



A Conversation about Demography with Harold Hodgkinson

When Harold L. Hodgkinson became dean of the Simmons College School of Education in the late 1950s, he was beginning an odyssey in higher education that would earn him a reputation as America's leading educational demographer. After Simmons, it was on to the deanship of Bard College and later, a faculty position at Berkeley. In 1974, President Ford appointed him director of the National Institute of Education. Hodgkinson did stints as president of the American Association for Higher Education, president of the National Training Laboratories, director of the American Management Association and fellow of the American Council on Education. Since 1987, he has directed the Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Educational Leadership's Center for Demographic Policy.

A former editor of the *Harvard Educational Review* and the *Journal of Higher Education*, Hodgkinson has been recognized by the National Science Foundation as a Distinguished Lecturer. He recently shared his views on key issues with CONNECTION.

ON THE EDUCATION CONTINUUM

We have begun to realize that the most important years of life for education are the first five. And we've realized there's a role for education throughout people's lives—*lifelong learning*. Though we have studied the school-to-college transition, we don't know very much about what happens when a child leaves preschool and enters school. Twelve governors have

now established K-16 commissions, bringing together for the first time interested parties from kindergarten through college—already a fairly common practice in countries that have centralized ministry systems.

We also know that when we allow a student to drop out of high school, we are essentially creating a prisoner. Eighty percent of U.S. prisoners are high-school dropouts. In fact, someone who doesn't graduate high school is more likely to go to prison than a heavy smoker is likely to get lung cancer. After all, dropping out of high school means there's no way of achieving the American Dream other than by stealing the BMW—because you're never going to be able to buy it.

Now, U.S. higher education institutions must end their isolation from the rest of the educational system, because it's in their self-interest to make sure everybody has a chance to travel through the system and move into higher education.

ON THE DEMOGRAPHER'S CRAFT

Some people have more children than others, some people live longer, some move more often and some have more money than others. Understanding those variables, along with the ability to compute percents, sums up the field of demography.

The reason we're so successful at predicting the future is the simple scientific principle that every decade, people get precisely 10 years older. In 1946, the year President Clinton was born, there was a 37 percent increase in people born in the United States, so

in 1996, there was a 37 percent increase in 50-year-olds, and in 2006, there will be a 37 percent increase in 60 year-olds, and in 2011, there will be a 37 percent increase in people applying for retirement.

If a college wants to plan its freshman enrollment for the year 2010, it doesn't have to wait. Higher education enrollment forecasting is based largely on people who have already been born, and the "traditional college-age" freshmen of the year 2010 were born in 1992. Simple forecasting techniques turn out to be astonishingly accurate—usually, plus or minus 5 percent.

ON THE BABY BOOM

People born in the 1930s are not a problem for Social Security because there are very few of them. The Baby Boomers can take care of my retirement by paying into the system without much trouble at all. But who will support these aging, white Baby Boomers in their retirement years?

The answer is a small and shrinking workforce that is also the most ethnically diverse workforce the United States has ever seen.

Differential fertility plus immigration determines the future makeup of the United States. The average black female gets pregnant about five times over her lifetime and gives birth to 2.6 children. The average Hispanic female gets pregnant less often and gives birth to more children. The average white female gets pregnant 2.8 times and gives birth to 1.7.

The Baby Boom is the result of a 17-year celebration of the end of World War II.

There wasn't much optimism among blacks after World War II, so their fertility rates did not go up to the same degree as that of whites. Result? The Baby Boom is essentially white.

The decline in births following the Baby Boom was also essentially white, though some decline also occurred among blacks. If it were not for Hispanic and Asian immigrants, we would be in a very difficult situation in terms of keeping schools going.

ON AN AGING POPULATION

In the London of Charles Dickens, half the funerals were for children under age 10. In 1880s New York City, one child died for every child born. The birth and death rates for children canceled each other out.

