

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE AND AMERICAN DIALECTOLOGY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT: Dramatic demographic changes are rapidly reshaping the population of the United States in ways that make the research questions that motivated twentieth-century dialectology outmoded. This paper outlines some of the most important demographic changes currently affecting the United States and suggests some research questions that are implicit in those developments. While twentieth-century dialectology was driven by questions regarding the sociospatial structure of the Founder Dialects and their relationships to settlement history and British regional varieties, twenty-first-century dialectology must examine the linguistic consequences of newly emerging demographic divisions, the consequences of widespread urbanization, and the relationships between Anglo dialects and a rapidly growing non-Anglo population. These questions require some fundamental changes in how we do dialectology, but they also position the discipline in a way that will enable it to address fundamental social and educational issues that stand at the center of the intellectual life of the twenty-first century.

IT HAS BEEN ALMOST 75 YEARS since Hans Kurath articulated a set of research questions for American dialectology and outlined a methodology, adapted from European predecessors, for answering those questions.¹ During the past 75 years the methodology outlined by Kurath has changed significantly to embrace technological innovations, to broaden the target population, and to incorporate more sophisticated ways of selecting informants. Thus tape-recorded interviews have replaced transcription in the field, corpora have become computerized, and telephone interviews have arisen as alternatives to field interviews.² Likewise, while early projects in dialectology focused largely on white informants in rural communities and small towns, recent projects have included samples that are more representative demographically, and dialectologists have explored a variety of procedures for obtaining these samples, including various sorts of probability sampling.³

In contrast to methodology, the research questions that Kurath proposed are still the ones that for the most part drive dialectology at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The sociospatial structure of the dialects formed dur-

ing the initial settlement of the United States, the linguistic content of those dialects, and their relationships to settlement history and British regional vernaculars are still questions that underlie a significant amount of work in dialectology.⁴ Dramatic demographic changes that are rapidly reshaping the population of the United States, however, suggest that the research questions Kurath articulated are in need of revision. This paper outlines some of the most important demographic changes affecting the United States and the research questions that those changes imply in developing a prospectus for dialectology in the twenty-first century.

The demographic forces that Kurath encountered in 1930 were remarkably different from those shaping the population of the United States today. The completion of transcontinental settlement had occurred only 40 years before Kurath began his enterprise, and after more than half a century of massive immigration, especially from central and eastern Europe and Scandinavia, the influx of new arrivals had begun to slow dramatically with the beginning of World War I and the passage of restrictive immigration laws in the 1920s. By 1940 the foreign-born population comprised less than 9% of the total population of the United States. While urbanization had begun to transform the demographic landscape of the United States a century earlier, in 1930 only a little more than half of the population lived in urban areas (that is, in communities with populations of 2,500 or more); less than 40% of the population of the South lived in such areas. Further, although Americans have always been more mobile than their European counterparts, most Americans remained near the place of their birth for their entire lives. For instance, in the 1920 U.S. census (the census Kurath used in planning a linguistic atlas that he hoped would eventually cover all of the United States and Canada), 76.1% of the American population lived in the state of their birth, a figure virtually identical to the 76.7% in 1850 and the 76.5% in 1890 (Haines 2000). Moreover, the massive population movements that crossed traditional dialect boundaries lay ahead. The northward migration of blacks and whites from the South was still in its infancy and would not reach its apogee until after World War II, while the large-scale movement of Northern whites to the South would not occur for another 40 years.⁵ More important, though, the reflexes of much of the traditional regional culture implanted in the original settlement of the United States were still evident, especially in rural areas.

Dialectologists in the twenty-first century are faced with three demographic forces that have eliminated many of the vestiges of traditional regional culture and that are radically reshaping the United States. These include (1) continuing and accelerating urbanization (or more accurately, metropolitanization), (2) resurgent foreign and domestic migration, and (3) expanding ethnic diversity. They all pose significant challenges for dialectologists.

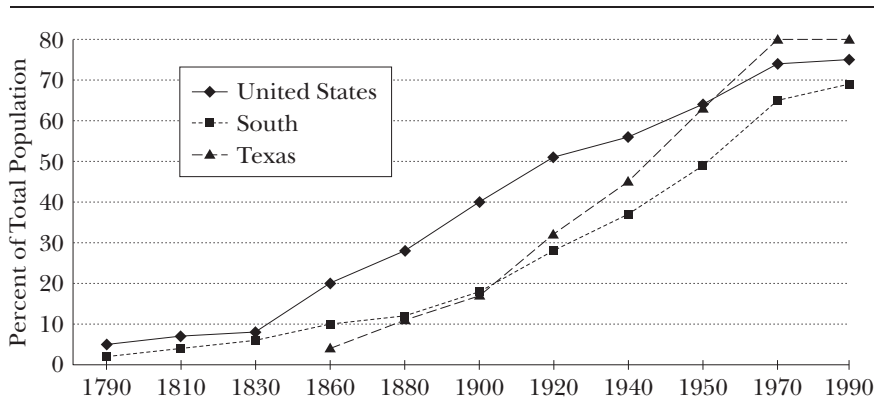
CONTINUED URBANIZATION

The movement of the American population to cities and metropolises that had begun well before 1930 has accelerated rapidly since that time. Figure 1 tracks the urbanization of the population of the United States as a whole and of the South and Texas separately. As figure 1 indicates, the urban population of the United States (i.e., the population living in communities of 2,500 and more) grew from just over 50% in 1920 to 75% in 1990. After World War II, urbanization involved migration not just to cities, but to very large cities, so that by 2000, 80.3% of all Americans lived in 280 metropolitan areas.⁶ In 2000 some 30% of Americans lived in metropolises with populations of more than five million people, and another 27% lived in metropolises with populations between one and five million. An additional 16% lived in metropolitan areas with populations between 250,000 and one million (Perry and Mackun 2001). The magnitude of the urban transformation of the American population over the last century and a half is stunning: in 1860, 80% of the American population was dispersed in rural areas and communities with populations less than 2,500; in 2000, roughly the same proportion of the population was concentrated in 280 metropolitan areas.

