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**A New Focus:
Studying Linkages Among Household Structure,
Race Ethnicity, and Geographical Levels,
with Implications for Census Coverage**

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A New Focus: Studying Linkages Between U.S. Household Structure and Race/Ethnicity at the National and Local Levels[1,2]

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Household structure has been changing dramatically in the United States over the past fifty years. Two of many notable changes were the decline of the "married couple with children" household type from 44% in 1960 (Lugaila 1992) to just 24% in 2000 (Fields and Casper 2001), and the decline of household size from 3.29 to 2.59 during the same period (Hobbs and Snoops 2002). A third change is that nonfamily households with two or more persons unrelated to the householder had the highest percentage increase of all household types every decade from 1.7% in 1970 to 6.1% in 2000 (Hobbs and Snoops 2002). These are very important trends to examine for the overall population of the United States over time, but they do not reveal subpopulation or geographical differences in household structure.

In this paper, we take a different approach, holding time constant to examine differences in household structure indicators in the United States by two other variables: race/ethnicity and level of geography. We explore three research questions in this paper. To what extent do measures of household structure and complexity in the overall United States population reflect similar patterns for different race/ethnic groups, or mask variations among those subpopulations? How do local measures of household structure and complexity add to our understanding of population and household trends? What are the implications of these findings for the perennial goal of improving census coverage across race/ethnic groups in future censuses?

Specifically, we use Census 2000 data to identify, chart, and baseline variations in key household structure indicators for six U.S. race/ethnic groups, at two geographical levels: the U.S. as a whole and custom-designed local areas around ethnographic study sites included in our larger complex ethnic households study (Schwede, Blumberg, and Chan 2006, Schwede 2006). We examine the following nine household structure indicators: 1) household size; 2) family size; 3) the proportion of all households that are family households; 4) the breakdown of general family types: married couple households, male householder with no spouse present, and female householder with no spouse present; 5) the proportion of families with any "related children under 18"; 6) the proportion of families with any "own children under 18"; 7) the proportion of

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[1] This report is released to inform interested parties of ongoing research and to encourage discussion of work in progress. The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Census Bureau.

[2] This paper builds on data presented in the poster the author presented at the 2007 Population Association of America Annual Meeting, "A New Approach to Studying Interactions of Household Structure and Race/Ethnicity at the National and Local Levels" (Schwede and Blumberg 2007).

households with *just* distantly related children; 8) the proportion of households with any nonrelatives, 9) and the breakdowns of these households with nonrelatives by family and nonfamily type. The last two indicators are new measures of household complexity, signaling two types of complex households[3] that can be identified from the American FactFinder system.

To our knowledge, this study of household structure indicators for six race/ethnic groups at different geographical levels is unique. The great preponderance of studies of household and family structure and living arrangements are done with surveys such as the Current Population Survey and the Survey of Income and Program Participation, which, while large, don't have sufficient sample size to provide reliable statistics on very small subpopulations, such as Asians, American Indians, and Alaska Natives (Casper and Bianchi 2001) at local levels. By 2010, the American Community Survey may have accumulated enough sample to make this possible. Until then, only the decennial census, which we use here, allows such analyses.

With these comparisons, we will show that while non-Hispanic white households, comprising 75% of all U.S. households, clearly influence overall national household structure patterns, their patterns are quite different from, and not representative of, household structure patterns for the other subpopulations and mask those subpopulation variations. Additionally, we use these household structure charts and knowledge of social, cultural and other variables from the qualitative study to identify cultural, economic, regional, and other factors that may explain, in part, wide differences in household structure by race/ethnicity and geographical level. Finally, we predict that over time, household structure and complexity will continue to diversify as the non-Hispanic white population, with lower growth rates than the other groups, declines to less than 50% of the overall U.S. population sometime in the 2050s, if current trends continue. Since race/ethnicity and complex households have been linked with differential census coverage errors in the past, increases in these subpopulations vis-a-vis non-Hispanic whites suggests that census coverage errors may also be likely to increase. This, in turn, suggests that tracking changes in household structure and complexity from the Census 2000 baselines provided here over time with future census and other data will be important for the Census Bureau in order to identify new trends and to adjust coverage improvement programs iteratively to address them.

The findings in this paper highlight selected findings from the book, *Complex Ethnic Households in America* (Schwede, Blumberg, and Chan 2006). Data come from two sources. The first source is Census 2000 data on household structure variables that we accessed from the Census Bureau's American FactFinder system at www.census.gov.[4] The second source is rich qualitative data collected in an integrated set of small-scale studies of complex households in six race/ethnic groups: African Americans in urban coastal Virginia; rural whites in upstate New

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[3] Complex households are those that include persons other than, or in addition to, the traditional nuclear family of married parents and their biological children.

[4] For step-by-step illustrated instructions on how we created the customized tables in this report using the American Factfinder system, see Schwede (2007).

York, Hispanic immigrants in Central Virginia; Korean immigrants in Queens, New York; Navajos on the Navajo reservation in Arizona, and Inupiaq Eskimos in northern Alaska (Schwede, Blumberg and Chan 2006, Schwede 2004, Schwede 2003). These are the six race/ethnic groups for which we will present household indicator data.

In addition to national-level comparisons, we wanted to design customized local geographical areas circumscribing each of our six ethnographic study sites individually, so that we could obtain custom-tailored census data to compare the particular race/ethnic group studied in each local site with the overall population in that local area. This would allow us to identify differences in household structure by race/ethnicity while controlling for some local conditions (e.g., infrastructure, climate, availability and range of jobs, and so forth). It would also enable us to contextualize our qualitative results with quantitative data from the census.

We therefore developed a strategy to use the American FactFinder system to "right-size" the local-area boundaries for each of the six local study sites: 1) choose a meaningful geographical area with similar conditions circumscribing the study site, while keeping the area 2) small enough to control for some local conditions, but 3) large enough to show meaningful differences and also protect confidentiality. With these principles in mind, we used the options available on the geography page of the American FactFinder's custom table function to custom-tailor the local geographical areas to include 100,000 to 2.3 million people. For example, using the American FactFinder system, we defined the local African American area as the "Urban Area" of Virginia Beach, Virginia, with a population just under 1.4 million people, and the Navajo area as three contiguous northern Arizona counties that encompass the Arizona part of the Navajo reservation.

Having defined our custom-tailored local areas surrounding our six qualitative sites, we were then in a position to use the American FactFinder to generate custom tables for three types of comparisons of household structure data by race/ethnicity. The first is national-level comparison of the 6 race/ethnic groups to each other and to the overall national population. The second is local-level comparison of the race/ethnic group studied in that site to the overall local population in that same site. The third is a geographical comparison for each of the race/ethnic groups at both the national and local level. This latter comparison can show us the extent of variation in household structure for a race/ethnic group under specific local conditions, compared to its overall national pattern. Each of these three comparison types by race/ethnicity and/or geography can lead to new insights and hypotheses on potential causes and consequences of household structure variation. We portray these data in bar chart form to make it easy for the reader to see similarities and differences between groups and geographical levels quickly.

The remainder of this paper will be devoted to identifying variations in household structure by race/ethnicity and level of geography, offering suggestions on reasons for the differing patterns, based on the ethnographic study, and identifying coverage implications for future censuses.

Household and family size

Figure 1 shows differences in household and family sizes for the six race/ethnic groups at the national level. Households are comprised of one or more persons living or staying in one housing unit. The average household size for the U.S. is 2.59, widely ranging from a low of 2.43 for non-Hispanic whites to a high of 3.62 for Hispanics. The other groups fall between, with African Americans at 2.74, Alaska Natives at 2.88, American Indians at 2.9, and Asians at 3.09.

**Figure 1: Household (HH) and Family Size by Race/Ethnicity: U.S.**
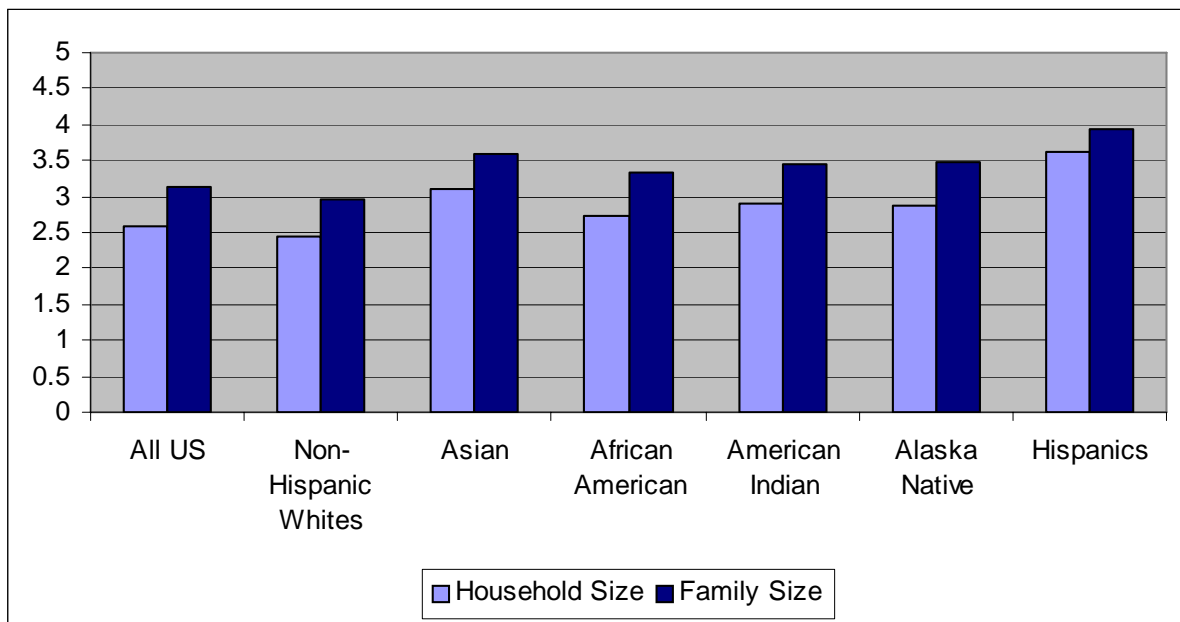
Source: American FactFinder, SF-2, Table DP-1.