In contrast, by 1997, fully 57,000 Americans were over age 100, according to the Census Bureau. The third quarter of human life is clearly from age 50 to age 75.

The problem is that increased life expectancy presents us with a smaller

workforce and a very large retired force. There were once 18 workers per retiree; now there are three workers per retiree and there will soon be just two. So if a man retires at \$40,000 a year in Social Security, a working woman must give that retiree \$20,000 a year for as long as he's retired and she's working. That's enough to prevent her from putting a new roof on her home or sending her children to the college of their choice.

Furthermore, nothing is distributed evenly in the United States. In 27 states, including Vermont and Maine, one-fifth of the total population will be over age 65 in the year 2025.

These states will feature a mailbox economy in which income does not come through wages, but through the



mail in the form of Social Security checks, dividends from stocks and bonds and interest on savings accounts. Money in the mailbox economy isn't taxed until the older person spends it. Try putting a tax on somebody's Social Security check and you'll have a revolution.

Also because more people are getting older, disabilities are becoming more common. Some products advertised on TV would have been embarrassing to consider publicly 15 years ago; now we're talking about diapers for adults and nobody seems to mind.

Finally, many older people whose children have finished school and college are not interested in bond revenues for new school construction or state support for higher education.

ON DENSITY AND POLICY

Population density in New England varies from 1,000 people per square mile in the *BosWash* Corridor from Boston to Washington—greater than Japan's 750 people per square mile—to six people per square mile in Maine's Piscataquis County, which is the population density of the Gobi Desert.

Why is density important? Florida recently gave up on running a bullet train because the densities along the route in Florida simply are not great enough. But a bullet train will work between Boston and Washington. Similarly, if you're delivering Meals on Wheels to elderly people around Providence, you could deliver 20 meals in 20 minutes. In southern Utah, it could take all day because there may be five miles between stops. And if you have a heart attack in a county with six people per square mile, your chances of being Medicaid'd are much worse than if you were outside Boston. So population has a lot to do with the efficiency of social service delivery.

It's also very hard to run schools with only six taxpayers per square mile.

With high densities, mistakes can be fatal. A little problem with transportation doesn't matter much in Provo, Utah, but matters a lot in Boston. High-density areas *have* to be efficient. In fact, the *BosWash* Corridor functions like a single, efficient city right from Boston to Washington. And one reason the corridor works is that it doesn't have a mayor!

Incidentally, another principle of demography is that metropolitan areas do not confine themselves to state lines. Forty percent of metropolitan St. Louis is in Illinois. Memphis is not only the largest metropolitan area in Tennessee—it's also the largest in Arkansas and Mississippi. And from a demographic standpoint, Cleveland and Pittsburgh have come together to form *Clevelandburg*.

ON POPULATION STABILITY

Every year, 43 million Americans move from one address to another, in many cases, from the North to the South. And because *movers* are younger and better educated than *stayers*, what's left in the Northern half of the country is a residual population of older, white citizens.

Hundreds of studies examine why people leave places, but few ask why people stay. Yet this is enormously important.

Transience destroys communities. Communities need engaged churches that care about the larger community as well

as their own members. Communities need small retail stores with places to hang out, sit down and gossip (if you can't sit down, you can't truly gossip). And they need active associations. Writing a check to the Boy Scouts is not enough; communities need troop leaders. Communities also need diverse economies with small manufacturing companies where even high school graduates can earn enough to own homes in the community. High home ownership rates, in turn, offer further stability, even in big-city neighborhoods.

Families with children are important in a community, too. And if the children are known by adults who are not their parents, that's pure gold. If somebody who is not a parent can say, "Johnny, you better stop doing that or I'm going to tell your mother," Johnny stops doing that. It's one of the world's great surveillance systems, but it only works for adults who know children by name.

People also tend to stay in communities with stable, clustered incomes, because everyone is in the same boat financially.

