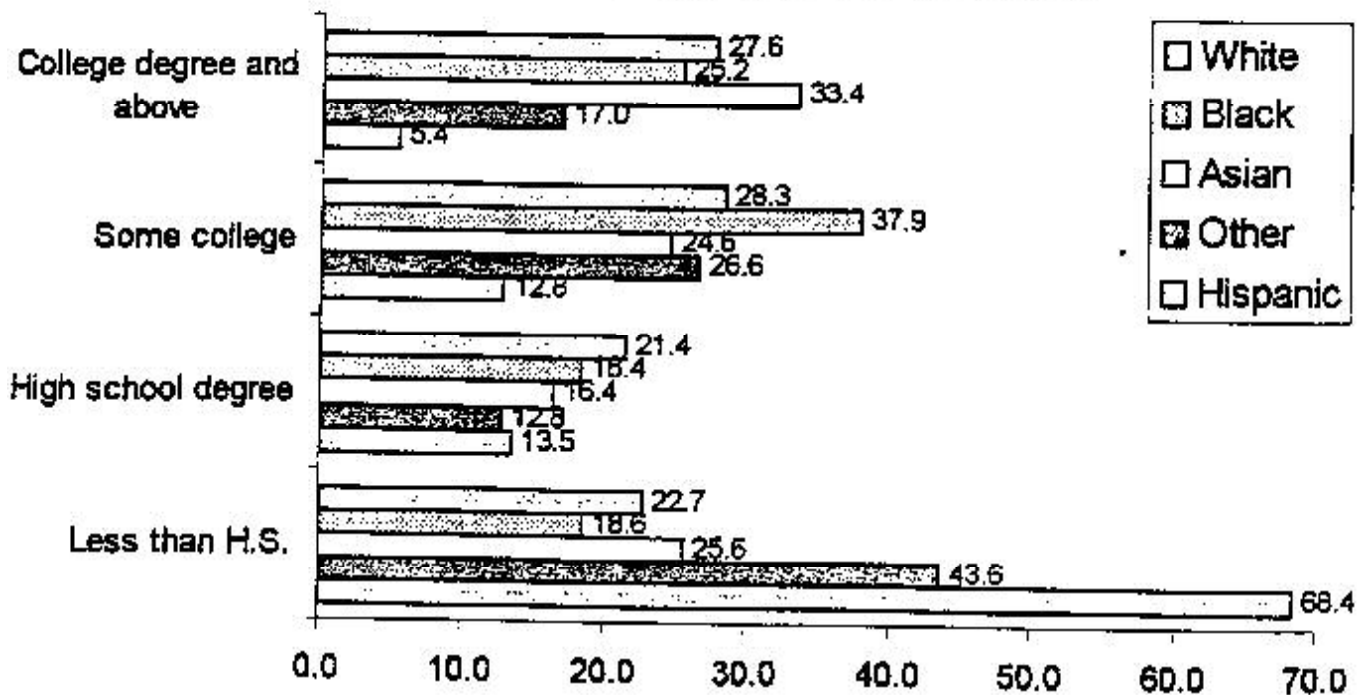
Figure 15: Educational Attainment of Native Born Persons by Race: OC

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file.

Figure 16 is similar to Figures 14 and 15 but represents educational attainment for the *foreign-born* in California. It is a graphic display of the differences in educational attainment of foreign-

born Latinos compared to other immigrant racial groups. The differences are overwhelming

Educational Attainment of Foreign-Born Persons 25 Years and Older, by Race: California



with 68.4 percent, over three-fifths, of Latino immigrants 25 or older having less than a high school education and only 5.4 percent having at least a college degree.

25

Figure 16: Educational Attainment of Foreign Born by Race: CA

Source: U.S Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file.

