

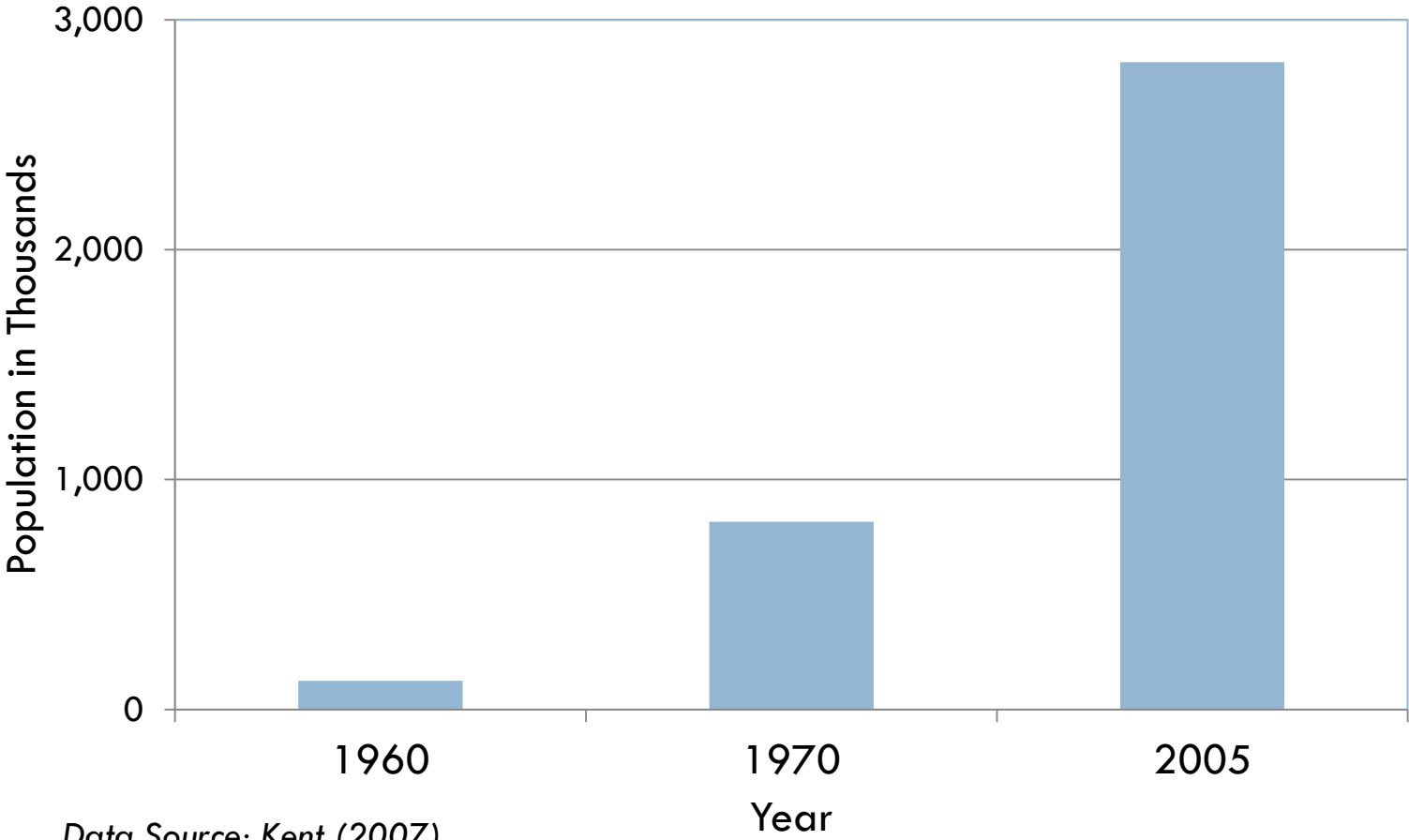
# BLACK IMMIGRANTS, THEIR CHILDREN, AND THEIR FAMILIES

Kevin J.A. Thomas

# Background

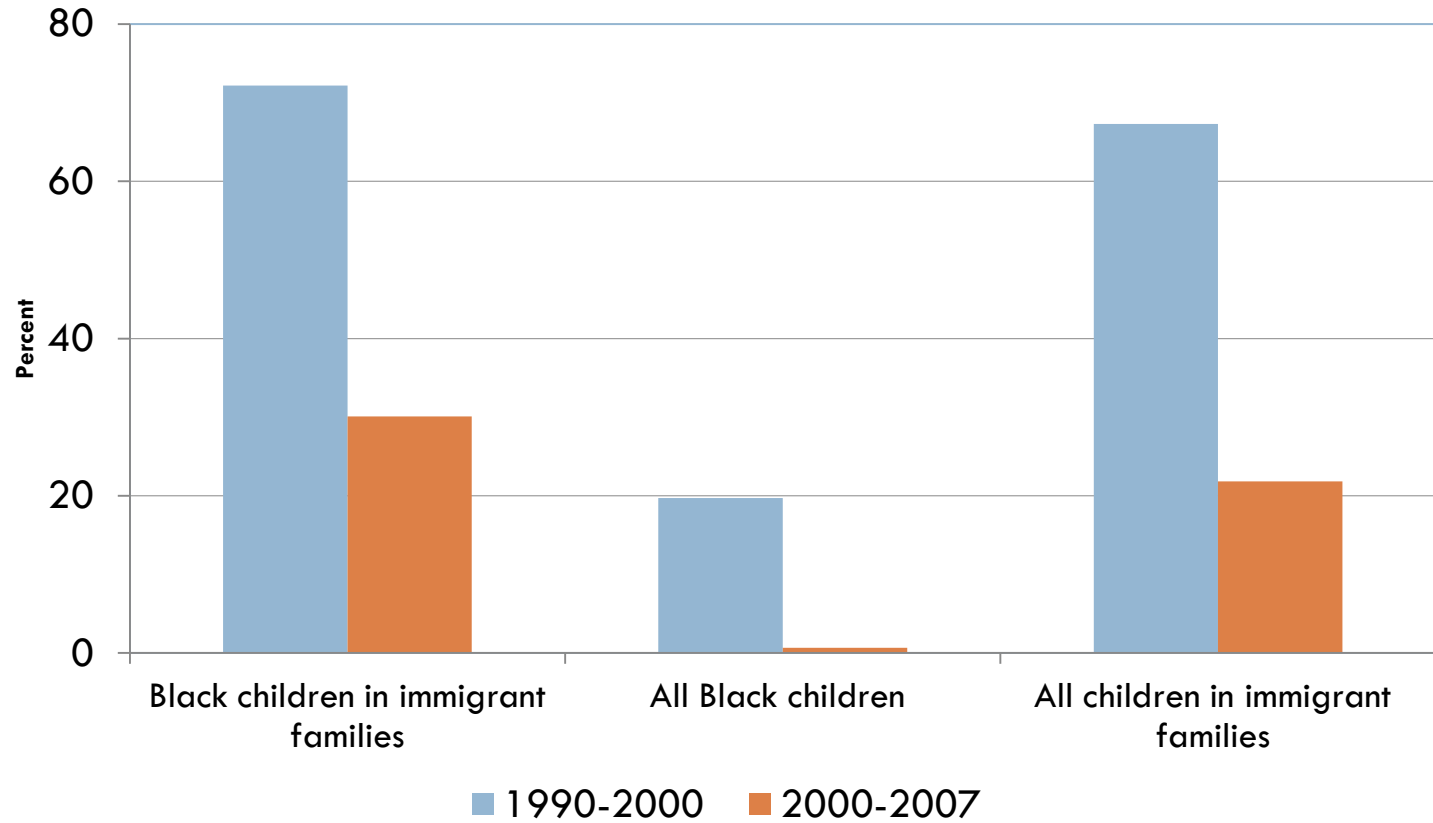
- The history of Black immigration to the US dates back to the period of slavery
  - ▣ 360,000 African slaves were taken directly to the US between 1519 to 1867
  - ▣ Black slave migration to the US through the Caribbean was also important during this period
- The recent growth in the Black immigrant population occurred after 1965
- The Black immigrant population increased by more than 1,000% between 1965 to 2005 (Kent 2007)
- Among children, the increase was 125% for Black immigrants vs. 100% for all children of immigrants in the last two decades

