

**The Foreign-born in California: Place of Origin, Region of  
Residence, Race, Time of Entry, and Citizenship**

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The *CCSRE Race and Ethnicity in California: Demographics Report Series* documents the current socioeconomic, educational, and demographic status of ethnic and racial minority populations in California. Census 2000 data are being used as they become available to examine racial/ethnic diversity, residential segregation, household and family composition, language use, educational attainment, occupation and work status, income, and poverty. The series is made possible by a grant from the James Irvine Foundation, and is accessible on-line at the CCSRE website: [www.stanford.edu/dept/csre](http://www.stanford.edu/dept/csre).

Twenty-six percent of California’s residents were born outside of the U.S., more than double the national proportion (11 percent). These numbers would be larger if more accurate counts of illegal immigrants could be ascertained. Using data available from the 2000 Census, this report summarizes characteristics of the foreign-born population in California, including place of origin, region of residence within the state, race, time of entry to the U.S., and citizenship rates, and examines county and regional distributions of foreign-born people in the state. Statistics about place of birth (within the U.S.) for the native-born population living in California are also presented.

## Foreign-born population

Race, ethnicity, and ancestry responses on the census do not indicate whether individuals are native to the U.S. or foreign-born—a differentiation often accompanied by differences in socioeconomic status and political participation. To focus on the one fourth of California’s population that is foreign-born<sup>1</sup>, this section summarizes characteristics information about place of origin, region of residence within the state, race, time of entry to the U.S., and citizenship status. It also presents county and regional distributions of foreign-born people in the state.

### Place of Origin

Table 1 contains breakdowns of place of origin for the foreign-born population in California and the U.S.; using aggregations congruent with Census Bureau categories, areas considered include: Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Europe, Oceania, North America, South America, and Central America. In this analysis, Mexico is also included as a separate category since it accounts for a significant portion of California’s foreign-born population, 44.3 percent. Mexico and Central America combined account for over half of the foreign-born population in the state, 52.5 percent, compared to 36.0 percent in the U.S. overall. Places in Asia make up the second most common area of origin, accounting for 32.9 percent of California’s foreign-born population and 26.4 percent of the foreign-born population overall in the U.S.. Also noteworthy, the Caribbean only

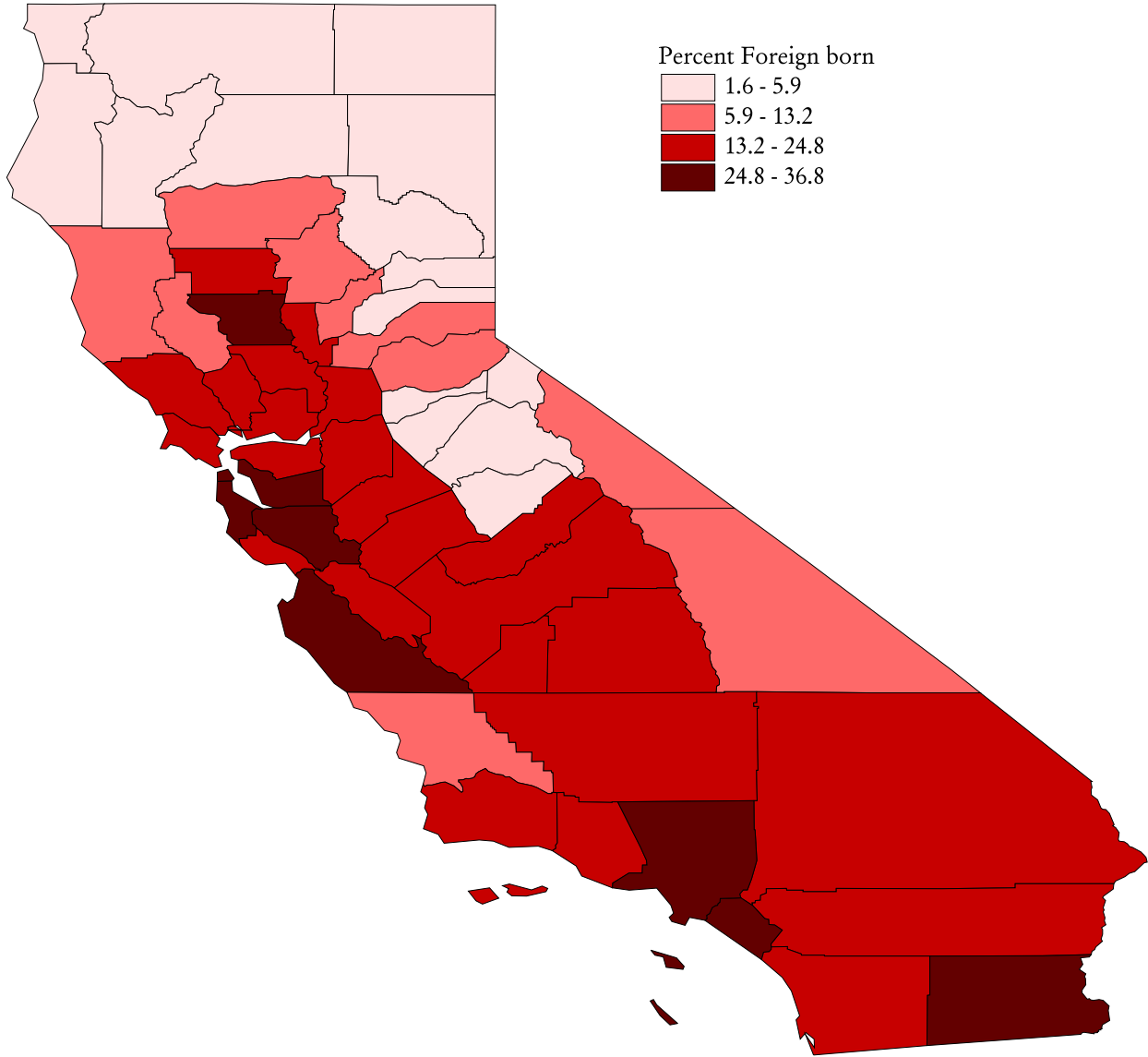
**Table 1: Place of Origin of Foreign-born Population in California and the U.S.**

