

Demographics Are Our Destiny – 2010 Census Data Trends



By Mauricio A. Velasquez, MBA, President, CEO, The Diversity Training Group

First in a new series of articles

I don't know who said it – but she or he was right. Bull's eye. The 2010 Census data continues to come out and many are being caught by surprise. As a former amateur demographer for the IRS (many moons ago), I find it all increasingly fascinating. Did you see these trends coming? I think many people don't want to look at the data for fear of seeing what is already here and what is coming. For some, it is just safer to stay naïve and in denial (future clients right).

Let's dive into the demographic pool, the temperature is just right. As we swim through the numbers note what the implications are for you, your own family, your organization, your employees (sourcing, hiring, retention), and of course, your customers or clients. It is mostly about immigration and birth rates – anyone studying the numbers will tell you this.

Status quo – how you manage your human resources, your talent, is under siege – “Doing the same things you have always done and expecting better results” in an increasingly diverse workplace and marketplace (more diverse than anyone predicted) is organizational suicide!

A Quick Look

Here is what we know right now about our society, our population, or workforce – our demographics:

The United States of America ...

- Continues to grow (where many countries – especially in Europe – are in decline)
- Getting older – we are living longer, 24% of residents who are 18 and under – at an all time low
- Increasingly Hispanic (immigration, birth rates)
- Increasingly Asian (immigration, birth rates)
- Where the traditional family of the past is vanishing
 - We are getting married at a lower rate (waiting to marry, economics)
 - We are not having as many children – 1/3 of households now have children (economics)
 - Where multiple generations are living under one roof (economics and culture)
 - We are seeing more same-sex couples (“sign of the times”)

- Having children and being married – weaker link (share of births by unmarried women went from 26% to 41% from 1990 to 2010) and getting weaker
 - Among Hispanics – 53% are not married
 - Among blacks – 73% are not married
- Households with kids under age 18 dropped in 95% of counties in contrast with “areas populated by immigrants” where the 1.9 million gain in under-18 population since 2000 came completely from racial and ethnic minorities
- More aware, and sensitive to, multiracial, multicultural identities (including my kids)
- More suburban, less rural (moving to the jobs)
- More people are moving to the South and going West (climate and jobs)

The implications are insanely profound for social, cultural, government, and organizational America. These changes have caught many by surprise. Even professional demographers, those professionals where this is their specialty, have been caught off-guard.

Surprise, Surprise, Surprise

“It was always predicted that we would be diverse, but it’s happened faster than anyone predicted,” says Cheryl Russell, former editor in Chief of *American Demographics* magazine. Ms. Russell goes on to say, “Diversity and the rapid growth in diversity is one of the reasons we have a black president today. That’s one thing that would never have been predicted.”

Now as a Hispanic-Latino Diversity Trainer and Consultant in a field dominated by African American diversity trainers and consultants, what everyone is coming to grips with is the explosive growth of Hispanics. This country’s rich civil rights history, the “black-white dynamics,” is being complicated by the rise of the emerging Hispanic population.

Look at the South, southern states, where the black-white saga has played out, Hispanics have accounted for most of the population gains the past decade. You only have to look at New Orleans after Katrina to see the demographic shift from African American to Hispanic. Some are calling New Orleans (because of construction, rebuilding) one of the most Hispanic cities in the United States (percentage of population). That did not happen by accident. I love this next quote.

“An entire Venezuela’s worth of Hispanics was added in just those two decades,” says Robert Lang, an urban sociologist at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. That’s about 30 million, or half of the nation’s growth since 1990.”

“Everything about America now has to do with diversity that we could hardly recognize in 1990,” says William Frey, demographer at the Brookings Institution. The change will be felt for years to come as whites and blacks age and young Hispanics dominate in more places.”

News of Our Demise Premature

Some have concluded (or want to believe) that my field – the diversity and inclusion consulting and training – is in decline and disappearing. I think that is just plain wrong. They are not looking at the demographic tea leaves. You don't have to have my MBA or an advanced degree to see what is happening. As one of the very few Latino diversity trainers in the country, as the son of immigrant parents, bilingual, in a multicultural marriage with multicultural children, and with a basic understanding of our demographics, I see it very differently.

Keep an eye out for my next article in this series where I will focus more specifically on households, Hispanics, gender, and geography (where we live). There are so many ways to slice the data. I am always looking for numbers and trends that “pop” or surprise me.

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