



Fact Book Bulletin

REPORTING SIGNIFICANT TRENDS AFFECTING EDUCATION PROGRESS IN THE SREB STATES

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TO LEAD

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Racial/Ethnic and Gender Differences Gain Importance as Factors in Education Progress

The fastest-growing racial/ethnic groups in the nation and the SREB region — Hispanics and African-Americans — have below-average education attainment rates. If these gaps are not eliminated, continued increases in overall education progress will be impeded — an unprecedented stall in the historical rise of America's education level. This *Bulletin* takes a closer look at racial/ethnic and gender differences in bachelor's degree attainment from 1970 to 2000.

Gaps in the percentage of adults from different racial/ethnic groups who have earned at least a bachelor's degree have persisted over time, although more students in all groups are attaining degrees. In 1970, 10.7 percent of white adults in the SREB region had earned at least a bachelor's degree, compared with 3.5 percent of black adults and 7.2 percent of Hispanic adults. By 2000, 25.3 percent of white adults had a bachelor's or higher degree, compared with 13.1 percent of black adults and 12.3 percent of Hispanic adults.

The 1970 rate for black adults was 40 percent of the white rate. By 2000, the rate for black adults was 52 percent of the white rate. In contrast, the 2000 rate for Hispanic adults amounted to 49 percent of the rate for white adults — down from 67 percent in 1970.

Very different gender patterns have emerged in education attainment within racial/ethnic

groups as well. Among white adults, the percentage of women with at least a bachelor's degree grew from 60 percent of the men's rate in 1970 to 83 percent of the men's rate in 2000. Given that women received 58 percent of the bachelor's degrees conferred to white adults in 2000, the percentage of white women with bachelor's or higher degrees will soon exceed the percentage of white men with that level of education.

In contrast, among black adults, the percentage of women with at least a bachelor's degree has long surpassed the percentage of men. Since 1970, however, the percentage of black men with a bachelor's or higher degree has begun to close the gap: In 1970 the rate for black men with at least a bachelor's degree was 71 percent of the women's rate. In 2000, the men's rate was 81 percent of the women's rate.

Among Hispanic adults, the percentage of women with at least a bachelor's degree was just over half of the men's rate in 1970, but by 2000 it was higher than the men's rate.

In 1970 the attainment rate for Hispanic adults in the SREB region was higher than that for black adults. By 2000 the pattern was reversed, with the attainment rate for black adults surpassing that for Hispanic adults.

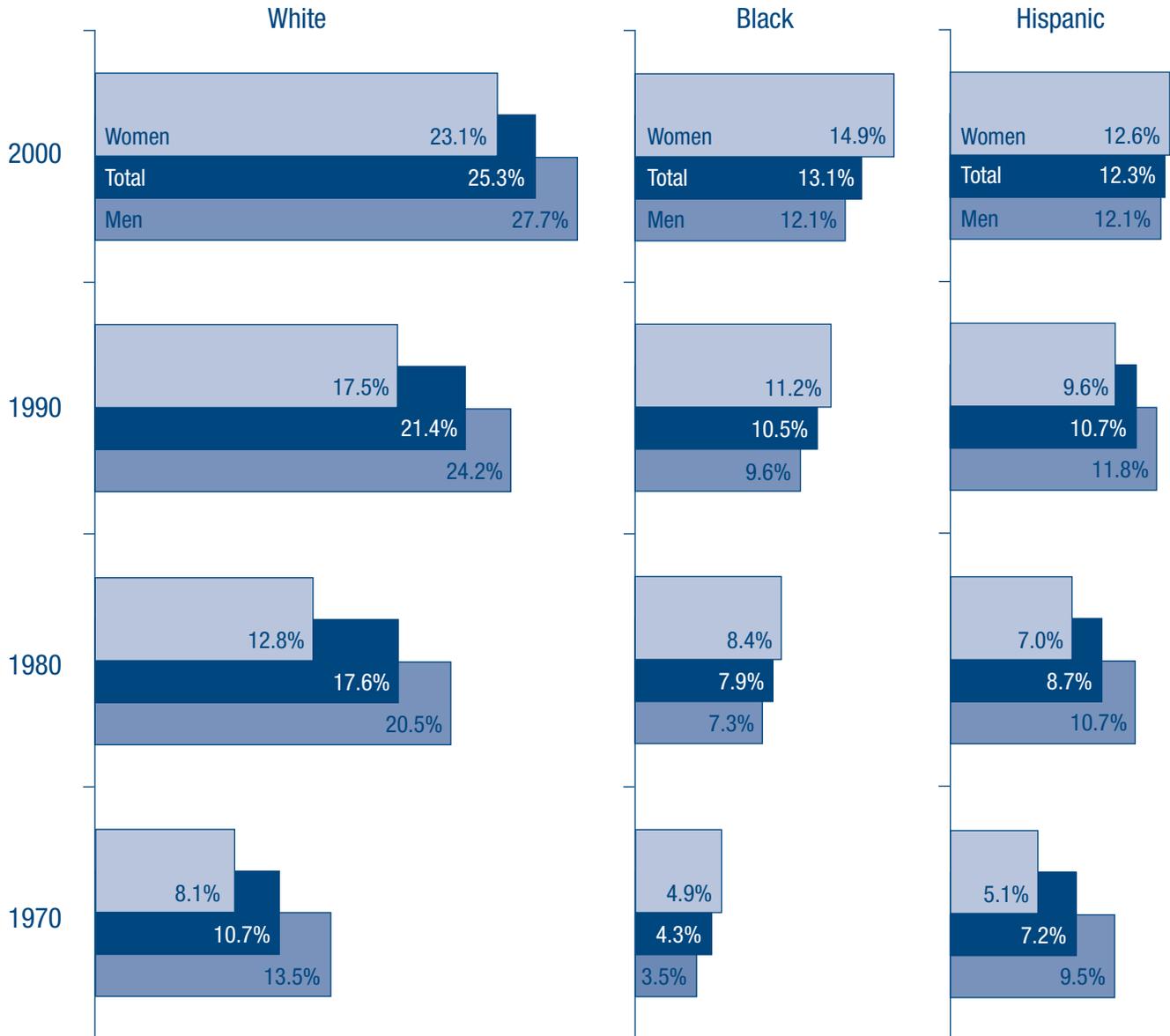
March 2006

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Adults Ages 25 or Older With at Least a Bachelor's Degree, SREB States

(Supplements Table 4, *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education, 2005*)



Source: D.V. Price and J.K. Wohlford analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data.

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