	CALIFORNIA		UNITED STATES	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mexico	3,928,701	44.3	9,177,487	29.5
Asia	2,918,642	32.9	8,226,254	26.4
Central America (excluding Mexico)	725,339	8.2	2,026,150	6.5
Europe	696,578	7.9	4,915,557	15.8
South America	202,628	2.3	1,930,271	6.2
Northern America	141,779	1.6	829,442	2.7
Africa	113,255	1.3	881,300	2.8
Caribbean	70,135	0.8	2,953,066	9.5
Oceania	67,131	0.8	168,046	0.5

Source: 2000 Census (SF3)

<sup>1</sup> The proportion of foreign-born in the state is likely larger than census data indicate because the number of undocumented immigrants is difficult to determine.

# Map 1: Percent Foreign-born, by County



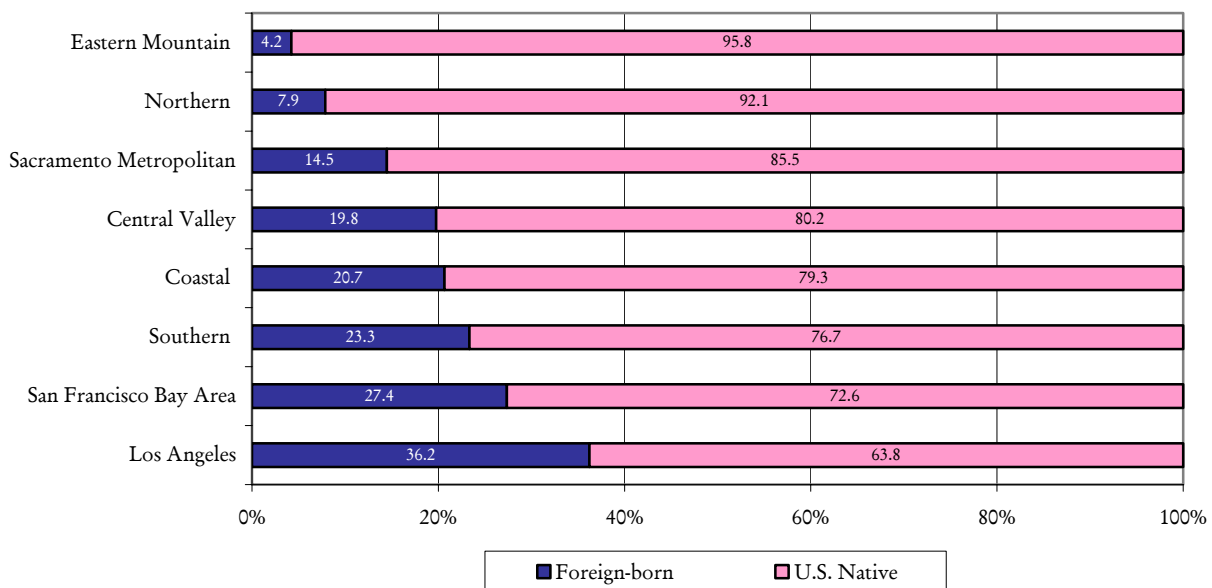
Source: 2000 Census (SF3)

accounts for 0.8 percent of the foreign-born population in California, contrasted with 9.5 percent of the foreign-born population in the country as a whole. A detailed list of countries of origin for the foreign-born population in California and the U.S. is provided in an appendix table.

### Location of Foreign-born Population in California

To depict where in California the largest concentrations of foreign-born people reside, Map 1 illustrates percentages for each county, and Figure 1 presents the data regionally<sup>2</sup>. In Los Angeles, over a third of the population (36.2 percent) is foreign-born, as is 27.4 percent of the San Francisco Bay Area. At the other end of the spectrum, the Eastern Mountain and Northern regions of the state have the smallest percentages of foreign-born people residing in them, 4.2 and roughly 7.9 percent, respectively.

**Figure 1: Percent Foreign-born by Region in California**



### Foreign-born Population by Race

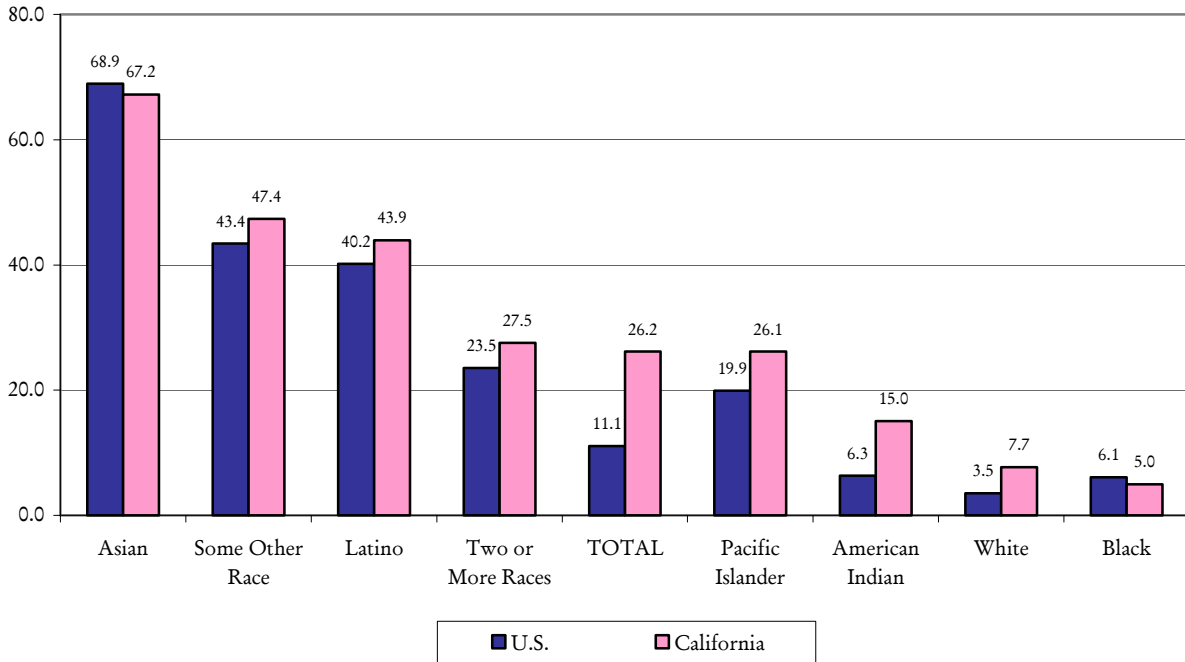
The proportion of each race group that is foreign-born varies in California and the nation, as shown in Figure 2. Focusing on California, 67.2 percent of Asians are foreign-born, followed by 47.4 percent of people identified as Some Other Race and 43.9 percent of Latinos, while smaller percentages of Blacks (5.0 percent), Whites (7.7 percent), and American Indians (15.0 percent) fall