Very few people move to New England and very few leave. Still, the leader by this measure is Pennsylvania: fully 80 percent of the people living in Pennsylvania were born there. By contrast, just 30 percent of Floridians were born in Florida. Some of the implications are obvious. Pennsylvania is a wonderful place to raise children, crime rates are low and there are few street signs because everyone has been there before. But getting a new idea across the state line into Pennsylvania might as well be illegal. Along with the comfort and security comes hostility to innovation. Florida, on the other hand, is dangerous, transient, multilingual—a difficult place to raise children. But new ideas wash into Florida like the tide because there is no established repertoire of ideas—no Floridian way of thinking about things as there is in Pennsylvania. As a result, lobbyists love Florida because Floridians don't know how to behave, and the lobbyists are delighted to show them.

Transient legislatures are another new phenomenon with important implications for higher education. Some lawmakers are just passing through, not interested in building a legacy for *their* grandchildren through higher education.

ON COLLEGE-GOING

Few phenomena vary by state as widely as college admissions. The percentage of

19-year-olds who have graduated from high school and been admitted to college ranges from a high of 60 percent in North Dakota to a low of 25 percent in Nevada. No international test comparisons show that great a deviation between nations.

Coming after North Dakota at the top of the list are Iowa, New Jersey, Nebraska, Massachusetts, Illinois, Wisconsin and Rhode Island—some of the most stable states in terms of population growth. At the bottom of the list are Nevada, Nebraska, Florida, Texas and Arizona—the five most transient states in the United States. Teachers all over these states report having totally different students in their classrooms in the spring than in the fall when school began. Ministers talk of never having seen a third or more of the



*If the funeral
replaces the baby
shower in
your town, put
your house on
the market.*

people gathered in their halls of worship. Hospital physicians spend their time treating patients who are total strangers.

Nationally, 24 percent of adults have bachelor's degrees or more. In New England, the figures are: 33 percent in Massachusetts, 30 percent in Connecticut; 27 percent in New Hampshire, 25 percent in Rhode Island; 20 percent in Maine; and 14 percent in Vermont.

ON RACE AND POVERTY

The percentage of people in poverty in New England is below the U.S. average. That's important, because if you can prevent people from moving into poverty, you have a better shot at achieving educational equity.

Furthermore, we should look at race and class together. You can look at

eighth-grade students in terms of math proficiency and compare four different ethnic groups, but try comparing the highest-income quarter with the lowest-income quarter within each ethnic group and you see how much of the experience is due to race and how much is due to class. Look at the math scores for wealthy Asian kids versus poor Asian kids. Look at the scores for wealthy whites and poor whites, wealthy Hispanics and poor Hispanics, wealthy blacks and poor blacks. It turns out this is roughly 30 percent about race and 70 percent about class.

The fact that 20 percent of black households have a higher income than the white average doesn't mean there aren't severe problems with poverty among black, and especially, Hispanic populations. But it does suggest that the universally handicapping condition is not race, but poverty.

Without exception, as you get more education your lifetime income increases, and those numbers have not changed in terms of consistency for at least 50 years. In fact, education is so important in determining income that you can pass those benefits on to your children. If you look at who goes to college by income level—and there's no reason to think this is based on IQ—you see there is very little opportunity for people with incomes below \$23,000.

SATs, meanwhile, predict one thing beautifully, but it's not the grades students will earn as freshmen; it's the household income of the test-takers. For every \$10,000 increase in household income, math and verbal scores go up a minimum of nine points without exception. This is what's called a "linear series"—it's so rare a lot of computer programs don't even do it.

ON CITIES

In virtually all 351 U.S. metropolitan areas, poverty is moving out to the innermost suburbs or *Ring 2*. *Ring 3* is where the baby boom is raising its children, and *Ring 4* is where real estate is being created from farmland sold to developers, and the sprawl moves out even further.

