

# Ethno-racial realignment in North American immigration societies

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# With the collaboration of:

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# Canada & the U.S.

- My emphasis is on the U.S., because that is where the bulk of my research effort has been focused.
- But, based on recent research with Jeffrey Reitz, I will point out parallels in Canada.
- I am going to begin with U.S. population projections because the impact of ethno-racial realignment is most acutely observed through a comparison of alternative futures.

# U.S. Census Bureau population projections

- Population projections are fueling the belief in an imminent majority-minority society, when “more than half of all Americans are projected to belong to a minority group (anything other than non-Hispanic White alone)” (Colby and Ortman, 2015).
- The 2017 projections show this point being reached by 2045.

## Race by Hispanic Origin

Projections for the United States: 2017-2060

Main series. Table 5

(2016 base population. Percent of total resident population as of July 1)

	2016	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	2055	2060
<b>Total (in percent)</b>	<b>100.00</b>									
<b>Not Hispanic or Latino</b>	<b>82.21</b>	<b>81.27</b>	<b>80.11</b>	<b>78.93</b>	<b>77.74</b>	<b>76.54</b>	<b>75.40</b>	<b>74.34</b>	<b>73.37</b>	<b>72.50</b>
One race	80.12	78.98	77.56	76.11	74.61	73.10	71.62	70.20	68.87	67.60
White	61.27	59.70	57.75	55.77	53.76	51.74	49.75	47.83	46.02	44.31
Black or African American	12.45	12.53	12.64	12.75	12.86	12.98	13.12	13.26	13.41	13.56
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.74	0.73	0.73	0.72	0.72	0.71	0.70	0.69	0.68	0.67
Asian	5.49	5.83	6.25	6.67	7.08	7.47	7.85	8.21	8.55	8.85
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.18	0.18	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.21	0.21
Two or More Races	2.09	2.29	2.55	2.83	3.12	3.44	3.78	4.13	4.51	4.89
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	<b>17.79</b>	<b>18.73</b>	<b>19.89</b>	<b>21.07</b>	<b>22.26</b>	<b>23.46</b>	<b>24.60</b>	<b>25.66</b>	<b>26.63</b>	<b>27.50</b>

# Impact of the “majority-minority” society as an idea in U.S.

- Many analyses of the 2016 presidential election trace the outcome to the anxieties of many whites about loss of status due to demographic change (e.g., Mutz, 2018, in PNAS).
- Far-right groups are recruiting on the premise that white dominance in the U.S. is endangered.
- On the other side of the spectrum, a multicultural left welcomes “the end of white America” as “a cultural and demographic inevitability” (Hua Hsu, 2009, in The Atlantic).
- Social psychological research shows that many whites adopt more conservative political stances when presented with a majority-minority scenario (Craig et al., 2018). However, a blending scenario may not have this effect (Myers and Levy, 2018).