By definition, family households include two or more people, at least one of whom is related by blood, marriage or adoption to the "householder" (the first person listed on the household's census form, also known as "Person one"). The average U.S. family size is 3.14; ranging from non-Hispanic white (2.97) through African American (3.34), American Indian (3.44), Alaska Native (3.47), and Asian (3.60) to Hispanic (3.93) households.

Do we find the same patterns at the local study area level? Figure 2 shows household and family size at the national and local study area levels for Hispanics. The bars on the left are for the U.S. national population (identical to the respective bars in Figure 1), while the bars on the right are

for the overall population and Hispanics in the Central Virginia local area. It is readily apparent from this figure that in this local area, as at the national level, Hispanic household and family sizes are larger than those of the overall population in this local area.

Figure 2: Household (HH) and Family Size for Hispanics: U.S. and Central Virginia
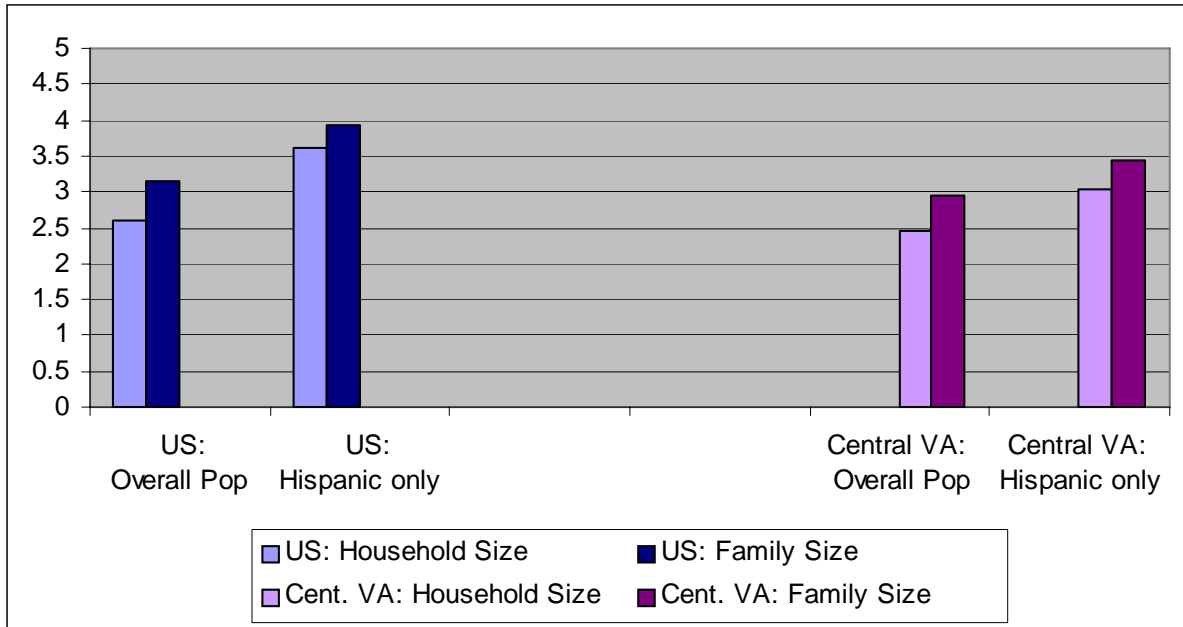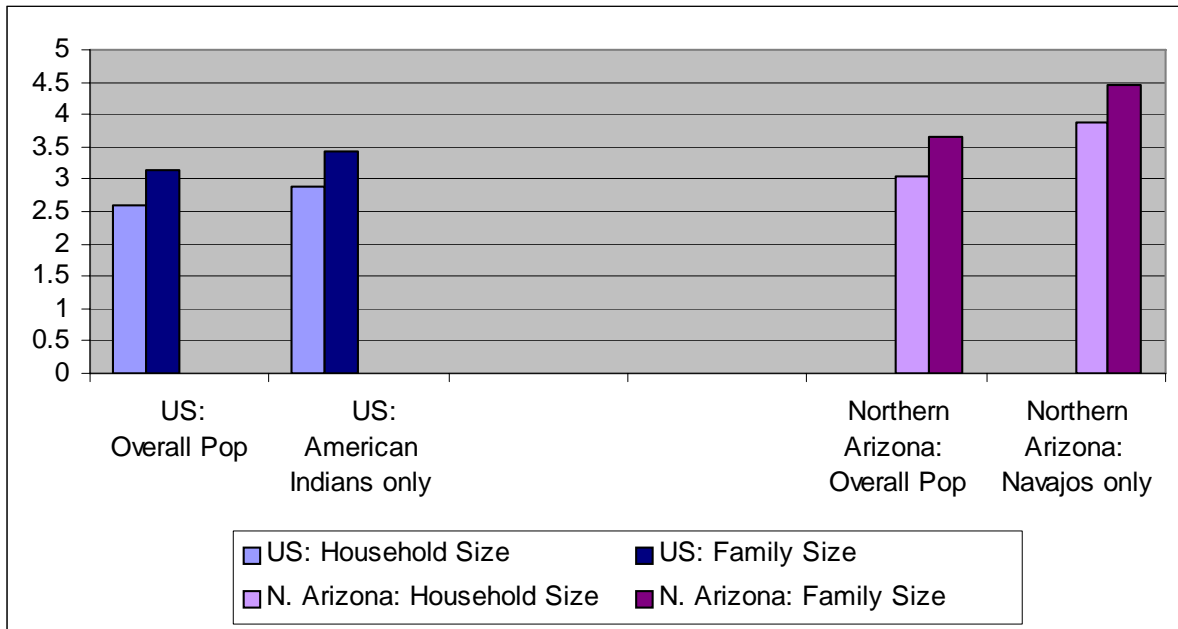

Source: American FactFinder, SF-2, Tables DP-1 and PCT-26

However, the average size of Central Virginia Hispanic households (3.03) is noticeably smaller than that of Hispanic households at the national level (3.62). The same is true for average Hispanic family size at the local and national levels: 3.43 compared to 3.93. This is a sign that there may be something different about Hispanic households in the Central Virginia site.

A quite different type of variation is apparent in Figure 3 for the local northern Arizona area (the Navajo study site) and the national level, for both the Indians and the overall populations. The same general national pattern of American Indian households having larger average household (2.9) and family (3.44) sizes than the overall national population (2.59 and 3.14 respectively) is also evident in the local Arizona study area. However, in this local site, the averages for both the overall population and the Navajos are much higher: for the overall local population the household size is 3.06 and the family size is 3.64, compared to the very large Navajo household size of 3.87 and family size of 4.47. Most Navajos in this area live on the Navajo reservation, which is more than 90% Navajo. Clearly, there is something different between the American Indians and Navajos and the overall local population, and there is also something different about

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the local Arizona site, for both groups, compared to the national groups.

Figure 3: Household (HH) and Family Size for Navajos, American Indians and the Overall Population: U.S. and Northern Arizona

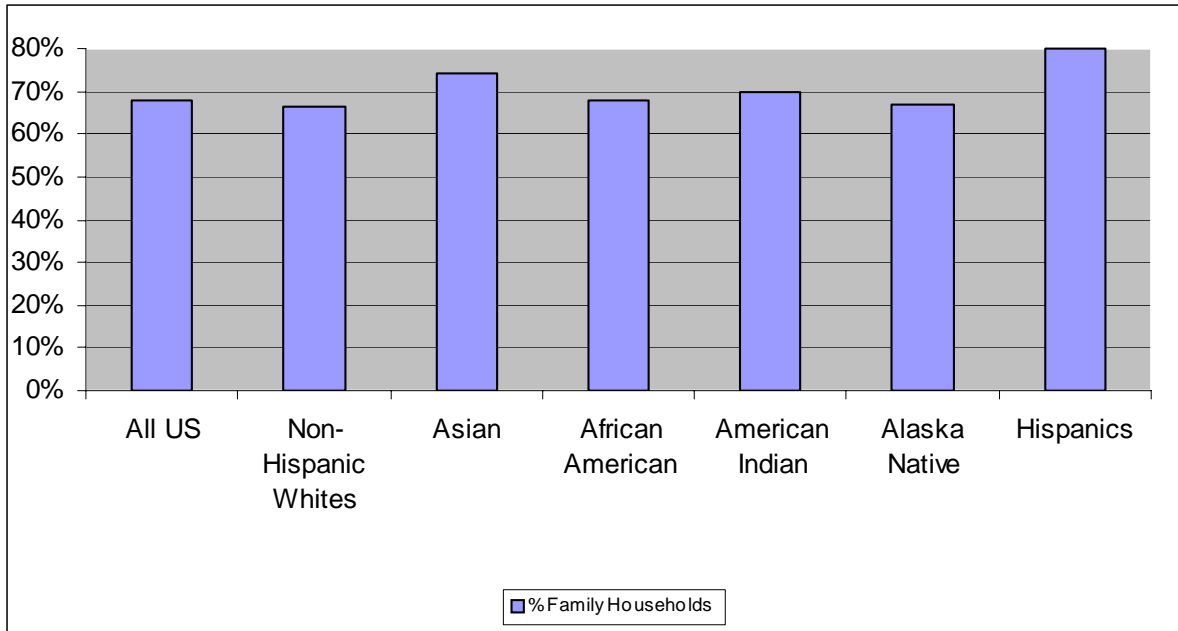Source: American FactFinder, SF-2, Tables DP-1 and PCT-26

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate wide variations in household and family size for race groups at the national and local levels, and Figure 3 shows how the overall population can differ at local and national levels as well. Let us now turn to our second indicator of household structure.