Urbanization and metropolitanization have not progressed at the same pace throughout the country, however. The South lagged behind the rest of the United States by about 50 years, beginning to accelerate only after 1880 and beginning to approach rates in other parts of the country only after World War II. Nevertheless, by 1990 almost 70% of all Southerners lived in urban areas, and the percentage of the Texas population which was urban was greater than that of the United States as a whole. Both in the South and in the nation as a whole, the primary effect of this urbanization, especially

FIGURE 1

Urbanization of the Population of the United States, American South, and Texas



in combination with the geographic mobility of the American population, has been the obliteration of a great deal of the regional folk culture of the United States.⁷

Urbanization has had a demonstrable linguistic effect too, as tables 1 and 2 show. Table 1 summarizes the effects of urbanization on 12 features elicited in the Texas Poll portion of the Phonological Survey of Texas (PST), a project conducted during 1989.⁸ As table 1 indicates, the distribution of 7 of the 12 features is strongly conditioned by rurality. (Note that in tables 1 and 5, different letters indicate statistically significant lexical differences; $PR > F$ reflects the level of significance. In all 7 instances, the linguistic divide is not simply between rural and urban areas, but rather between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. Since other data suggest that all 7 linguistic features represent changes in progress at various stages, it is clear that in Texas the speech of metropolitan areas is diverging sharply from that of rural areas and towns (see Bailey et al. 1996). The work of Thomas (1997) provides strong confirmation of the Texas metropolitan-nonmetropolitan split.⁹

Evidence from Oklahoma provides additional confirmation for a metropolitan-nonmetropolitan split. Table 2a provides the results of a multivariate analysis of the effects of 14 sociodemographic factors on 22 linguistic features elicited in the telephone portion of the Survey of Oklahoma Dialects (SOD). Rurality significantly affects 14 of the features, more than any other sociodemographic factor in SOD.¹⁰ When the evidence from PST and SOD

TABLE 1
The Effects of Rurality on Some Features of Texas English
(summary of results of the Scheffe Test on data from the 1989 Texas Poll)

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Large Metro</i>	<i>Metro</i>	<i>Towns/Rural</i>	<i>PR > F</i>
Significantly different				
Unrounded vowel in <i>lost</i>	AAA	AAA	BBB	.0031
Unrounded vowel in <i>walk</i>	AAA	AAA	BBB	.0031
Lax vowel in <i>field</i>	AAA	AAA	BBB	.0014
Lax vowel in <i>sale</i>	AAA	AAA	BBB	.0113
Lax vowel in <i>school</i>	AAA	AAA	BBB	.0015
/tu/ in <i>Tuesday</i>	AAA	AAA	BBB	.0024
Intrusive /r/ in <i>Washington</i>	AAA	AAA	BBB	.0166
Not significantly different				
Monophthongal /ai/ in <i>night</i>	AAA	AAA	AAA	.1404
Unconstricted /r/ in <i>forty</i>	AAA	AAA	AAA	.1876
Deletion of /h/ in <i>Houston</i>	AAA	AAA	AAA	.3280
Fronted onset in <i>thousand</i>	AAA	AAA	AAA	.6080
Unrounded vowel in <i>forty</i>	AAA	AAA	AAA	.6883

NOTE: Contrasting uppercase letters indicate significant rural/urban differences.

TABLE 2A
 Summary of Multivariate Analysis of SOD Telephone Survey Data
 (using the GLM Procedure in SAS)

Variable	AGE	NAT	RUR	HOM	YRS	SEX	EDU	INC	OCC	ETH	RAT	RNH	LOK	MAR	EXPV
Wednesday	—	.01	.01	.01	—	—	.01	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.16
pen	—	.01	.01	.01	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.13
Thursday	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.01	—	—	—	—	.08
forty	.05	.05	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.01	—	—	—	—	.14
Friday	—	—	.01	—	.05	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.08
time	.01	—	.01	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.12
night	—	—	.01	—	—	—	.05	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.08
field	.01	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.15
bale	.01	—	—	—	.05	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.13
pool	.01	.01	.01	—	.01	.01	.01	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.20
hawk	.01	.01	.01	—	.01	.01	—	—	—	—	.01	—	—	—	.17
wash	.01	.05	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.08
thousand	—	.05	—	—	—	.05	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.06
Tuesday	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.05
snap bean	.01	—	.01	—	—	—	.01	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.16
light bread	—	—	.01	.05	—	—	.01	—	—	.01	—	—	—	—	.16
snake doctor	—	—	.01	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.05	—	.20
yall	.01	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.13
yall (sing.)	.01	—	.01	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.09
fixin to	.01	.05	.01	—	—	—	.01	.05	—	.05	—	—	.05	—	.18
might could	.05	.01	.01	—	—	—	.01	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.12
anymore	—	.01	.05	—	—	—	.01	—	—	—	—	—	.05	—	.13

NOTE: For a description of the variables, see table 2b.

