

**Racial Classification, the United States Census 1850-1980, and
the Use of “Box-Checking” to Create Race**

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Introduction

The understanding of race does not exist in a vacuum. One definition of race states:

“ ‘Both what constitutes a race and how one recognizes a racial difference are culturally determined’ ... We decide that a certain physical characteristics – usually skin color, but perhaps also hair type, stature, or other bodily features—will be primary markers of group boundaries. We invent categories of persons marked by those characteristics. The categories become socially significant to the extent that we use them to organize and interpret experience, to form social relations, and to organize individual and collective actions. [...] The characteristics that are the basis of the categories, however, have no inherent significance. We give them meaning, and in the process we create races.” (Hoffman, 2004)

While a number of different definitions and explanations of race exist, this one underscores the concept that race develops over time, and as such carries with it not only hopes for the future of a people, but also legacies from eras and events both difficult and powerful.

“When we speak of “racial” diversity, discrimination, or inequality, it is unclear whether we are referring to color, socioeconomic status, continent of origin, or some other factor.” (Yang, 2005-2006) Additionally:

“Race has been identified as a biological feature; a local geographic population; a group linked by common descent or origin; a population connected by a shared history, nationality, or geographic distribution; a ‘subspecies’; and a social and political construct. The term ‘race’ has been used inter-changeably with ‘ethnicity,’ ‘ancestry,’ ‘culture,’ ‘color,’ ‘national origin,’ and even ‘religion.’” (Yang, 2005-2006)

This paper explores the creation and categorization of race in America, particularly as reflected in racial classifications used in the decennial United States Census from 1850 to

1980. While the census began earlier, and continues today, and while census information from before 1850 and after 1980 may be mentioned here, the heart of this paper addresses the years above for several specific reasons.

Historic shifts in the treatment — including the acknowledgement — of racial categories across census years tie in fairly directly with several large-scale social changes and trends. Among these, the post-Civil War liberation of slaves, the Chinese Exclusion (1882-1943), and the Japanese Internment during World War II stand as critical examples. The shifts in racial categories also connect to legal issues, particularly when involved with states' rights and the growth of federal (at times constitutional) regulations with regard to race. The staggering of racial classifications has a powerful relationship to voting privileges in the United States, for example – and not just for African Americans. The 1980 census in particular displays a “new” wealth of racial categories with which individuals may self-identify.

Lastly, racial classifications have connotations beyond the act of “box-checking” on the Census. They have sociopolitical and emotional connections to not only historic facts and events (such as those mentioned above), but also to their very definitions. Whiteness is tallied next to Non-Whiteness. Racial passing and racial deception have been used for centuries to affect one's station in life, in varying degrees, particularly with regard to issues of ownership and of eligibility and rights. The words Black, Colored, Negro, Afro-American, and African-American have all been used by the census to describe a particular group in terms of race, but the time periods of their usage often reflect understandings of the social and political climates of the time. The word “other” also has an impact. And the definition of the word “race” seems consistent only in the

inconsistency of its meaning, which makes for a substantial pitfall in the measurement and comparison of population data.

The maps generated and included here provide only a glimpse at the distribution of populations of racial classifications over the decades with the hope of displaying a visual correlation with historical events and eras. If we want to consider the United States Census a portrait of a nation, than it makes complete sense that as the individuals who make up the reality, the real features, *behind* the portrait change and grow, so should the portrait itself. While this paper argues that the *numbers* in the census may be unreliable to a degree, due to the racial classifications themselves, this does not prevent the racial categories (which permit racial classification) in the census from creating a fascinating glimpse of our own history.

Part I. Historic Shifts

Historical events and eras have had a powerful effect on racial categorization in the U. S. Census. When the status or perception of a race of people changes, therefore, so may the terminology used to classify their individual presence in the United States.

In looking at the maps for 1850, 1860, and 1870, one can quickly see the changes between racial classifications. In 1850 and 1860, while slavery still pervaded much of the southern states of the U. S., statistical value exists in trying to quantify the population of free and enslaved colored individuals. In the 1850 map, we see the distribution of white, free colored, and slave populations across the United States at the time. It is evident that several states at the time had a larger slave population than their population of whites. The free colored and slave population at this time refers to blacks and mulattoes.

In the 1860 map, the population of free colored individuals (again, both slaves and mulattoes) increases in states and territories such as Nevada, Kansas, and Ohio. Yet, while the slave population of Georgia decreases, the slave population of Arkansas actually increases. Yang states, “During segregation and slavery, enforcement of the color line was necessary to maintaining the system of power and privilege for Whites. Laws setting out rights and disabilities based on race covered all aspects of life. (Hoffman, 2004) And, whether one was a slaveholder or not during the decades addressed by the 1850 and 1860 censuses, the use of the classification categories of White and Colored, of Black and Mulatto, of Free and Slave allowed for the gathering of statistical and political information regarding inhabitants of the united states.

Another example of this political information can also be seen in the 1860 map included here. The Indian population is broken out into “Civilized” and “Tribe”, where civilized means not part of a tribe, but part of the greater society. The 1970 map reinforces this interpretation, where Indians are classified as “Sustaining Tribal Relations” and “Out of Tribal Relations”. (U. S. Census, 1870). Interestingly, in the 1860 census, we read:

“A new element has been developed by the present census, viz: that of the statistics of negro slavery among the Indian tribes west of Arkasaw, comprising the Choctaw, Cherokee, Creek, and Chickasaw nations ; also the number of white and free colored population scattered throughout these tribes ; all of which, with an estimate from the most reliable sources of the whole number of aborigines will be found appended to the population tables.” (U. S. Census, 1860)

This, when compared to the population distribution seen in the 1860 map, bring the realization that at least some of the slaves in the state of Texas, for example, could be “property” of the Indians existing there – not a feature of history commonly discussed or recognized, but a sure way that the discussion-type information of the census document supplements and analyzes the data they gathered. Additionally, we read: “it appears from the returns that during the census year [of 1860], [the manumission of slaves] numbered a little more than 3,000, being more than double the number who were liberated in 1850, or at the rate of one each to 1,309 ; whereas, during 1850, the manumissions were as one to every 2,181 slaves.” (U. S. Census, 1860) Decreases in the manumission of slaves were seen in Delaware and Florida, but increased notably in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Here, we see the beginning of a shift away from slave labor in some states, and come 1870 and the complete

emancipation of slaves in America, a new category is created: Colored. This category is further discussed in Part III of this paper.

The legislative information behind the addition of the Chinese race category in the 1870 census makes for an interesting discussion. The Burlingame-Seward Treaty of 1868, created to formalize friendly diplomatic relations between the United States and China directly precedes the inclusion of the Chinese population in the 1870 census. Yet, by 1890, the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882-1943) prohibited the immigration of Chinese into the United States – toward the end of the California Gold Rush. Immigration of the Chinese into the United States spiked significantly during the first phase of the gold rush (1848-1855). So how did we as a nation shift from including them as a census race category in 1870 based on friendly international relations to prohibiting their immigration into our country within only twenty years? Between the growing scarcity of surface gold and the difficult economic climate within the country after the conclusion of the civil war, there was a disinclination – if not an outright animosity – toward sharing national resources and national wealth and prosperity, both so hard won during this time, with “outsiders.” A snapshot of the Chinese population of the United States for the census years 1870, 1910 and 1950 has been included at the end of this section.

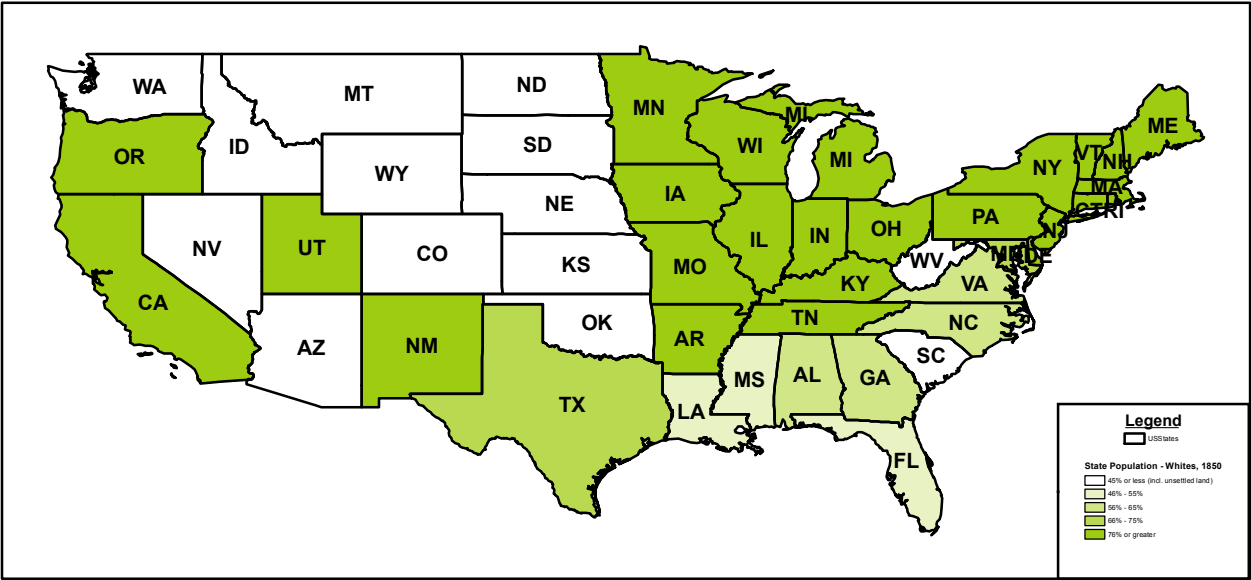
The Japanese were first included in the census of 1880 and the Japanese-American Internment began in 1942, after the United States entered into the arena of World War II (1941; World War II: 1939-1945), and ended in 1945 – remarkably rescinded not only *before* the actual end date of the war (Japan surrendered in September 1945), but also before the dropping of the atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August of that same year. In Yang, we read: “During WWII,

some Japanese Americans claimed to be Chinese in order to avoid war-time internment.” (Hoffman, 2004) In March of 2007, reports came out ending decades of debate about the role of the U. S. Census Bureau in the Japanese-American Internment of 1942-1945. It had long been rumored that the Census Bureau had assisted the government in providing details about individuals of Japanese ancestry during World War II – the Second War Powers Act of 1942 “temporarily repealed [the protection against the revealing of data that could be linked to specific individuals] to assist in the round-up of Japanese-American individuals for imprisonment in internment camps in California[, Colorado, Arkansas, Wyoming, Idaho, Arizona, and Utah] during the war. (Minkel, 2007) In viewing the maps of Japanese racial category population distributions in 1940 and 1950, we can investigate the potential for increases of Japanese populations in states where they underwent internment.

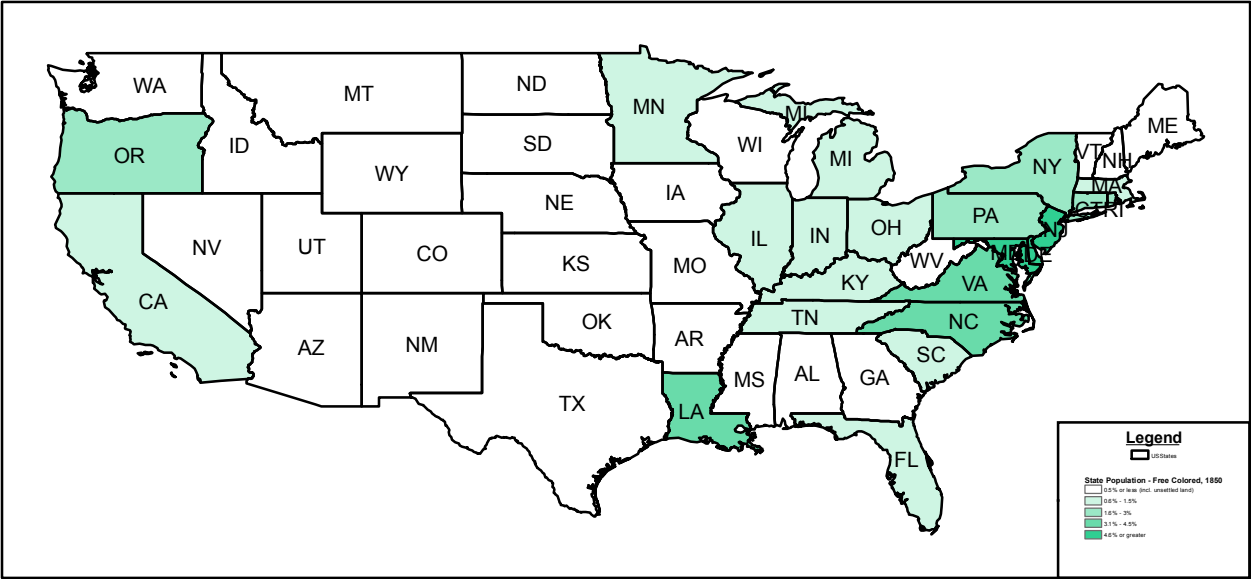
Additionally, Yang states, “During WWII, some Japanese Americans claimed to be Chinese in order to avoid war-time internment.” (Hoffman, 2004) For this reason, the abovementioned map also includes the comparison between Chinese population distribution for the census years 1940 and 1950 as well. It was not until the 1960 census, after all, that the long-standing practice of using census enumerators was discontinued in favor of the beginning of self-identification. This change affects the classification of race distinctly.