Proportion of Households that are Family Households

Our third household structure indicator is proportion of households that are family households. The Census Bureau's most general breakdown of households is by family/nonfamily households. This breakdown is made on the basis of the number of people in the household and the type of their relationship to the first person in the household listed on the census form, called "Person one" or the "householder." As noted earlier, a family household has two or more people listed on the census form, with at least one of them related to the householder by blood, marriage, or adoption. Nonfamily households are of two types. The first type is the one-person household. The second type consists of two or more persons, none of whom is related to the householder, such as a household of college roommates. These are called "households with nonrelatives" or,

in some publications, "other nonfamily households." As noted earlier, these "other nonfamily households" had the highest percentage increase of any household type during each decade except for the 1960s, growing from 1.1% in 1950 to 6.1% of all U.S. households (Hobbs and Snoops 2002). Later in this paper we will examine households with nonrelatives in greater detail.

Figure 4: Proportion of all Households that are Family Households by Race/Ethnicity: US

Source: American FactFinder, SF-2, Table PCT 9.

Here our focus is on comparing the proportion of family households across all race/ethnic groups (the bars don't sum to 100 percent because the nonfamily households are not included in the charts). Figure 4 shows that at the national level, the proportion of all U.S. households that are family households is 68.1%. The lowest proportion of family households is found for non-Hispanic whites (66.4%), followed by Alaska Natives (67.1%), African Americans (67.9%), American Indians (69.7%), Asians (74%) and Hispanics (80%).

Figure 5 shows quite different national and local patterns in the proportions of family households for Hispanics and the overall population. As we have seen, Hispanic households at the national level have a much higher proportion of family households (80%) than the overall population (68.1%). In the local Central Virginia area, however, Hispanic households have just slightly more family households (65.6%) than the overall local population (64.6%). This is *below* the overall national average (68.1%).

Figure 5: Proportion of all Households that are Family Households for Hispanics and Overall Populations: U.S. and Central Virginia
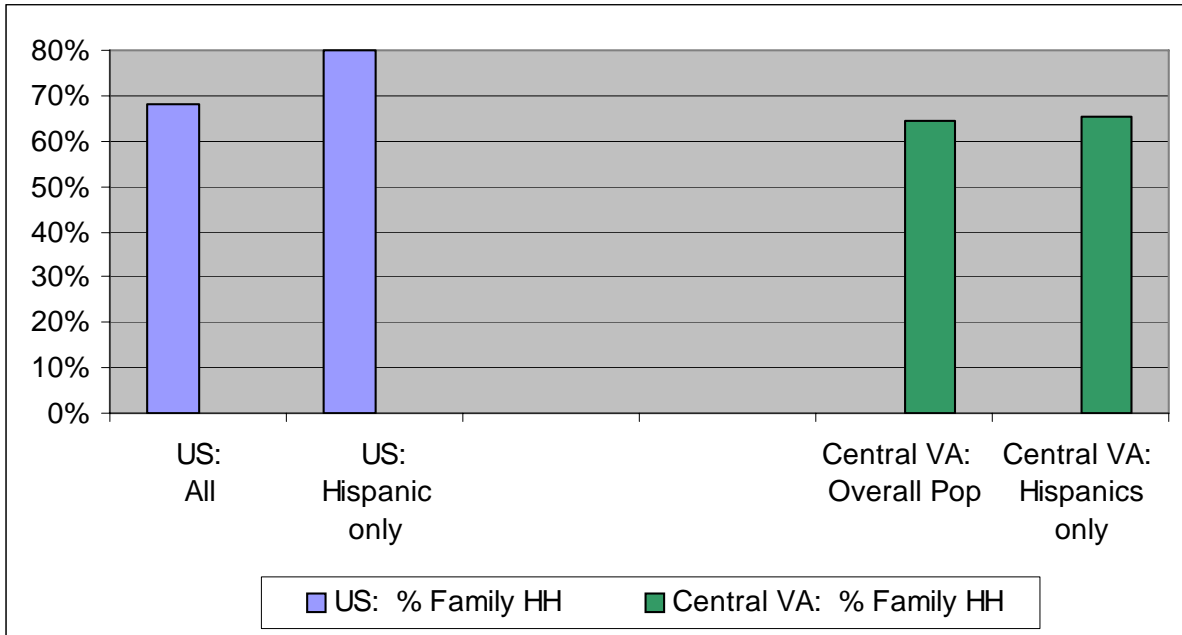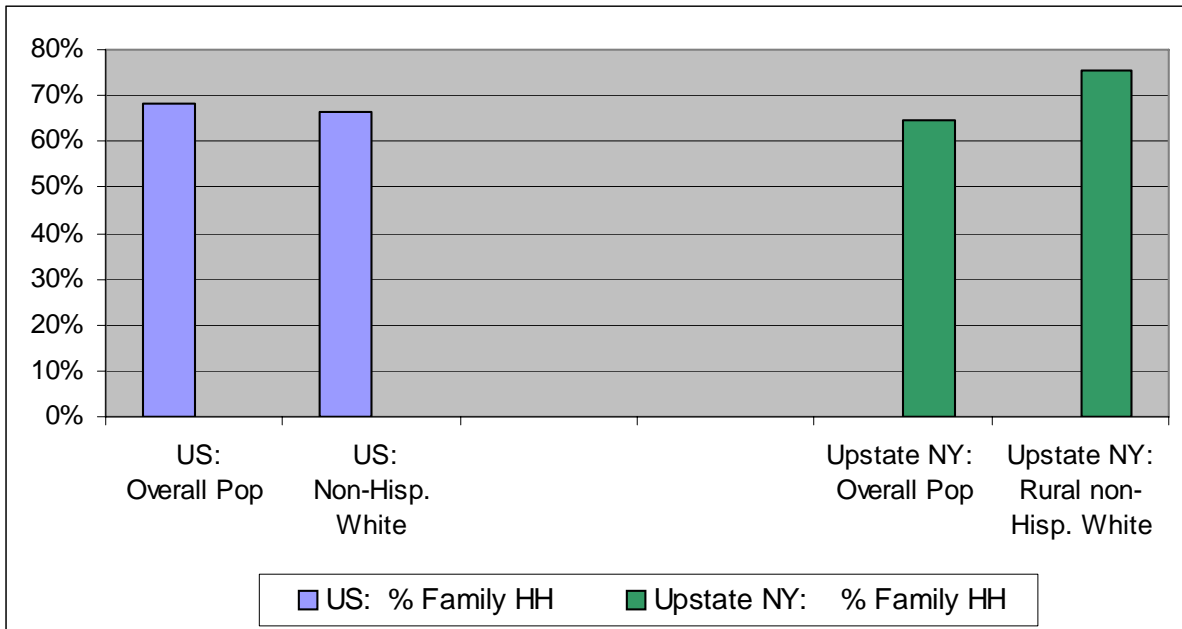

Figure 6: Proportions of all Households that are Family Households for Rural non-Hispanic whites and the Overall Populations: US and Upstate, New York

Source for both figures: American FactFinder, SF-2, Table PCT 9.

In Figure 6, we discover that household structure patterns for *rural* non-Hispanic whites in upstate New York differ from those of the overall local population and also the overall non-Hispanic white population. At the national level, as noted earlier, the proportion of white non-Hispanic households that are family households (66.4%) is lower than that of the overall population average (68.1%). In our upstate New York local study area, rural non-Hispanic whites have a much higher proportion of family households (75.3%) than the overall, predominantly non-Hispanic white population (64.8%). Urban/rural residence appears to be a factor strongly associated with higher rates of family households in this site, and may be in other areas as well.