TABLE 2B

Key to Sociodemographic and Linguistic Variables in Table 2a

<i>Sociodemographic Variables</i>	
NAT	Nativity (years in Oklahoma)
RUR	Rurality (size of place of residence)
HOM	Size of place of longest residence
YRS	Years in present neighborhood
EDU	Education
INC	Income
OCC	Occupation
ETH	Ethnicity
RAT	Rating of Oklahoma as a place to live
RNH	Rating of neighborhood
LOK	Respondent's perception of Oklahoma as a Southern, Midwestern, etc., state
MAR	Marital status
EXPV	Explained variance, r^2
<i>Lexical Item</i> <i>Linguistic Variable Explored</i>	
<i>Wednesday</i>	Merger of /ɛ/ and /ɪ/ before nasals
<i>pen</i>	Merger of /ɛ/ and /ɪ/ before nasals
<i>Thursday</i>	Unconstricted syllabic /r/
<i>forty</i>	Unconstricted postvocalic /r/
<i>Friday</i>	Monophthongal /aɪ/ in open syllables
<i>time</i>	Monophthongal /aɪ/ before nasals
<i>night</i>	Monophthongal /aɪ/ before voiceless obstruents
<i>field</i>	Laxing of /i/ (to /ɪ/) before /l/
<i>bale</i>	Laxing of /e/ (to /ɛ/) before /l/
<i>pool</i>	Laxing of /u/ (to /ʊ/) before /l/ (includes tense ingliding vowels)
<i>hawk</i>	Unrounding of /ɔ/ so that /ɔ/ and /ɑ/ are merged
<i>wash</i>	Intrusive /r/
<i>thousand</i>	Fronting of /au/
<i>Tuesday</i>	Loss of /j/ after alveolars
<i>snap bean</i>	For <i>green bean</i>
<i>light bread</i>	For white bread baked in loaves
<i>snake doctor</i>	For <i>dragonfly</i>
<i>yall</i>	As a second-person plural pronoun
<i>yall</i> (sing.)	As a second-person singular pronoun
<i>fixin to</i>	As a quasi-modal
<i>might could</i>	Combining of modals
<i>anymore</i>	In positive structures

is taken in conjunction with the data on the Northern Cities Chain Shift compiled by Labov, Ash, and Boberg (forthcoming), it becomes clear that the ongoing, rapid urbanization that began even before the first linguistic atlas was initiated, and in particular the metropolitanization that has taken place since World War II, is transforming American dialects and their spatial organization. Tracking this transformation must be a major priority for twenty-first-century dialectology.

EXPANDING MIGRATION

Both domestic and foreign migration have been significant factors in the continuing growth of metropolitan areas in the United States. Domestic migration has always played an important role in urbanization as residents of rural communities moved to towns and cities to fill industrial jobs and to look for employment as agricultural opportunities diminished during the course of the twentieth century.¹¹ In most cases, people simply moved to cities from the surrounding countryside. Two broad streams of interregional migration to metropolitan areas, however, have radically reshaped the demography of the United States since World War I. The first involved the movement of massive numbers of Southerners, both black and white, to Northern cities between World War I and 1970. During this period more than 6,000,000 African Americans moved from the rural South to metropolitan areas in the North and West, such as Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, New York, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and Los Angeles.¹² This phenomenon, known as the Great Migration, was “by far the largest movement of a single group in American history” (Flanders 1998, 165).¹³ An even larger number (although a much smaller percentage) of Southern whites moved to cities in the North and West too. In fact, during the 30 years between 1940 and 1970, more than 15 million white Southerners left the rural South for cities in the South as well as in the North and West.

The reversal of this South-to-North stream of migration was a major demographic trend of the last quarter of the twentieth century and is continuing into the twenty-first. As a result, the Sunbelt regions (the South and West) grew significantly faster than did the Northeast and Midwest after 1975, and they continue to do so (see figure 2, which provides data on growth by region for the 1990s). The migration to the Sunbelt is almost exclusively a movement to Southern metropolises, and initially it was largely a white phenomenon as well. During the 1990s, though, African Americans also began moving back to the South. Figure 3 compares the migration out of the South by African Americans during the period 1965–1970 with their migration into the South

FIGURE 2
Population Growth in Four Regions of the United States, 1990–2000

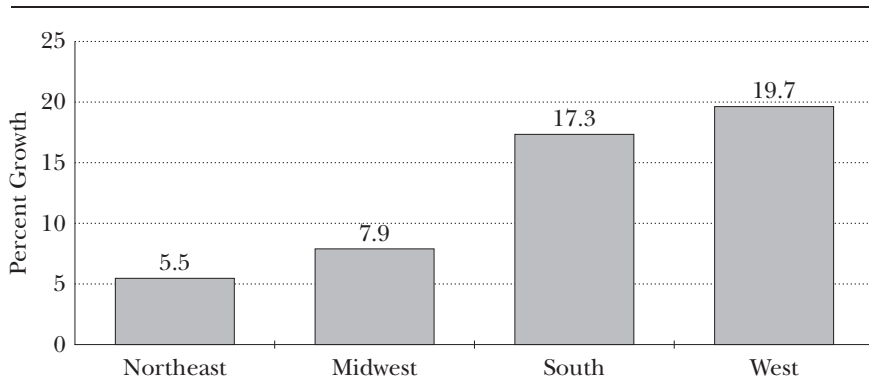
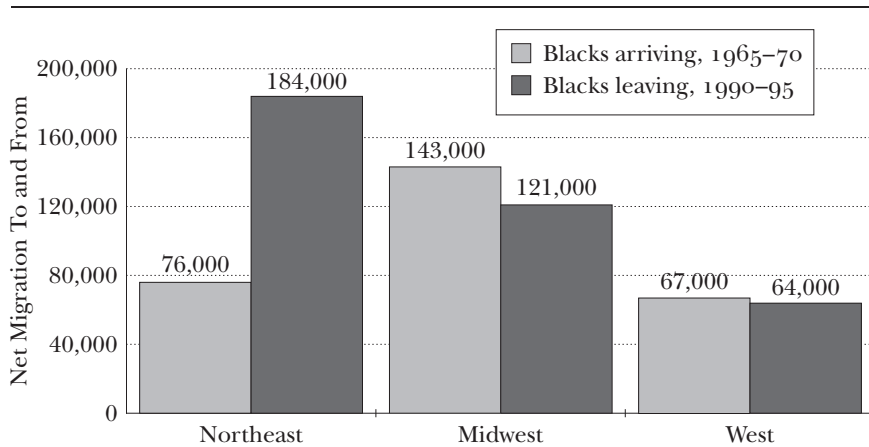