<sup>2</sup> The state's 58 counties were divided into the following eight geographic areas:

- Northern: Butte, Colusa, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lassen, Lake, Mendocino, Modoc, Nevada, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Yuba;
- Sacramento Metropolitan: El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, and Yolo;
- San Francisco Bay Area: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, Sonoma;
- Eastern Mountain: Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Inyo, Mariposa, Mono, Tuolumne;
- Central Valley: Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare;
- Coastal: Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Ventura;
- Los Angeles: Los Angeles;
- Southern: Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego.

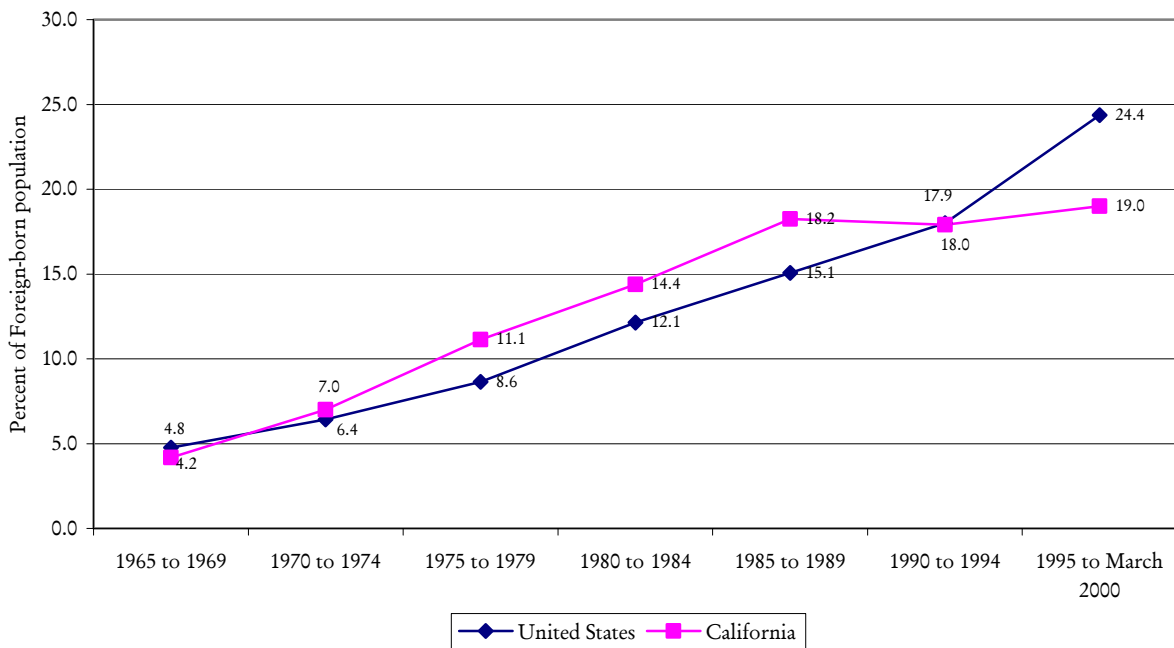
into this category. People identified as Pacific Islander (26.1 percent) or Two or More races (27.5 percent) have foreign-born percentages similar to the state average of 26.2 percent.

**Figure 2: Percent Foreign-born by Race in California and the U.S.**



Time of Entry to the U.S.

**Figure 3: Time of Entry to the U.S. of the Foreign-born Population in California and the U.S.**



In California, 8.1 percent of the foreign-born population came to the U.S. prior to 1965; in the U.S. overall, this number is slightly higher at 10.6 percent. To illustrate year of entry for the foreign-born population who arrived between 1965 and March of 2000 (at the time the census occurred), Figure 3 displays data presented in five year increments for both California and the U.S.. In the country as a whole, the percentage of foreign-born people who entered during each five year time period steadily increased, particularly in the past five years, with nearly a quarter (24.4 percent) of the overall foreign-born population having entered the U.S. between 1995 and 2000. This differs slightly from the California data; though state percentages also increased through 1984, they seem to level off between 1985 and 2000.

Figure 4 allows us to consider the California data regionally. One exception to the state trend is that Sacramento Metropolitan and the San Francisco Bay Area show increases across five year intervals through 2000 in the percentage of the foreign-born population. Almost a quarter of the foreign-born populations in these two regions entered the U.S. between 1995 and 2000. Also noteworthy is that 34.3 percent of the foreign-born population in the Eastern Mountain area of the state arrived to the U.S. prior to 1965, a much higher percentage than any other areas (which range between 6.4 and 16.5 percent).

