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**Demographic Shifts Divide Races**  
**NO CONSENSUS ON THE CENSUS**

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Dramatic increases in both the size and ethnic diversity of America’s population, reflected in the 2000 census, are drawing a mixed reaction from the public. Consistent with a long-term rise in favorable attitudes toward immigrants, more people say today’s immigrants are better able to adapt to American life than did so four years ago. Yet the public is concerned over the surge in the nation’s population in the past decade. Half view that negatively, compared to 32% who see it as a good thing. And more whites than blacks or Hispanics raise concerns about the changing demographic composition of the country.

The Pew Research Center’s latest survey shows that, to perhaps a surprising degree, news about the census has penetrated the public’s consciousness. Fully two-thirds have heard of California’s emergence as a “minority-majority” state — where blacks, Hispanics and people of Asian descent comprise a majority — and 58% know that, nationwide, Hispanics are now as populous as blacks.

Race and ethnicity are important factors in the public’s attitudes toward the census. Hispanics and non-whites are more upbeat over population growth than non-Hispanic whites, better than half of whom (54%) see this as a bad thing.

The census has shown that, despite the nation’s increasing diversity, segregation remains a fact of life in the United States. About seven-in-ten (71%) see this as a bad thing. More blacks and Hispanics than whites express concern about racial segregation.

By a fairly narrow margin (35%-29%), non-Hispanic whites react positively to the census finding that Hispanics have achieved rough numerical parity with blacks. Hispanics and nonwhites are much more encouraged by this — more than half (52%) see it as a good thing.

	White			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Non-Hisp.</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>
<i>Rise in U.S. population ...</i>	%	%	%	%
Good thing	32	28	43	42
Bad thing	50	54	44	35
Neither/Don't know	<u>18</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>23</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Segregation still prevalent ...</i>				
Good thing	12	12	9	15
Bad thing	71	68	85	78
Neither/Don't know	<u>17</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
	100	100	100	100

	<u>Total</u>	White	Hispanic/ Non-white*
		<u>Non-Hisp.</u>	<u>Non-white*</u>
<i>'Minority-majority' in California ...</i>	%	%	%
Good thing	42	35	61
Bad thing	28	30	20
Neither/Don't know	<u>30</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>19</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Hispanics as numerous as blacks ...</i>			
Good thing	39	35	52
Bad thing	26	29	16
Neither/Don't know	<u>35</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>32</u>
	100	100	100

\* These questions were asked of split halves of the survey sample, there were too few minorities to analyze African-American and Hispanic respondents separately.

Racial differences are also evident on California's minority-majority status. While non-Hispanic whites are divided over whether this is a good thing, Hispanics and non-whites, by a three-to-one margin (61%-20%), have a positive reaction to this census finding.

While whites appear somewhat conflicted over many of the census findings, so too are older people. Americans age 50 and over are split over whether it is good that Hispanics are now as populous as blacks. Women age 50 and over, in particular, have reservations about this demographic shift. Just 28% see the growth of the Hispanic population as a good thing, compared to 41% of men age 50 and over.

<i>Hispanics as numerous as blacks ...</i>	<u>18-29</u>	<u>30-49</u>	<u>50-64</u>	<u>65+</u>
	%	%	%	%
Good thing	49	39	38	28
Bad thing	18	22	31	38
Neither/Don't know	<u>33</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>34</u>
	100	100	100	100

***More Say Immigrants Adapt***

This mixed view of the changing composition of the population may be more reflective of ethnic and racial strains than economic concerns. In general, the public is less resentful of immigrants than in the mid- and late-1990s and far less likely to regard them as an economic burden.

The current survey finds that better than four-in-ten (43%) say today's immigrants adapt better to American life than their predecessors in the early 1900s; 34% held that view in 1997. Just half as many in the current survey (21%) say they don't adapt as well, and 31% believe that today's immigrants adapt in about the same fashion.

Democrats and independents are more likely than Republicans to say that today's immigrants fit in better than their predecessors. There also is a gender gap on this question — more women than men believe that today's immigrants fit in better than those in the past.

