

BY WILLIAM H. FREY

Lest you were in a coma last October, let me remind you that the 300 millionth American has been clocked in. That number leaves the United States far short of the billion-plus giants, China and India. But it does place America third in the world in population – and still growing, in sharp contrast to our soon-to-be-shrinking cousins in Europe and Japan.

In some ways the 300 millionth American, born in 2006, will have more in common with the 100 millionth American, born in the ethnic, immigrant-imbued America of 1915, than with his or her 200 millionth counterpart, born in a white-bread suburb of the insular America of 1967.

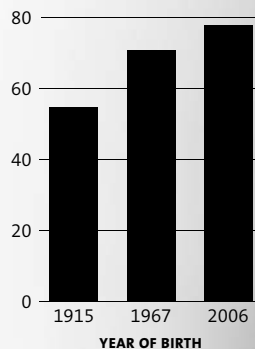
Americans who arrived in the late 1960s were (and are) generally a lucky lot. Born in the wake of the baby boom and the Great Society, this largely homegrown generation benefited from remarkable advances in medicine, as well as from a largely successful drive for racial and gender equality under the law. But all has not been wine and roses – divorce and single parenthood became commonplace, and the gritty manufacturing industries that provided healthy incomes for blue-collar workers in the postwar decades fell off a cliff.

That baby born last October, by contrast, will be part of an America buffeted by immigration that is, once again, a multicultural stew. The education wave will continue, but perhaps not with such emphasis on the four-

year college degree that has served as a ticket to the middle class. And birthrates may trend upward, especially among immigrant groups, since family connections will be even more important in an era of accelerating economic and social change.

Mixed “salad bowl” communities, connected culturally and economically to counterparts across the globe, will take over from the familiar urban, suburban and rural labels that defined the lifestyles of the past. While the 200 millionth American was a child of “the American Century,” the 300 millionth will more likely become a citizen of the world.

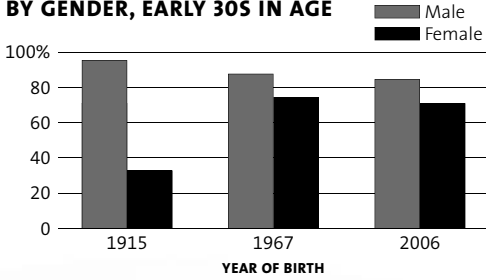
LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH, IN YEARS
COHORTS OF 100 MILLIONTH, 200 MILLIONTH AND 300 MILLIONTH AMERICAN



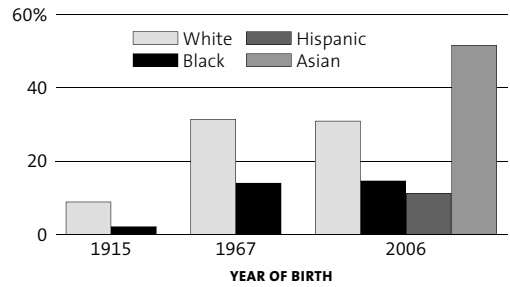
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LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY GENDER, EARLY 30S IN AGE

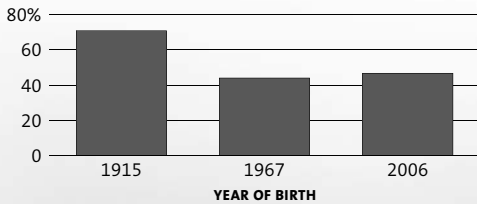


PERCENT COLLEGE GRADS BY MAJOR RACE GROUPS, EARLY 30S IN AGE

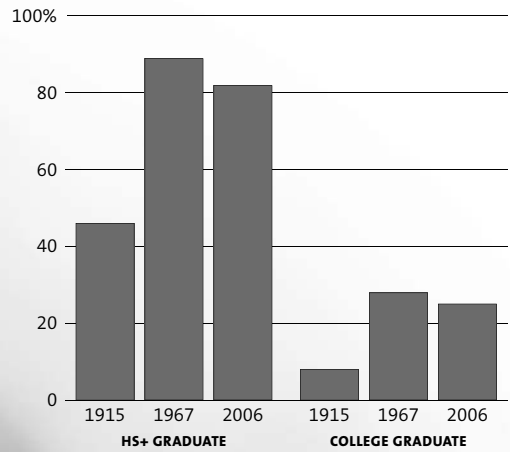


MARRIED COUPLES WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18, EARLY 30S IN AGE

PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS



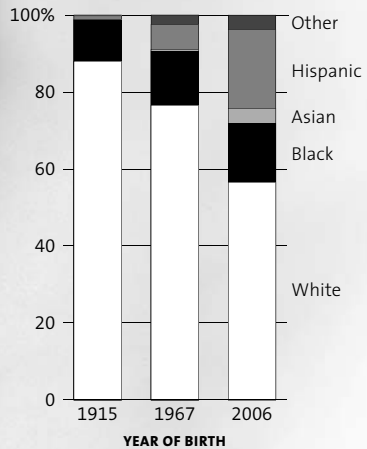
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, EARLY 30S IN AGE



TOP 10 COUNTRIES OF PARENTAL BIRTH OF FOREIGN BORN

1915 COHORT	1967 COHORT	2006 COHORT
Italy	Mexico	Mexico
Poland	Italy	India
U.S.S.R.	Canada	El Salvador
Germany	Germany	Philippines
Austria	China	Vietnam
Ireland	Philippines	Dominican Republic
Sweden	England	China
Czechoslovakia	Cuba	Guatemala
Norway	Greece	Cuba
England	Poland	Jamaica

RACE COMPOSITION



SOURCE: William H. Frey analysis of U.S. Census sources