1850: U. S. Population Distribution

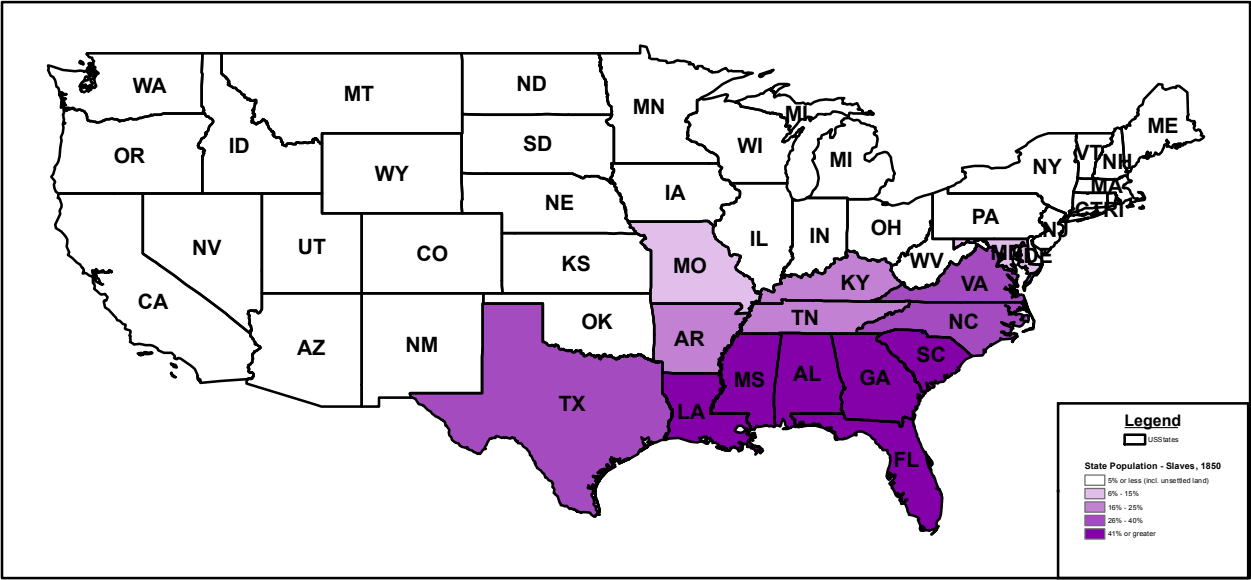
1850 Population: Whites



1850 Population: Free Colored

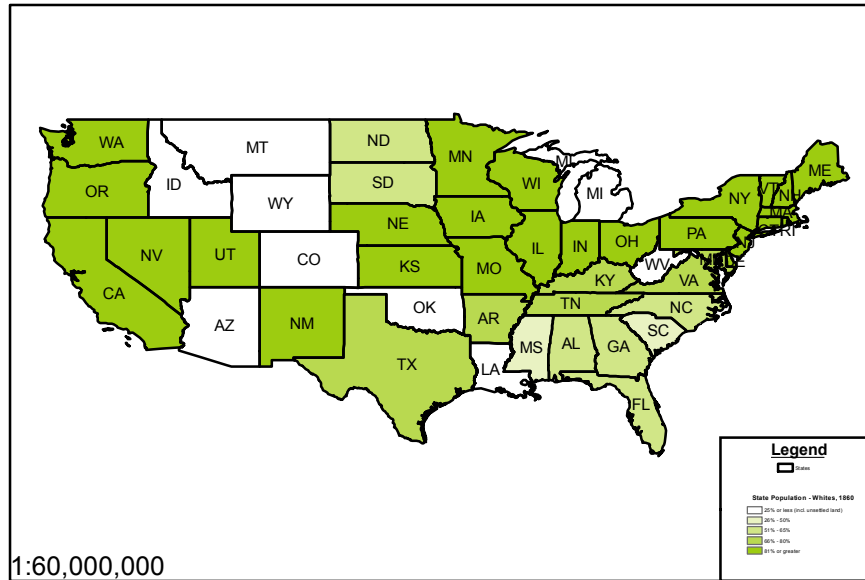


1850 Population: Slaves

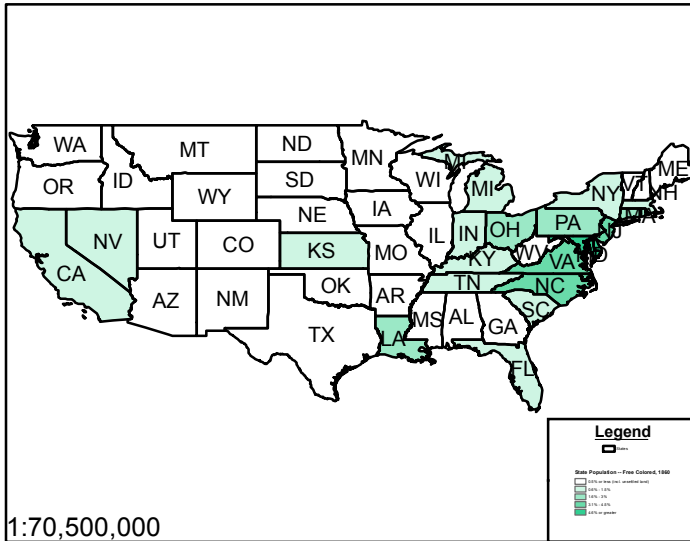


1860: U. S. Population Distribution

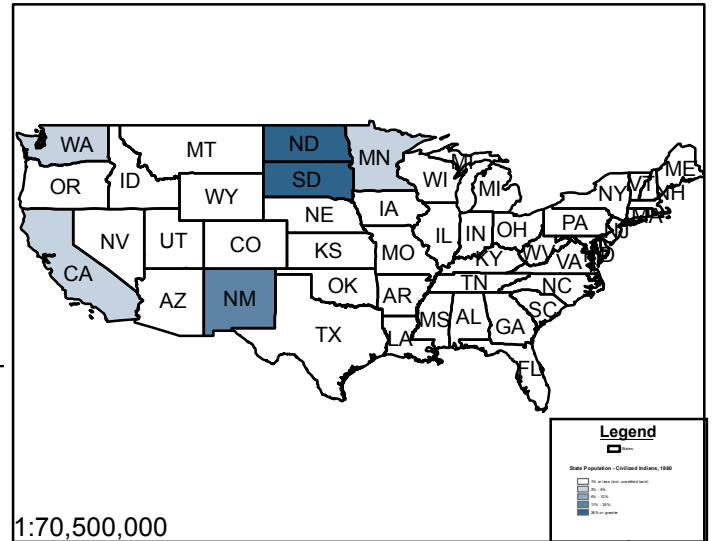
1860 Population: White



1860 Population: Free Colored

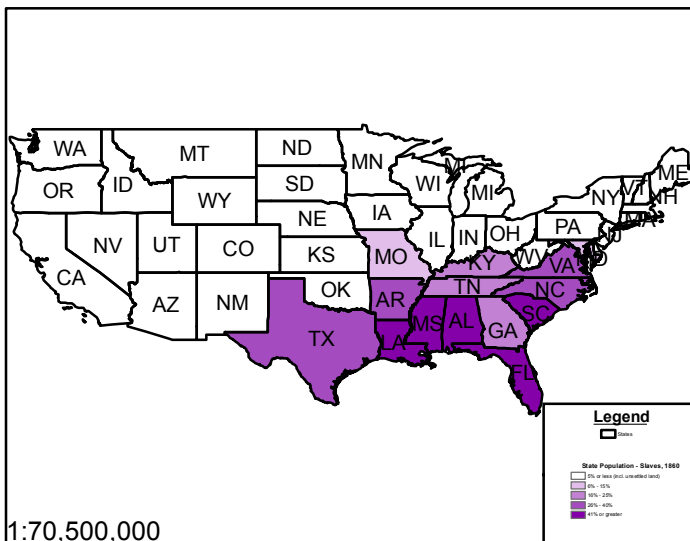


1860 Population: Civilized Indians*

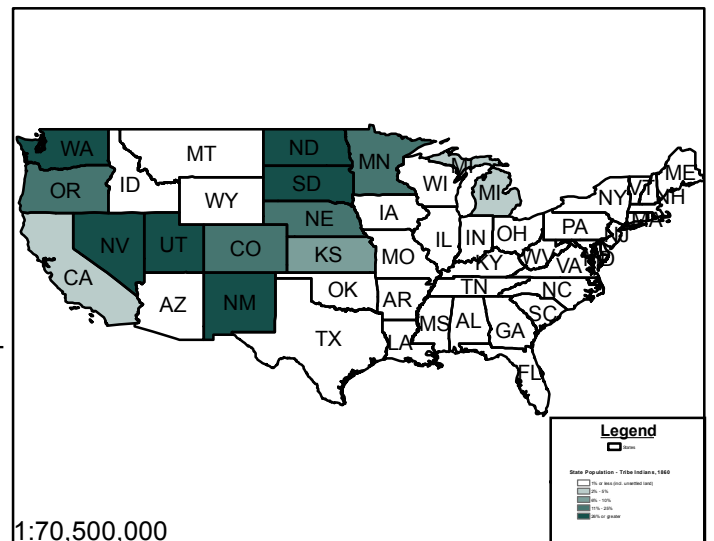


*Indians out of tribal relations

1860 Population: Slaves



1860 Population: Tribe Indians**

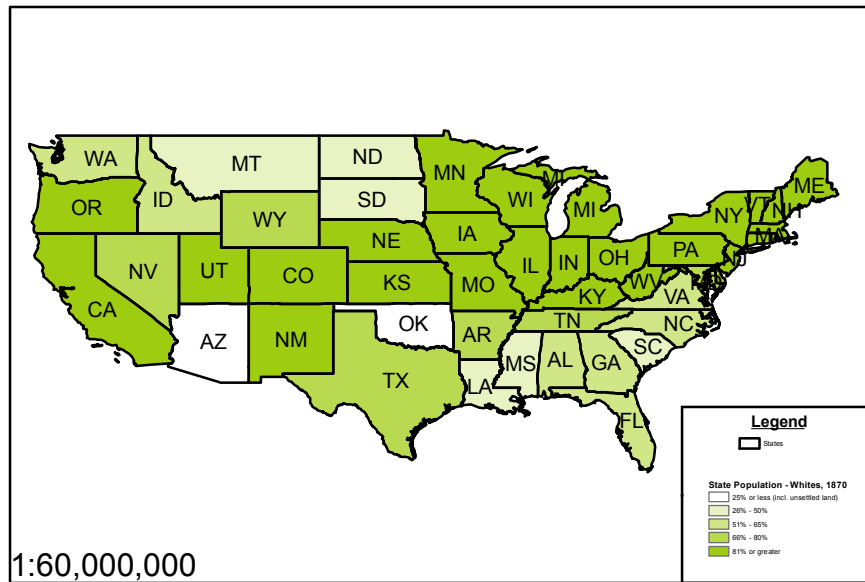


**Indians sustaining tribal relations.

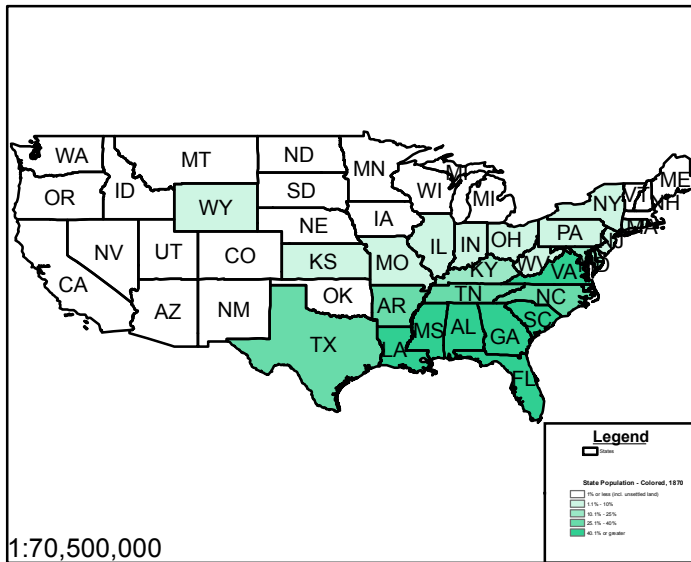
Source: U. S. Census (1860)