Figure 7: Proportions of all Households that are Family Households for Eskimos in Northern Alaska and all Alaska Natives and the Overall Populations: US and Northern Alaska
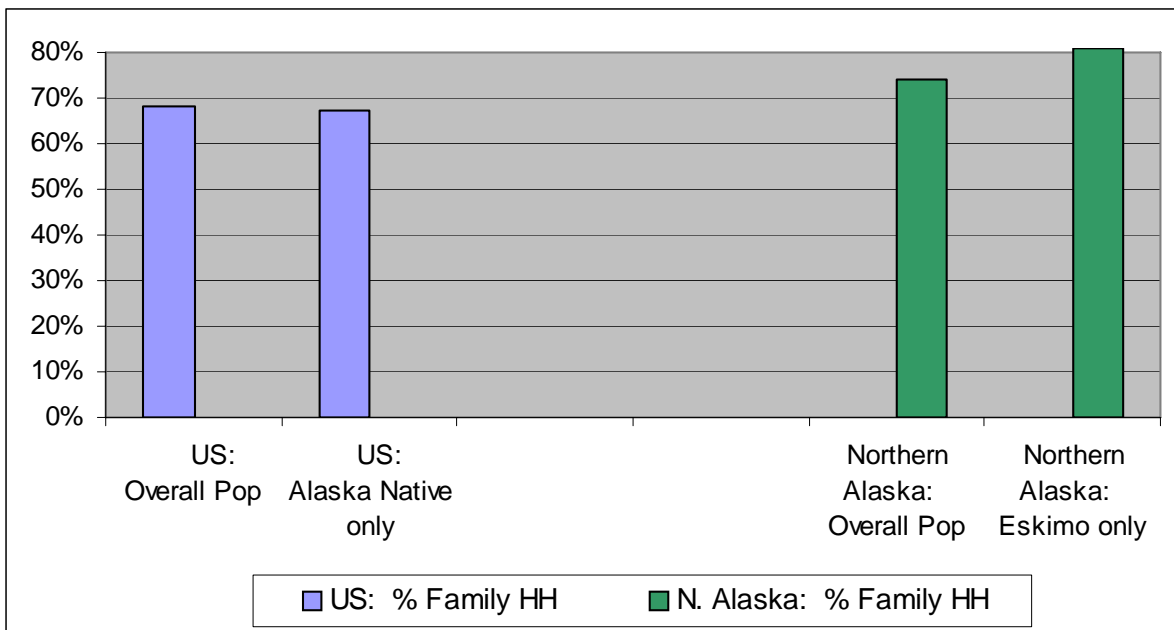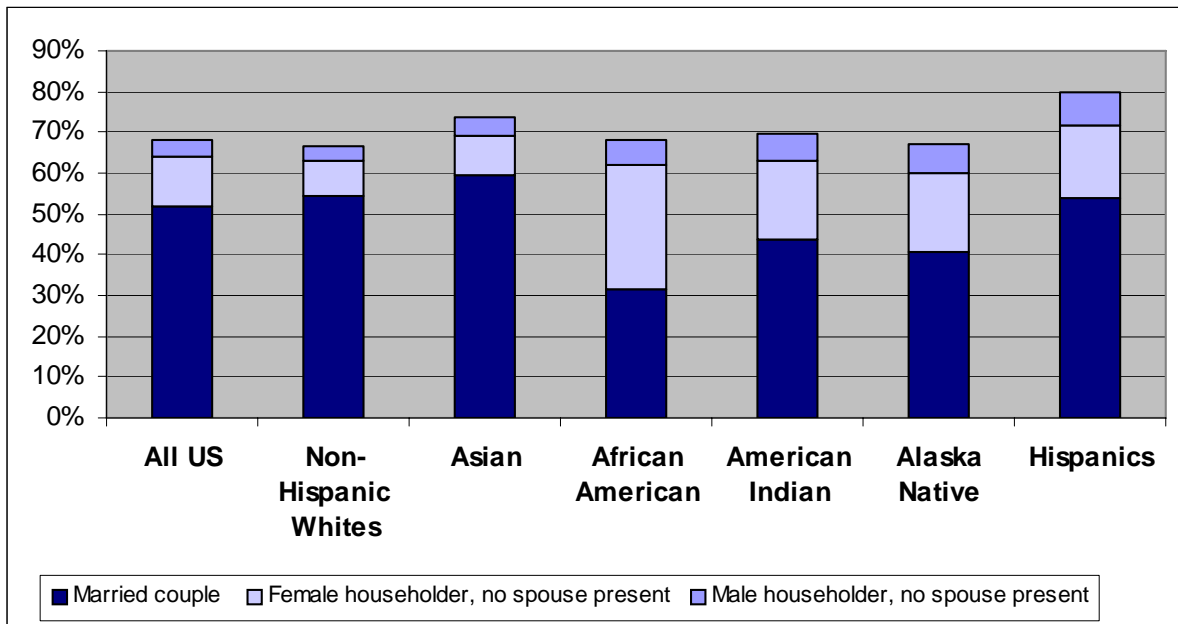

Source: American FactFinder, SF-2, Table PCT 9.

In Figure 7, there is further indication that rural residence and race are important factors in the incidence of family households. As we have shown, Alaska Natives at the national level have a slightly lower proportion of family households (67.1%) than the overall population (68.1%). However, in northern Alaska, Eskimo (which include both the Inupiaq in our study and the Yu'pik) households have a much higher proportion of family households (81.1%) than both the overall local population (74.1%) and the overall national population (68.1%). This northern Alaska area, like the Navajo reservation, is sparsely populated and the homeland of this group.

Types of Family Households

Our fourth household structure indicator is family type. Figure 8 shows very interesting differences in the national distribution of the three family household types–married couple, male householder with no spouse present, and female householder with no spouse present–for the overall population and the 6 race/ethnic groups in this study. Of all U.S. households, 51.7% are married couple households. Asian households have the highest proportion (59.3%), followed by non-Hispanic white (54.2%), Hispanic (53.9%), American Indian (43.7%), Alaska Native (40.9%) and African American (31.4%) households.

**Figure 8: Family Type by Race/Ethnicity: US**

Source: American FactFinder, SF-2, Table PCT-9

Female householder family households comprise 12.2% of all households at the national level, but large differences are found when the figures are disaggregated by race/ethnic group. African Americans have the highest proportion of female householder family households (30.7%) with American Indian and Alaska Native households at 19.3% and 19.1%, Hispanic and Asian households at 17.8% and 9.6% respectively, and non-Hispanic white households the lowest at 8.8%.

Just 4.2% of all U.S. households are male householder family households. Hispanic households have the highest proportion (8.3%), followed by Alaska Native (7.1%), American Indian (6.7%),

African American (5.8%), Asian (4.9%) and non-Hispanic white households (3.4%), below the average (3.4%).

Figure 9: Family Type by Race/Ethnicity for Hispanics and the Overall Population: National and Local Level
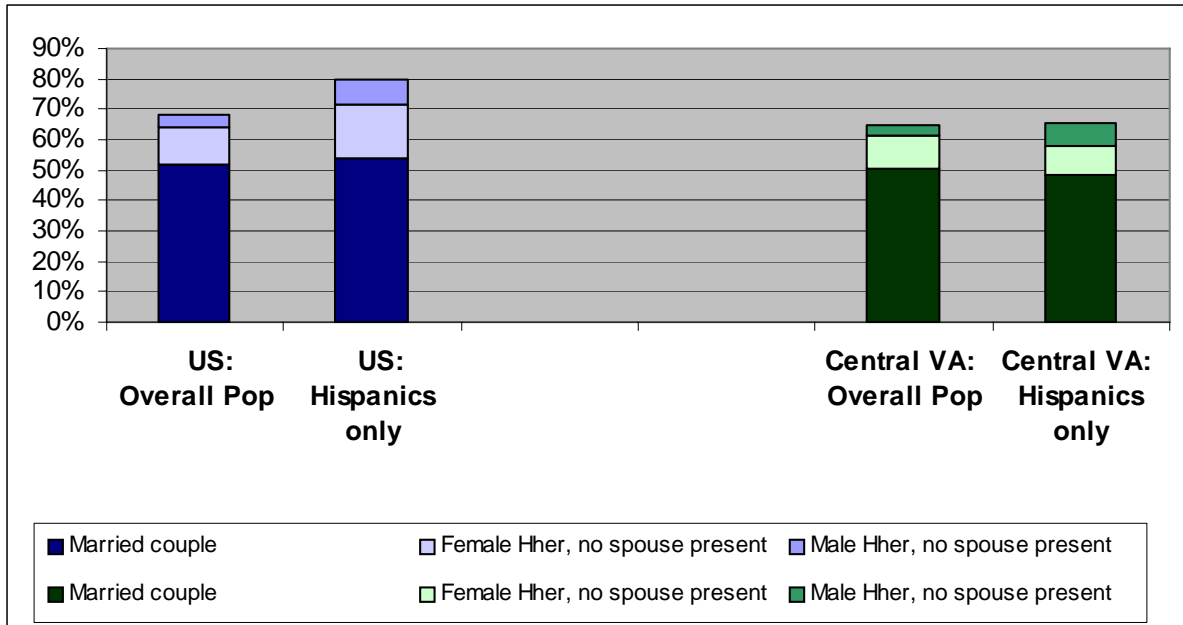
Are local-level family household type patterns similar to those at the national level for our race/ethnic groups? Figure 9 compares Hispanics and the overall population at the national level and in the local Central Virginia site. The overall Central Virginia population is similar to the overall national population in the incidence of married couple families (50.7% at the local level to 51.7% at the national level), female householder family households (10.5% to 12.2%), and male householder family households (3.4% to 4.2%). However, as we saw in Figure 5, Hispanics in the local Central Virginia level have a much lower proportion of family households than at the national level (65.6% to 80%) and the breakdown within family types shows additional variation from the national pattern: married couple (48.3% to 53.9%) and female householder (9.6% to 17.8%), while male householder family household was more similar (7.6% to 8.3%). In the conclusion we offer a partial explanation for these differences.

There are also striking differences–but of a quite different kind–in family household types at the national level (Alaska Native) and local northern Alaska level (Eskimo) and the overall populations, shown in Figure 10. At the national level, the proportion of all family household types of Alaska Natives (67.1%) is slightly lower than that of the overall population (68.1%), but the breakdown by type shows very different profiles: married couple (40.9% for Alaska

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Natives to 51.7% for the overall population), female householder (19.1% to 12.2%), and male householder (7.1% to 4.2%).