# Black immigrant population trends



# Trends

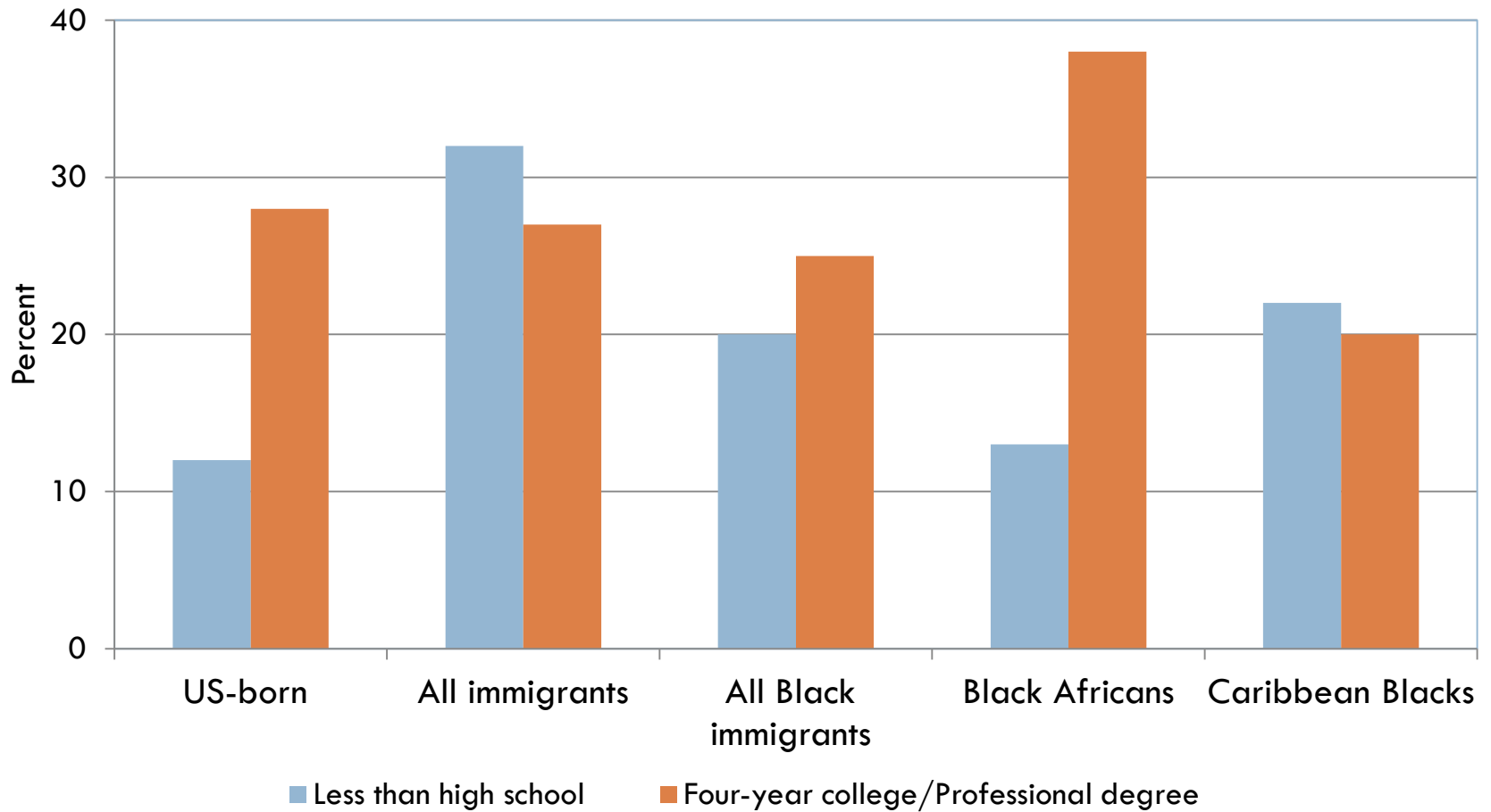
Percentage change in the population of children in immigrant families