### Naturalization

Since benefits are afforded to naturalized citizens (in particular, the right to vote and participate in the democratic process of the U.S.), this report next considers rates of naturalization among those who are foreign-born. To become a naturalized citizen, individuals must—among meeting other requirements—swear allegiance to the U.S. giving up prior allegiances to other countries, and promise to support and defend the U.S. constitution and other laws and to serve the country when required (Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2000). Benefits of citizenship include the right to vote and the ability to attain a U.S. passport (allowing travel freedom, plus protection and assistance from the U.S. government when abroad). Citizens are expected to participate in the political process by registering and voting in elections, to serve on a jury when called upon, and to tolerate and respect different opinions, cultures, ethnic groups, and religions.

Of the foreign-born population in California, 39.3 percent have become naturalized (a rate similar to the U.S. overall, at 40.3 percent). To give a more detailed picture of naturalization rates in the state, Map 2 shows the percentage of each county’s foreign-born population that has become naturalized—the darker the shading, the larger the naturalization rate.

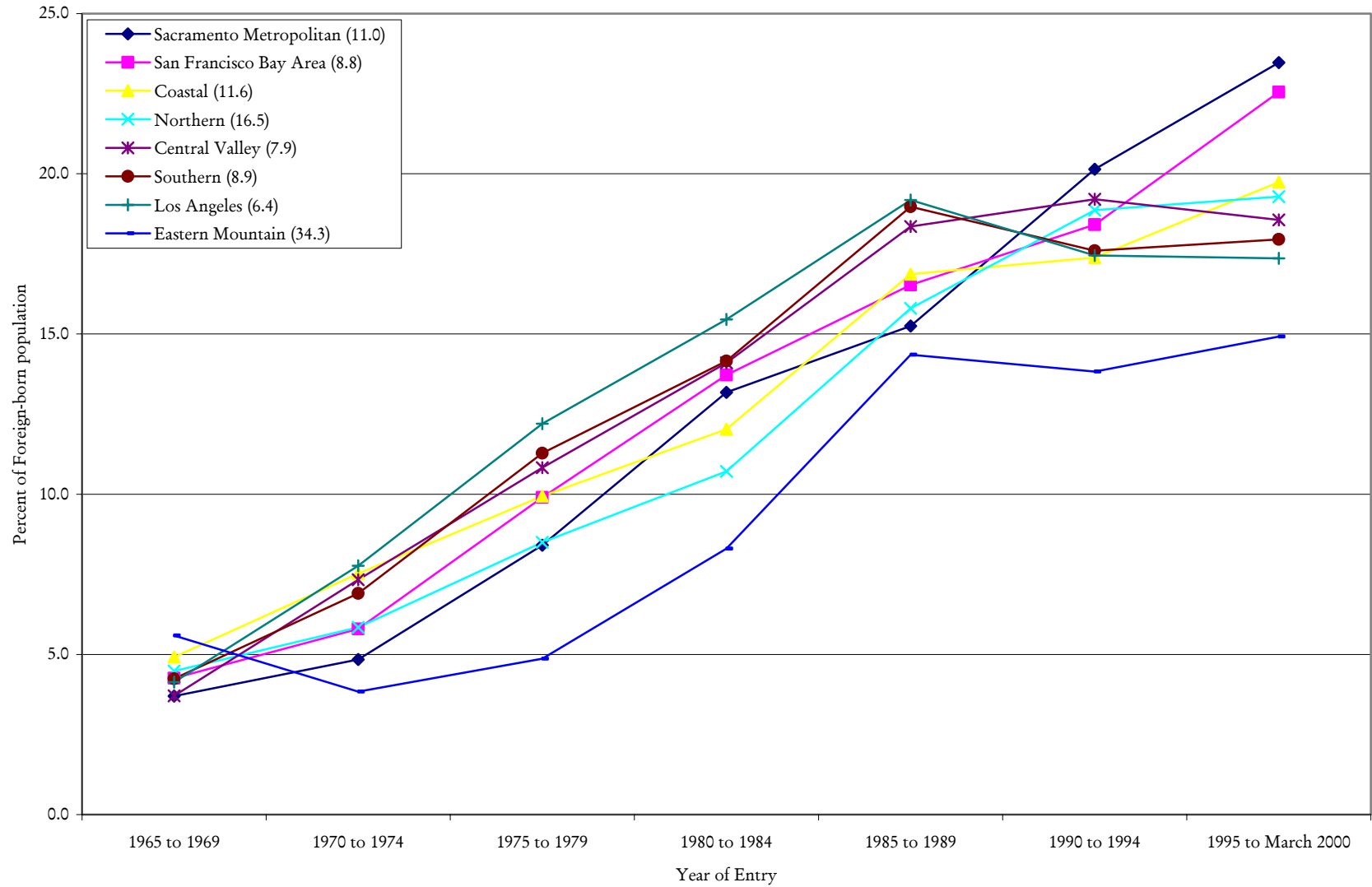
If we examine the state data based on time of entry to the U.S., as shown in Table 2, it is clear that more recent arrivals are less likely to have become naturalized citizens.