# Starting point: An historic demographic transition underway

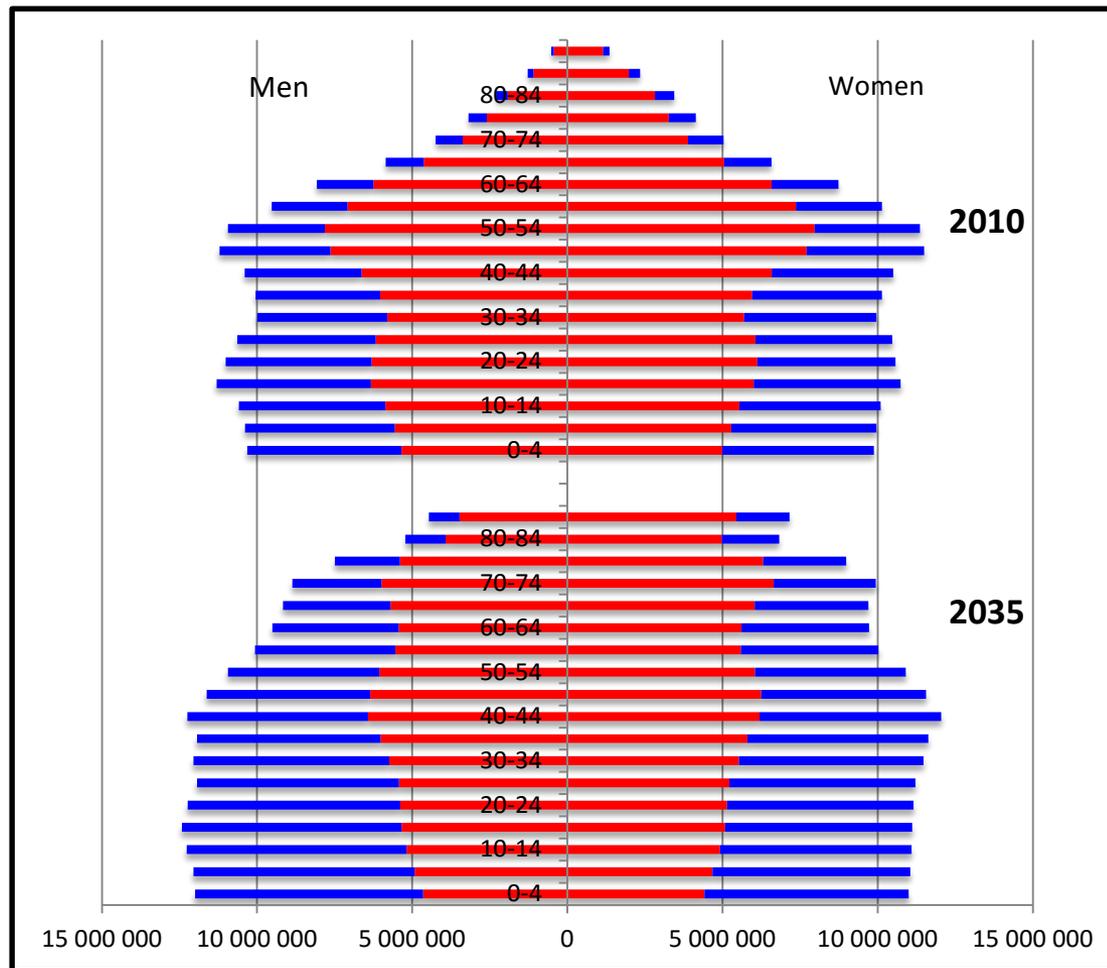
- Because of immigration, all western societies are facing a demographic transition to a much more diverse working-age population.
- During the next quarter century, this transition will result from a conjunction of two forces:
  - The exit from the work force of the large, heavily native, baby-boom cohorts born after World War II.
  - The maturation of very diverse youth cohorts, containing many who have grown up in immigrant homes.
- Historically, the U.S. mostly has recruited its most highly skilled workers and its leadership from white men. What will these changes mean?

# US population, as counted in 2010 and projected (by the Census Bureau) in 2035

Note:

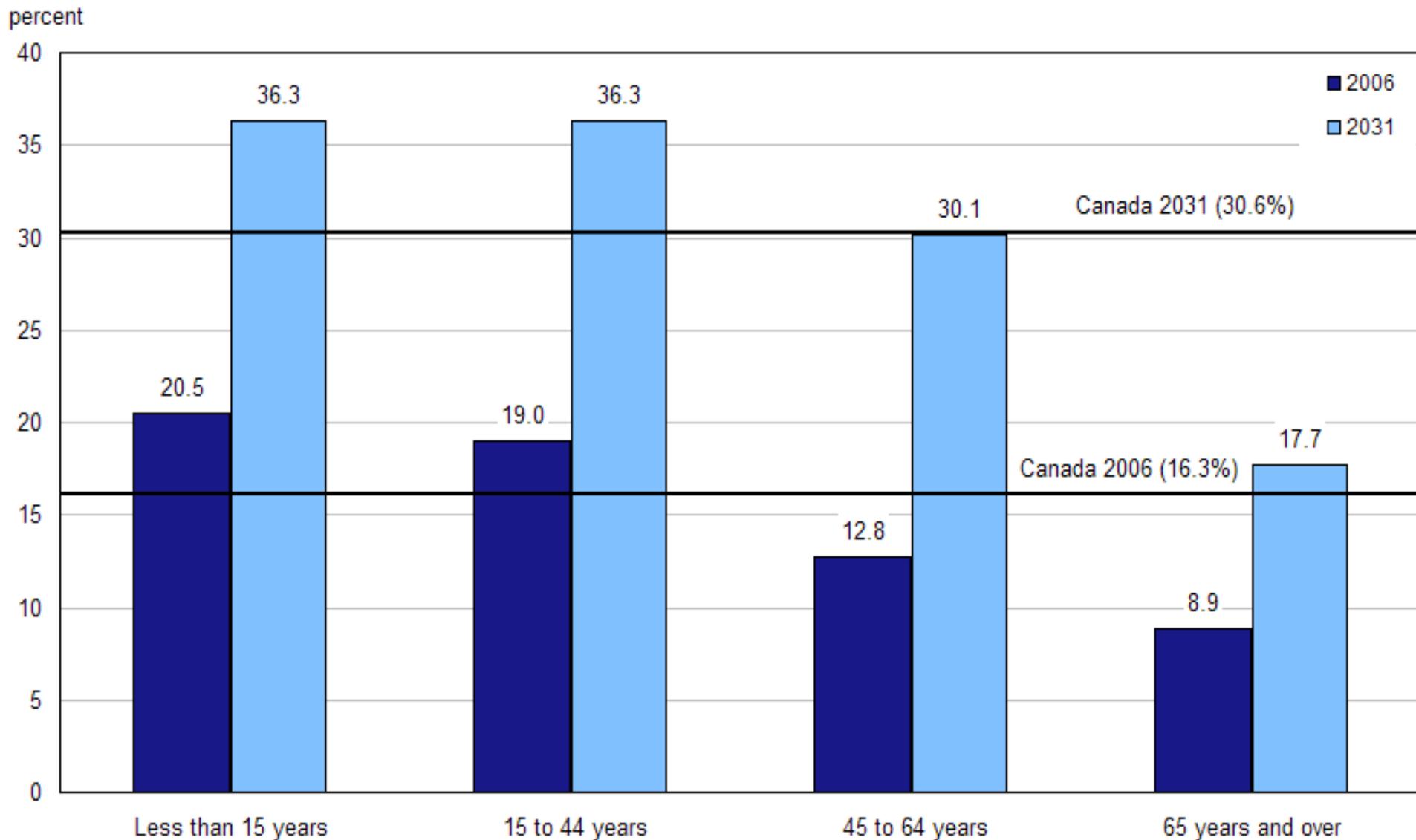
Red=non-Hispanic whites

Blue=minorities



Source: Alba and Foner (2015).

# Similar developments in Canada: Visible minority population, by age & year



# Period of ethno-racial fluidity?

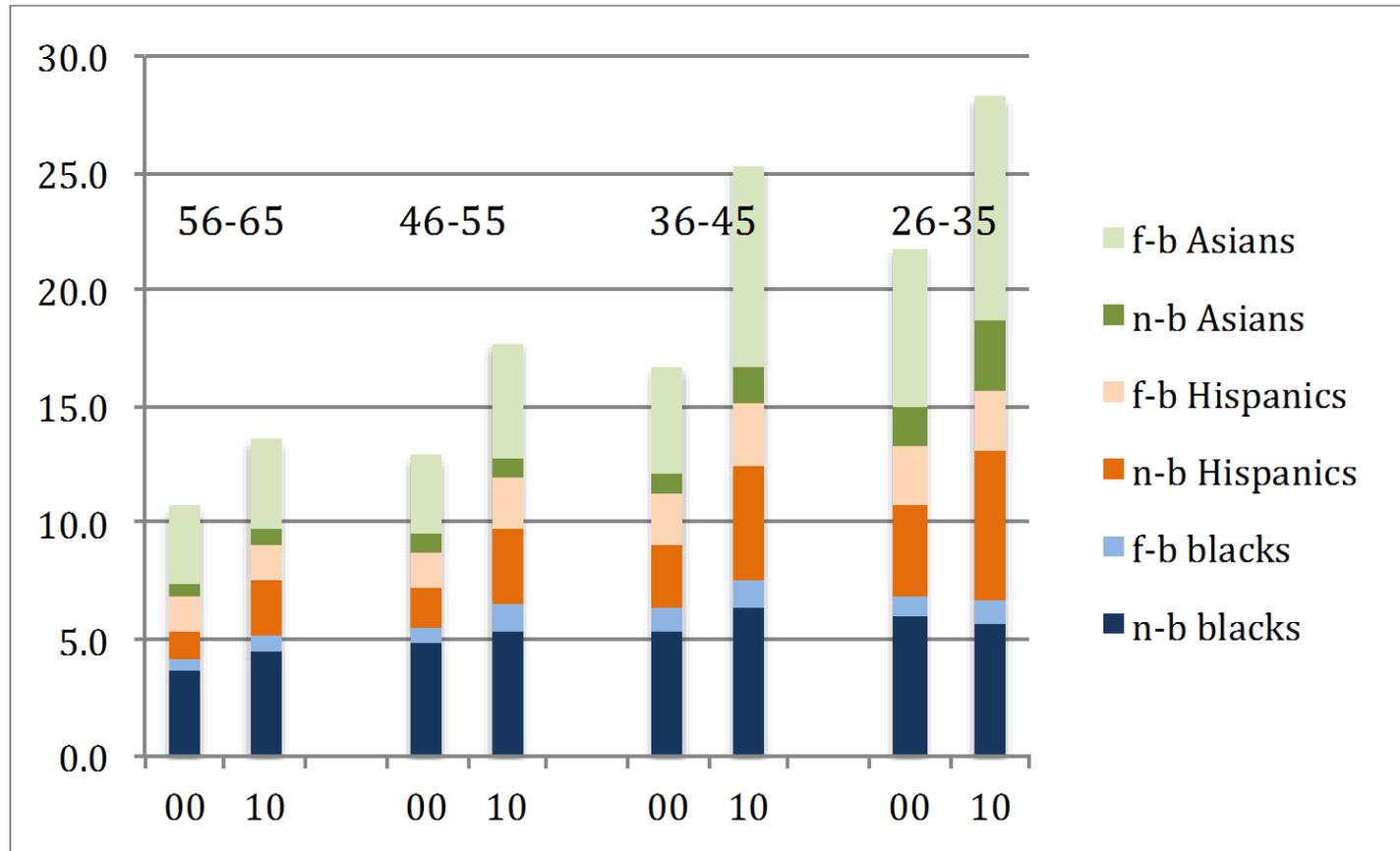
- Change = alteration to ethno-racial boundaries, not simply enhanced opportunities for some minority individuals
  - Example: mid-20<sup>th</sup> century assimilation of white ethnics in the U.S.
- My claim: Key is non-zero-sum mobility, a lessening of competition, which allows minorities to rise without threat to life chances of majority
- Exodus of the baby boom from the labor market creates the prospect of non-zero-sum mobility during the next 25-30 years, into the 2030s