Turning to the local comparison in northern Alaska, we find several different features. First, in Figure 10, the incidence of family households in this local area is higher than at the national level for the overall local population (74.1%), and even more so, for the Eskimos (81.1%–the highest in our whole study). Also, in this local area we do not see the big 11% gap shown at the

Figure 10: Family Type by Race/Ethnicity for Eskimos at the Local Level and Alaska Natives and the Overall Population: National and Local
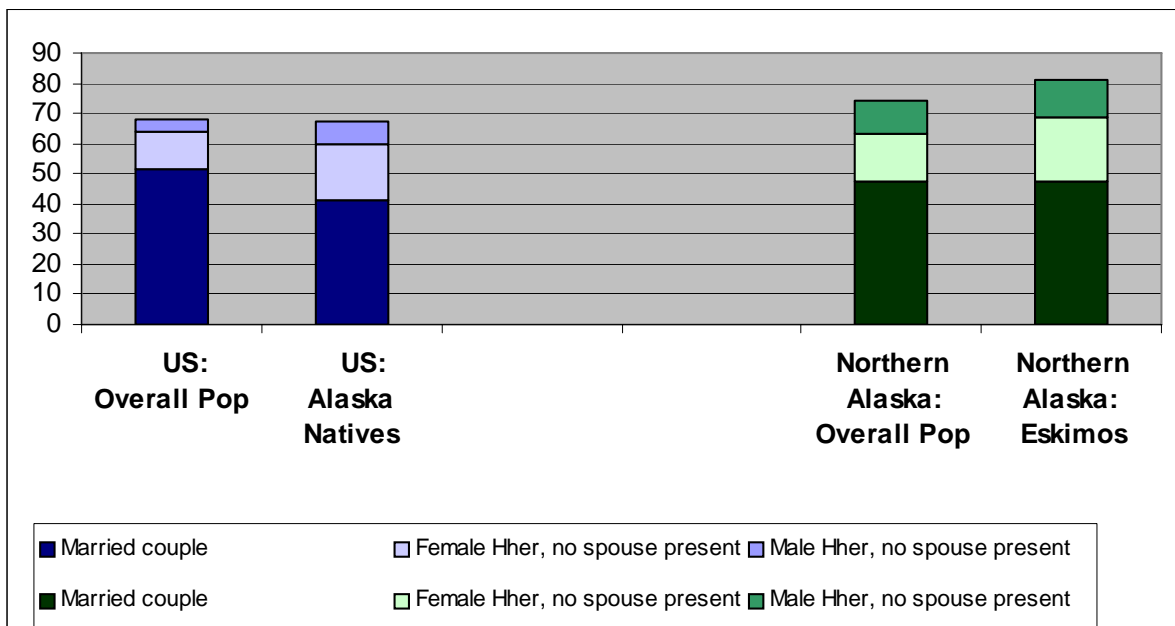
Source: American FactFinder, SF-2, Table PCT-9

national level between Alaska Natives and the overall population: in this local area, the Eskimos and the overall population have the same proportion of married couple family households (47.2%). The incidence of female householder family households in this local area is larger for both the Eskimos and the overall population (21.2% to 16.2%) than for the overall national population (12.2%), but not far off from the 19.1% for all Alaska Native households nationally. However, in the local area, the incidence of male householder family households was much higher for both Eskimos and the overall local population (12.7% and 10.6%), compared to the national figures for Alaska Natives (7.1%) and especially to the low 4.2% for the overall national population. These striking comparisons suggest the interaction of both race/ethnicity and distinctly different local conditions in northern Alaska as underlying factors explaining differences in household structure.

Some very similar trends, but with some twists, are found when comparing American Indians at the national level and Navajos at the local northern Arizona level (Figure 11). At the national level, American Indian households are slightly more likely to be family households (69.7%) than the overall population (68.1%), but, very similar to the Alaska Natives, they differ from the overall population in family type: married couple (43.7% for American Indians compared to 51.7% for the overall population), female householder (19.3% to 12.2%) and male householder (6.7% to 4.2%).

As in the Eskimo study area, the incidence of all types of family households in the northern Arizona local study area is higher, both for the overall local population (72.2%) and especially for the Navajos (80.8%). The incidence of northern Arizona married couple households is higher for the Navajos (47.8%) than for all U.S. American Indians (43.7%), but that is below the proportion for the overall local northern Arizona population (51.5%).

Also, as was found in northern Alaska, the proportions of both female and male householder families is higher in the northern Arizona area for the Navajos than at the national level–but the biggest difference is with female householder households, rather than their male counterparts: female householder family households were a large 26.3% of all local Navajo households compared to 15.6% of overall local population households. Only African American households at the national level (30.7%) and in the local urban Virginia site (29.2%) had higher rates.

While the Navajo in the local area had the highest proportion of male householder family households (6.8%) compared to the overall local population (5%), and the national population (4.2%), it was just very slightly higher than for all American Indians at the national level (6.7%). Later we offer explanations for the similar, but somewhat different, Navajo and Eskimo profiles.

Family Households with Related Children, Own Children, and Just Distantly Related Children under Age 18


The American FactFinder system has two indicators of household structure that can be used to look at complexity in households that include children under 18 (but not above that age). The first variable is "households with own children under 18," which includes all biological, step, or adopted children of the householder who live or stay in the household. This variable is a subset of the second, more general, category, "households with related children under 18," which includes "own children" as well as any distantly related children listed on the census form and identified in the relationship question in the checkbox for "grandchild" or in the "other relative" checkbox with the specific relationship type written in, such as niece, grand-nephew, cousin, etc.

Figure 11 shows the distribution of these two variables at the national level for the six race/ethnic groups. In the overall U.S. population, 35.5% of households include one or more related children under 18. The proportion of non-Hispanic white households with related children (31.2%) is the lowest (below the average), while the others are much higher: Alaska

Native (42.8%), Asian (43.1%), American Indian (44.2%), African American (45%) and Hispanic (56.9%) households.

The same general pattern is apparent for the subset of households with related children with own children. In the overall U.S. population, 32.8% of households include own children, with non-Hispanic white households below the average at 29.5%, and all others: Alaska Native (38.1%), African American (38.3%), American Indian (39%), Asian (40.2%), and Hispanic (51.6%).

Figure 11: Family Households with Related and Own Children by Race/Ethnicity: U.S.
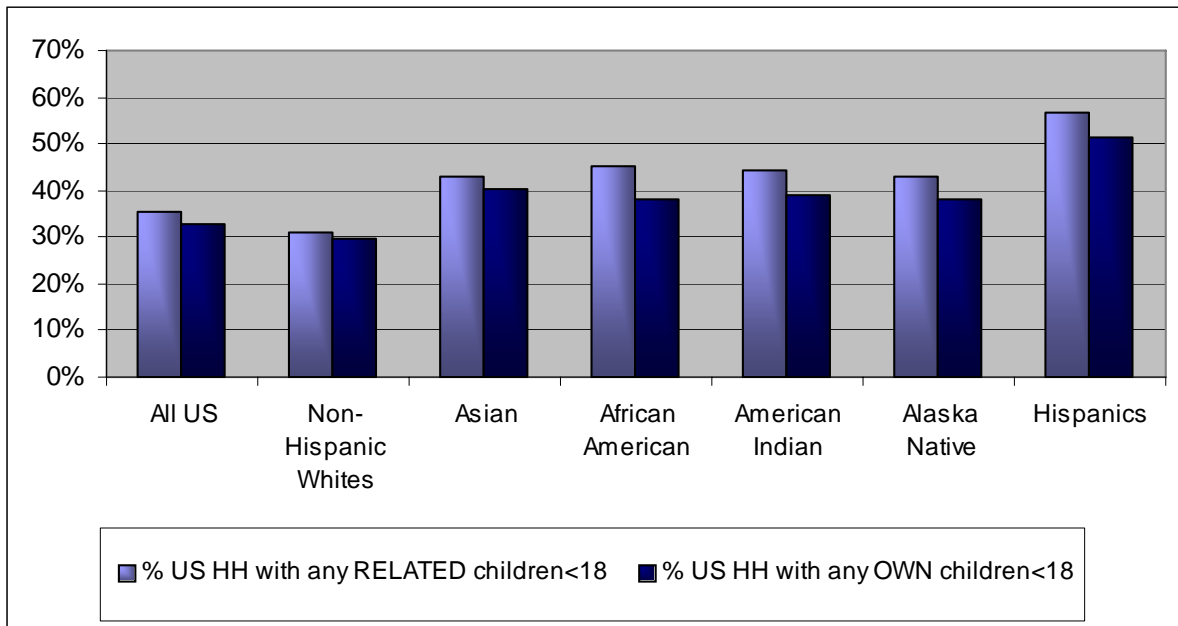
Source: American Factfinder, SF-2, Tables PCT 27 and PCT 28

By subtracting the proportion of households with own children from the proportion of households with related children, we can create a new indicator of household complexity that identifies that segment of households that include *just* distantly related children that are not own children, such as grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, and so forth.[5] These households with

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[5] This new indicator, derived by subtracting the total number of households with own children from those with related children, to come up with the number of households with *just* distantly related households is admittedly crude. The figures in the text represent the minimum proportion of households that include any distantly related kin for at least two reasons. First, it does not allow us to identify households with both "own children" and "related children" under 18. Second, it does not allow us to identify households with distantly related persons age 18 and above. It was our first attempt to come up with an indicator of complex households with distantly related kin, using just tabular data already publicly available in the Census Bureau's

distant relatives are a type of complex household that we know from previous research (de la Puente 1993, Schwede 2003) are difficult to count in the census.

Using this new indicator of household complexity for the overall U.S. population, we find that 2.7% of households include just distantly related children under age 18 (without any own children). Non-Hispanic white households register below this average at 1.7%, followed by Asian (2.9%), Alaska Native (4.7%), American Indian (5.2%), and Hispanic 5.3% households. African American households are the most likely of all of our groups at the national level to include just distantly related children without own children, at 6.7%. This is consistent with, and extends, the findings of Rossi and Rossi (1990) that African Americans felt much stronger obligations to more distant kin, such as nephews, nieces, cousins, aunts, and uncles than did whites in their study.