**Table 2: Percent Naturalized Citizens of the Foreign-born Population in California and the U.S., by Time of Entry**

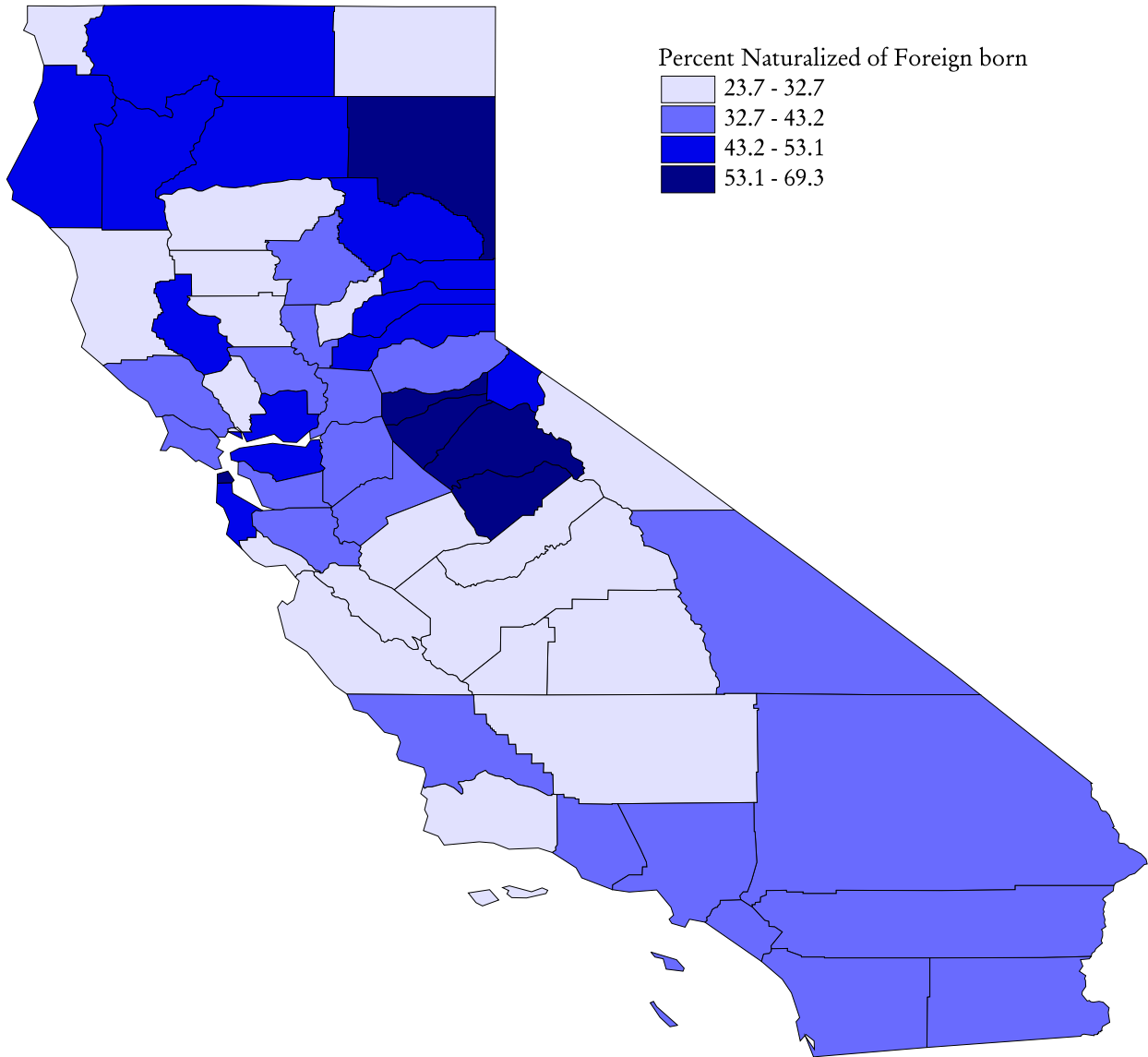
	California	United States
Entered U.S. before 1980	68.6	74.0
Entered U.S. between 1980 and 1989	41.4	44.6
Entered U.S. between 1990 and March 2000	12.9	13.4

Source: 2000 Census (SF3)

**Figure 4: Time of Entry to the U.S. of the Foreign-born Population by Region in California**  
 (Number in parentheses indicates percent in each region who entered the U.S. prior to 1965)



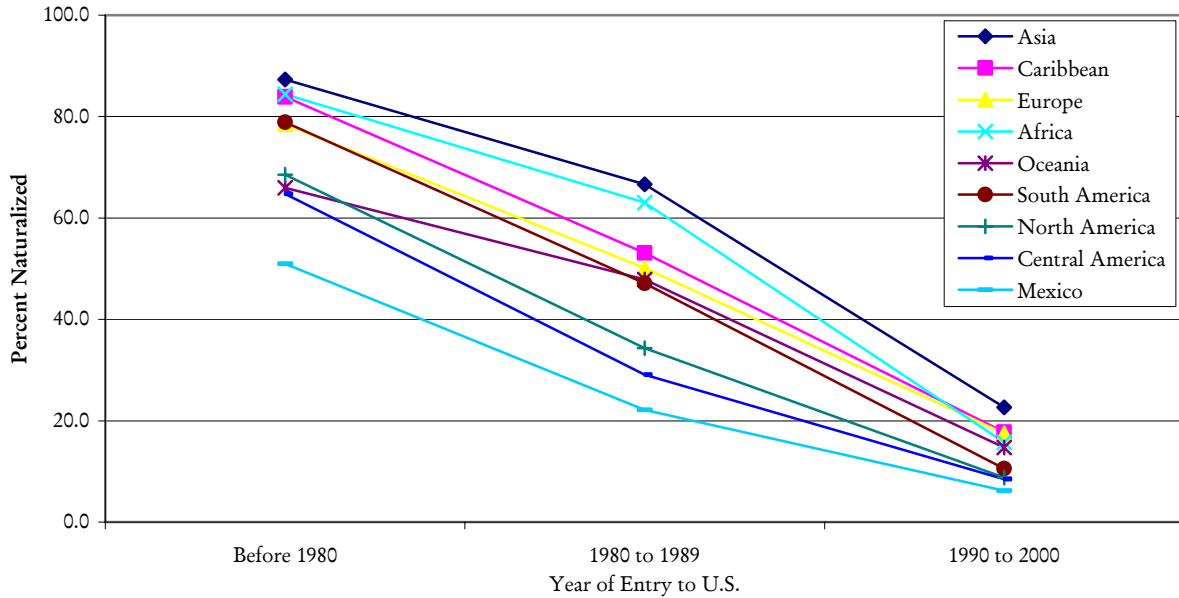
## Map 2: Percent Naturalized of Foreign-born Population, by County