When we disaggregate the Hispanic category for Orange County, as in figures 17 and 18, it becomes clear that a disproportionate percentage of Latinos of Mexican descent are in the lowest rungs of educational attainment. Even for native-born Chicanos 25 or older, only 11.8 percent have a college degree while 29.9 percent have less than a high school education. Nearly seventy-five percent (74.6%) of foreign-born Mexicans have less than a high school degree. Compare these figures with those of Central Americans. While 59.4 percent of foreign-born Central Americans have less than a high school degree, only 9.6 percent of the

native-born are so defined. There are at least two possible reasons for this difference. First, the majority of Central Americans arrived in the United States in the 1980s due to political unrest, so most of those U.S. Latinos of Central American descent who are native-born and are 25 or

26

older are not really representative of the larger Central American community (Le. the class backgrounds of their immigrant ancestors may be more like that of South American immigrants). Second, both Chicanos and Mexican immigrants have a long history of suffering

Educational Attainment of Native Born Persons 25 Years and Older, by Hispanic Origin: Orange County

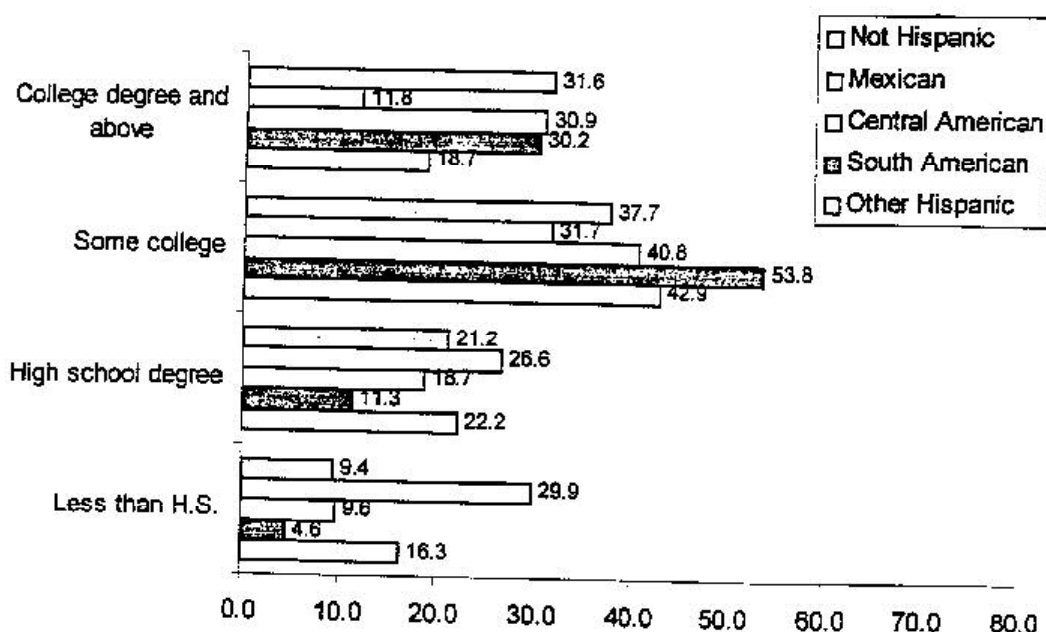


Figure 17: Educational Attainment of Native Born by Hispanic Origin: OC

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file.

from racial discrimination which has created not only structural barriers to educational

attainment but emotional and psychological ones as well this may account in part for the, socio-economic similarities of the Mexican origin and the African-American populations of California. By contrast, the educational levels of both Cuban and South Americans are exceptionally high compared to other Latino groups and more closely resemble those of some non-Hispanic groups. This points to the heterogeneity of the Latino population and the

27

importance of distinguishing among different Latino national origins which in turn reflect class and background variables which have an influence on access to educational attainment and other variables that shape income and poverty outcomes.