This sense of obligation and willingness to take in and house distant relatives, even when it causes financial hardship, comes through very clearly in the vivid case study descriptions of complex households in our book, *Complex Ethnic Households in America*, particularly in the chapters on African Americans (Holmes 2006), Hispanics (Goerman 2006), and American Indians (Tongue 2006).

In Figure 12, it is clear that the proportions of Hispanic households in Central Virginia with related and own children are far lower than those for Hispanic households at the national level. In Central Virginia, 41.6% of Hispanic households include related children, compared to 56.9% of Hispanic households at the national level. This figure for local Hispanic households is still higher than of the local overall population (31.9%) and the U.S. overall population (35.5%).

The same pattern is seen for households with own children, with Hispanic households in Central Virginia (38.5%) much lower than Hispanic households at the national level (51.6%), but still higher than the overall local (29.5%) and national (32.8%) populations.

It is also apparent from the relative heights of the "related children" and "own children" bars in this figure that local Hispanic households in Central Virginia are less likely to have just distantly related children without any "own children" (3.1%), compared to all U.S. Hispanic households (5.3%), but still more likely to do so than households in the overall local (2.4%) and national (2.7%) populations. These are also indicators that Central Virginia has unique factors producing household structure patterns differing so markedly from all Hispanic households in the country.

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American FactFinder system. We hope to work with colleagues to develop the programming to define this variable more appropriately with the full census dataset.

Figure 12: Family Households with any Related and Own Children for Hispanics and the Overall Population: National and Local
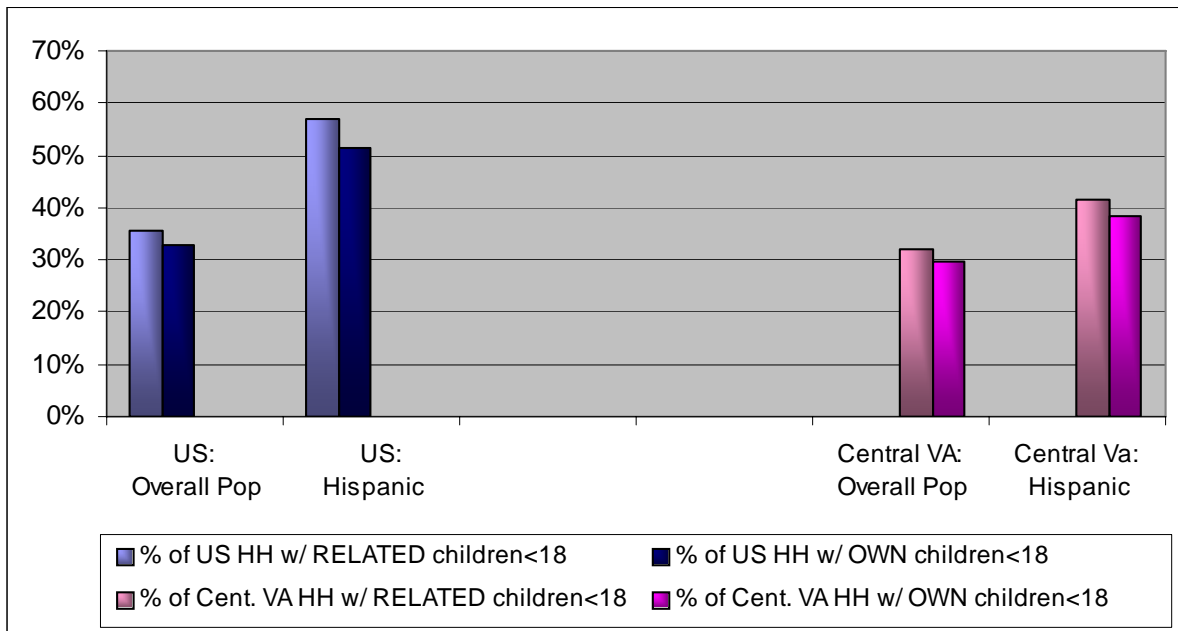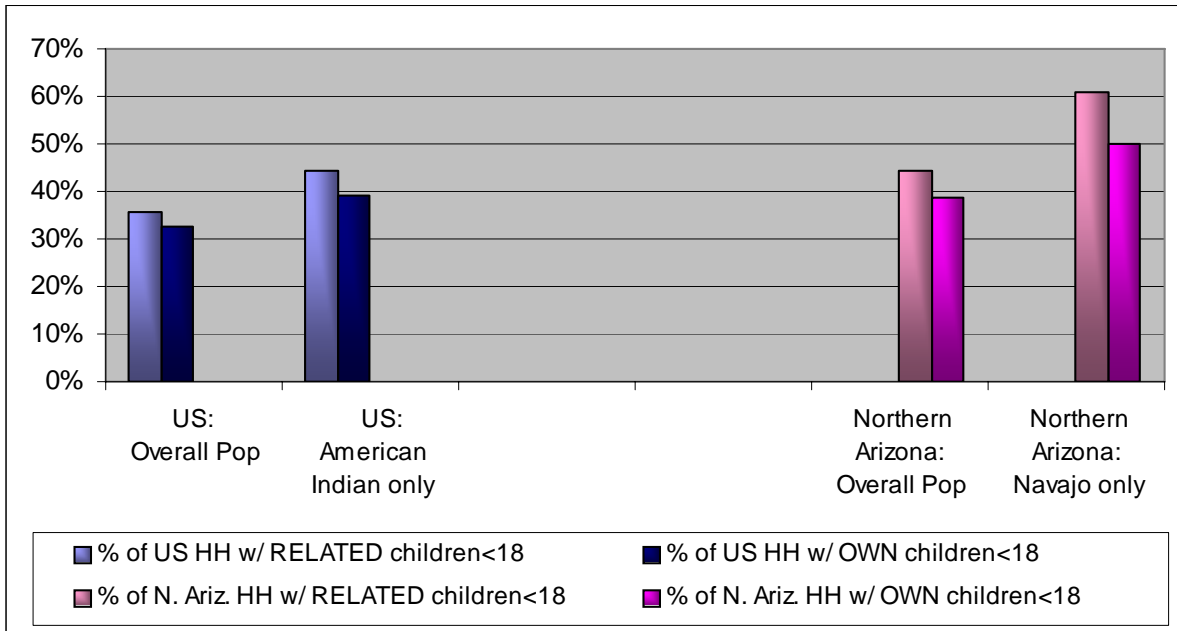

Source: American FactFinder, SF-2, Tables PCT 27 and PCT 28

Figure 13 shows the opposite local/national contrast in the distributions of households with related and own children for the Navajo in Arizona and American Indians at the national level and the overall local and national populations. Navajo households in northern Arizona have a much higher proportion of households with related children (61%) than all American Indians at the national level (44.2%). Quite interestingly, the overall local population in northern Arizona has the same proportion as all U.S. American Indian households (44.2%), which is much higher than that in the overall national population (35.5%)

The same pattern is apparent for households that include own children. Local Navajo households have the highest proportion with own children (50.1%), compared to all U.S. American Indians (39%), and the overall populations at the local (38.7%) and national (32.8%) levels.

It is when we identify those households with just distantly related children that we see the very high propensity of northern Arizona Navajo households to take in distant relatives when they don't have any "own children" in the household (10.9%), as compared to all U.S. American Indian households (5.2%), and the overall local (5.5%) and national (2.7%) populations. Close relationships with distantly related children and other kin is closely tied to the matrilineal kinship system of the Navajo. In the concluding section, we return to these findings and identify factors that may be instrumental.

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Figure 13: Family Households with any Related and Own Children for Navajos and American Indians: National and Local

Source: American FactFinder, SF-2, Tables PCT27 and PCT28
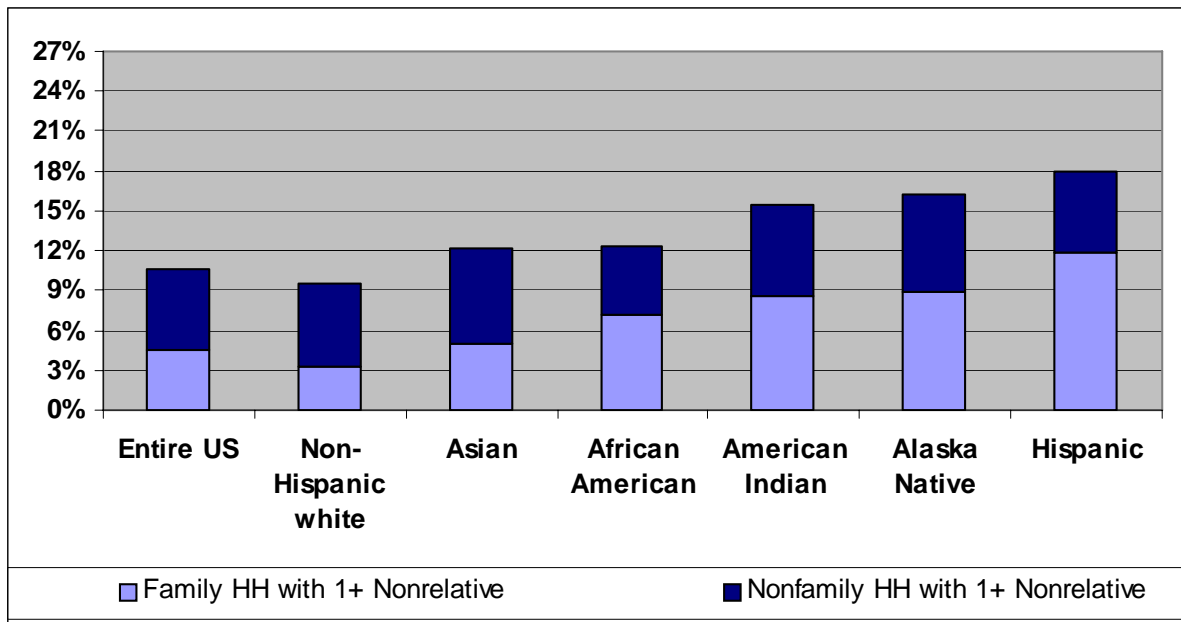
Households with any Nonrelatives

Figure 14 shows two features of households with any nonrelatives (one type of complex household). The first feature is the proportion of households that include any nonrelatives, shown by the full height of the bars in the chart. In the overall U.S. population, 10.6% of all households include at least one nonrelative. Once again, non-Hispanic white households have the lowest proportion (9.5%) and Hispanics the highest (17.9%), with Asians (12.2%), African Americans (12.3%), American Indians (15.5%) and Alaska Natives (16.2%) in the middle range.

