# Fertility Differentials across Race-Ethnicity and Generational Status: Incorporating Non-Hispanic Immigrants

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# Background

- Research on race-ethnic fertility differentials in the U.S. focuses largely on Hispanics' higher fertility rates compared to whites
- However, the U.S. draws immigrants from other parts of the world
   Asians recently surpassed Hispanics as the largest group of new immigrants
- More research is needed to understand whether, and how, other raceethnic groups vary in their fertility behavior across generations

#### **Prior Research**

- Studies have found race-ethnic differences in immigrant fertility, but many of these are now dated
- Prior work has often failed to consider differences in the age structure of race-ethnic-immigrant groups
- Should focus on completed fertility among older women to account for the age structure of immigrant groups
- Mexican women's high fertility is largely explained by the large proportion of foreign-born women, who are generally young
- There is evidence that among Mexican women, fertility initially decreases with generational change but increases between the second and third generation

#### **Present Study: Research Questions**

We examine completed fertility among women aged 40–44 to account for the younger age structure of immigrants.

- Is the higher fertility an immigrant factor, or is it unique to Mexican women?
- Does generational change in fertility go in the same direction across race-ethnic groups, or does it vary?

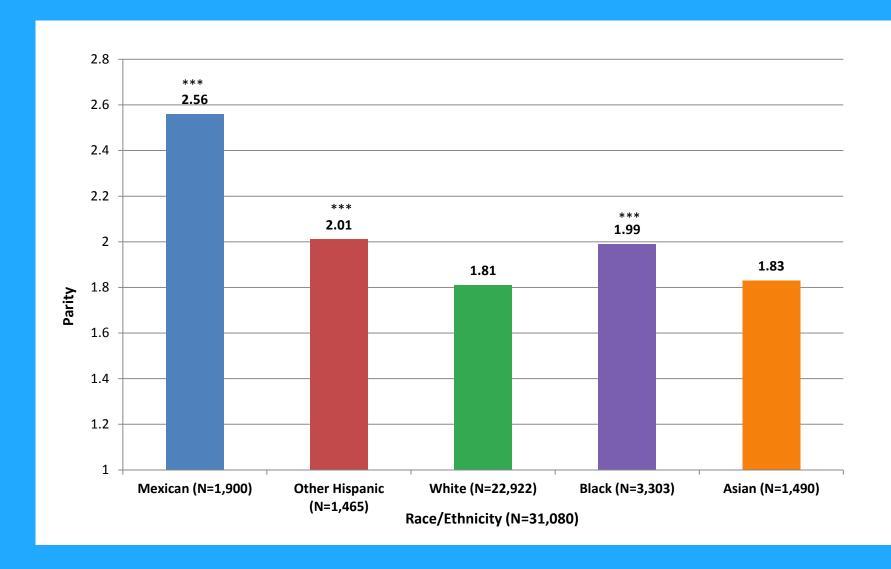
We also explore differences in timing of the entry into parenthood among young women aged 18–24 and completion of childbearing among the 40–

- Are there race-ethnic-generational differences in the proportion of young women who have had a birth?
- Are there race-ethnic-generational differences in the age at last birth among women 40-44?