In his great book *Cities Without Suburbs*, David Rusk talks about *rigid* cities—places where poverty is confined to city limits and poor people can't seem to move out. The most rigid city in the United States is East St. Louis; the second most rigid city is Hartford, Conn. You

can see where the city of Hartford ends as if it were cut with a razor. Bridgeport and New Haven, Conn., are other cities where poverty is rigidly confined, with significant implications for education.

By contrast, in *elastic* places where poverty is not confined to the city, neither are college graduates confined to the suburbs. New jobs are created in the elastic city as well as its suburbs, whereas new jobs appear mostly outside the rigid city.

Every time I go to Boston and Hartford, I see this rigid confining of poverty to the city limits. That's partly because annexation is very difficult in New England, whereas in North Carolina, a voluntary annexation law permits any two counties to affiliate through annexation without asking permission. In Arizona, Phoenix has annexed neighboring communities 26 times, and in the process, added space for new schools and corporations. Hartford can't annex anything. The city is exactly the same size as it was after World War II.

If the 10 biggest metropolitan areas in the United States, including Boston, were a country, their gross product would be the fourth largest in the world. The only trouble with these metropolitan areas is that because they are combinations of cities and surrounding suburbs, they're not politically real. This is beginning to change, as metro councils bring together cities and suburbs. But New England is behind on those issues.

ON POPULATION LOSS

A variety of federal funds are distributed to states based largely on the state's rank in population. New England has lost rank. Massachusetts is now the 13th largest state, down from 11th in 1980. Connecticut ranks 28th, down from 25th in 1980. Maine ranks 38th, compared with 39th in 1980. New Hampshire remains 42nd. Rhode Island ranks 43rd, down from 40th, while Vermont slips from 48th to 49th.

The population of the New England states is projected to reach 14 million by the year 2010; 6.4 million in Massachusetts; 3.4 million in Connecticut; 1.3 million in Maine; 1.3 million in New Hampshire; 1 million in Rhode Island; and 651,000 for Vermont. But every New England state will experience a decline in people under age 18 by 2010. The group of young workers ages 18 to 44 will also be down. These would be the young workers starting families, buying retail items and getting the new economy going. How about older workers, ages 45 to 64? Their numbers are rising. In fact, all the New England states will see

increases in the over-65 group by 2010. These are people who get sick and complain a lot.

Moreover, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, Michigan, Wisconsin and Illinois will be unable to maintain their present population level because their populations are aging so fast. They forgot to have children. And nobody with children moved in. As a result, these places are becoming *Palm Beachified*. Palm Beach has one birth per death, compared with the national norm of 2.2 births per death. The average age in Palm Beach is 49, compared with a national average age of 36, and the fertility rate of people over 49 is not worth calculating. In Palm Beach two years ago, the debutante cotillion ball was canceled, not for lack of interest, but for lack of debutantes.



Virtually every county in Iowa has fewer people than it had in 1980. How do you get people to come back? You don't. That's not the solution. The solution is to provide a job in the community for every high school graduate, and make sure college graduates who come back to the state have good jobs for at least three years guaranteed by the state.

In 1997, 221,000 more people left Massachusetts than moved in. The same year, 192,000 more people left Connecticut than moved in. Rhode Island lost 66,000; Maine 15,000; and Vermont, 5,000. New Hampshire actually had a net in-migration of 13,000.

Right now, fertility rates in New England are strong enough that if people stop moving in, the region can still remain even for

a while. But if the funeral replaces the baby shower in your town, put your house on the market. This is a very dangerous thing. And New England could be next.

ON IMMIGRATION

We are experiencing the second biggest immigration wave of this century. But while we're used to a European immigrant population, those coming now are mostly non-European. Americans say that immigrants can come in as long as they adopt our customs. But what happens when a new group moves in is that *we* change too. That reciprocity is what makes it work.

