



**NO LONGER ARE WE ALL YOUNG
WHITE GUYS: *E&C PERSONNEL AVAILA-
BILITY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY***

STEPHEN L. KLINEBERG

The Ninth Annual Rice Global E&C Forum

17 October 2006



THE HOUSTON AREA SURVEY (1982-2006)



- Supported by a consortium of local foundations, corporations, and individuals, the annual Houston Area Survey has conducted random-digit-dialed interviews with 25 successive representative samples of Harris County residents.
- In May 1982, just two months after the first survey in this series, Houston's 80-year oil boom suddenly collapsed.
- The region recovered from deep and prolonged recession in the mid 1980s to find itself squarely in the midst of:
 - A restructured economy, and
 - A demographic revolution.
- Using identical questions across the years, with new items added periodically, the surveys have measured area residents' changing perspectives on these remarkable trends.

THE RESTRUCTURED ECONOMY



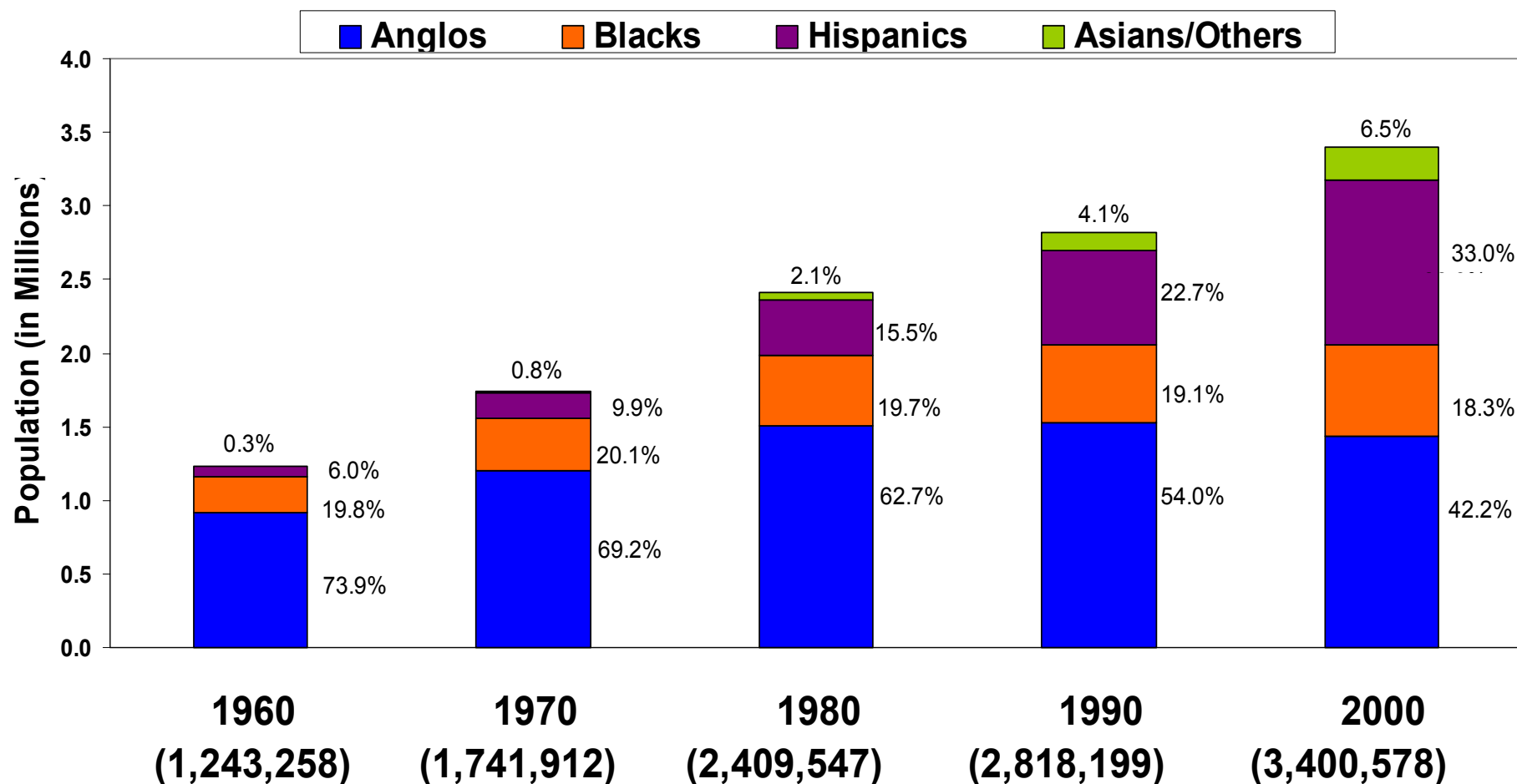
- The resource-based industrial-era economy has now receded into history. It has been replaced by an increasingly high-tech, knowledge-based, worldwide economic system. There are two compelling consequences of this transition . . .
- ***The growing inequalities.*** The traditional blue-collar path has largely disappeared. Good-paying jobs today require high levels of technical skills and educational credentials, and the income inequalities grow ever wider and deeper.
- ***Quality-of-life issues.*** Houston's prosperity now depends increasingly on its ability to attract and retain the most skilled and creative "knowledge workers" and high-tech companies. The city therefore needs to develop into a much more environmentally and aesthetically appealing urban destination.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC REVOLUTION