#### Data and Sample

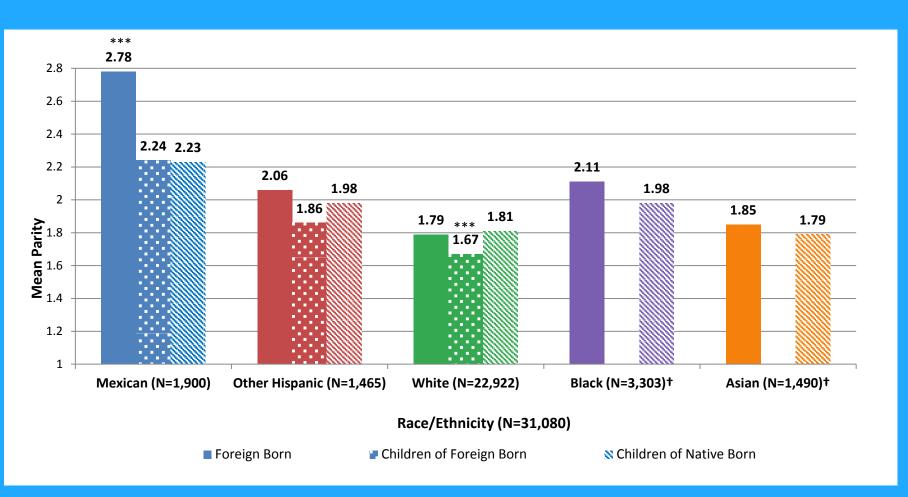
- Current Population Survey (CPS) June Fertility Supplement, 2000–2010
- Mexican, other Hispanic, black, Asian, and white women, both foreign and native born
- Aged 40-44: N=31,080
- Aged 18-24: N=34,620
- Key variables
- Completed fertility (parity) among 40–44
  Age at last birth among 40–44
- Has had a birth among 18–24

# Figure 1: Weighted Mean Parity by Race/Ethnicity for Women Aged 40–44



As expected, Mexican women overall have much higher completed fertility than other women (including other Hispanic women). Significant differences (ref=white) are marked with asterisks.

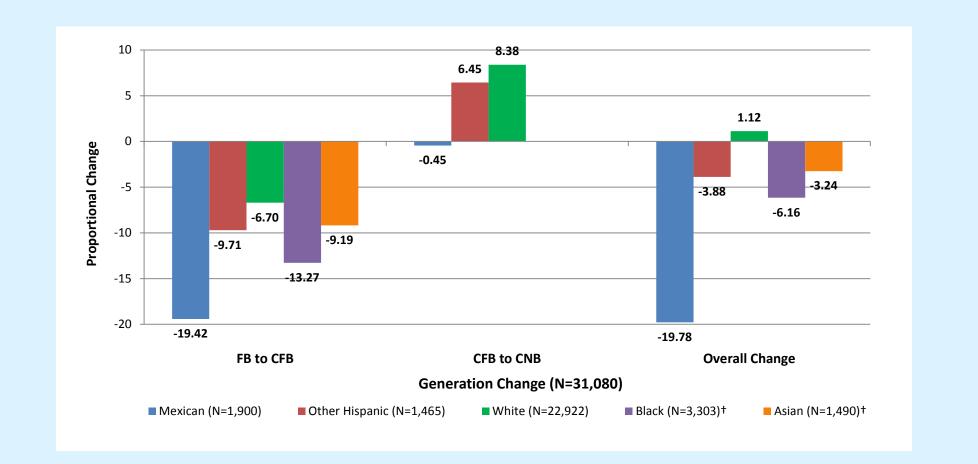
#### Figure 2: Weighted Mean Parity by Race/Ethnicity and Generation for Women Aged 40–44



However, differences across groups are much smaller among native-born women for both the adult children of foreign born (CFB) and children of native born (CNB). Differences across generations are only significant for Mexicans and whites (ref=CNB).

† There are too few Asian and black children of foreign-born parents to produce reliable estimates..