# Growing diversity at top of U.S. workforce: white majority percent of top occupational quartile, by cohort

				Baby boom cohorts		
Age:			26-35/	36-45/	46-55/	56-65/
2000/			26-35/	36-45/	46-55/	56-65/
2010/		26-35/	36-45/	46-55/	56-65/	
2015	26-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-65	
2000			77.0	82.2	86.0	88.3
2010		69.4	72.8	80.9	85.3	
2015	68.0	66.7	71.2	80.4	84.1	

Source: 2000 Census PUMS and 2009-11, 2015 ACS

# Minority composition, top quartile jobs, 2000 & 2010, by age

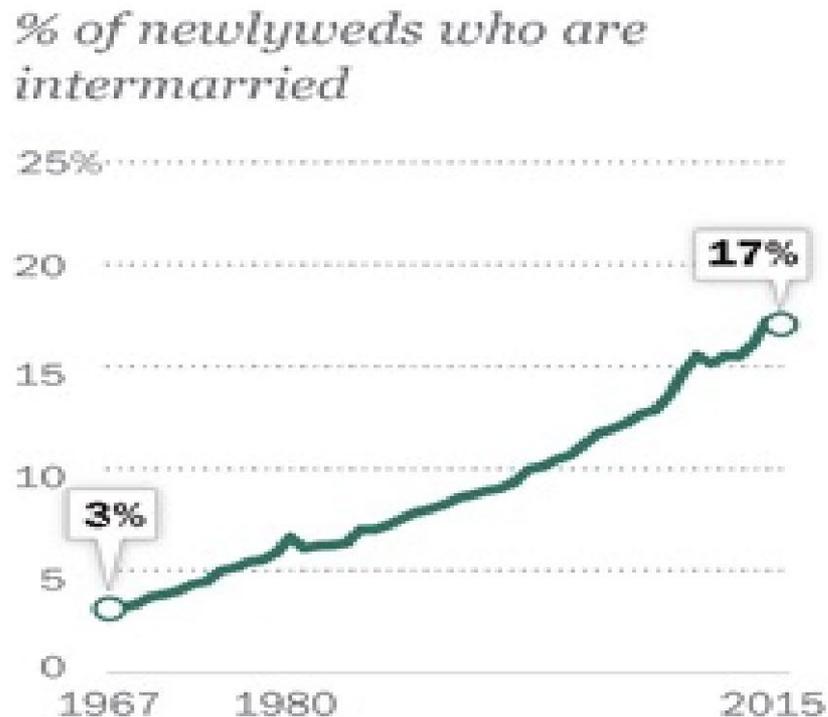


Source: 2000 Census PUMS and 2010 ACS.

# “Knock-on” effects of immigration-fueled diversity

- Social mobility by minorities brings about greater equal-status contact between them and members of the white majority in schools (esp. colleges & universities), workplaces, and neighborhoods (Schachter, 2016).
- Greater equal-status contact makes for socially more intimate relationships, including the formation of families.
- I argue: The children of these families give us insight into the long-run sociological significance of this integration.