- Along with the major immigration capitals of L.A. and N.Y., closely following upon Miami, San Francisco, and Chicago, Houston is at the forefront of the new ethnic diversity that is refashioning the socio-political landscape of urban America.
- Throughout all of its history . . .
 - This was essentially a bi-racial Southern city,
 - Dominated and controlled, in an automatic, taken-for-granted way, by white men.
- Today . . .
 - Houston is one of the most culturally diverse metropolitan areas in the country, and
 - All of its ethnic communities are now “minorities.”

FIGURE 2: THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATIONS OF HARRIS COUNTY (1960-2000)



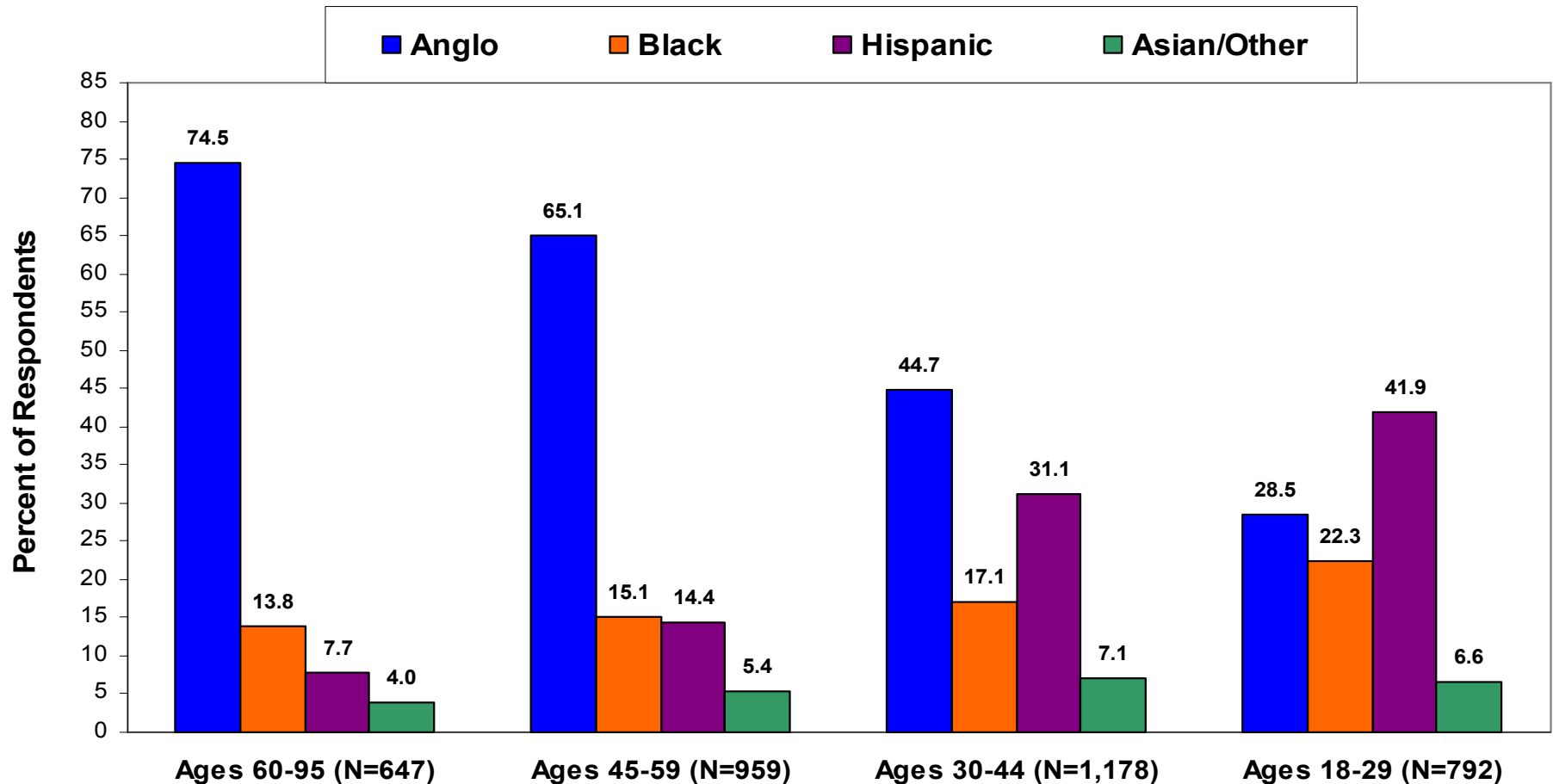
Source: U.S. Census (www.census.gov); classifications based on Texas State Data Center conventions; total populations are given in parentheses.

INTERACTIONS OF ETHNICITY AND AGE



- The other demographic revolution: the remarkable “aging” or “graying” of the American population.
- Today’s seniors, of course, are primarily Anglos, as are the 76 million born between 1946 and 1964, now aged 42 to 60. In the next 30 years, the numbers over age 65 will double.
- The younger populations who will replace the “baby boom” are disproportionately non-Anglo and far less privileged.