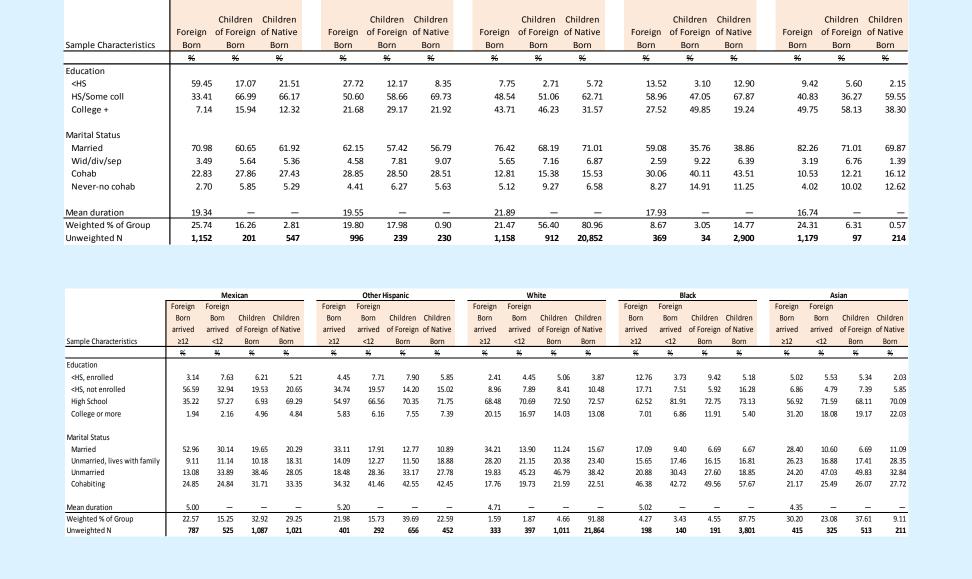
# Figure 3: Proportional Change in Mean Parity by Race/Ethnicity and Generation for Women Aged 40–44



This figure quantifies changes across generation shown in Figure 2. While parity drops across generations from the foreign born to the children of immigrants, this is not the complete picture: Parity goes back up for all groups except Mexicans (where it remains relatively stable) among the children of native-born parents. This suggests increasing significance of race-ethnicity as their proximity to the migration experience fades away.

†There are too few Asian and black children of foreign-born parents to produce reliable estimates..

## Tables 1 and 2: Descriptive Characteristics of Foreign-Born Women Aged 40–44 and 18–24 by Race/Ethnicity and Generation



# Table 3: Zero-Order and Adjusted Race-Ethnic Effects from Poisson Regressions on Fertility by Generation for Women Aged 40–44

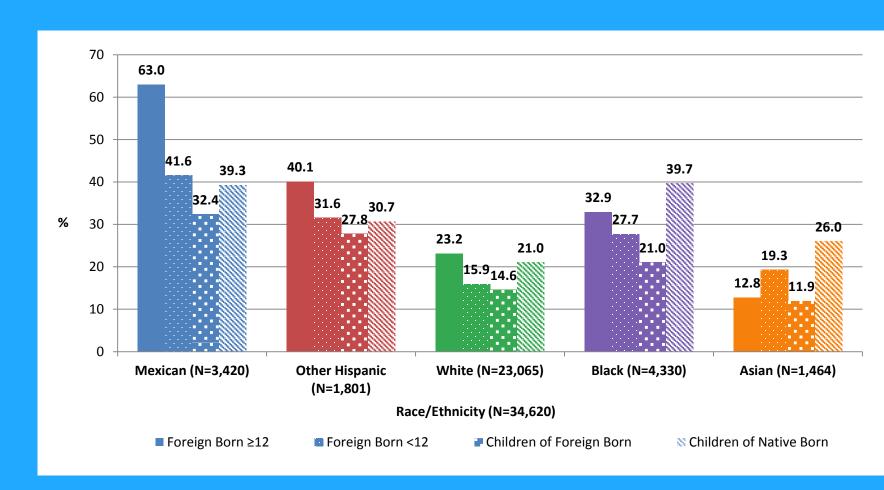
	Generation					
	Foreign Born		Children of Foreign Born		<b>Children of Native Born</b>	
Race/Ethnicity	Zero-Order	Adjusted	Zero-Order	Adjusted	Zero-Order	Adjusted
Mexican	0.44 ***	0.24 ***	0.29 ***	0.25 ***	0.19 ***	0.15 ***
Other Hispanic	0.15 ***	0.07 *	0.11 *	0.08	0.08 +	0.09
Black	0.13 **	0.17 ***			0.07 ***	0.14 †
Asian	0.02	0.02			0.03	0.04
(White)						
† p<.10, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001						

Adjusted models control for duration of residence (where applicable), education, marital status, age, and geographic region. While a substantial portion of the race-ethnic effect among Mexicans and Hispanics is explained with controls, significance tests show that controls explain more of the race-ethnic differences among the children of native parents than among the foreign-born women.