Source: 2000 Census (SF3)

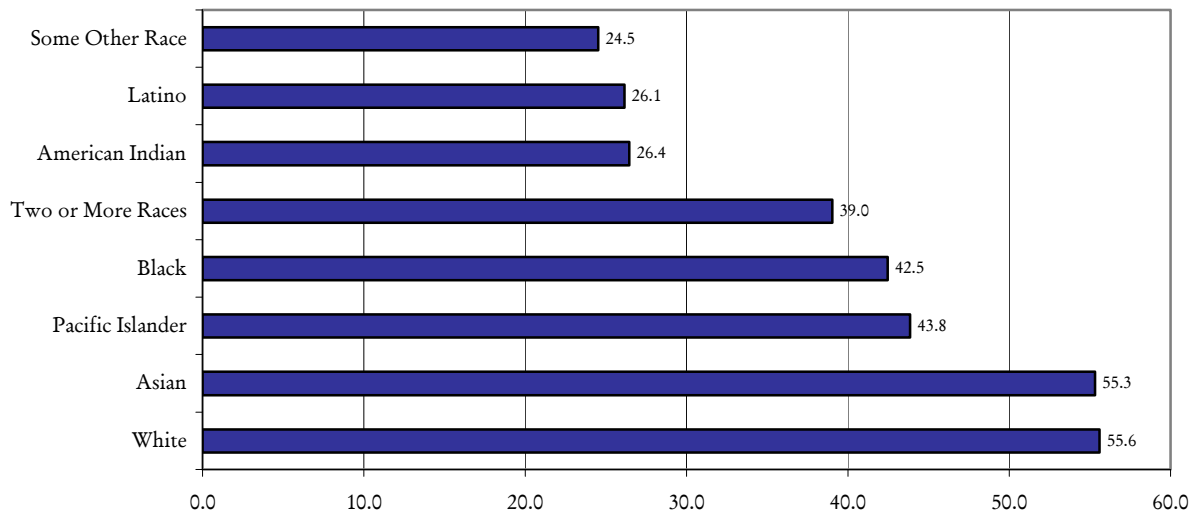
Adding place of origin to the analysis, Figure 5 shows naturalization rates of California's foreign-born population by place of origin for each of three time periods—before 1980, 1980-1989, and 1990-March 2000. Asia consistently has the largest rate of naturalization, especially compared to Mexico and Central America. In addition to the rates of naturalization being lower for more recent arrivals, the range of rates between places is narrower during the time period 1990-2000 than for 1980-1989 or prior to 1980.

**Figure 5: Percent Naturalized of Foreign-born Population in California, by Time of Entry and Place of Origin**



The next figure considers naturalization rates by race in the state. At the high end of the spectrum, foreign-born Whites and Asians are the most likely to have attained citizenship, at 55.6

**Figure 6: Percent Naturalized of Foreign-born Population in California, by Race**



and 55.3 percent, respectively (see Figure 6); in the middle are Pacific Islanders, Blacks, and people identified with Two or More Races; and, at the bottom are people who identified as American Indian, Latino, and Some Other Race.

### **Native-born population**

Though this report has primarily focused on the foreign-born population in California, this final section briefly summarizes region of birth for the native-born population, which makes up 74 percent of the state. Of those living in California who were born in the U.S. 68.1 percent were born in California, 5.7 percent in other Western states, 10.0 percent in the Midwest, 8.3 percent in the South, and 6.4 percent in the Northeast<sup>3</sup>.

Figure 7 provides more detailed data by race. While the majority of California residents were born in the Western part of the U.S., there are variations across race: over 90 percent of people identified as Some Other Race or Latino were born in the West; while these percentages are smaller for Blacks and Whites, at 62.7 and 66.1 percent, respectively. Compared with other race groups, a relatively large proportion of Blacks were born in the South, roughly one in four; and Whites had the largest percentages from the Midwest (15.0 percent) and Northeast (9.7 percent). Also noteworthy, 22.3 percent of Pacific Islanders who are native citizens of the U.S. were born outside of the country; this statistic includes people who were born in ‘U.S. island areas’—i.e., U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa (formerly called ‘U.S. outlying areas’).