- The “aging of America” is thus turning out to be as much a division along ethnic lines as it is along generational lines.
- Nowhere is this ongoing transformation more clearly seen than in the age distributions of the Harris County population.

FIGURE 3: THE PROPORTIONS IN FOUR AGE GROUPS WHO ARE ANGLO, BLACK, HISPANIC, AND ASIAN OR OTHER (2000-2005)



THREE IMPLICATIONS FOR HOUSTON AND AMERICA IN THE YEARS AHEAD



- This city and nation will need to nurture a far more educated workforce, and fashion policies that can reduce the growing inequalities and prevent the rise of a new urban underclass.
- To attract the most innovative companies and talented individuals, Houston will need to become a more environmentally appealing urban destination, and develop the research centers that will fuel the new engines of economic growth.
- If the region is to flourish in the new century, it will need to grow into a more inclusive multiethnic society, one with true equality of opportunity, where all communities are invited to participate as full partners in shaping the Houston future.

CONTACT INFORMATION



**Professor Stephen L. Klineberg
Department of Sociology, MS-28
Rice University, P. O. Box 1892
Houston, Texas 77251-1892**

Telephone: 713-348-3484 or 713-665-2010

email address: slk@rice.edu

Web: www.houstonareasurvey.org

**For additional copies of the 2005 report,
call: 713-348-4225**