#### Quantum or Timing?

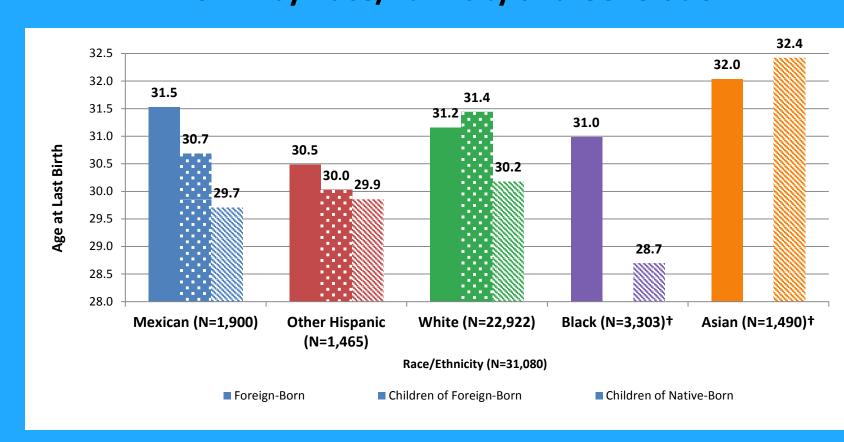
- Differences in completed fertility may represent actual differences in fertility quantum, timing, or both.
- To explore whether there are differences in the timing of entry into parenthood, next steps examine the proportion of younger women (18–24) who have had a child.
- With a larger sample size, we are able to further disaggregate those who immigrated as children (the 1.5 generation) and those who arrived at older ages.
- We also explore whether there are differences in the timing of finishing parenthood by looking at the mean age at last birth among women 40–44.

# Figure 4: Weighted Percent of Women Aged 18–24 with Any Children by Race/Ethnicity and Generation



The percent of young women who have had a child declines with generation initially, then increases among women born to native parents. Foreign-born Asian women who arrived at or after age 12, however, follow a different pattern, with a lower percent than foreign-born women who arrived prior to age 12 (the 1.5 generation).

### Figure 5: Mean Age at Last Birth among Women aged 40–44 by Race/Ethnicity and Generation



On average, most women had their last birth about 10 to 14 years prior to the survey. For Mexican, other Hispanic, and white women, the foreign born continued to bear children later than the children of native-born parents. Asian women see a small increase in age at last birth. Overall, generational change drops the age last birth among black women by nearly 3 years.

† There are too few Asian and black children of foreign-born parents to produce reliable estimates.

#### Conclusions

- This cross-sectional study does not permit causal conclusions about the association between marital status and well-being.
- The contribution of foreign-born women to American fertility rates varies by race/ethnicity, in terms of both quantum and timing
- Foreign-born women aged 40–44 have higher fertility than the nativeborn
- Mexican immigrant women have significantly higher fertility than other immigrant women net of other factors—thus it is not only an immigrant factor
- Predictors explain more racial/ethnic variation in fertility with subsequent generations, suggesting that different mechanisms are in play across generations

#### Limitations

- Cross-sectional surveys
- Small cell sizes for Asian and Black women who are children of immigrants
- Aggregated racial-ethnic groups
- Limited availability of pre-migration factors (e.g., births before migration, reason for migrating, pre-migration SES)

#### **Future Directions**

- Further explore starting patterns among women aged 18 to 24
- Assess how well correlates explain earlier fertility among women aged 18 to 24
- Further disaggregate country of origin
- Examine synthetic cohorts over more survey years
- Explore role of partner characteristics

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