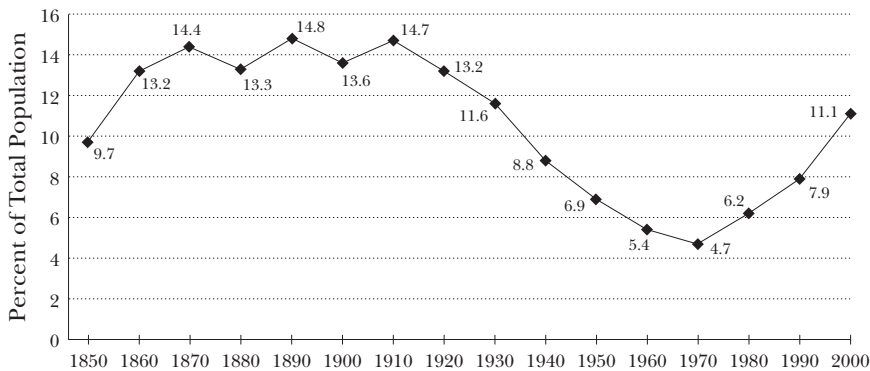
FIGURE 3
The Reversal of the Great Migration
(Frey, Abresch, and Yeasting 2001)



during the period 1990–1995. As that figure suggests, the 1990s seemed to mark the beginnings of a reversal of the Great Migration as large numbers of African Americans left the North and moved to the South.

Occurring simultaneously with the Sunbelt migration has been a resurgence of foreign migration. As figure 4 suggests, after 60 years of decline the percentage of foreign-born population in the United States began to increase after 1970, and in the 2000 census was at 11.1%, the highest level since 1930 and one that approaches the 13–15% level that characterized the period from 1860 to 1920. The rate of increase in the foreign-born

FIGURE 4
 Percentage of the U.S. Population That Was Foreign-Born, 1850–2000

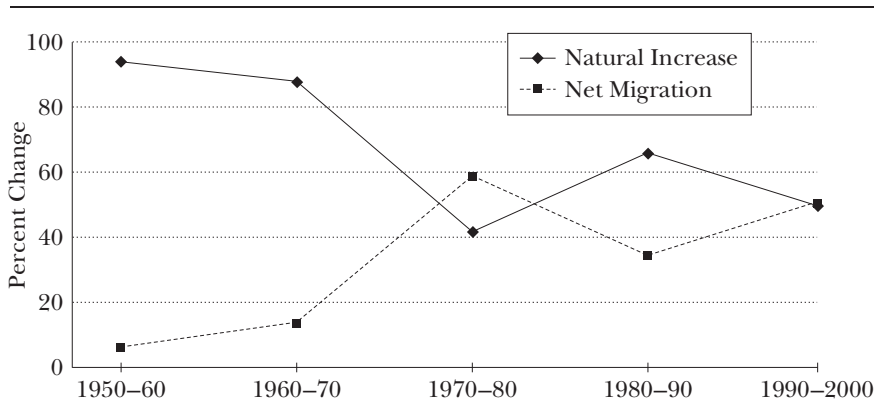


population was particularly dramatic between 1990 and 2000, growing by 57%, and it shows no sign of abating.

Just as remarkable as the extent of recent foreign migration is its effect on the population of metropolitan areas. Frey, Abresch, and Yeasting (2001, 50) note that, “during 1998, 660,447 legal immigrants, 44,829 refugees, and an estimated 275,000 illegal immigrants entered the United States.” Most of these immigrants ended up in metropolises, and their impact on those large cities is striking.¹⁴ Frey, Abresch, and Yeasting point out that five of the seven fastest-growing metropolises in the United States (Los Angeles, Houston, San Diego, Miami, and Dallas) owe ALL of their population growth to foreign migration, as does the largest metropolis, New York (71). In fact, New York and Los Angeles, the nation’s two largest metropolitan areas, each received more than 1.2 million immigrants during the 1990s—almost as many people as live in San Antonio, the nation’s eighth largest city. The role of immigration in the demographic development of metropolises in the United States during the 1990s (and continuing into the first decade of the twenty-first century) was even greater than these figures suggest, however: “in the metropolitan regions of Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York, many of the suburbs, as well as all of the central cities, would actually be shrinking” were it not for this phenomenon (75).

The impact of migration, both domestic and foreign, on the population of the United States is hard to overestimate. An examination of the sources of population growth in Texas (one of the states that has benefited from both Sunbelt migration and foreign migration) over the past 50 years demonstrates that impact. Figure 5 shows that between 1950 and 1970, virtually all of the population growth in Texas stemmed from natural increase (the

FIGURE 5
Sources of Population Growth in Texas since 1950
(Murdock 2001)



remainder of births over deaths). During the 1970s, however, migration began to outpace natural increase as a source of population growth, largely in response to the oil boom and the emergence of the Sunbelt phenomenon. With the oil bust of the 1980s, migration slowed somewhat, but in the 1990s natural increase and migration were virtually equal as sources of population growth. One additional point should be made here: the sources of migration during the 1990s were quite different from those during the 1970s. During the 1970s most migration was domestic; during the 1990s, however, foreign migration began to outpace domestic migration. For instance, between 1990 and 1996, net domestic migration into Texas was 466,970, while net foreign migration was 491,931 (Murdock 2001).

The combination of domestic and foreign migration means that many communities include significant numbers of people (in some cases a majority of their population) who are not natives of the community. Like urbanization, nativity has important consequences for linguistic variation. Table 3 summarizes the effects of nativity on the 12 phonological features elicited for the Texas Poll portion of PST, while table 2a above provides the effects of nativity in the SOD data. Although in the Texas data nativity significantly affects only about half as many features as rurality does, 10 of the 22 SOD features show significant effects for nativity. Like rurality, then, nativity is clearly a factor in language variation.