1870: U. S. Population Distribution

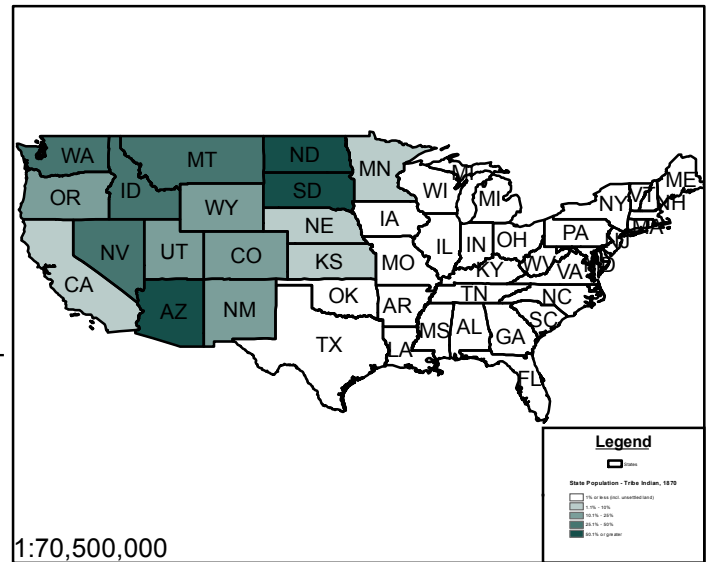
1870 Population: Whites



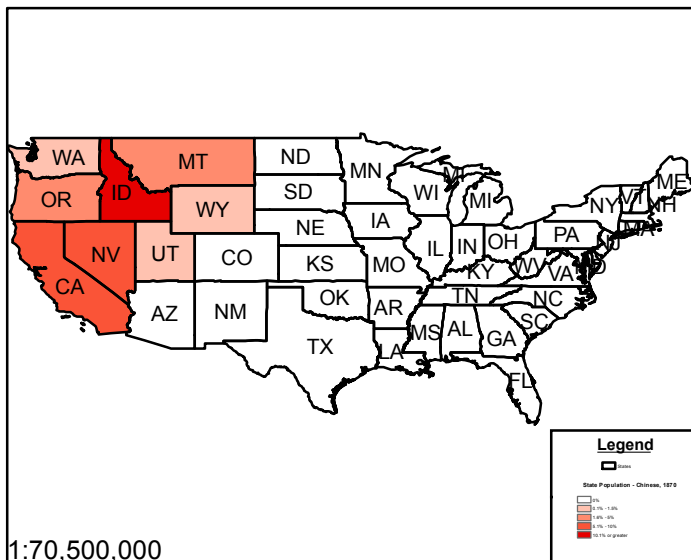
1870 Population: Colored



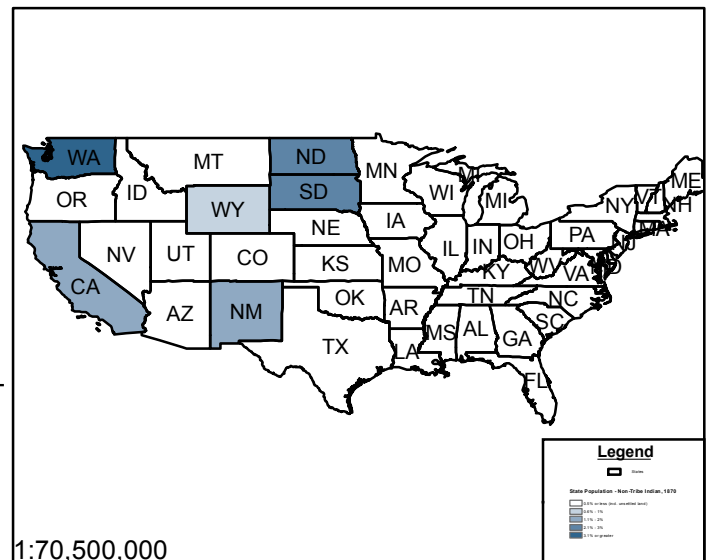
1870 Population: Tribe Indians



1870 Population: Chinese

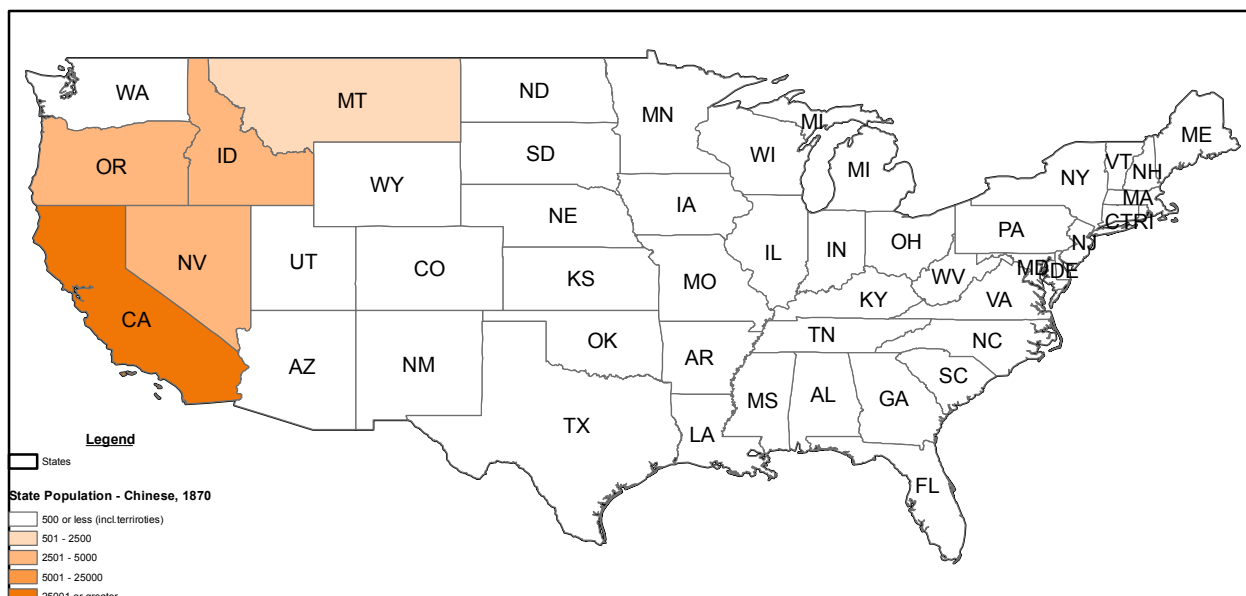


1870 Population: Non-Tribe Indians

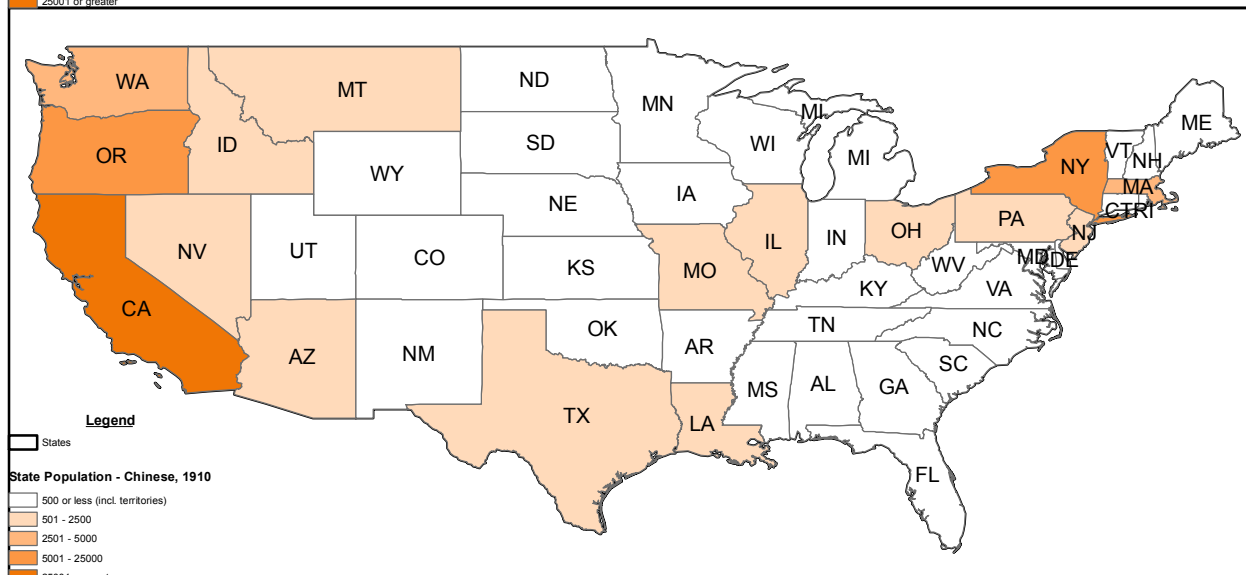


Chinese Population Distribution Before, During & After the Chinese Exclusion Act

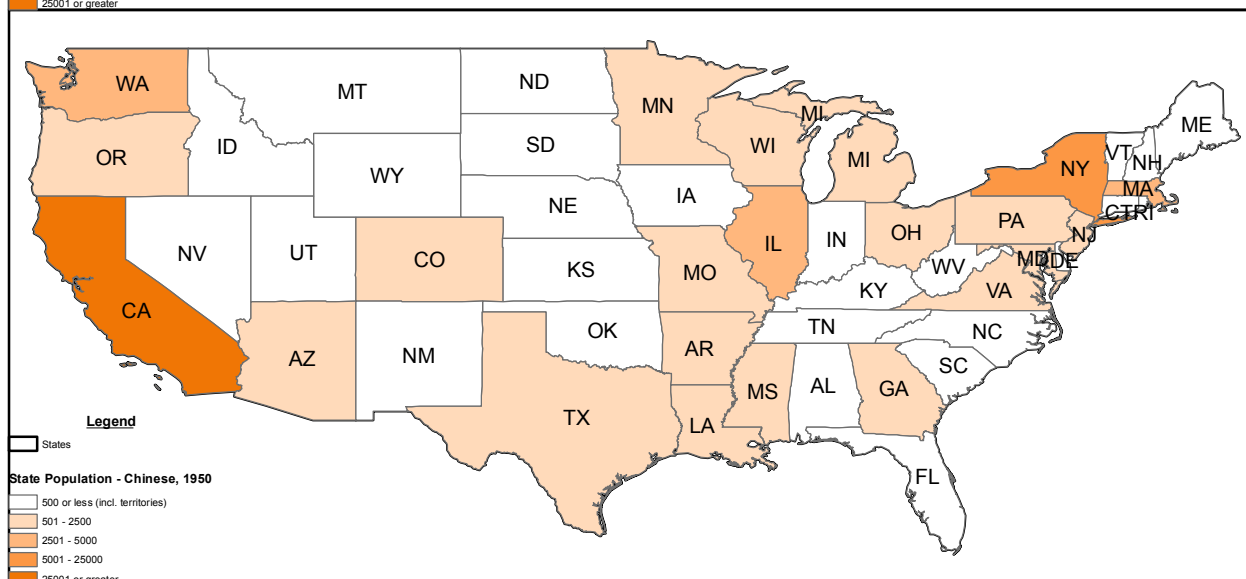
1870 Population: Chinese Distribution



1910 Population: Chinese Distribution



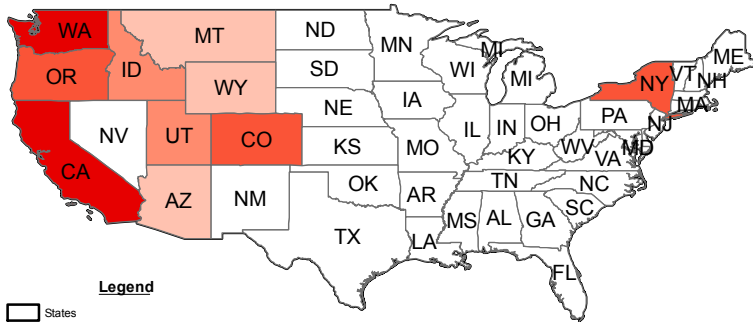
1950 Population: Chinese Distribution



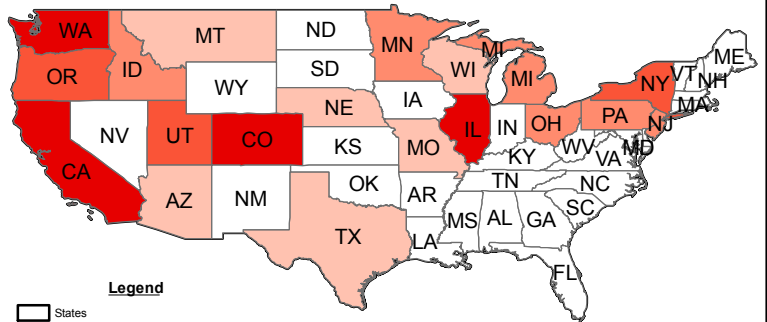
Source: U. S. Census (1870, 1910, 1950)