The second feature shown in Figure 14 is the breakdown of these households with nonrelatives into family households (light shading at the bottom of the bars) and nonfamily households (dark shading at the top). Of the 10.6% of households with any nonrelatives in the U.S., 4.5% are family households, while 6.1%–the majority–are nonfamily households with two or more persons. Non-Hispanic white households show this same pattern even more dramatically, with 3.2% of households with nonrelatives classified as family households and 6.3% as nonfamily households. Asians show the same pattern: family households (5%) to nonfamily households (7.2%).

All of our other race/ethnic groups show the *opposite* pattern from non-Hispanic whites and

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Asians. For them, households with nonrelatives are more likely to be *family* households, with Hispanics showing the greatest contrast: *family* households (11.9%) to *nonfamily* households (6%) at the national level. The figures for Alaska Natives are family (8.9%) and nonfamily (7.3%) households, for American Indians (8.6% to 6.9%), and for African Americans (7.2% to 5.1%). The pattern of the overall population thus reflects the distribution of households with nonrelatives for non-Hispanic whites and Asians that together represent somewhat less than 80% of U.S. households, but masks the very different distributions of the other race/ethnic groups.

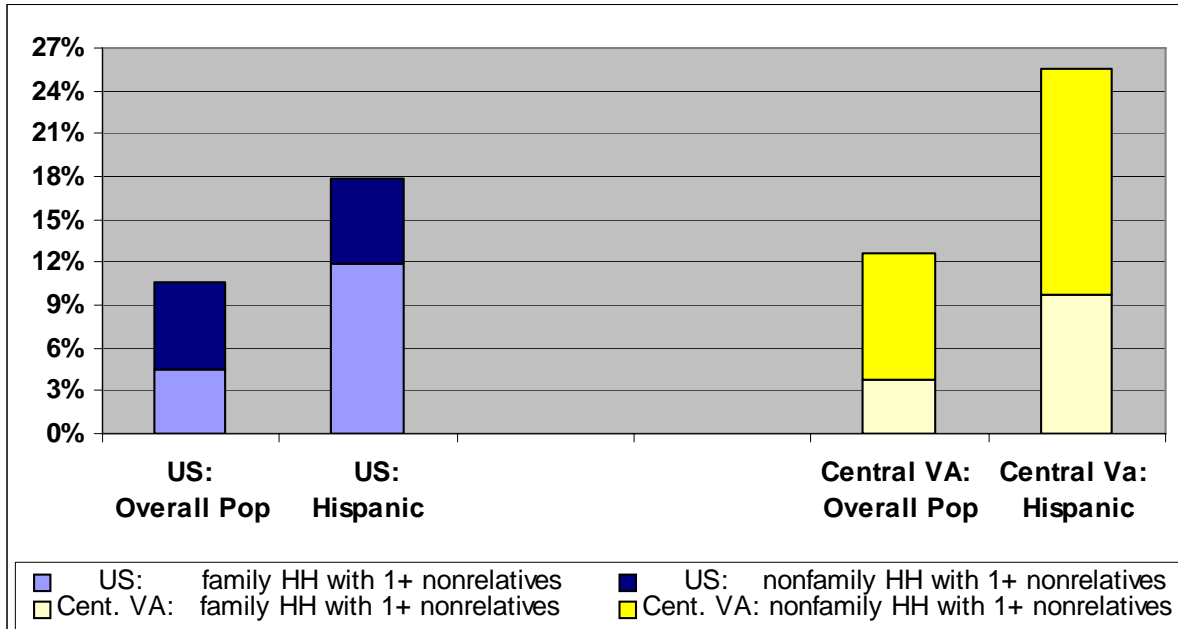**Figure 14: Households with Any Nonrelatives by Race/Ethnicity: US**

Source: American FactFinder, SF-2, Tables PCT 9 (all households with nonrelatives), PCT 16 (nonfamily households with two or more persons) and PCT 16 - PCT 9 (to calculate proportion of family households with nonrelatives)

Figure 15 dramatically illustrates national/local differences for Hispanics and the overall populations. The most obvious difference is the very tall right-most bar in the chart indicating that 25.5% of all Hispanic households in Central Virginia have any nonrelatives, the highest in our entire study. This is much higher than for Hispanic households nationwide (17.9%), and it is also more than twice as high as the 12.6% for the overall population in that same local area and the 10.6% for the country as a whole.

Additionally, there is a very noticeable difference in the relative proportions of family and nonfamily households with relatives for Hispanics at the national and local level. At the national level, as mentioned earlier, about twice as many Hispanic households with nonrelatives were *family* households (11.9%) compared to *nonfamily* households (6%), but at the local level, the

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proportions for Hispanics are nearly reversed: *family* households (9.7%) and *nonfamily* households (15.8%). This proportionate breakdown looks more similar to the overall local population than it does to all Hispanic households at the national level. These findings are yet more evidence that the Hispanics in the local Central Virginia study site have very different household structure patterns than in the nation as a whole.
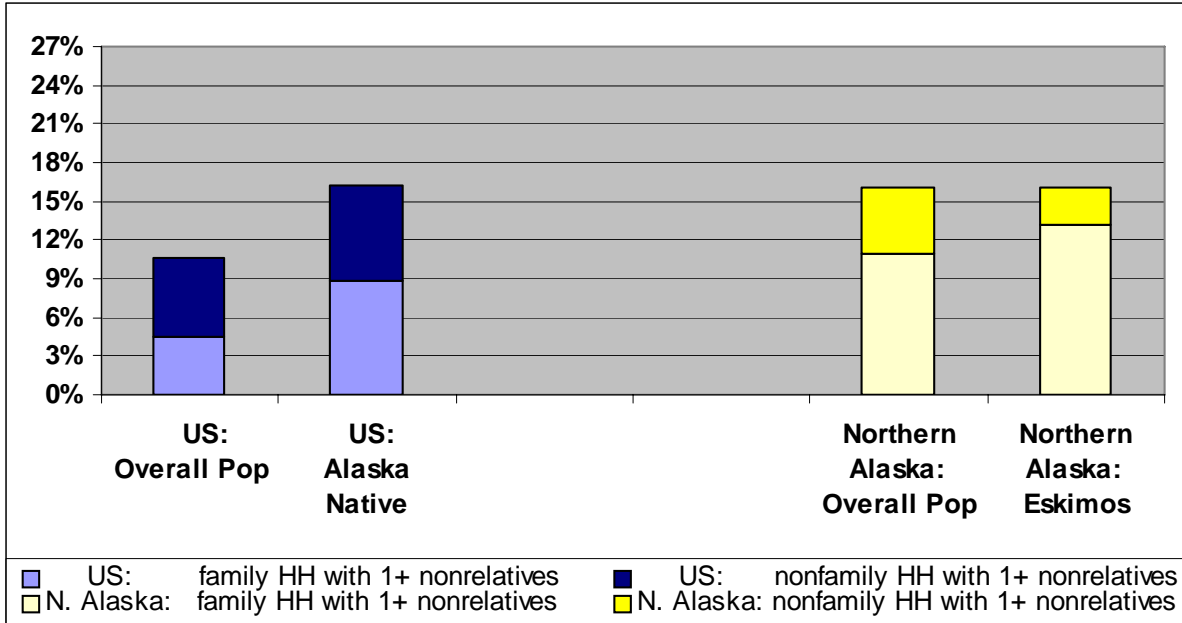
Figure 15: Hispanic Households and all Households with Nonrelatives by Family/Nonfamily Type: National and Local

Source: American FactFinder, SF-2, Tables PCT 9 (all households with nonrelatives), PCT 16 (nonfamily households with two or more persons) and PCT 16 - PCT 9 (to calculate proportion of family households with nonrelatives)

Our Eskimo/Alaska Native comparison at the national and local levels in Figure 16 shows that even when the relative proportions of households with any nonrelatives remains relatively similar at the national and local levels at around 16%, the breakdown of them by family/nonfamily type can be very different. At the national level, the 16.2% of all Alaska Native households with any nonrelatives is somewhat more likely to be of the family (8.9%) than nonfamily (7.3%) type. In contrast, the 16% of Eskimo households in the local northern Alaska study area are very much more likely to be family (13.1%) than nonfamily (2.9%) households. It's not just a matter of race/ethnicity though: in the overall local population, the breakdown is family (11%) to nonfamily (5.1%) households. It is apparent that some cultural and regional factors in the local area are affecting household structure.

