

United States must keep pace with socio-economic demands of growing population

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The United States must keep pace with its growing demographic and socio-economic changes to avoid becoming poorer and less competitive

internationally, according to a new book from sociologists at Rice University.

"[Population Change in the United States](#)" maps the intricate relationship between demographic and socio-economic changes in the U.S., where the rapid aging of the non-Hispanic white [population](#) and increasing diversity are just a few of the pressing issues with serious long-term implications if not properly addressed. The text draws on detailed post-2010 projections of the U.S. Census Bureau, as well as a wealth of data distilled from other respected sources.

The U.S. population is expected to grow by nearly 112 million between 2010 and 2060. While the African-American population is expected to increase by 17.6 million, the Asian population by 18.6 million and the Hispanic population by a staggering 78.3 million, the non-Hispanic white population is expected to decrease by 17.9 million.

"While it's no secret that Texas is growing and diversifying at a rapid pace, our extensive research has shown that the same phenomenon is taking place in the U.S.," said the book's co-author Steve Murdock, the Allyn and Gladys Cline Professor of Sociology in Rice's School of Social Sciences and director of the Hobby Center for the Study of Texas. "The data in this book indicate that the future of the population of the United States is clearly tied to its [minority populations](#), particularly its Hispanic population."

The book thoroughly surveys the major demographic patterns in the U.S. through 2060. The authors focus on many of the urgent policy questions raised by America's changing population—namely, how economic markets are adapting to an older and more diverse customer base, how the projected demographic change will impact public-service demand and how the projected demographic patterns will change the fiscal, economic, education, health and housing sectors and alter the social

structures and processes impacting U.S. households and the diverse future population. The authors' analysis also considers possible variations of outcome predicated on alternative dynamic patterns between demographics and socio-economics.

As of the 2010 census, more than twice as many Hispanics and nearly three times as many African-Americans live in poverty compared with their non-Hispanic white and Asian counterparts. Regarding education, 17.9 percent of African-Americans and 37.8 percent of Hispanics do not have a high school diploma, compared with 9.3 percent of non-Hispanic whites and 14.5 percent of Asians. And finally, non-Hispanic white households make approximately \$20,000 more per year than African-American households and approximately \$15,000 more than Hispanic households. Asian households make nearly \$30,000 more than African-Americans and approximately \$24,000 more than Hispanic households.

Murdock calls the country's socio-economic decline "inevitable" if the ongoing demographic changes are not addressed.

"There is no way for the U.S. to remain competitive if steps are not taken to improve poverty, education and the wage gap for African-Americans and Hispanics," he said.

However, Murdock was quick to note that such a fate can be avoided if these critical issues are addressed. Specifically, he referred to education as one of the key solutions for decreasing poverty and improving wages.

"Given the clear linkages between education and poverty and income with higher levels of education leading to higher income and lower poverty levels, it is essential to ensure that all Americans have the skills and education they need to be competitive in an increasingly competitive international economy," Murdock said. "The reality is that the future of the United States is closely tied to the future of its minority populations

and how well these populations do is how well the nation will do."

Murdock hopes that the book will inform governmental and private sector policies that will have significant implications for the future of the U.S.

Provided by Rice University

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