# Rise of intermarriage (marriage across major lines of race and Hispanic origin) in U.S.

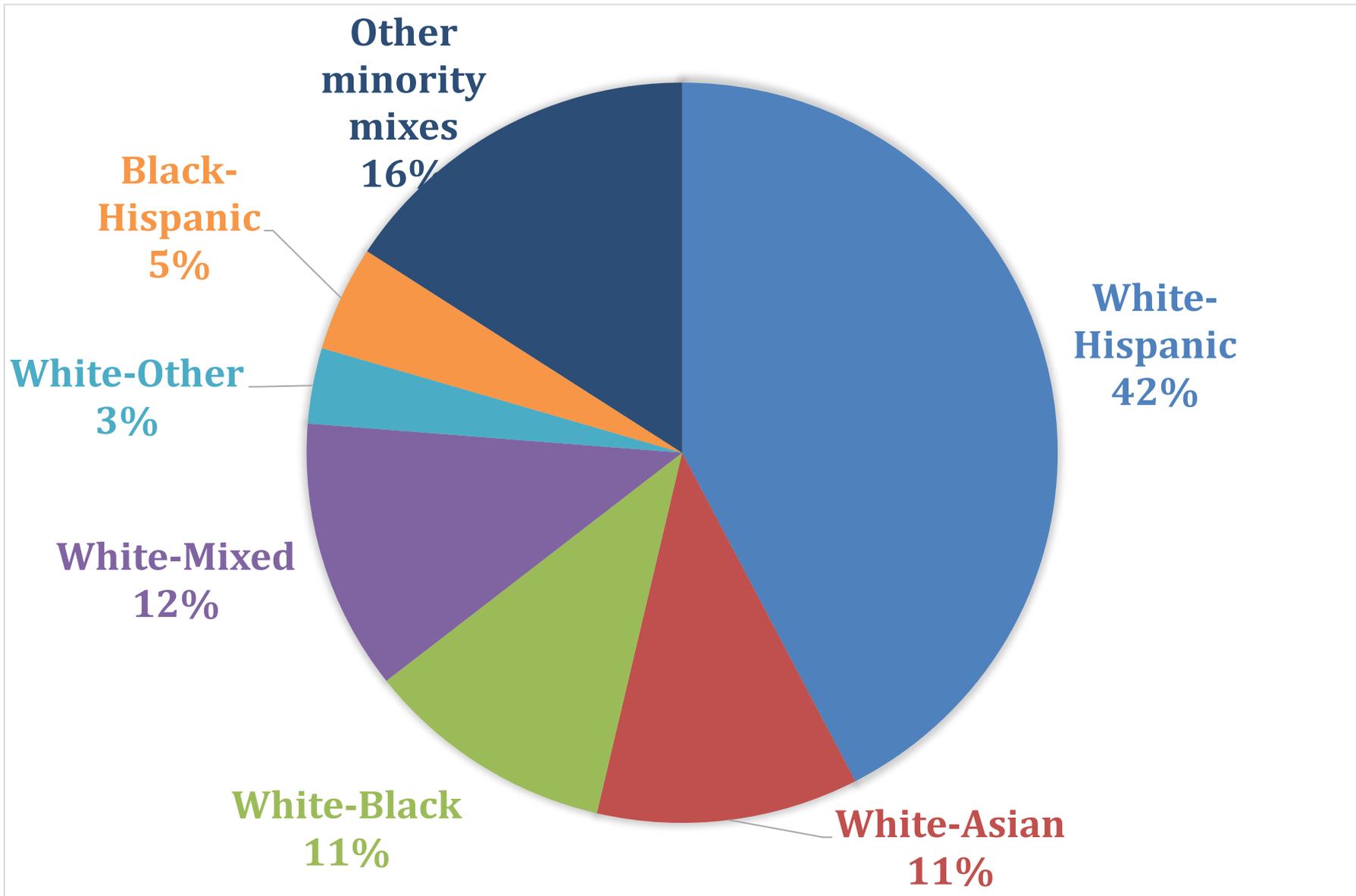


Source: Pew Research Center (2017).

# And in Canada?

- Similar developments, with rates of mixed unions affected by the different ethno-racial composition of the marriage-age population—i.e., higher visible-minority share in U.S. (Hou et al., 2015).
- Hence, higher rates in Canada (since smaller groups are less endogamous), and higher share of these unions involving white partners (Alba and Reitz, forthcoming).