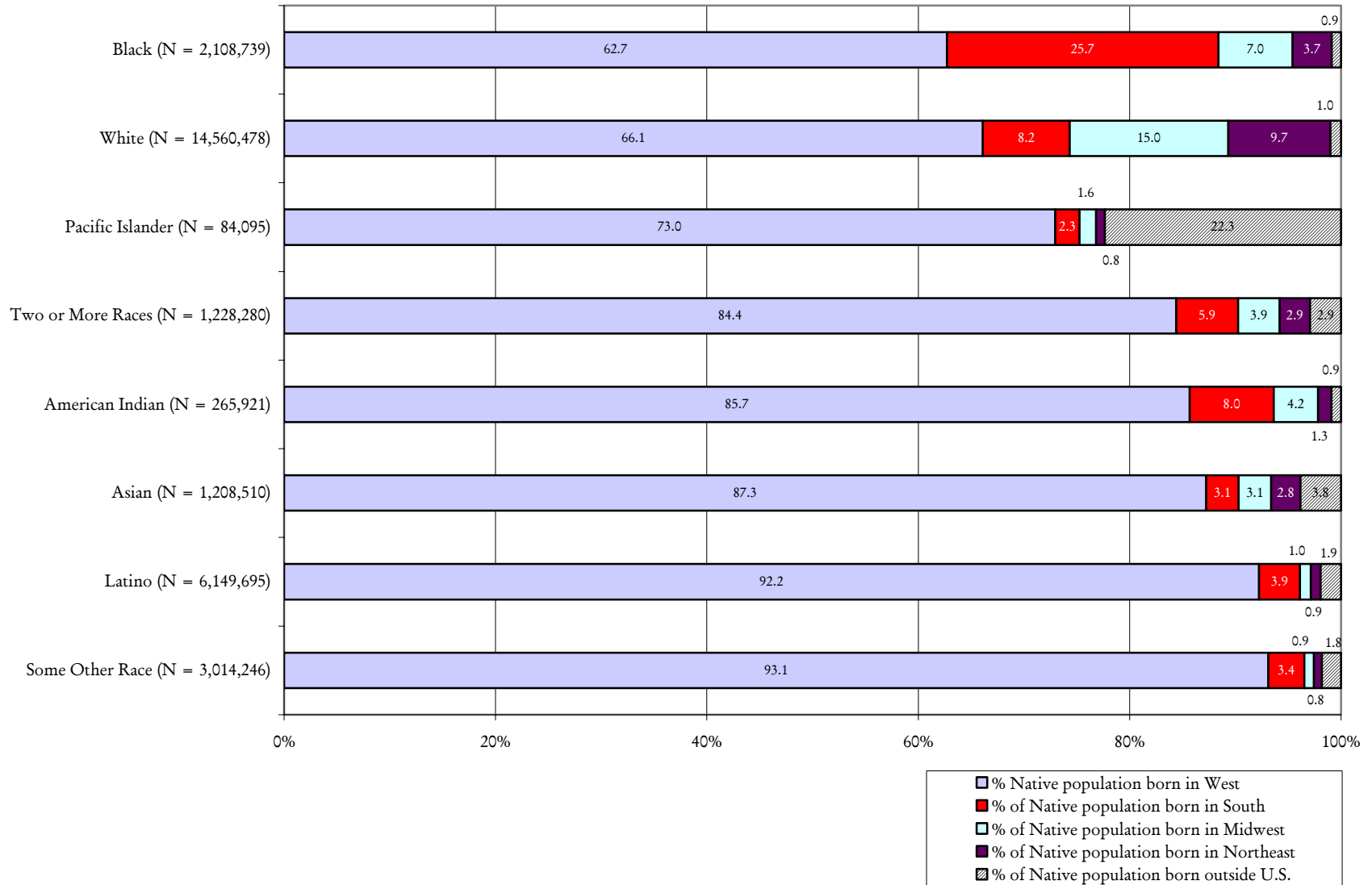
### **Summary Findings**

- One in four people living in California are foreign-born. Over half of this population, 52.5 percent, is from Mexico and Central America; the second most common area of origin is Asia, accounting for 32.9 percent of the foreign-born in the state.
- Regionally, over a third of the population in Los Angeles, 36.2 percent, is foreign-born, as is 27.4 percent of the San Francisco Bay Area. At the other end of the spectrum, the Eastern Mountain and Northern regions of the state have the smallest percentages of foreign-born people residing in them, 4.2 and roughly 7.9 percent, respectively.
- In California, 67.2 percent of Asians are foreign-born, followed by 47.4 percent of people identified as Some Other Race and 43.9 percent of Latinos; smaller percentages of Blacks (5.0 percent), Whites (7.7 percent), and American Indians (15.0 percent) fall into this category. People identified as Pacific Islander (26.1 percent) or Two or More races (27.5 percent) have foreign-born percentages similar to the state average of 26.2 percent.
- Of the foreign-born population in California, 39.3 percent have become naturalized. More recent arrivals are less likely to have gone through this process. And, foreign-born Whites and Asians are the most likely to have attained citizenship, at 55.6 and 55.3 percent, respectively; in

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<sup>3</sup> The remaining 1.5 percent were born off U.S. soil but considered native citizens, e.g., people born at sea.

Figure 7: Region of Birth for Native U.S. Population Living in California -- by Race



the middle are Pacific Islanders, Blacks, and people identified with Two or More Races; and, at the low end are people who identified as American Indian, Latino, and Some Other Race.

- The native-born population makes up 74 percent of the state. Of those living in California who were born in the U.S., 68.1 percent were born in the state, 5.7 percent in other Western states, 10.0 percent in the Midwest, 8.3 percent in the South, and 6.4 percent in the Northeast. There are variations across race: over 90 percent of people identified as Some Other Race or Latino were born in the West; while these percentages are smaller for Blacks and Whites, at 62.7 and 66.1 percent, respectively. Compared with other race groups, a relatively large proportion of Blacks were born in the South, roughly one in four; and Whites had the largest percentages from the Midwest (15.0 percent) and Northeast (9.7 percent). Also noteworthy, 22.3 percent of Pacific Islanders who are native citizens of the U.S. were born outside of the country; this statistic includes people who were born in ‘U.S. island areas’—i.e., U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa (formerly called ‘U.S. outlying areas’).

Appendix Table: Countries of Origin of the Foreign-born Population -- in California and the U.S.