In recent years, attitudes toward immigrants — particularly regarding their economic impact — have undergone a remarkable turnaround. In 1994, the public by about a two-to-one margin (63% -31%) saw immigrants as an economic drain on the country. In a Center survey last September, just 38% held that view (a 25% shift), while half of Americans said immigrants' work ethics and talents strengthened the United States. This trend has cut across racial and ethnic lines; whites, blacks and Hispanics all hold more favorable views of immigrants' economic contributions than they did several years ago.

However, a recent Gallup survey showed that, if anything, the public is slightly more divided over immigrants' cultural impact. In March, Gallup found a plurality (45%) saying that increased diversity created by immigrants mostly improves American culture, while 38% say it mostly threatens the culture.

<b>More Positive View of Immigrants</b>					
	<u>1994</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
<i>Immigrants today ...</i>	%	%	%	%	%
Strengthen our country	31	37	41	46	50
Are a burden	63	54	48	44	38
Neither/Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>12</u>
	100	100	100	100	100

***New Categories OK***

Last year's census, for the first time, allowed Americans to classify themselves as belonging to more than one race. By and large, the public approves of this change — half believe it is a good thing, while 27% view it negatively.

Six-in-ten Hispanics endorse the change, compared to about half of whites and blacks (49% and 51%, respectively). But slightly more African-Americans (36%) have an *unfavorable* reaction to the new racial classifications than either whites or Hispanics (26%, 23%).

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**ABOUT THIS SURVEY**

Results for the survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among a nationwide sample of 1,202 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period April 18-22, 2001. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. For results based on either Form 1 (N=598) or Form 2 (N=604), the sampling error is plus or minus 4.5 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PRESS**  
**APRIL 2001 NEWS INTEREST INDEX**  
**— FINAL TOPLINE —**  
**April 18-22, 2001**  
**N=1,202**

On another subject...

As you may know, the U.S. Census was completed last year and many of the findings have recently been released.

Q.39 Did you happen to hear that between 1990 and 2000, the U.S. experienced the largest population increase in its history, or didn't you hear about this?

35	Yes, heard about this
63	No, didn't hear about this
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.40 In general, do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing for the country?

32	Good thing
50	Bad thing
10	Neither (VOL)
<u>8</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=598]:**

Q.41F1 Did you happen to hear that in California, African-Americans, Hispanics and people of Asian descent now make up a majority of the population, or didn't you hear about this?

67	Yes, heard about this
32	No, didn't hear about this
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.42F1 In general, do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing for the country?

42	Good thing
28	Bad thing
21	Neither (VOL)
<u>9</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=604]:**

Q.43F2 Did you happen to hear that the number of Hispanics in the country is now about equal to the number of African Americans, or didn't you hear about this?

58	Yes, heard about this
41	No, didn't hear about this
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.44F2 In general, do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing for the country?

39 Good thing  
26 Bad thing  
24 Neither (VOL)  
11 Don't know/Refused  
100

**ASK ALL:**

Q.45 Did you happen to hear that American neighborhoods are STILL mostly racially segregated, or didn't you hear about this?

50 Yes, heard about this  
49 No, didn't hear about this  
1 Don't know/Refused  
100

Q.46 In general, do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing for the country?

12 Good thing  
71 Bad thing  
11 Neither (VOL)  
6 Don't know/Refused  
100

Q.47 Did you happen to hear that, in this census for the first time, Americans were allowed to classify themselves as belonging to more than one race, or didn't you hear about this?

39 Yes, heard about this  
60 No, didn't hear about this  
1 Don't know/Refused  
100

Q.48 In general, do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing for the country?

50 Good thing  
27 Bad thing  
13 Neither (VOL)  
10 Don't know/Refused  
100

Q.49 Compared to the immigrants of the early 1900s, are TODAY'S immigrants more able to adapt to the American way of life, less able to adapt to the American way of life, or are they about as able to adapt to the American way of life?

			<u>April 1997</u>
43	More		34
21	Less		31
31	Same		28
<u>5</u>	Don't know/Refused		<u>7</u>
100			100