Nativity, though, may have an effect that is not evident in data like that from PST and SOD. Foreign migration brings with it multilingualism. According to the most recent U.S. census, some 47 million people spoke a language other than English in their homes in 2000, and of these 21.3 million spoke

TABLE 3
The Effects of Nativity on Some Features of Texas English
(summary of the chi-square test on data from the 1989 Texas Poll)

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Significance Level</i>
Significant	
Unrounded vowel in <i>lost</i>	.0001
Unrounded vowel in <i>walk</i>	.0001
Lax vowel in <i>school</i>	.001
/tu/ in <i>Tuesday</i>	.04
Not significant	
Lax vowel in <i>field</i>	—
Lax vowel in <i>sale</i>	—
Intrusive /r/ in <i>Washington</i>	—
Monophthongal /ai/ in <i>night</i>	—
Unconstricted /r/ in <i>forty</i>	—
Deletion of /h/ in <i>Houston</i>	—
Fronted onset in <i>thousand</i>	—
Unrounded vowel in <i>forty</i>	—

English less than “very well.”¹⁵ The effect that this much multilingualism, concentrated for the most part in a few metropolitan areas, will have on the vernaculars of those areas is surely a topic that dialectologists in the twenty-first century must consider more extensively than they have in the past.¹⁶

GROWING ETHNIC DIVERSIFICATION

One of the consequences of rapidly expanding immigration is the growing ethnic diversification of the United States. In planning the linguistic atlas project, Kurath confronted a population that was predominantly white and of European descent, the only exceptions being a large population of African Americans (still predominantly in the rural South at that time) and much smaller populations of Mexican Americans in the Southwest, Asians in California, and Native Americans in various Western and Midwestern states. The current situation is radically different—and becoming more so. Table 4 provides selected population statistics from the 2000 census on the 10 largest states, which collectively include 54% of the total population of the United States. Much of the information on table 4 is not surprising—for example, the rapid population growth in the South and West, continuing the Sunbelt expansion that began in the 1970s. What is surprising is that most of the growth in both the Sunbelt and the non-Sunbelt states is the result of the increase in non-Anglo populations: non-Anglo growth accounts

TABLE 4
Demographic Change among the 10 Largest States
(Murdock 2001)

State	2000 Total Population	# Change 1990-2000	% Change 1990-2000	# Change Anglo Pop.	% Change Anglo Pop.	# Change Non-Anglos	% Pop. Growth Due to Non-Anglos
California	33,871,648	4,111,627	13.8	-635,635	-3.73	4,747,262	100
Texas	20,851,820	3,865,310	22.8	783,036	7.61	3,082,274	80
New York	18,976,457	980,002	5.5	-538,818	-4.32	1,518,820	100
Florida	15,982,378	3,044,452	23.5	1,093,542	11.54	1,950,910	64
Illinois	12,419,293	988,691	8.6	-35,722	-0.42	1,024,413	100
Pennsylvania	12,281,054	399,411	3.4	-49,009	-0.47	446,420	100
Ohio	11,353,140	506,025	4.7	159,928	1.69	346,097	68
Michigan	9,938,444	643,147	6.9	256,678	3.36	386,469	60
New Jersey	8,414,350	684,162	8.9	-93,620	-1.64	777,782	100
Georgia	8,186,453	1,708,237	26.4	627,337	13.81	1,080,900	63

NOTE: Anglo refers to non-Hispanic whites.

for at least 60% of the population increase in all 10 states.¹⁷ In five states, including New York and California, non-Anglo growth accounts for all of the population increase; all five states show actual declines in Anglo population, with California and New York declining in Anglo population by more than a half a million each.

The U.S. census for 2000 shows that the increasing ethnic diversity actually comes from two sources: migration from abroad and higher birth rates among non-Anglo populations already in the United States. The sources of immigration during the past quarter century differ significantly, of course, from the sources of earlier immigration. While most foreign migration during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century was from Scandinavia and central and eastern Europe, much of the current immigration is from Latin America and Asia. In fact, in the 2000 U.S. census the latter two sources accounted for just over 78% of the foreign-born population (Latin America for 51.7%, Asia for 26.4%). The impact of the foreign-born population is further accentuated by higher birthrates among this group. In the 2000 U.S. census, 17% of all births were to foreign-born women, whose birthrate (85 births per 1,000 women) was significantly higher than the 62 births per 1,000 of the general population. The birthrate among foreign-born Hispanic women was even higher (112 births per 1,000).¹⁸ The combination of high rates of immigration and higher birthrates than the general population means that the Latino and Asian populations (and to a lesser extent, the African American population) will grow much more rapidly than the Anglo population over the next half century. As a consequence, by 2060 the United States will most likely be a majority-minority nation and an increasingly multilingual one (Frey, Abresch, and Yeasting 2001, 47).

Like rurality and nativity, ethnicity has a significant impact on language variation in the United States. Table 5 summarizes the effects of ethnicity on the linguistic features elicited for the Texas Poll portion of PST. As table 5 shows, eight of the 12 features are significantly affected by ethnicity. The linguistic consequences of ethnicity in Texas are quite complex, though. As table 5 indicates, some features are shared by Anglos and African Americans, some are shared by African Americans and Hispanics, and some are shared by Anglos and Hispanics. Still others are distinct to each of the three groups.¹⁹ Table 2 above shows that ethnicity significantly affects four features even in the ethnically less complex state of Oklahoma.

As with nativity, the effects of ethnicity are not fully shown in either of these sources of data, however, since neither source explores ethnic linguistic stereotypes such as durative/habitual *be* or copula absence in African American Vernacular English (AAVE). A complete account of AAVE, Chicano English, and varieties of English influenced by Asian languages would suggest

TABLE 5
 The Effects of Ethnicity on Some Features of Texas English
 (summary of results of the Scheffe Test on data from the 1989 Texas Poll)

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Anglo</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>PR > F</i>
Significantly different				
Unrounded vowel in <i>lost</i>	BBB	CCC	AAA	.0001
Unrounded vowel in <i>walk</i>	BBB	CCC	AAA	.0001
Unconstricted /r/ in <i>forty</i>	AAA	CCC	BBB	.0001
Lax vowel in <i>field</i>	BBB	BBB	AAA	.0005
Lax vowel in <i>sale</i>	BBB	BBB	AAA	.0001
Lax vowel in <i>school</i>	AAA	BBB	AAA	.0001
Monophthongal /ai/ in <i>night</i>	AAA	BBB	BBB	.0001
Fronted onset in <i>thousand</i>	AAA	BBB	BBB	.0007
Not significantly different				
Deletion of /h/ in <i>Houston</i>	AAA	AAA	AAA	.0796
Intrusive /r/ in <i>Washington</i>	AAA	AAA	AAA	.1612
Unrounded vowel in <i>forty</i>	AAA	AAA	AAA	.1212
/tu/ in <i>Tuesday</i>	AAA	AAA	AAA	.1633