# Ethno-racial mixes (14-15%) among 2013 U.S. infants

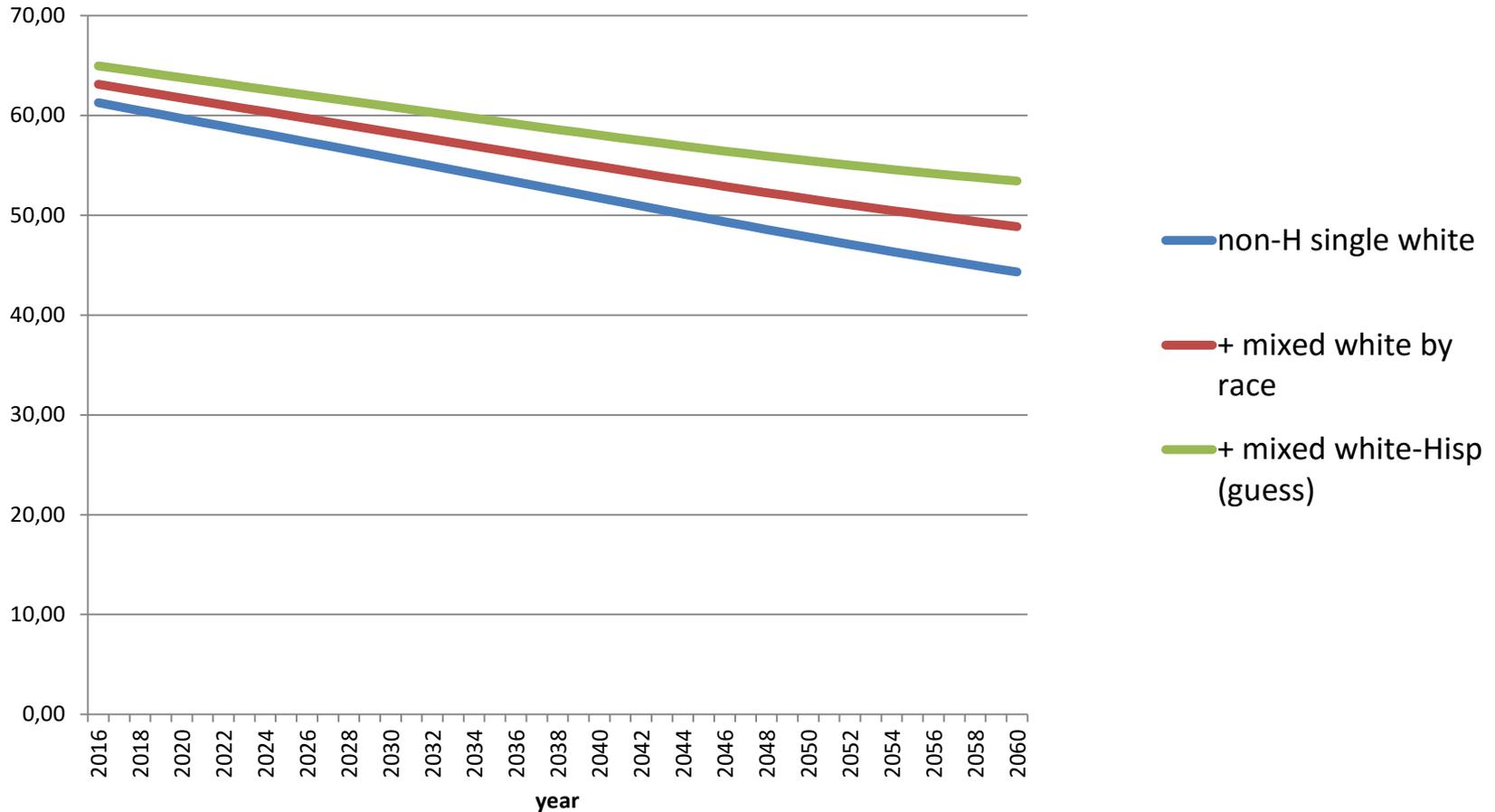


Source: 2013 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata

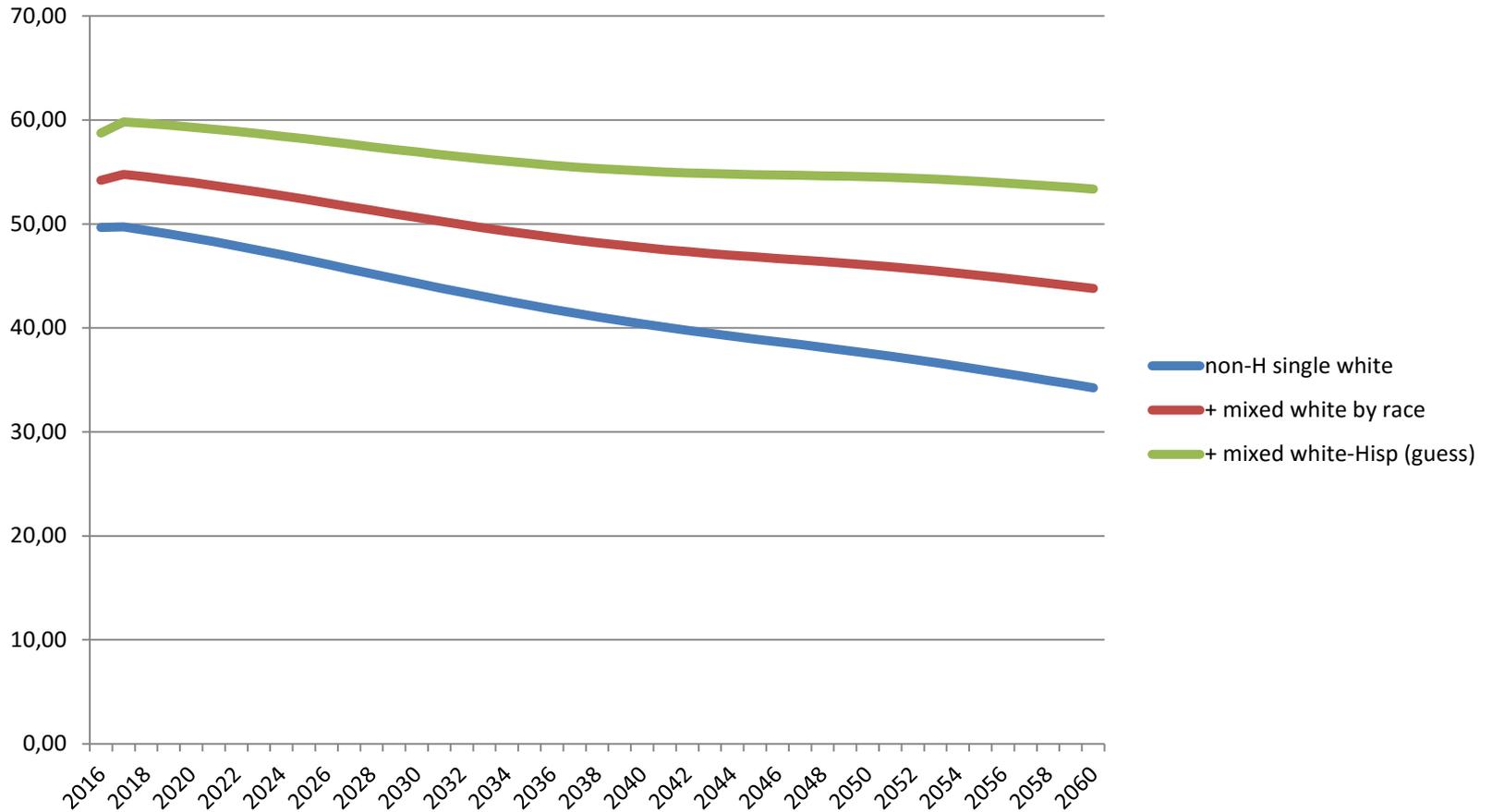
# Mixed minority-white individuals are the pivot in the U.S. projections

- In contrast to the “one-drop” regime of past racism, most mixed individuals appear to be growing up in mixed family settings.
- However, because binary, zero-sum rigidity still guides our thinking, they are mostly classified as minorities.
- Their growth over the time span of the projections is huge, especially among young Americans.

# Alternative projections of the white population under more and less inclusive definitions



# Alternative projections of whites among infants



# What do we know about individuals from mixed backgrounds?

- Knowledge (mostly in U.S.) based on census data, specialized surveys, especially conducted by Pew, and some small-scale interview studies.
- A fundamental issue: selectivity in the reporting of mixed background; some studies get around this by ancestry tracing (e.g., Pew; Ethnic Diversity Survey in Canada).
- Knowledge logically divided up: children vs. adults; topical areas such as social affiliations (incl. marriage partner), social identities (self and others), experiences.