Japanese Population Distribution, 1940 & 1950 (before and after the Japanese Internment)

1940 Population: Japanese

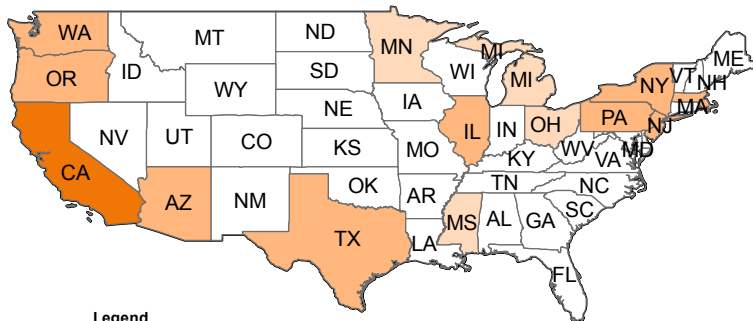


1950 Population: Japanese

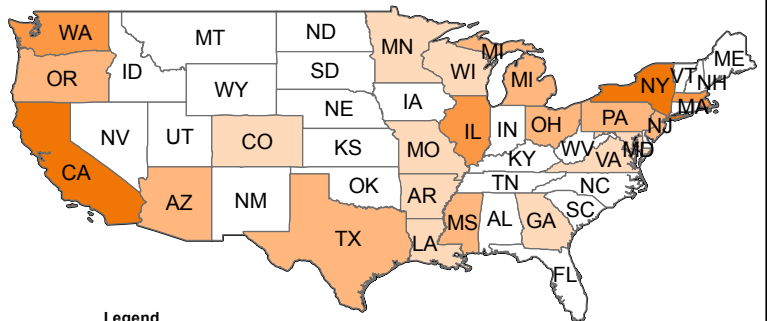


Chinese Population Distribution, 1940 & 1950 (before and after the Japanese Internment)

1940 Population: Chinese



1950 Population: Chinese



Part II. Legal Issues

Because geographic information systems (GIS) – namely ArcGIS – were used in creating the maps seen in this paper, the role of geography within the efforts of the United States Census Bureau is worthy of brief discussion. In collecting data, the Census Bureau looks at many different geographic regions and the consideration of geography exists under two lenses: census statistical units and census political units. (Bryan & George, 2007) Implicit within the categorization of a census unit as political is the *politicization* of those units – and the information gathered for the United States as a whole and for individual states fall under the census political units category.

By the 1870 Census, the American Civil War has ended and the slaves emancipated, and the classification of slaves and free coloreds changes to simply “colored”, combining the formerly separate blacks and mulattoes under one heading. Thus the extension of increased civil liberties (most particularly freedom) to blacks and mulattoes created the need to alter the classification of individuals in the census. In Hoffman, we read: “By 1860, no Southern State allowed the immigration of free Blacks. In 1870, Congress, extended the right of naturalization to ‘persons of African nativity,’ but until 1940 individuals of Asian descent and others who were not White or African-American could not be naturalized.” (Yang, 2005-2006)

And one of the most striking shifts in census racial classification terms with regard to legal issues occurs with the 1890 census. Keeping in mind that slaves had been freed a full 20-25 years prior, the next legal issue to arise after their emancipation becomes their right to vote. Due to the resistance on the part of state legislatures to extend full voting privileges to *all* (or any) colored individuals, states examine the

heritage of their colored population with a mind toward excluding all but the whitest of coloreds from voting rights. This forces a higher level of race-consciousness due to the fact that, during this period, the U. S. Census Bureau employed enumerators who *took* an individual's data – meaning, the census used phenotyping *and* self-identification to assess, at the very least, racial information. Self-identification only dates back to the 1960s. While the term “phenotyping” would not have been used, essentially it means that one's genetic make-up can be observed through physical characteristics as well as through more concrete scientific methods – and it exacerbates the issues of racial passing, discrimination, and deception, as it can alter the rights permitted an individual. In fact, since colonial times, “some states considered [...] mixed-race individuals to be legally White if the blood quantum of [their] ancestry was sufficiently small.” (Yang, 2005-2006)

And so it is that “‘Race’ only appears once in the Constitution, in the Fifteenth Amendment, which prohibits governmental authorities from denying individuals the right to vote because of their ‘race.’” (Hoffman, 2004) Yang also states, “Black racial identity and how it is created through rules such as hypo-descent has meaning only in the context of the maintenance of a racial caste system and the superiority of Whites over other races.” (Yang, 2005-2006) For states that had a vested interest in prohibiting civil liberties to minorities, particularly the “colored” population, this “one-drop rule” – or similarly, the separation of the colored population into negro, mulatto, quadroon and octoroon, or the perceived ‘visible admixture of black blood’ – provided an effective means by which to gather statistics and to carry out their voting privilege restrictions. (Hoffman, 2004) For a time, the enumerator could assume that, if you looked black, you

were a slave, and if you asserted that you were freed, the onus of proof was *yours*. And, once freed, states could decide their own “blood quantum” to establish, or refuse, rights –

“Many states classified as “Negro” those who were at least one-eighth Black [“octoroon”] or had at least one Black great-grandparent. Other states considered only those who were one-fourth or more Black to be Negro, and still others utilized one-sixteenth or one-thirty-second rules. A person could, therefore, be considered White in one state and Black in another.” (Hoffman, 2004)

This discussion of Negro and blackness sees further analysis in Part III, where racial terminology and definitions are discussed, with an eye towards usage, history, and finding context in the census.

Also in the 1860 census, “civilized Indians” and “tribe Indians” join the ranks, making this the first group to be classified by their *choice* of culture combined with residency information. Then in 1910, Indians can be segmented out as “taxed” and “untaxed” individuals. Fast-forwarding to 1980, over 100 years later, “Indians” are referred to as “American Indians”, but further classified into three umbrella groups: those living on reservations, those living on tribal trust lands, and those living in their type of location. Again, this highlights a focus on residency information, but even this has legal ties. Hoffman writes, “A few other federal law provisions that focus on ‘race’ are noteworthy. Native Americans and Native Hawaiians are granted special privileges in some circumstances, and to ensure appropriate application of the benefits, the law must define who fits these ‘racial’ categories.” (Hoffman, 2004) This refers to several updates within the United States Code in or around the year 2000 – which saw special rights and privileges extended, through different initiatives, to American Indians and Native Hawaiians.

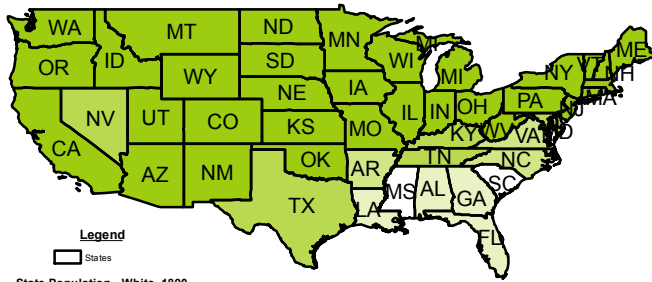
Hoffman writes:

“Until the Civil Rights era, “race,” in the United States, served as the basis for discrimination, exclusion, and persecution through anti-miscegenation laws, laws restricting citizenship and immigration rights, policies seeking educational segregation, restrictions on voting rights, and other methods of marginalization. Notably, the label “race” was attached to a variety of groups that were deemed collectively inferior, some of which are not perceived as “races” today [e.g. “Slavic race”]. (Hoffman, 2004)

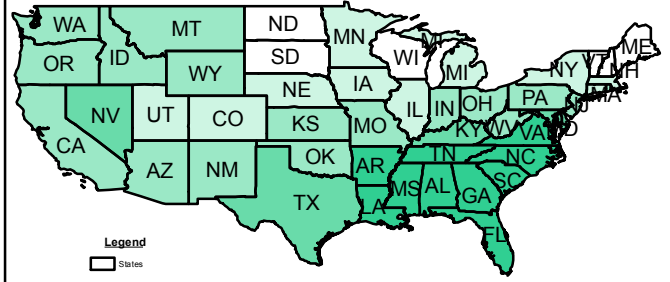
Without a concrete definition of *what* race is, and what race is not, it is at the very least difficult to assess a population based on, say, a Hindu, a White person, and an Untaxed Indian.

1890: U. S. Population Distribution

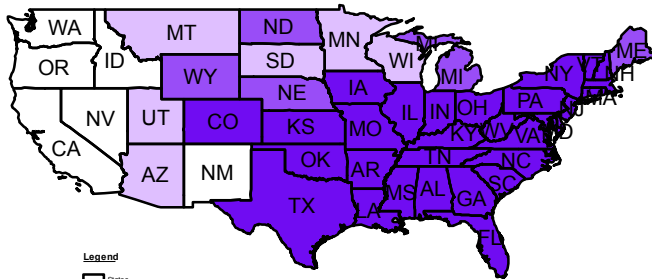
1890 Population: Whites



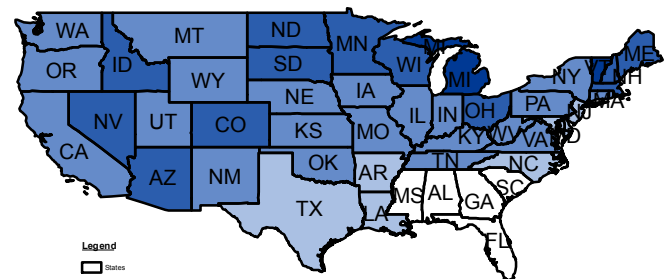
1890 Population: Colored



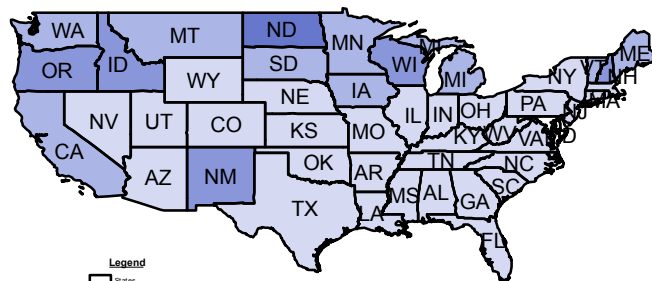
1890 Population: Negro vs. Total Colored



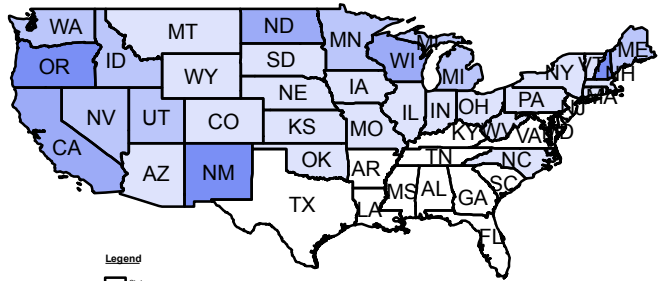
1890 Population: Mulatto vs. Total Negro