NOTE: Contrasting uppercase letters indicate significant rural/urban differences. Shading highlights shared features.

a fuller range of features that might be involved in variation and change over the coming decades and that deserve close scrutiny by dialectologists and sociolinguists.²⁰

THE INTERACTION OF THESE DEMOGRAPHIC FORCES

Although urbanization, migration, and ethnic diversification have so far been treated as independent demographic factors, their intersection is currently producing some spatial configurations that may well have a greater impact on the development of American English than any of these factors in isolation. Frey, Abresch, and Yeasting (2001, 76) suggest that the spatial distribution of the new ethnic diversity will be quite uneven, with “both new immigrant populations, Latinos and Asians, . . . clustering in [gateway] metropolitan areas separate from the black and white populations.” They go on to note that

the Anglo-American population is diffusing into mostly ‘whiter’ parts of the country, especially the Northwest and inland areas. And African Americans are returning in large numbers to the South. In short, America is separating into broad regions that

will differ distinctly in their racial and ethnic blends, creating never-before-seen demographic divisions. The new demographic cleavage between regions will soon become just as significant as the familiar divides of urban—suburb and city—rural. [71]

The ultimate result of the intersection of urbanization, migration, and ethnic diversification, then, will be “dense pockets of diversity and vast expanses of ethnic homogeneity” (76). Figure 6, which examines the ethnic distribution of the population of the United States, illustrates the “balkanization” (to use Frey, Abresch, and Yeasting’s term) of the country into dense pockets of diversity and vast expanses of homogeneity.

Even within diverse, multicultural states such as Texas, there is a continuing balkanization of the population. Taken together, figures 7 and 8 provide a picture of the spatial organization of population growth among various ethnic groups in the state. As figure 7 shows, the vast majority of Anglo growth is in the suburbs, while the preponderance of Hispanic, African American, and Asian growth is in central cities. The Anglo population of central cities is actually declining. Figure 8 provides a different perspective on this data: the growth of central cities in Texas is primarily a Hispanic and secondarily

FIGURE 6
Ethnic Diversity in the United States: Counties with Ethnic Populations
Greater Than the National Average in 2000
(U.S. Census 2000)

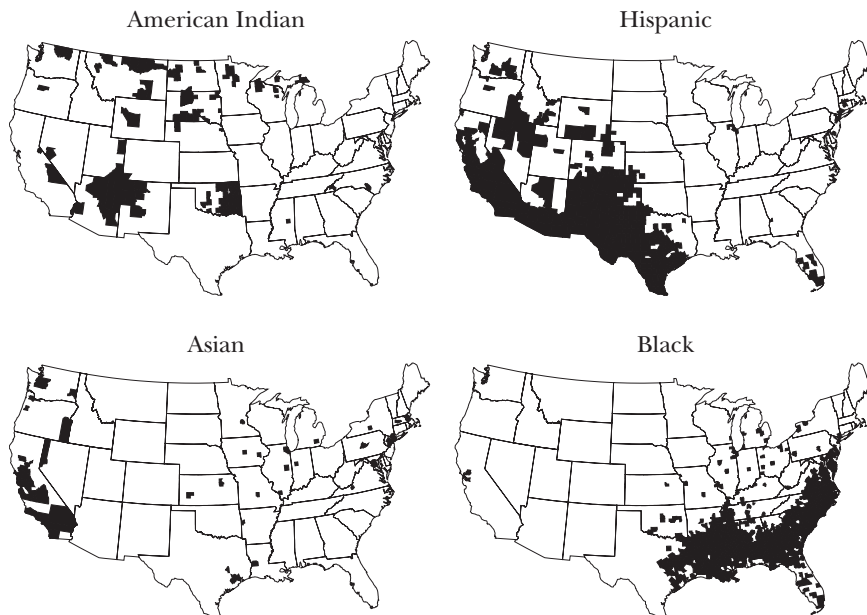


FIGURE 7
Population Change in Texas for Four Ethnic Groups by Community Type, 1990–2000
(Murdock 2001)

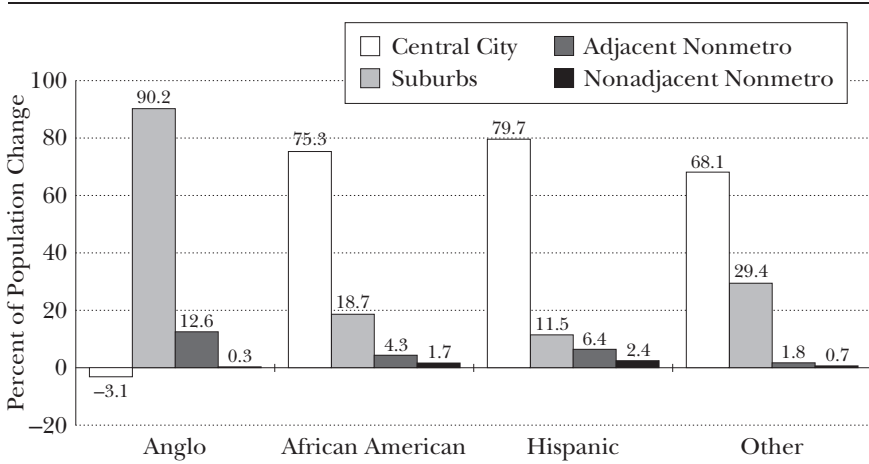
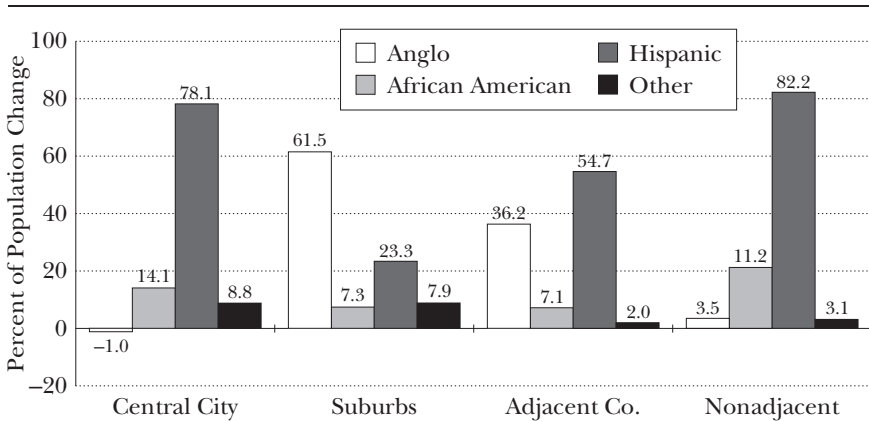