**Educational Attainment of Foreign-Born Persons
25 Years and Older, by Hispanic Origin: Orange County**

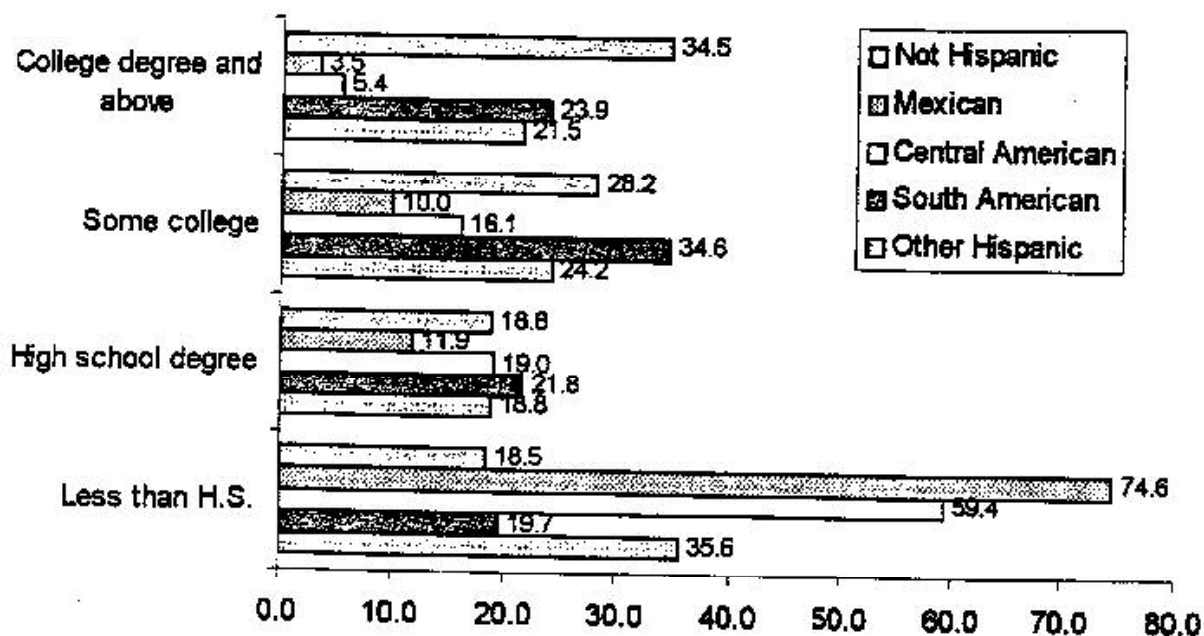


Figure 18: Educational Attainment of Foreign Born by Hispanic Origin: OC
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file.

Multiple Poverty "Risks"

The ways in which multiple "high risk" factors impact poverty levels s demonstrated

in Table 7. The table allows us to see how ethnicity and certain demographic characteristics are associated with poverty: 1) being a female head of household, 2) having less than a high school degree, and 3) having children at home. Though poverty rates are lower in Orange County than in California as a whole, poverty is gendered among Latinos. Latinas have a greater rate of poverty at both state and county levels than non-Latinas in nearly every

28

category than non-Hispanics. One notable exception is that of all three factors which may be partly explained by public assistance which has been available for children (AFDC); however the difference is small, and even with such aid, nearly 60% of female heads of household with children and less than a high school education were living in poverty in 1989.

	Non-Hispanic		Hispanic			
	Total	Total	Mexican	Central American	South American	Other
All Females 25 and Over						
California	8.1	19.3	19.6	25.2	12.3	13.3
Orange County	4.8	16.6	17.6	21.8	9	9.6
(1) Single Head of HH						
California	14.4	30.7	32.7	33.6	18.9	21.5
Orange County	8.8	20.8	23	18.6	9.6	15.4
(2) Less than HS degree						
California	17	26.1	25.8	32	19.8	21.1
Orange County	11.5	23.7	23.9	32.4	8.1	16.9
(1) and (2)						
California	25.5	39.7	41.1	40.1	28.5	30.2
Orange County	17.2	32.5	33.6	27.3	13.1	29.2
(1) and (2) with children						
California	59.4	58.8	59.8	52.2	55.2	62.8
Orange County	40.3	41.3	41.4	38.6	9.1	56.4