1890 Population: Quadroons vs. Total Negro



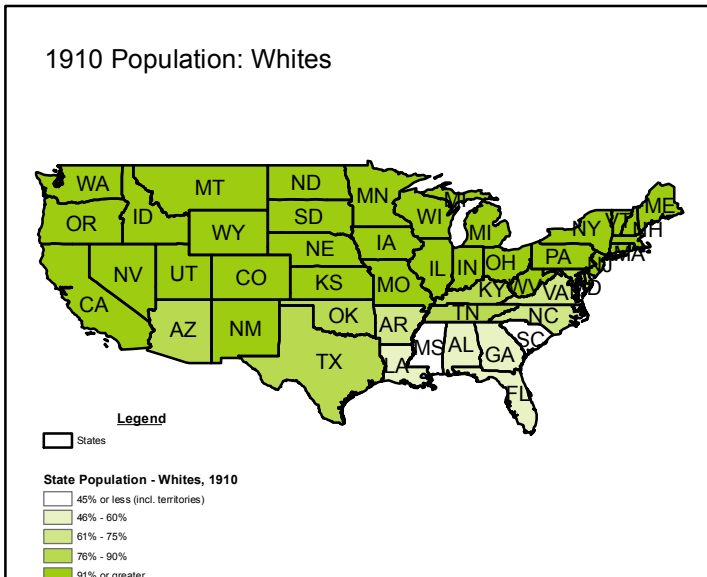
1890 Population: Octoroons vs. Total Negro



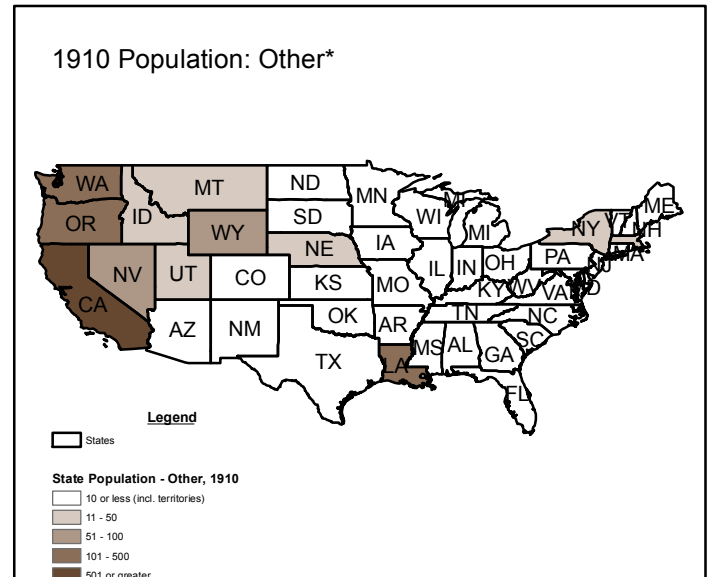
Note: These maps focus solely on Whites and Colored populations for Negroes, Mulattoes, Quadroons, and Octoroons. Indians, Chinese, and Japanese are in the 1890 Census, but were not included on this map.

1910: U. S. Census Population Distribution

1910 Population: Whites

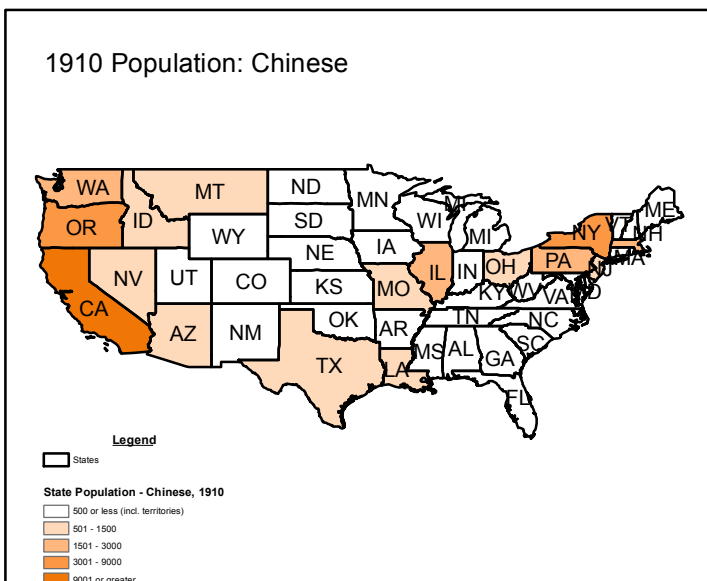


1910 Population: Other*

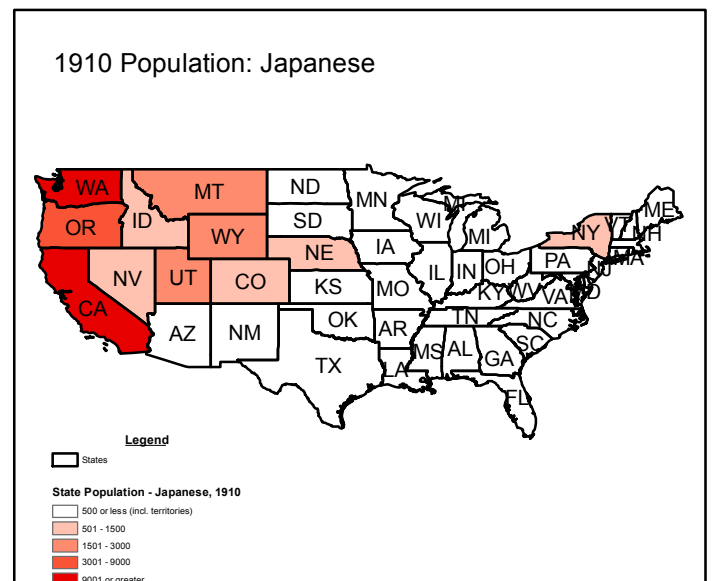


*Includes: Hawaiians, Hindus, Koreans, Filipinos, and Maori.

1910 Population: Chinese



1910 Population: Japanese

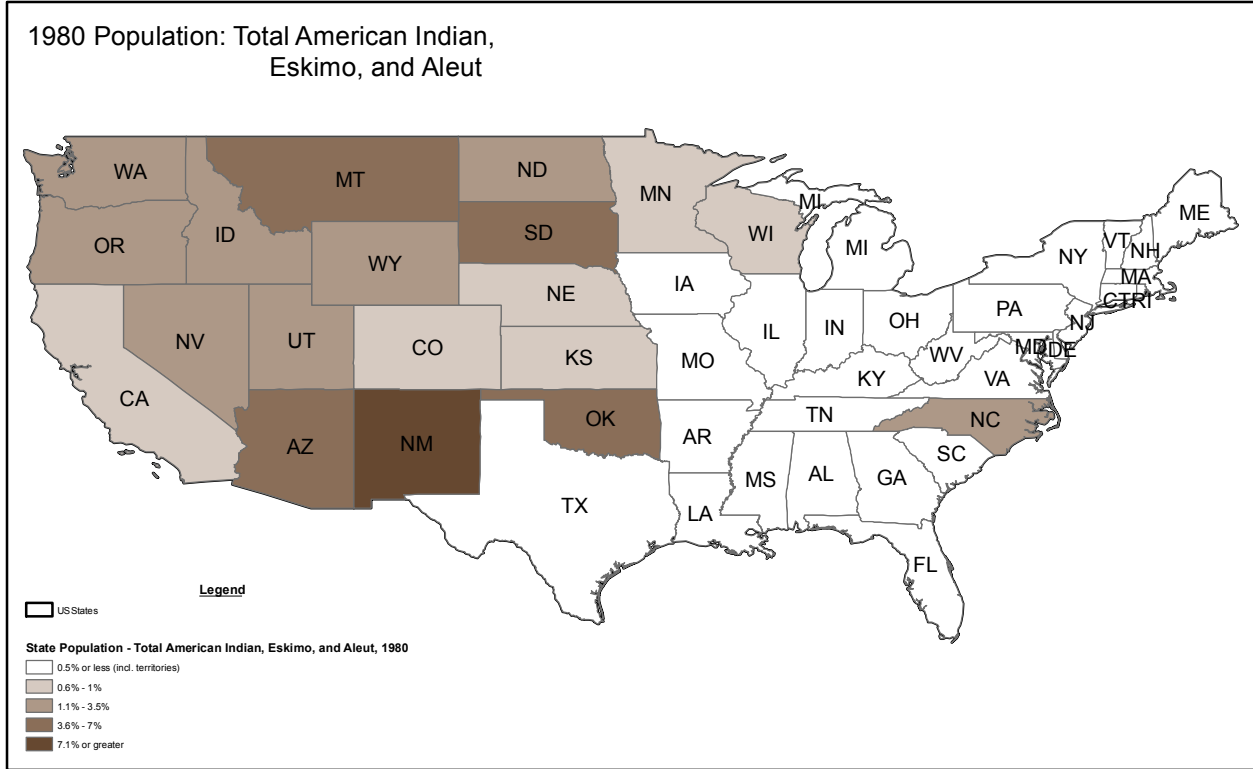


Note: These maps focus solely on Whites and the Chinese, Japanese, and the "Other" populations for 1910. Indians and Negroes (Blacks and Mulattoes) are in the 1910 Census, but were not included on this map.

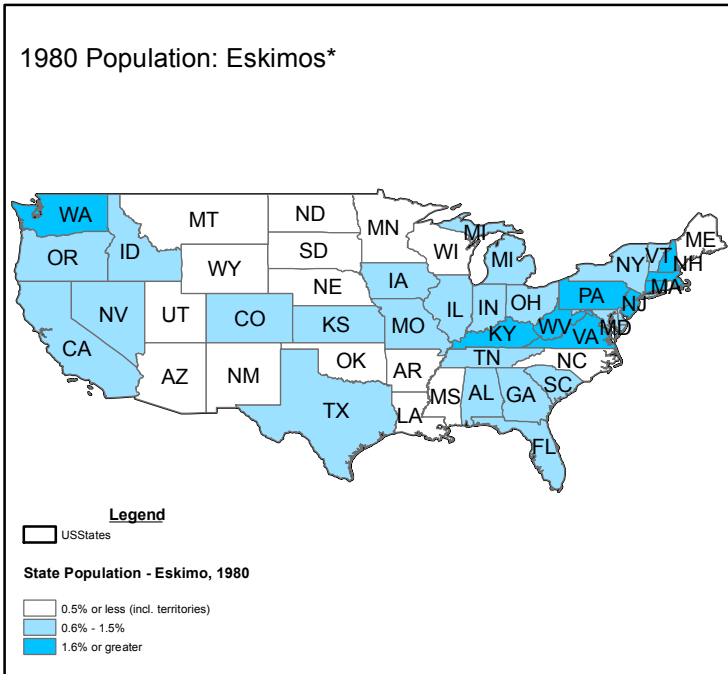
1:75,000,000

Source: U. S. Census (1910)

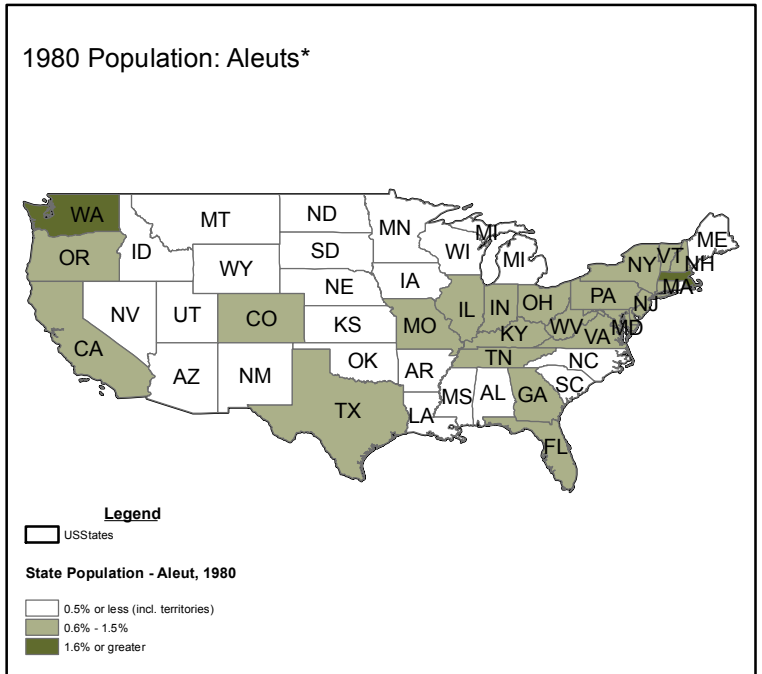
1980: U. S. Population Distribution



1:40,000,000



1:68,000,000



1:68,000,000

*Here, Eskimos and Aleuts populations are vs. the Total for American Indian, Eskimos, and Aleuts

Source: U. S. Census (1980)

Part III: A Race By Any Other Name...