FIGURE 8
Ethnic Sources of Population Growth in Texas in Four Types of Locales, 1990–2000
(Murdock 2001)



an African American phenomenon, while the growth of suburbs is primarily an Anglo and secondarily a Hispanic phenomenon. Only in nonsuburban counties that are adjacent to metropolitan areas is there anything like balanced growth among ethnic groups.

The linguistic consequences of the balkanization and the more general spatial reorganization of the American population will not be clear for some time to come, but the evolution of African American Vernacular English

(AAVE) during the twentieth century after the Great Migration suggests that these kinds of demographic developments should be followed closely by linguists.²¹ In fact, the demographic developments suggest a new set of research questions for dialectology during the twenty-first century.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY DIALECTOLOGY

The rapid and dramatic demographic changes that are transforming the United States are creating a nation that is remarkably different from the one that Kurath confronted three quarters of a century ago. These changes suggest a new set of priorities that twenty-first-century dialectology must address. Among them are these:

1. The effect of the “never-before-seen demographic divisions” that are currently emerging on the regional organization of American dialects. The work of Bailey (1997), Bailey and Thomas (1998), Thomas (2001), Tillery and Bailey (2003), Labov, Ash, and Boberg (forthcoming), and Johnson (1996) has shown that traditional dialects of American English have undergone extensive phonological, lexical, and, to a lesser extent, grammatical change. Most of this change has taken place, however, within the spatial dimensions of the regional dialects identified by Kurath. In spite of massive change in the linguistic content of American regional dialects, then, their spatial dimensions have largely been unaltered. The demographic forces discussed above, though, are not only reshaping the populations within the spatial dimensions of American dialects, but are also creating new spatial configurations of the population. Will these new spatial configurations produce new regional dialect configurations, or will change continue to take place within the old spatial structure?

2. The fate of the Founder Dialects, which developed following the initial European settlement of the United States. Although extensive changes in American English over the last century have eliminated many features of the Founder Dialects, vestiges of them are still extant.²² What effect will the ongoing demographic changes that are radically reshaping the American population have on the vestiges of the Founder Dialects?

3. The relationships between the dialects of Anglos and the growing non-Anglo ethnic groups. A growing body of work confirms that with the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to the urban North, AAVE and white vernaculars began to develop independently of one another. One of the consequences of this independent development was a sort of national AAVE that transcended the regional organization of Anglo

American dialects (see Bailey and Cukor-Avila forthcoming for a discussion of this issue). The emerging spatial reorganization of the American population has the same potential for creating varieties that have ethnicity as their primary social correlate. Will the continuing balkanization of the American population produce similar ethnic varieties, will various ethnic groups assimilate to the established Anglo varieties of the area, or will some new compromise variety emerge?

4. The linguistic consequences of urbanization. The divergence of urban and rural vernaculars has now been documented in several areas of the country. Further, Bailey et al. (1996), Bailey (1997), and Tillery and Bailey (2003) show that urbanization has been the catalyst for widespread change in Southern American English over the last 125 years. The growing concentration of the American population into a relatively small number of metropolitan areas has the same potential to motivate linguistic change and linguistic divergence. Is the continuing urbanization of the United States crystallizing urban-rural splits into new spatial configurations of American dialects, and will it lead to still additional splits?

5. The process of new dialect formation. The work of Kerswell (1996) and Kerswill and Williams (2000) shows how new dialects are formed in “new towns” in England. In many ways, the ongoing spatial reorganization of the American population has the potential to create “new towns”—or more accurately, old towns with new populations. Will the demographic changes currently leading to the spatial reorganization of the United States create new linguistic communities with new varieties of English? If so, how will those varieties be formed and what will they look like?

CONCLUSION

These questions certainly do not exhaust the issues that American dialectologists might confront in the twenty-first century. They do, however, address some fundamental issues in the study of language variation and change, and, more important, they focus dialectology on major social issues that will affect the educational system and the sociospatial structure of the United States. By positioning the discipline in a way that will enable it to address fundamental social and educational issues, the proposed research questions have the potential to situate dialectology at the center of the intellectual life of the twenty-first century. That is not a bad place to be.