Table 7: Poverty High Risk Factors, Females < 25, by Race and Ethnicity: CA & OC
 Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 PUMS 5% file. Note: Numbers are percentages.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the social location of Latinos in California and Orange County through descriptive statistics drawn from census data, government publications and other archival resources in order to address three goals: 1) to describe the trends of income distribution, and the trends in the growth of poverty, for the general population and the Latino population in California and Orange County; 2) to assess the importance of immigration in the growing poverty of Latinos in Orange County;

29

3) to disaggregate the “Hispanic” category so as to make comparisons among different Latino ethnic groups and thus qualify the conclusions one might draw from a total category of Latinos in the state and county.

Thirty years after meeting at the University of California, Irvine to discuss "Poverty in Orange County," the problem of Latino poverty persists and is now greater than in 1968. Even within the general affluence of Orange County, Latino poverty has increased not diminished since 1979. While immigrants do shoulder a greater proportion of this burden, native born Latinos are not much better off. Among Latinos, those of Mexican and Central American origin are far worse off than other Hispanic origin groups and Latinas in general are particularly impacted by these disparities.

Similar to the findings of Mishel and Bernstein (1994) we found that a greater percentage of Latinos, especially Mexicans and Central Americans, were in the lowest income quintiles than compared to other racial and ethnic groups. More Latinos were living in or near poverty than other ethnic groups but among Latinos those of Mexican and Central American descent are far worse-off than other Latino ethnic groups. Contrary to anti-immigrant rhetoric which claims that immigrants who come to the U.S. depend on welfare, as was shown in Figure 12, only 20.8 percent of foreign-born Mexicans in Orange County received public

assistance in 1989 despite the fact that 87.7 percent of this population made less than \$20,000.00 in that year.

The factors which are associated with Latino poverty, especially for the Mexican and Central American population, are low educational attainment, concentration in low-paying (and unstable) job sectors, and foreign-born status -- all of which seem to be multiplied for

30

women. This study serves as an example of the importance of disaggregating the Hispanic category when analyzing income and poverty variables. In Orange County, Latinos of South American, Cuban, and even Puerto Rican origin fare much better than those of Mexican and Central American origin due in part to class differences among these groups, such as educational attainment (as shown in Figures 17 and 18). Nativity is another important difference among Latinos as we've demonstrated throughout this paper. Latino immigrants are not all the same; Mexican and Central American immigrants are more impoverished and have lower educational attainment than other Latino groups in California and Orange County. This paper is based on descriptive statistics and more in-depth analysis is needed but, as this study has demonstrated, it is imperative that the "The Hispanic" category be complicated in any future research so as to better analyze the socio-economic diversity of U.S. Latinos.

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APPENDIX A:

Dimension of Poverty in Orange County, 1968

Excerpts from a study prepared for the community Action Council by the Center for Government Studies, Political Science Department, California State College at Fullerton, March 1967. As cited in *Poverty in Orange County* 1968 conference manuscript University of California, Irvine Main Library.

DIMENSION OF POVERTY IN ORANGE COUNTY

Excerpts from a study prepared for the Community Action Council by the Center for Governmental Studies, Political Science Department, California State college at Fullerton, March 1967.

While the available data do not permit extensive analysis of poverty factors in Orange County, they do permit a preliminary identification of the geographic location of the larger pockets of poverty in the county. Table II, "Measures of Poverty," lists the twenty highest-ranking tracts for each of five kinds of census data indicative of poverty. Table III, "Measures of Poverty," similarly lists the highest twenty tracts according to welfare data. As can be seen in Table V, "Frequency of Agreement between Criteria," each of the eight selected poverty criteria tends to select a somewhat different set of tracts. Particularly noticeable is the fact that none of the three welfare criteria agrees with the census data in more than half of the cases. On the other hand, there is a fairly high level of agreement between census data criteria.