The United States remains the only nation that has made immigration work. After 10 years here, new immigrants go right up to or above the U.S. average in home ownership—a pretty good indicator of middle class life. When I was dean of Bard College, the entire Dean's List was the children or grandchildren of Jewish immigrants. Today, Bard's Dean's List is composed of the children or grandchildren of Asian immigrants. Forty percent of the members of the U.S. Senate have immigrant grandparents. Contrast that with how immigrants move into the political leadership in other countries.

ON RACE AND ETHNICITY

Between 2000 and 2010, the white population will decline in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and increase in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. The black population will be flat in Maine, but will grow significantly in Connecticut and Massachusetts and less spectacularly in the other three states. The Asian and Hispanic populations will grow across the board.

Fully 80 percent of the U.S. black population lives in 20 percent of the land mass—the South Coast and the Mississippi Delta. We talk about the melting pot, but it's pretty hard to melt in the 75 percent of U.S. counties where less than 1 percent of the population is black. Indeed, a friend who's a school superintendent in South Dakota declared last year to be Ethnic Diversity Year, and said every student in his schools was going to have to have one black friend by the end of the year, which also meant every black student would have 296 white friends!

The New South is where the new black middle class is thriving, and many blacks are moving back because: 1) good jobs exist there; and 2) not one of

the 10 most segregated cities in the United States is there—they're all in the Rust Belt. We've segregated income and race 100 percent in heavy manufacturing cities like Detroit and Flint, Mich., but not in the coastal South.

Ninety percent of Hispanics, meanwhile, live in 10 states, and Massachusetts is number 10. Hispanics have more political clout in many counties now than blacks do. In Detroit, a candidate for public office needs the black vote to get elected. Any place else in Michigan, a candidate needs the Hispanic vote.

Importantly, however, the term *Hispanic* doesn't represent a common heritage. It's merely a catchall phrase developed by the U.S. Census Bureau. Puerto Ricans and Cubans in Florida have a heritage from Spain. Mexicans in the Southwest have a heritage from Mexico. There is no Hispanic food. And there were no Hispanics before the 1980 census. Indeed, there are no Hispanics anywhere else in the world except in the United States. A Cuban friend of mine told me he had to move from Cuba to Miami to become a Hispanic. The prob-

lem is *Hispanic* hides as much as it reveals.

In fact, every time we have a census, we change the categories. In 1960, you were either white or non-white. How would women feel if the sex question had been: "Are you male or non-male?"

More recently, U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye introduced a bill to reclassify Hawaiians as Native Americans because only Native Americans can run gambling casinos.

Look at some of the amazing words we've used in the past like *mulatto*, *quadroon* and *octoroon*, and you see that we don't really know what we're doing in these categories. Race is important historically and politically, but it's scientific nonsense. The U.S. Census Bureau's own Directive 15 begins by saying, "The categories in the Census have no scientific validity whatever." Today, the darkest quarter of the white population is darker than the lightest quarter of the black population.

A Gallup Survey showed that about 66 percent of white people had a good black friend in 1990, up from 54 percent in 1981, while 80 percent of blacks have

a good white friend, up from 69 percent in 1981.

I meet with a group of about 16 researchers once a year for dinner. Last year, our conversation revolved around the O.J. Simpson verdict. We know each other well enough that we could say what we really thought. The whites were saying, "You call yourself researchers yet you pay no attention to the DNA evidence?" And one of the blacks said, "Nobody in your household has ever been arrested at two o'clock in the morning driving around in a suburb in a nice car doing nothing wrong." The Hispanics and Asians in the group were sitting there as if they were at a tennis match: *Yes, good point, well played*. After about half an hour, a Hispanic raised his hand (nobody had raised a hand in 10 years of these meetings). "Can I say something?" he asked. The white and black group shouted at him, "Keep out of this" Now, we have to ask: How many blacks have a good Hispanic friend? How many Asians have a good black friend?

Black-white won't do for the future. If *e pluribus* changes, so does *unum*. ■