NOTES

1. For an overview of Kurath's research questions and methods, see Kurath (1939, 1972).
2. Although some mechanical recordings were done with informants for the Linguistic Atlas of New England, the Linguistic Atlas of the Upper Midwest (LAUM) was apparently the first project to record interviews (most of the LAUM recordings were not preserved after they were transcribed, however). Labov's (1966) work in New York City demonstrated the possibilities that tape recorded interviews held for linguistic analysis, and the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States (LAGS) was the first atlas project to record and preserve all interviews and make the recordings the basic data of the project. LAGS was also the first project to computerize its corpus. The use of the telephone was pioneered by Labov (see Labov, Ash, and Boberg forthcoming) and by Bailey and his associates in Texas and Oklahoma (see Bailey and Bernstein 1989; Bailey, Tillery, and Wikle 1997).
3. LAGS, for instance, includes male and female informants in roughly equal proportions, and about 20% of the informants are African Americans. For examples of probability sampling, see Bailey, Wikle, and Tillery (1997).
4. In fact, these questions have also become important drivers of research in quantitative sociolinguistics. See, for instance, Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (1997), Poplack (1999), Wolfram, Hazen, and Schilling-Estes (1999), Poplack and Tagliamonte (2001), and Wolfram and Thomas (2002).
5. Earlier large-scale internal migrations, of course, had occurred along an east-west axis and account for the westward extension of the regional dialects that developed along the East Coast (Haines 2000).
6. The 280 areas identified as metropolitan in the 2000 U.S. census range in population from 57,000 to 27,000,000. Of these, 260 include populations of at least 100,000.
7. For example, tract housing constructed by nationwide firms has largely replaced local design and construction, restaurant chains have made significant inroads into local cuisine, and national recording companies have marginalized local music. Even ethnic music has been subject to national control—note the absence of the conjunto music of South Texas in the burgeoning national Latino music scene.
8. Both the Phonological Survey of Texas and the Survey of Oklahoma Dialects are statewide, multicomponent linguistic surveys that have as their centerpieces random sample telephone surveys designed to provide data on the social and spatial distribution of linguistic features. For a detailed description of their methods, see Bailey, Tillery, and Wikle (1997).
9. Of the five features not affected by rurality, two represent completed changes (the fronting of the onset of /au/ in *thousand* and the loss of fronted/unrounded allophones of /ɔ/ in *forty*); one seems to be a change in its initial stage (the loss of /h/ before /j/ in *Houston*); and two are ethnic markers (unconstricted /r/ in *forty*, which is generally characteristic of African Americans in Texas, and monophthongal /ai/ in *night*, which is generally characteristic of whites).

10. SOD has only two categories for rurality because of the paucity of cities in the state. Except for a few people who lived in cities with 1990 populations between 20,000 and 80,000, all of the SOD urban respondents were from either the Oklahoma City or Tulsa standard metropolitan areas. Of the eight features for which rurality is not significant, two (unconstricted /r/ in *forty* and *Thursday*) are ethnic markers, while another five (fronted onsets of /au/ in *thousand*, the loss of /j/ after /t/ in *Tuesday*, second-person pronoun *yall*, and lax vowels in *field* and *bale*) represent changes that are either complete or in their later stages.
11. Domestic migration, of course, was crucial in populating all of the states west of the eastern seaboard during the nineteenth century. Although there were some exceptions, this migration generally moved due west along the same latitude.
12. In fact, by 1970 34% of the African American population was concentrated in these seven cities. Only 60 years earlier, just under 90% of the African American population lived in the South, and less than 25% lived in cities.
13. The extent of the relocation of the African American population during the Great Migration is truly stunning: more than six times as many African Americans were involved in this movement as in the domestic slave trade and nearly ten times as many as in the foreign slave trade.
14. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, of course, large numbers of immigrants also ended up in cities such as New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, and their impact on these cities is still discernible today. (Unfortunately, for the most part linguists have not examined their impact on the vernaculars of those cities, but see Labov 1966 and Labov, Ash, and Boberg forthcoming.) However, a significant number of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century immigrants also went to rural areas. Much of the Midwest (especially west of the Mississippi) was settled by immigrants during this period, as were parts of Texas and California.
15. Of those who spoke a language other than English, 59.9% spoke Spanish, an increase of 5.4% during the 1990s.
16. This is especially true in areas where attitudes toward bi- and multilingualism are rapidly changing. For example, in Bexar County, Texas (where San Antonio is located), five school districts now offer two-way bilingual education programs; enrollments in the programs are generally limited only by the availability of teachers. In the wealthiest (and most Anglo) of these districts, the two-way bilingual programs are so popular that participants are determined by a lottery. This approach, of course, is not a national one; in many areas “English only” is the dominant attitude.
17. We prefer *Anglo*, the commonly used term in Texas, to *European American* for the following reason. In areas like Texas, the term *Anglo* has emerged as a synonym for non-Hispanic white and has lost its former meaning of *English*. In Texas parlance, then, people of German, Polish, and Italian descent are *Anglos*, as opposed to Hispanics, African Americans, and Asian Americans, who are not. Although they are not *Anglos*, many Hispanics, however, are European Americans, people who are of solely European descent, unlike African Americans and Asian Americans.

Moreover, among certain Hispanics in Texas, the distinction between those of solely European American descent and those of European–Native American descent (i.e., mestizos) carries social significance in some contexts. Finally, *Anglo* is frequently used as a term of self-reference, at least in Texas, while *European American* almost never is. Hence the term *Anglo* seems to best capture the distinction between non-Hispanic whites and other ethnic groups.

18. The birthrate among native-born Hispanic women (80 births per 1,000) is significantly higher than the birthrate of the overall native-born population (62‰ per 1,000), but it is 47% less than that of foreign-born Hispanic women. The combination of high birthrates among both groups, however, means that 20% of the babies born in the United States are to Hispanic mothers.
19. The ethnic differences in Texas deserve a full analysis since they show how contact and isolation at different points in the histories of the three varieties led to remarkably complex configurations.
20. Analyzing the English of these ethnic groups will require that we augment the set of features that have become standard fare in sociolinguistics and dialectology. For instance, in addition to the set of features listed in table 5, an account of the English of Hispanics in Texas (and of Anglos and African Americans in contact with them) would require that we examine such features as allophones of postvocalic /l/, the devoicing of final voiced obstruents, and prosodic features among other things.
21. For an account of some of the linguistic consequences of the spatial reorganization of the African American population, see Labov and Harris (1986), Bailey and Maynor (1987, 1989), Bailey (1993), Cukor-Avila (1995), and Labov (1998), and Bailey and Cukor-Avila (forthcoming).
22. See Mufwene (2001) for a discussion of the Founder Principle.

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