The much lower level of agreement between welfare data and census data, and between the various kinds of welfare data may be attributed to several factors. First, the welfare data is current while the census data is seven years old. Second, the welfare data measured different aspects of poverty. Old Age Security (OAS) recipients may be situated in different parts of the county than may be the AFDC recipients. Analysis of the medical indigency records reveals that recipients have a bi-modal age distribution, with the older group having a substantially lower average income than the younger group.¹ This relationship also appears in Table V. It should be noted that in a recent study by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare less than one-fourth of those in the poverty category receive some form of public assistance.²

Table IV, "Indices of Poverty", compiles the listings for all eight poverty criteria displayed in Tables II and III. Each of the tracts listed in Table IV is ranked in order by the number of times it appeared in the top twenty rankings of Tables II and III. For example, one census tract (44) appeared in every one of the eight listings while five tracts (40, 49, 59, 90, and 101) appeared in six of the listings. On the other hand, seventeen tracts appeared only once.

Leading the list is a cluster of ten central county tracts in the Santa Ana, Garden Grove, and Fountain Valley area

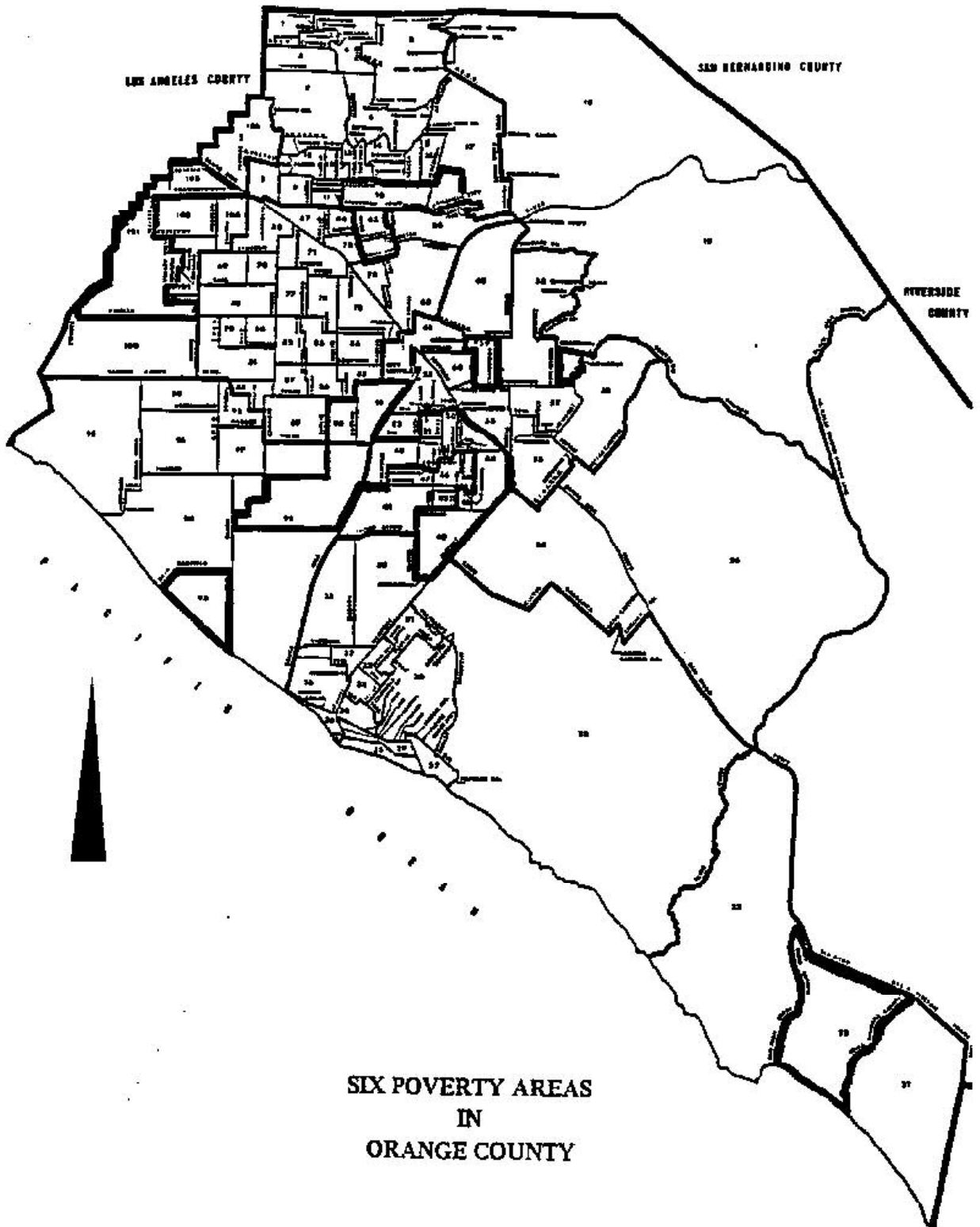
(tracts 40, 43, 44, 48, 49, 50, 51, 90, 91, and 92). Other pockets of poverty include a north county area of Anaheim, Fullerton, and Placentia (tracts 16, 17, 65, and 73); a north-west county area of Cypress and Buena Park (tracts 101 and 105); two tracts in the Orange area (59 and 19); and two coast tracts in Huntington Beach and San Clemente. Growth rates in Fountain Valley and Placentia cast some doubt on the data for these areas while the growth rate of San Clemente is unknown. (See map on next page.)