Hoffman states, “The origin of the word “race” itself is disputed, stemming from perhaps from Arabic, Latin, or German sources.” (Yang, 2005-2006) She also notes a quote from Jacques Bazrun on race in 1937: “[a]mong the words that can be all things to all men, the word race has a fair claim to being the most common, the most ambiguous, and the most explosive.” (Yang, 2005-2006) And, while Yang states that, “Contemporary litigation-driven efforts to acquire a White racial identity have become less significant with the end of legal segregation,” this more than hints that it stood as an important issue throughout the *less contemporary* history of the United States. (Hoffman, 2004)

This section does not take particular issue with the word “race” – though certainly indications of its arbitrariness will continue to pervade this discussion, as elsewhere in this paper – but instead look at the historical definitions of the words “colored”, “negro”, “black”, “non-white”, and “other” (the first term and the last two specifically with regard to people). These terms were chosen specifically as, of all the racial categories utilized in the United States Census over the years, those with respect to African-Americans (our current term *du jour* in the U. S.) have undergone the most change in terminology. Yang writes:

“Asian American racial identity, for example, has been the result of conscientious efforts of pan-Asian cooperation and amalgamation of separate national identities of Japanese, Chinese, Philippino, Indian, and other Asian communities. A similar story might be told even about African Americans and the creation of a Black identity from the many different tribal and national identities brought by slave ancestors from Africa.” (Hoffman, 2004)

While it is true that Asian Americans have seen much reclassification and re-categorization efforts, many of these have been since the beginning of the 20th Century. The lengthier, but in some ways less specific, history of terminology related to African Americans in the census, seems worthier of analysis for the purposes of this paper. The *Oxford English Dictionary Online* was used to explore the definitions of these words, which can be compared to the maps and historical and legal events and issues discussed above.

The word “colored” appears most related to this discussion in the *OED Online*’s definition 2b, which reads: “Having a skin other than ‘white’; *esp.* wholly or partly of black or ‘coloured’ descent. In *S. Afr.* Of mixed black or brown and white descent; also (with capital initial), of or belonging to the population group of such mixed descent.” Definition 2c is also worth noting, as it simply states: Of or belonging to black people.” Here, we see possible attachments to the terms “non-white” as well as “black” and “other” – and even the notion that “colored” indicates a *non-white* “mixed descent.”

“Negro” has a massive definition within the *OED Online*, but the various definitions held under the first definition suffice for this discussion. Definition 1b is considered both specific and historical in nature. It states: “A slave (or enfranchised slave) of black African origin or descent, *esp.* in the Southern states of America prior to the Abolition of slavery in 1865.” (OED Online, 2011) Definition 1c is most inflammatory in nature (though obsolete), and one could argue for ties to racism as well as racial passing or deception, as mentioned earlier in this paper – it reads: “to wash a Negro (white) : to attempt an impossible task.” (OED Online, 2011) Lastly, definition 1a is currently accepted: “A member of a dark-skinned group of peoples originally

native to sub-Saharan Africa; a person of black African origin or descent. In early use also applied to other dark-skinned peoples, esp. Moors.” While this definition seems the least inflammatory of the three included here, it also carries with it part of this paper’s purpose – not only does it refer to Africans in various ways, it also refers to Moors – even though through “early use.” “Moors” consist of another group not completely bounded by their geography, and thusly also do not always have a common continent or country of origin.

The *OED Online*’s 6th definition under “black” leads with: “A ‘black’ man or woman (in various senses) and continues with 6a, which reads: “A person with ‘black’ skin; a black African, an African American, or other member of a dark-skinned people.” A note under 6a informs the reader that: “In this sense *black* appears to be a translation of *Negro*, which was in earlier use.” So, here, we have an extension or redefinition or updated term for “Negro” along with the statement “or other member of a dark-skinned people” – which could result in the enumerator-generated classification or self-identification of *many* individuals as “black” who would not necessarily otherwise identify with the black population.

Surprisingly, or perhaps *unsurprisingly*, there is a definition of “non-white” – at least in the vast resource that is the *OED*. Significantly, the first known use of the term “non-white”, as cited by the *OED* occurs in 1864 and its usage fascinates, under the lens of the 1860 Census. The *OED* quotes F. C. Bowen’s 2nd edition of *Logic*: “The Exclusive proposition, ‘None but Whites are civilized’, is really complex; it contains one direct assertion, respecting all non-Whites, that they are *not* civilized.” (OED Online, 2011) In referring back to the 1860 Census, we again note the terminology related to American

Indians, in that they are categorized as “Civilized” or “Tribe” Indians. Hoffman states, “In attempting to determine who is White, who is Black, and who is otherwise non-White, both the legislatures and the courts have struggled with the fluidity of “racial” categories” (Yang, 2005-2006) Further along that train of thought, Yang writes that the “legal recognition of non-White identity has remained significant, primarily in three contexts: race discrimination claims, affirmative action, and federal programs for members of federally recognized Indian tribes.” (Hoffman, 2004)

Perhaps the most enlightening definition of “other” exists as 4a, as listed in the *OED Online* -- “Remaining from a specified or implied group of two or (in later use occas.) more; opposite; alternative” – or as 4b, which reads: “With a plural noun: designating the remainder of a number of like people, objects, etc.; the rest of the —.” (OED, 2011) Thus, within the census, “other” comprises the groups who are not named, who are accounted for by number, but not by name, and those who *do not self-identify* with categories established for/during a particular census. This category can indeed undermine the statistical and tabulation efforts of the Census Bureau. Yang states:

“The Census position also supports the strong popular sentiment that racial identity is a matter of individual autonomy and self-determination. Self-identification is usually also most accurate.” [...] “The most powerful reason for self-identification is the common wisdom that our society now lives in, or at least is striving to create, a color-blind society. In a color-blind society, racial designation is relevant only as a vital statistic, like hair or eye color, and ought not have any social or legal significance.” (Hoffman, 2004)

If we agree that self-identification is most accurate, this reflects positively on the work of the censuses – yet the word “other” theoretically allows for the representation of one’s

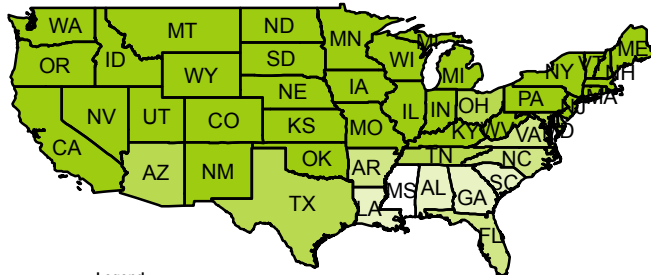
self as *not* of the other categories, whether this is truth or not, whether the identification of “other” is satisfactory or not.

Now we turn to the maps related to the 1980 Census. The 1980 population distribution maps at the end of this section display a number of demographics of interest. These maps allow for the display of: (1) populations of Spanish-origin individuals (including Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban and “others”), (2) populations of American Indian, Eskimos, and Aleuts, and (3) populations of American Indians (including those on reservations, those on tribal trust lands, and those identifying as not on either of those types of locations). Yet, it is in this census (1980) that we see Blacks.

If we agree that the expansion and shifts in racial classification across the U. S. Census imply or indicate an arbitrariness in terminology, and compare this to the heightening of specificity related to *some categories*, one could argue that race has not *always* been treated arbitrarily – but only for some.

1950: U. S. Population Distribution

1950 Population: Whites



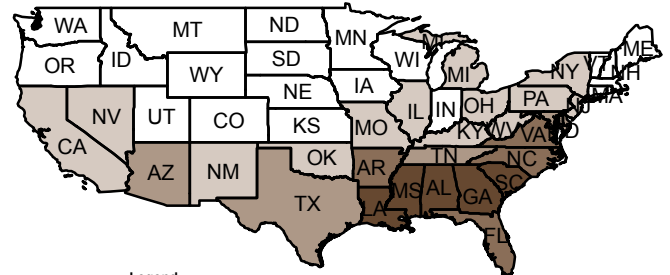
Legend

States

State Population - Whites, 1950

60% or less (incl. territories)
61% - 70%
71% - 80%
81% - 90%
91% or greater

1950 Population: Non-Whites, Total



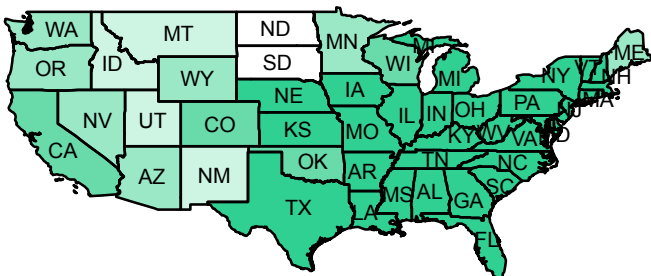
Legend

States

State Population - Total Non-White, 1950

5% or less (incl. territories)
6% - 10%
11% - 20%
21% - 30%
31% or greater

1950 Population: Non-White Negroes



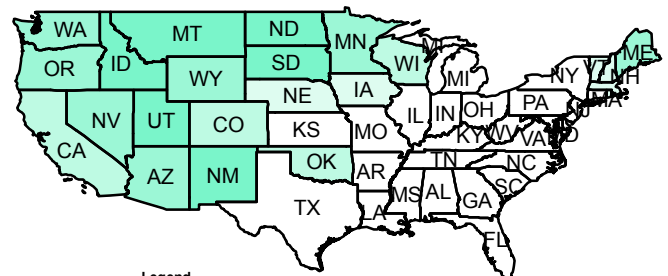
Legend

States

State Population - Total Non-White Negro
vs. Total Non-White, 1950

5% or less (incl. territories)
6% - 25%
26% - 50%
51% - 75%
76% or greater

1950 Population: Other Non-Whites*, Total



Legend

States

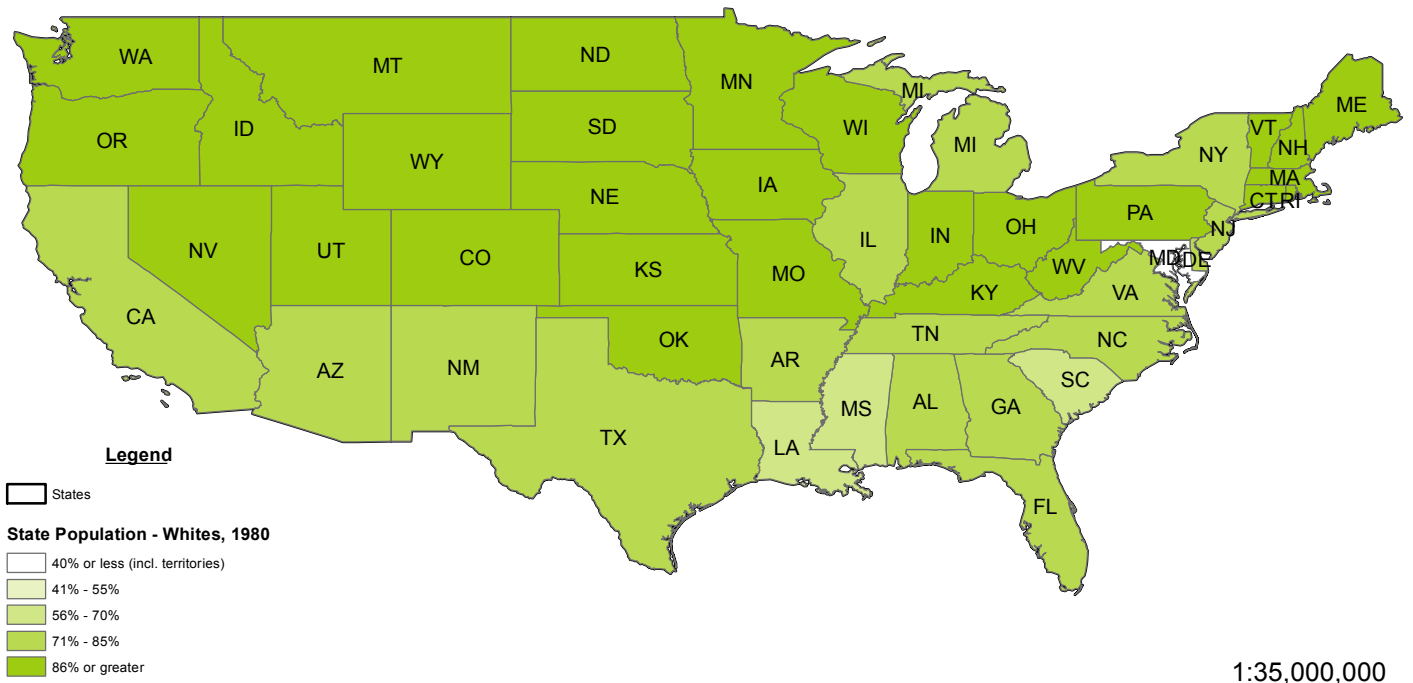
State Population - Total Non-White Other, 1950