# Mixed infants

- Alba and colleagues (Alba et al. 2018) have looked closely at the situations of mixed infants (in the ACS), where the identification of mixture is based on the parents.
- Two important findings for infants with both parents present (75 percent of all infants):
  - Family incomes of mixed infants are closer to those of white infants than to infants with the same minority heritage.
  - Locations in residential space are also more similar to those of white infants.
- Findings indicate that mixed infants are mostly being raised in circumstances like those of white infants
- Black-white infants are prominent exceptions.

# Mixed adults: Social affiliations

- Social distance from whites is less than that from minority origin—e.g., feel accepted by whites, have a lot in common with them (Pew). The reverse is true for black-white individuals.
- In friendship circles and neighborhoods, mix more with whites than with minority origin. Partly true for black-white persons (Pew).
- Marriage is commonly to white individuals, in Canada and the U.S.. True of mixed race adults, including black-white ones (Miyawaki 2015; Alba and Reitz, forthcoming). Also true of Anglo-Mexican individuals (Telles and Ortiz 2008).

# Mixed adults: Boundary-related experiences

- From the Pew study, “Multiracial in America”:
  - Individuals of mixed race commonly report being “subject to slurs or jokes” “because of their racial background” (though it is not obvious by whom).
  - Partly black individuals are much more likely to experience “poor service,” though this is not uncommon for individuals who are white and Asian.
  - Partly black individuals much more likely to be “unfairly stopped by police.”
- In-depth interviews suggest that mixed Asian-white and Hispanic-Anglo individuals do not feel excluded by whites; not true for black-white persons (Telles & Ortiz 2008; Lee & Bean 2010; Strmic-Pawl 2016).

# Mixed individuals: Identities

- Those who are mixed Asian and white prefer a mixed identity, as do those who are black and white; those who are mixed American Indian and white prefer “white” (Pew 2015).
- For those who are Hispanic and Anglo, the evidence indicates that their Hispanic identity is at best muted and that many identify as “white” (Telles & Ortiz 2008; Pew 2017). A recent Pew study estimates that 11 percent of Americans with Hispanic ancestry don’t identify as Hispanic; virtually all are mixed Hispanic. Many other mixed Hispanics describe themselves most often as “American” rather than Hispanic.
- Nevertheless, there is a lot of fluidity and contingency in these identities—hence, the “churning” in census reports observed by Liebler et al. (2017), which except for black-white individuals “leans” white.

# Evidence of integration of individuals from mixed majority-minority families

- Identity fluidity that “leans white” (Lee and Bean, 2010; Pew, 2015, 2017; Liebler et al., 2017), although some, like Asian-whites, prefer mixed identities.
- Social relations more common with whites than with persons of same minority origin (Pew, 2015).
- In Canada, incomes of mixed adults are on a par with those of whites (Alba and Reitz, forthcoming).
- Marriage with whites the predominant pattern (Miyawaki, 2015; Alba and Reitz, forthcoming).
- However, those with one black parent are an exception and have some experiences—police contacts--similar to those of African Americans (Pew, 2015). In Canada, too, they are the least advantaged mixed group (Alba and Reitz, forthcoming).

# How to make sense of this? A proposal

- Need to rely on sociological concepts and theories to understand better the changing social realities that give rise to demographic patterns—in this case, ethno-racial reports.
- Neo-assimilation theory (Alba and Nee 2003): assimilation is equated with entry into a white-dominated mainstream, within which the impact of ethno-racial origins is relatively small.
- Historical experience—post-WW II mass assimilation—shows that assimilation need not extinguish ethnic identities but they come more muted. Hyphenation of ethno-religious identities as an example.

# What about the majority-minority society?

- A chimera in the following sense:
  - Most Americans undoubtedly view it as a society constituted by groups discrete and distinct like those of today but with very different sizes.
  - Such a scenario is very unlikely.
- Instead, the pivot of the future is the population coming from mixed majority-minority backgrounds.
- They can be seen as whites, as minorities, as something altogether different.
- Since they can be seen as whites, the projection of whites as a minority is problematic, at a minimum.
- Since they can be seen as minorities, they change our view of minority groups. They add to the evidence of growing heterogeneity within contemporary ethno-racial groups, minority as well as majority (Alba et al. 2014). To this heterogeneity, we should add the inevitable changing generational composition of Asians and Latinos, the groups that have grown most rapidly from immigration.

# Some final words

- Our ethno-racial future is, in a fundamental sense, indeterminate. It will not be the outcome solely of demographic forces—fertility, mortality, migration. Rather, one key lies in the social locations of Americans and Canadians from mixed family backgrounds. These will be determined by sociological forces, such as the willingness of North Americans of different ethno-racial origins to cross boundaries and to accept into their midst others who do.