Figure 16: Alaska Native/Eskimo Households and all Households with Nonrelatives by Family/Nonfamily Household Type: National and Local

Source: American FactFinder, SF-2, Tables PCT 9 (all households with nonrelatives), PCT 16 (nonfamily households with two or more persons) and PCT 16 - PCT 9 (to calculate proportion of family households with nonrelatives)

Summary and Conclusions

In summary, we have used Census 2000 data in bar charts to compare and contrast 9 indicators of household structure for 6 race/ethnic groups at two geographical levels: the national level and custom-designed local study areas surrounding our small-scale ethnographic study sites. In this section we summarize some of the overarching patterns at the national and local levels and identify some factors found in our qualitative studies that underlie and partially explain these results, then discuss implications for census coverage.

In looking through the distributions of our nine household structure variables at the national level, it became quite apparent that non-Hispanic white households differ very markedly from those of the other five race/ethnic groups in this study. Our successive bar charts have shown that non-Hispanic whites have: 1) the smallest household size; 2) the smallest family size; 3) the lowest proportion of family households; 4) the second highest proportion of married couples vis-a-vis other family household types (exceeded only by Asians); 5) the lowest proportion of households with related children and 6) own children; 7) the lowest proportions of households

with just distantly related children; 8) the lowest proportion of households with any nonrelatives; and 9) the lowest proportion of family households with nonrelatives. This suggests that non-Hispanic whites may have the lowest proportion of complex households of any race/ethnic subpopulation in the U.S.

Even more interesting is that for eight of the nine indicators just mentioned above where non-Hispanic white households had the lowest proportions (all except proportion of married couple households), the non-Hispanic white household proportions were actually *below* the respective averages for the overall U.S. population. For seven of these indicators, non-Hispanic white households were the *only* race/ethnic group below the overall national average: household size; family size; and proportions of households with any related children under 18, any own children under 18, and just distantly related children under 18; any nonrelative; and proportion of family households with nonrelatives.

What makes this so noteworthy is that non-Hispanic households are the clear majority: 75% of U.S. households are classified as non-Hispanic white households because the householder is non-Hispanic white (American FactFinder, Census 2000 SF 1, Quick Table 1). As such, their patterns strongly influence national statistics on household structure. Non-Hispanic white households are so numerous and so different from those of the other race/ethnic groups that they heavily skew the overall U.S. figures in the direction of non-Hispanic white household patterns, but not enough to reach the very low non-Hispanic white household indicators themselves on eight of our nine indicators. Unless researchers disaggregate household structure variables by race/ethnicity, the lower averages for the country as a whole mask the wide variations in household structure by race/ethnicity *within* the country.

The twist here is that non-Hispanic whites also have one of the lowest growth rates. If current trends continue, the population of non-Hispanic whites is expected to shrink from around 70% in 2000 to less than 50% in the 2050s. As the proportion of non-Hispanic white *households* shrinks vis-a-vis the other groups, this skewing of overall household structure patterns will decline and, other things being equal, the indicators we have identified will rise, reflecting the increasing influence of the race/ethnic minorities in national statistics on household structure.

This also ties in with larger Census Bureau concerns about differential coverage of subpopulations in decennial censuses. We know from previous research that subpopulations at risk of coverage errors include: race/ethnic subpopulations (for example, U.S. Census Bureau 2003, National Research Council 2004), those in complex households (de la Puente 1993, Schwede 2003), and those who are nonrelatives, or more distant relatives of householders, renters, and others. As mentioned, population projections indicate that race/ethnic subpopulations are growing faster than non-Hispanic whites, and if complex households too are rising over time, we may confront increasing rates of coverage errors in future years.

We now turn to a discussion of large national/local differences we have identified for Hispanics, Navajos and Eskimos, identifying some factors found in our qualitative research in those sites that underlie and partially explain the resulting profiles. As we have seen, Hispanic households

in the local Central Virginia area were very different from all Hispanic households at the national level. First, in the local area, Hispanic household and family sizes were much smaller than at the national level. Second, the local Hispanic households were much less likely to be family households and those family households were less likely to be of the married couple type; they had the highest rate of male householder family households of any group we studied. Third, they also had lower proportions of households with related children, with own children, and with just distantly related children. Fourth, the local area Hispanic households had a much higher proportion of households with nonrelatives (25.5%) than Hispanics at the national level (17.9%) and fifth, their breakdown of households with nonrelatives into family (9.7%)and nonfamily (15.8%) households was almost a complete reversal of the Hispanic pattern at the national level: family (11.9%) and nonfamily (6%) households.

What accounts for these differences? Ethnographer Goerman (2006) explains that this Central Virginia area is a new pole of migration for Hispanics. There are more individuals who are coming on their own and staying with nonrelatives until they can get established in this new area, so there are fewer families and more of them are male householder nonfamily households. As time goes on and the migrants become more settled, the proportions of family households and those with children would be expected to grow for this cohort. If these Central Virginia migrants stay long periods, conditions remain stable, and the rate of new immigrants slows, Hispanic household structure in this local area may shift toward the local and/or national overall patterns. On the other hand, if the migrants stay just a short time, or if conditions change, or if the rate of new immigrants increases, household structure in this local area might remain stable or diversify even further from the national pattern.

The Navajos show a distinctly different profile from the Hispanics and from the overall population of American Indians. In northern Arizona, Navajo households have much larger household size and family size. Third, they have a higher proportion of family households. Fourth, Navajo households in northern Arizona have a much higher proportion of female householder family households. Fifth, their households are much more likely to have related children, own children, and just more distantly related children. Sixth, a much lower proportion of Navajos at the local northern Arizona level include any nonrelatives (9.3%) than all American Indian households at the national level(15.5%). Seventh, local Navajo households are the least likely to have nonfamily households with nonrelatives (just 2.1%), compared to all American Indians at the national level (6.9%) and the overall national population (10.6%).

A large part of the explanation for these differences is that the northern Arizona study site is the Navajo reservation, which is the cultural homeland of the Navajo. The great majority of residents on the reservation are Navajos and the area is mostly rural, with insufficient jobs to support the local population. The Navajo's kinship system is matrilineal and their residence pattern is matrilocal, with women, husbands, and children living in their mothers' compounds, often taking in the women's nieces and nephews (treated like, and also considered as "own children" in this matrilineal society). Men are more likely to leave the area for temporary wage work elsewhere to help supplement the household's income. Households are very fluid, with young and old, close and distant relatives often staying for varying lengths of time (see Tongue 2006 for the full,

engagingly readable ethnographic study).

Finally, the Eskimos in northern Alaska show strikingly similar patterns in our household structure indicators to those of the Navajo in Arizona, with one important difference. The proportion of male householder family households is much higher for the northern Alaska Eskimos (12.7%) than for the northern Arizona Navajos (5%). Like the Navajos, Eskimos live in their rural cultural homeland, but the kinship system is bilateral (as it is for most Americans). According to ethnographer Craver (2006), Eskimo women are more likely than men to leave the area for work or school, leaving their children in village households with grandparents and other relatives. Eskimo men are more often the valued hunters, partially preserving their cherished traditional subsistence way of life involving seasonal mobility and very fluid households (Craver 2006).

Thus, in the Hispanic, Navajo, and Inupiaq Eskimo study sites, we see the linkages of household structure patterns with economic, cultural, and regional issues specific to each group and its local conditions. For the Hispanics in Central Virginia, economic factors appear to be more centrally linked to household structure, as new immigrants come alone with little money, looking to stay with other relatives or nonrelatives until they can become financially able to set up their own households in the area or in their home country. Cultural factors are important, too. For example, cultural obligations of sharing lead to many Hispanics opening their own doors to house new relatives or nonrelatives from their villages or countries, even when some might prefer not to do so, as shown in some of Goerman's poignant case studies (2006).

In the Navajo and Inupiaq cases, culture, economics, and regional conditions interact with household structure patterns. In their cultural homelands, the Navajo prefer to live close together on their mothers' family compounds and the Inupiat prefer to live in extended households, often of the skip generation type. In both groups, resources and domestic functions are often shared across households and households are very fluid. Also, in both areas, geographical and economic conditions are such that many people in the prime working ages need to leave their local areas for wage labor work to supplement subsistence and income production in the rural household, contributing to the formation of complex, fluid households. Additionally, rural/urban differences appear to be influencing household structure in the American Indian and Alaska Native sites, as well as in the rural white local area of upstate New York, where differences with the overall overwhelmingly non-Hispanic white population were apparent in Figure 6. All of this suggests that there are complex linkages and interactions of household structure, race/ethnicity, economics, culture, local conditions, and other factors.

These results on race/ethnic and geographical variation in nine household structure indicators show quite different patterns of household structure indicators by race/ethnicity and geography, using Census 2000 data. They also provide a benchmark for examining future subpopulation changes in order to identify emerging trends. If current differential growth rate trends remain constant and the proportion of non-Hispanic white households continues to decline, the already divergent household structure patterns between non-Hispanic white households and those of our other race/ethnic groups are thus likely to continue diverging. The overall household structure

indicators are likely to change, mostly upward, as they are influenced more and more by the patterns of non-Hispanic white households in future censuses.

Since race/ethnicity and complex households have been linked through previous research to differential coverage issues, we suggest it would be useful for the Census Bureau to fund ongoing research on changing household structure indicators by race/ethnicity and geography and their effects on coverage. By tracking the interactions of these variables, we can examine their linkages with coverage errors and adjust our methods to improve the enumeration of the U.S. population.

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