5% or less (incl. territories)
6% - 25%
26% - 50%
51% - 75%
76% or greater

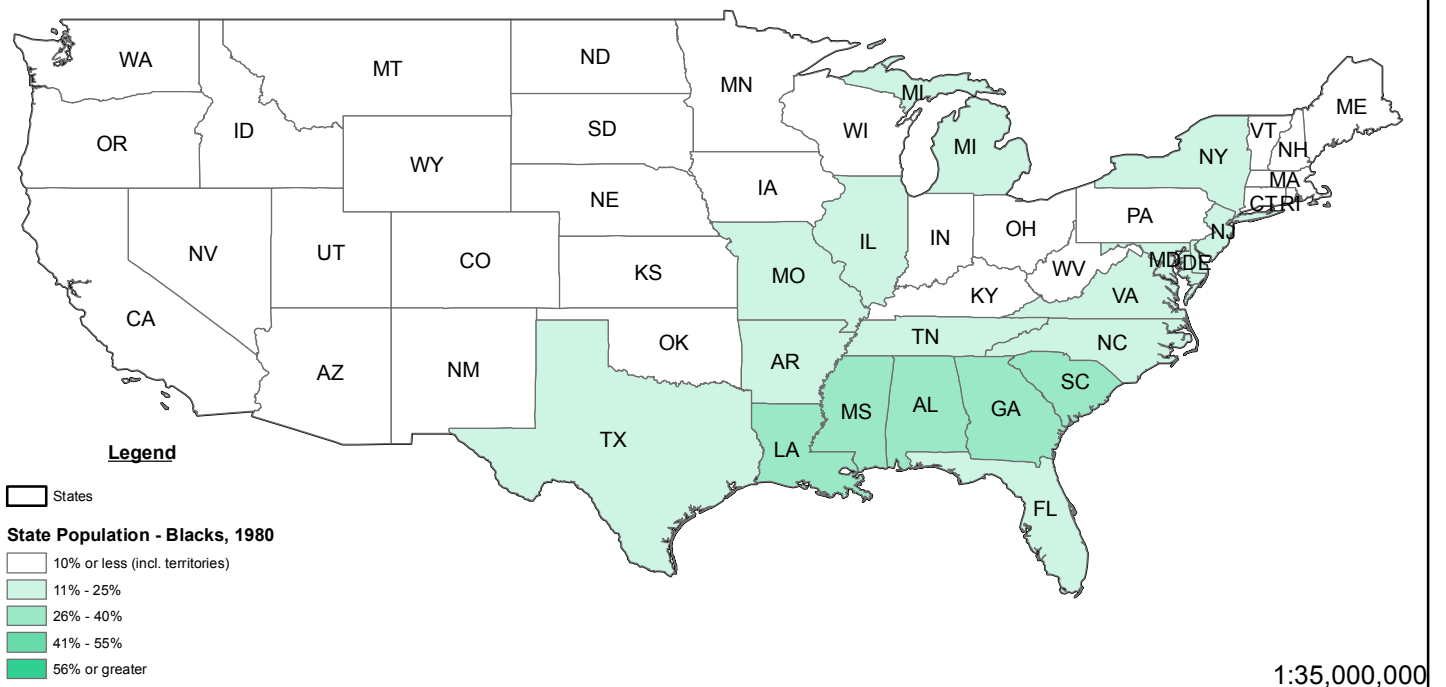
*Includes: Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and other, other non-whites.

1980: U. S. Population Distribution

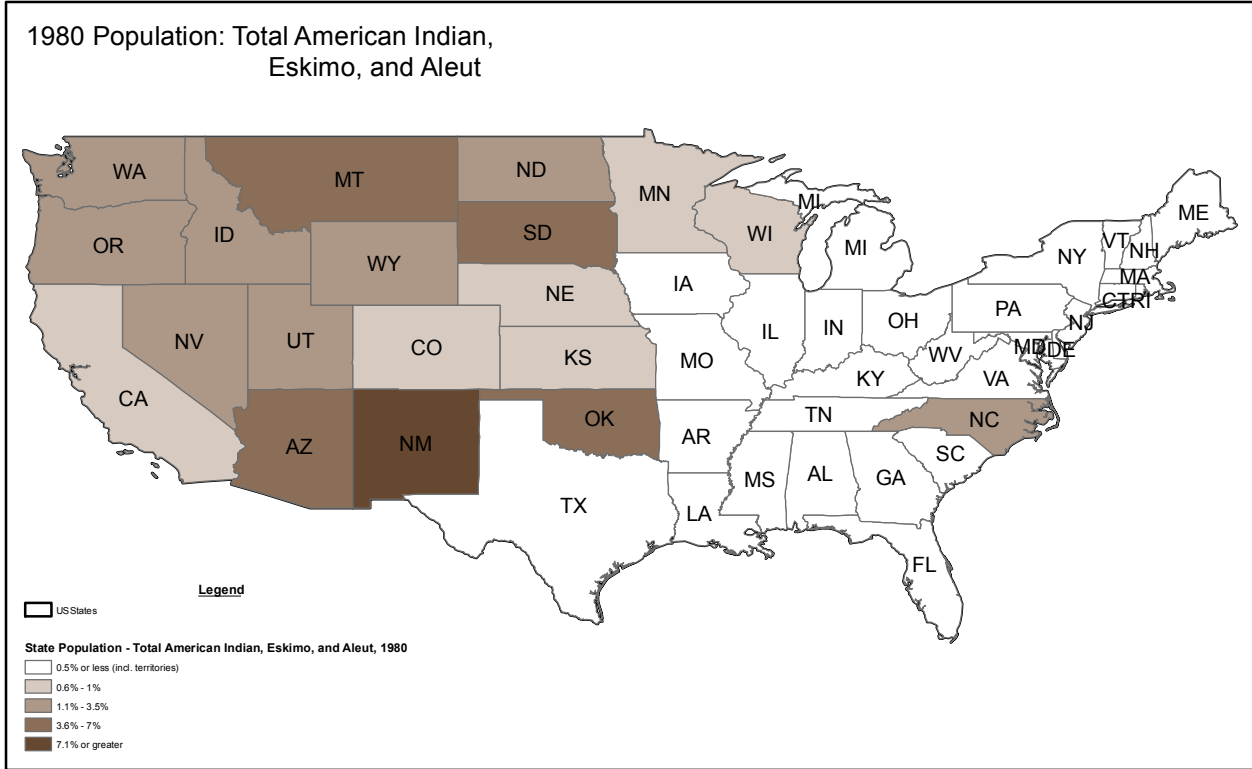
1980 Population: Whites vs. Total U. S. Population



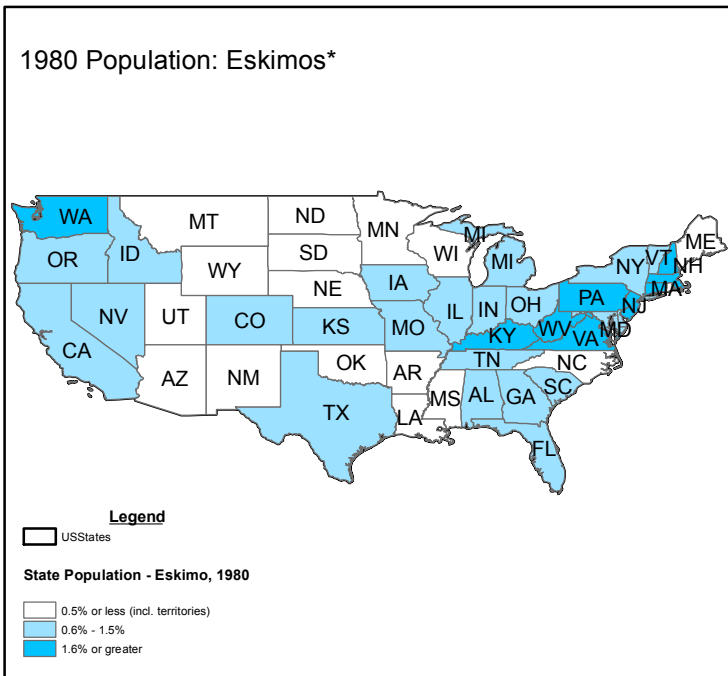
1980 Population: Blacks vs. Total U. S. Population



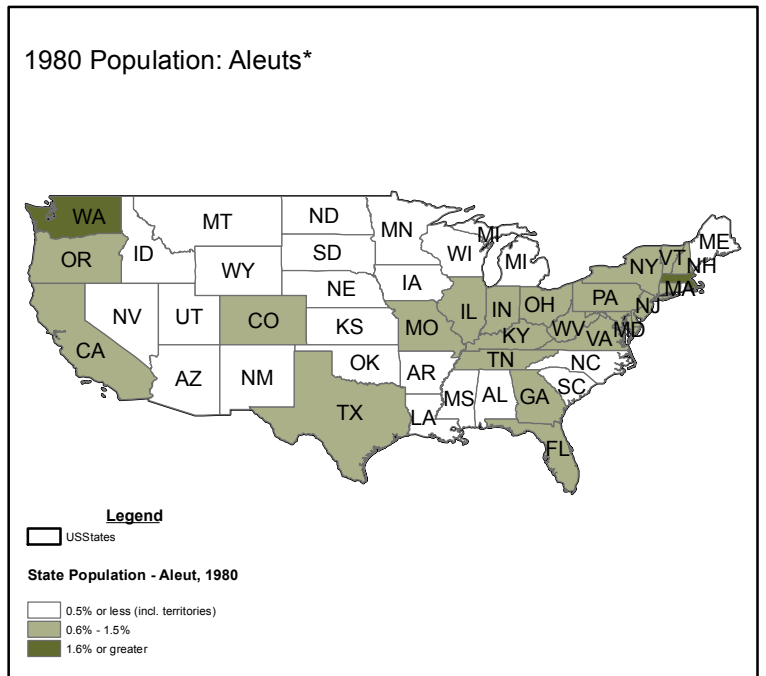
1980: U. S. Population Distribution



1:40,000,000



1:68,000,000



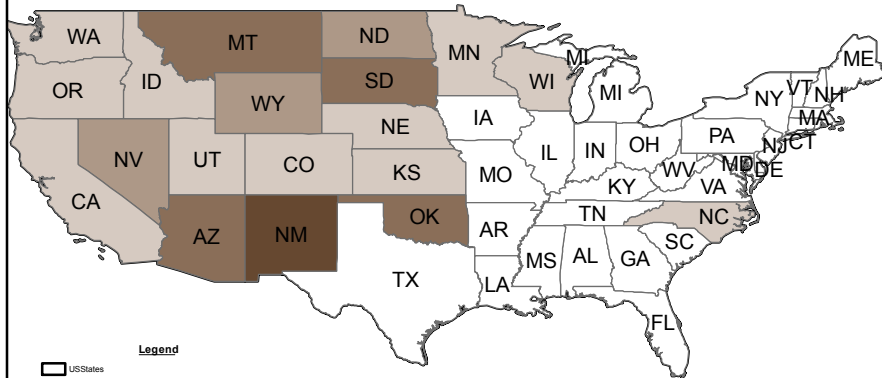
1:68,000,000

*Here, Eskimos and Aleuts populations are vs. the Total for American Indian, Eskimos, and Aleuts

Source: U. S. Census (1980)

1980: U. S. Population Distribution

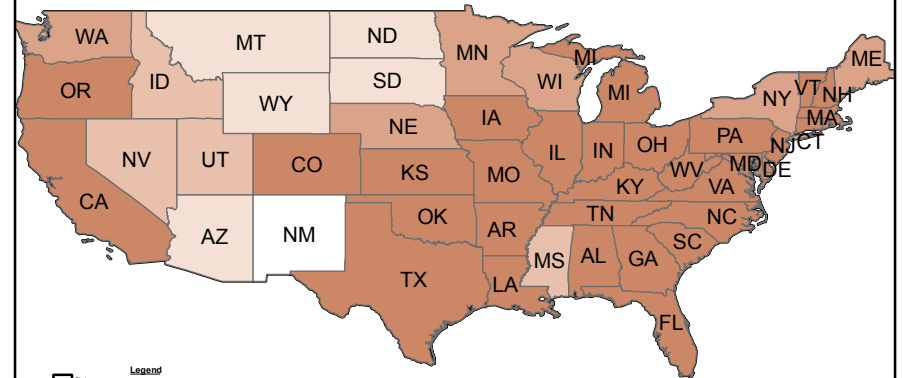
1980 Population: Total American Indian



Legend
 US States
 State Population - Total American Indian, 1980
 0.5% or less (incl. territories)
 0.6% - 1.5%
 1.6% - 4%
 4.1% - 7.5%
 7.6% or greater