	California		United States	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>Total:</i>	8,864,255		31,107,889	
<b>Europe:</b>	<b>696,578</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>4,915,557</b>	<b>15.8</b>
United Kingdom	133,090	1.5	677,751	2.2
Ireland	20,388	0.2	156,474	0.5
Sweden	11,383	0.1	49,724	0.2
Other Northern Europe	18,478	0.2	90,670	0.3
Austria	9,641	0.1	63,648	0.2
France	32,279	0.4	151,154	0.5
Germany	98,160	1.1	706,704	2.3
Netherlands	22,311	0.3	94,570	0.3
Other Western Europe	16,809	0.2	79,771	0.3
Greece	15,396	0.2	165,750	0.5
Italy	38,450	0.4	473,338	1.5
Portugal	32,315	0.4	203,119	0.7
Spain	12,476	0.1	82,858	0.3
Other Southern Europe	1,935	0.0	9,600	0.0
Czechoslovakia (includes Czech Republic and Slovakia)	11,701	0.1	83,081	0.3
Hungary	16,885	0.2	92,017	0.3
Poland	24,638	0.3	466,742	1.5
Romania	24,350	0.3	135,966	0.4
Belarus	5,144	0.1	38,503	0.1
Russia	54,660	0.6	340,177	1.1
Ukraine	44,953	0.5	275,153	0.9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6,239	0.1	98,766	0.3
Yugoslavia	12,096	0.1	113,987	0.4
Other Eastern Europe	32,049	0.4	261,664	0.8
Europe, n.e.c.	752	0.0	4,370	0.0
<b>Asia:</b>	<b>2,918,642</b>	<b>32.9</b>	<b>8,226,254</b>	<b>26.4</b>
China, excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan	327,611	3.7	988,857	3.2
Hong Kong	91,101	1.0	203,580	0.7
Taiwan	151,775	1.7	326,215	1.0
Japan	112,212	1.3	347,539	1.1
Korea	268,452	3.0	864,125	2.8
Other Eastern Asia	4,182	0.0	9,194	0.0
Afghanistan	20,530	0.2	45,195	0.1
Bangladesh	7,530	0.1	95,294	0.3
India	198,201	2.2	1,022,552	3.3
Iran	158,613	1.8	283,226	0.9
Pakistan	28,978	0.3	223,477	0.7
Other South Central Asia	13,359	0.2	75,457	0.2
Cambodia	53,544	0.6	136,978	0.4
Indonesia	32,148	0.4	72,552	0.2
Laos	68,306	0.8	204,284	0.7
Malaysia	11,635	0.1	49,459	0.2
Philippines	664,935	7.5	1,369,070	4.4
Thailand	62,114	0.7	169,801	0.5
Vietnam	418,249	4.7	988,174	3.2
Other South Eastern Asia	24,106	0.3	53,970	0.2
Iraq	20,532	0.2	89,892	0.3
Israel	26,552	0.3	109,719	0.4
Jordan	10,718	0.1	46,794	0.2
Lebanon	29,654	0.3	105,910	0.3
Syria	17,358	0.2	54,561	0.2
Turkey	13,438	0.2	78,378	0.3
Armenia	57,482	0.6	65,280	0.2

Source: 2000 Census (SF3)

	California		United States	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Other Western Asia	17,586	0.2	108,069	0.3
Asia, n.e.c.	7,741	0.1	38,652	0.1
<b>Africa:</b>	<b>113,255</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>881,300</b>	<b>2.8</b>
Ethiopia	11,818	0.1	69,531	0.2
Other Eastern Africa	20,704	0.2	143,768	0.5
Middle Africa	2,563	0.0	26,900	0.1
Egypt	25,147	0.3	113,396	0.4
Other Northern Africa	10,954	0.1	77,095	0.2
South Africa	14,359	0.2	63,558	0.2
Other Southern Africa	197	0.0	2,938	0.0
Ghana	3,103	0.0	65,572	0.2
Nigeria	13,939	0.2	134,940	0.4
Sierra Leone	1,304	0.0	20,831	0.1
Other Western Africa	3,685	0.0	105,164	0.3
Africa, n.e.c.	5,482	0.1	57,607	0.2
<b>Oceania:</b>	<b>67,131</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>168,046</b>	<b>0.5</b>
Australia	15,391	0.2	60,965	0.2
Other Australian and New Zealand Subregion	6,717	0.1	22,872	0.1
Melanesia	25,825	0.3	32,305	0.1
Micronesia	2,192	0.0	16,469	0.1
Polynesia	16,944	0.2	35,194	0.1
Oceania, n.e.c.	62	0.0	241	0.0
<b>Caribbean:</b>	<b>70,135</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>2,953,066</b>	<b>9.5</b>
Barbados	908	0.0	52,172	0.2
Cuba	41,065	0.5	872,716	2.8
Dominican Republic	3,569	0.0	687,677	2.2
Haiti	3,006	0.0	419,317	1.3
Jamaica	11,669	0.1	553,827	1.8
Trinidad and Tobago	5,754	0.1	197,398	0.6
Other Caribbean	4,164	0.0	169,959	0.5
<b>Central America:</b>	<b>4,654,040</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>11,203,637</b>	<b>36.0</b>
Mexico	3,928,701	44.3	9,177,487	29.5
Costa Rica	12,252	0.1	71,870	0.2
El Salvador	359,673	4.1	817,336	2.6
Guatemala	211,458	2.4	480,665	1.5
Honduras	46,744	0.5	282,852	0.9
Nicaragua	64,411	0.7	220,335	0.7
Panama	12,122	0.1	105,177	0.3
Other Central America	18,679	0.2	47,915	0.2
<b>South America:</b>	<b>202,628</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>1,930,271</b>	<b>6.2</b>
Argentina	29,335	0.3	125,218	0.4
Bolivia	8,231	0.1	53,278	0.2
Brazil	22,931	0.3	212,428	0.7
Chile	15,712	0.2	80,804	0.3
Colombia	35,083	0.4	509,872	1.6
Ecuador	22,032	0.2	298,626	1.0
Guyana	4,053	0.0	211,189	0.7
Peru	53,250	0.6	278,186	0.9
Venezuela	6,678	0.1	107,031	0.3
Other South America	5,323	0.1	53,639	0.2
<b>Northern America:</b>	<b>141,779</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>829,442</b>	<b>2.7</b>
Canada	141,181	1.6	820,771	2.6
Other Northern America	598	0.0	8,671	0.0
Born at sea	67	0.0	316	0.0