One of the outstanding features of most of these pockets of poverty is the high proportion of Negro and Mexican-American populations. Out of the top twenty tracts listed in Table VI, fifteen (75%) had a higher than average percentage of Negro and/or Mexican-American populations according to the 1960 census.

Anaheim, Garden Grove, and Santa Ana contain eleven of the twenty top poverty tracts. Table VI, "Family Income Under \$5,000 in Anaheim," based on a 1966 special census, suggests that poverty areas identified by 1960 census data tend to persist. Of the seven enumeration districts identified by the special census as having the largest percentage of families with incomes less than \$5,000, six were also picked by the 1960 census data.

Finally, it should be noted that fifty-six of the county's 106 census tracts are listed in Table IV, "Indices of Poverty." This suggests that in addition to the more obvious areas of poverty in the county, there may be a considerable amount of poverty which is not easily identified geographically.

1. Wayne D. Schroeder and Charles G. Bell, *Medical Indigency Patterns and Prediction (A Pilot Study)*, Fullerton, California: Center for Governmental Studies, 1965.
2. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, *Dimensions of Poverty in 1964*, (Washington D.C.: U.S.G.P.O.), 1965.



SIX POVERTY AREAS
IN
ORANGE COUNTY

About the Center for Research on Latinos in a Global Society

The goal of the Center for Research on Latinos in a Global Society is two-fold: to examine the emerging role of Latinos as actors in global events (economic, political, and cultural) and to promote Latino scholarship, enhance the quality of research in Latino studies, provide a forum for intellectual exchange, facilitate the exchange of scholars, disseminate research findings, and promote the participation of graduate students in research on Latino issues. In addition, we anticipate that the research conducted by the Center's affiliated researchers will help guide policy makers in their decisions concerning a society with a growing Latino presence. California has become ethnically and linguistically more diverse than many countries in the world - over a hundred languages are spoken in the public schools of Southern California alone. The research undertaken and supported by the Center is expected to make a contribution toward the understanding of cultural, social, and political dimensions of demographic change such as that which has been occurring in California. Although this research will focus on the population of Latinos within California and the United States, it shall do so in the context of the U.S. in a global society.