1:55,000,000

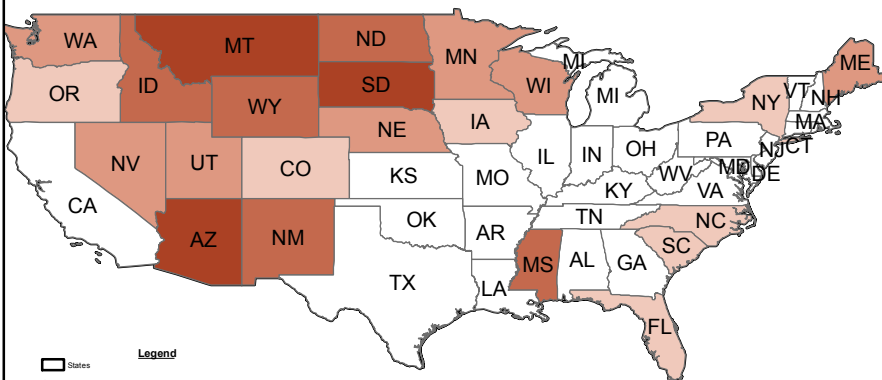
1980 Population: American Indians Off Reservation & Off Tribal Trust Land



Legend
 States
 State Population - American Indians Off Reservation & Not On Tribal Trust Land, 1980
 20% or less (incl. territories)
 20% - 40%
 40% - 60%
 60% - 80%
 80% or greater

1:55,000,000

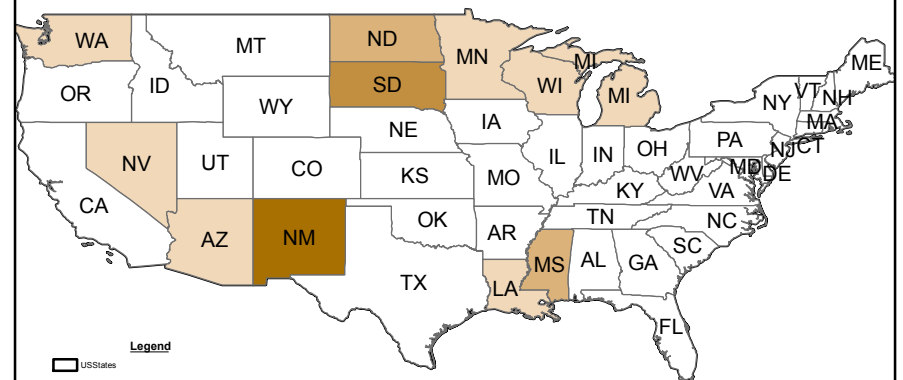
1980 Population: American Indians on Reservations



Legend
 States
 State Population - American Indians on Reservations, 1980
 0% or less (incl. territories)
 0% - 20%
 21% - 40%
 41% - 60%
 61% or greater

1:55,000,000

1980 Population: American Indians on Tribal Trust Land

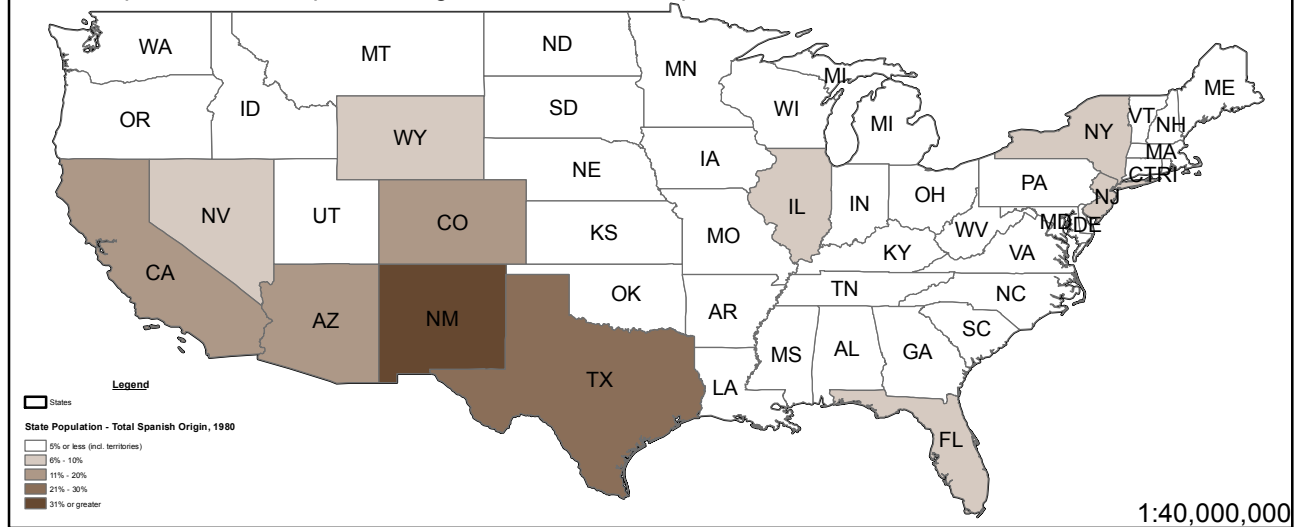


Legend
 US States
 State Population - American Indians on Tribal Trust Land, 1980
 0% (incl. territories)
 1% - 5%
 6% - 10%
 11% - 15%
 16% or greater

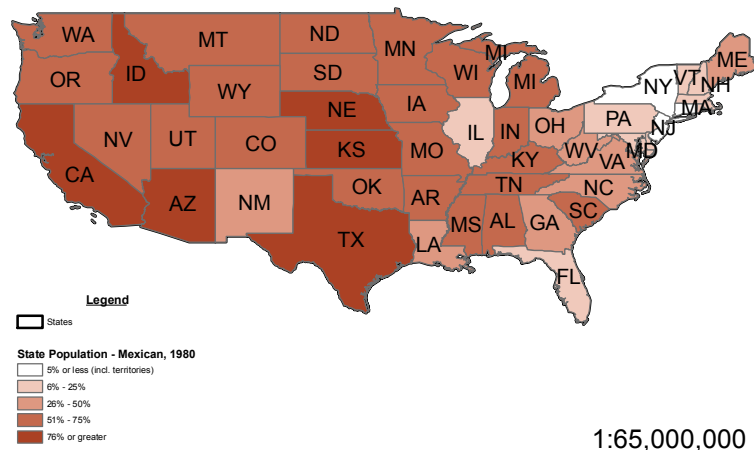
1:55,000,000

1980: U. S. Population Distribution

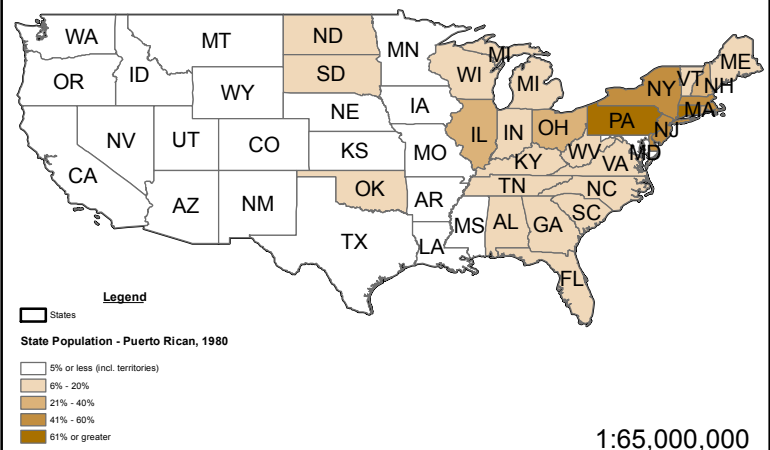
1980 Population: Total Spanish Origin vs. Total U. S. Population



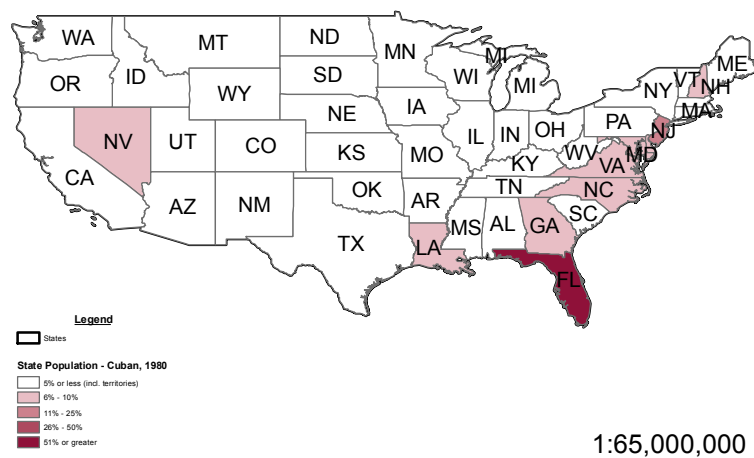
1980 Population: Mexican vs. Total Spanish Origin



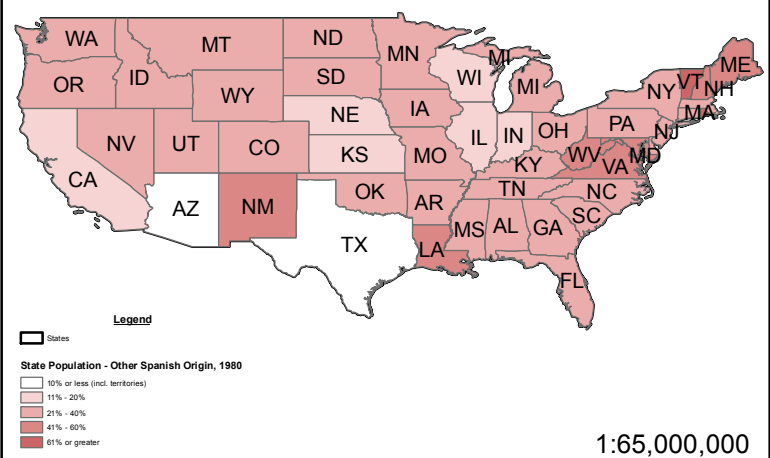
1980 Population: Puerto Rican vs. Total Spanish Origin



1980 Population: Cuban vs. Total Spanish Origin



1980 Population: Other Spanish vs. Total Spanish Origin



Conclusion

Many arguments exist, nationally and internationally, politically and sociologically and in ethics, regarding the nature, purpose, and practices of racial classification and categorization. Accordingly, Hoffman writes, “Beliefs and assumptions expressed in public discourse about racial identity remain generally consistent with traditional racial classifications schemas, including the one-drop rule.” (Hoffman, 2004)

Unfortunately, in the changes since 1980, it is clear that the more current schemes of the United States Census for classifying race still allow for the creation of inaccurate data. While the 2000 census questionnaire allowed individuals to check more than one box in indicating their race, and while individuals are no longer *forced* to choose just one category for racial self-identification, “the Census now *assigns* a mono-racial category to individuals who check more than one category.” (Yang, 2005-2006) Over 6 million people in the United States took advantage of this option of multi-ethnic self-identification via multi-box selection. Additionally, as of the 2000 Census questionnaire, “an individual who has selected a combination of White and one or more minority races is classified as one of the minority races.” (Yang, 2005-2006) Understandably, federally funded programs and the federal administration, particularly with a mind toward anti-discrimination and civil rights monitoring, require some form of data to carry out their work effectively. It is also the contemporary hope of the Census (though it was not for

many years) that individuals are the best judges of their racial make up and are therefore the best source of this identification.

The question becomes, if historic and current events and issues, both legal and social, have such a great impact on identity, the willingness and way in which we self-identify, and the rights and privileges of our citizens, is there anything to be done for the “fuzzy data” that no doubt abounds within the Census? How *do* we create a “more perfect distribution” within our decennial touchstone?

Hoffman, in particular, has several ideas, often vetted through a lens with international scope as well as research into the United Nations’ recommendations. We read her suggestion: “‘Race’ should be replaced in future statutory texts and jurisprudence by other, more precise terminology. The substitute wording can include ‘color,’ ‘continent of origin,’ ‘national origin,’ and ‘descent from ancestors of a particular color, national origin, or religion.’” (Hoffman, 2004) On the other hand, recognizing the ever-present complexity of looking for statistically-gatherable and practically tabulated data when combined with individuals and self-identification, Yang opines: “if one takes the problem of racial identification seriously, it is unlikely that an effective solution will be simple or available on the cheap.”

Thus, despite any current dissatisfaction with the 2000 Census’ questionnaire, it is possible that over the past 150-200 years, part of the overall trend of the U. S. Census has been in effort to create a harmonious tabulation of the cacophonous demographics of the United States.

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