# Diverse ethnic and regional origins

- The majority of Black children in immigrant families have parents from either the Caribbean or Africa
  - ▣ Black children with Caribbean parents: 47%
  - ▣ Black children with African parents: 39%
  - ▣ Black children with other immigrant parents: 14%
- Additional patterns of diversity are found within the population of children with parents from the Caribbean and Africa
  - ▣ Major Caribbean groups: Haiti (37%); Jamaica (34%); Trinidad and Tobago (10%)
  - ▣ Major African groups: Nigeria (22%); Ethiopia (10%); Somalia (9%)

# Educational attainment

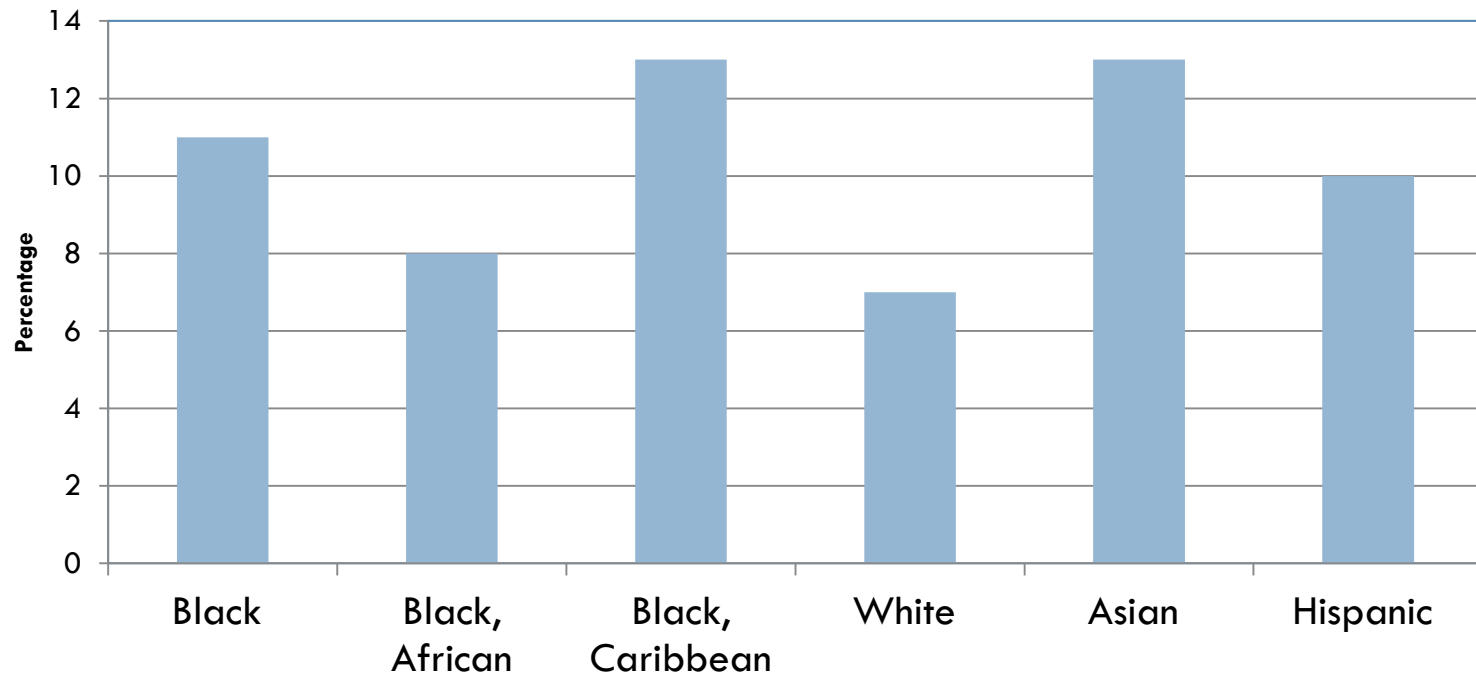


# Family structure

- Black children of immigrants are less likely to live with single parents than children in native-born Black families
- However, they are less likely to live in such families compared to the children of White or Asian immigrants
  - ▣ Among immigrants, Blacks are therefore among the most exposed to the vulnerabilities of single parent families
- Single-parent families are less prevalent among African than among Caribbean immigrants

# Extended family arrangements

**Young children of immigrants in extended families**

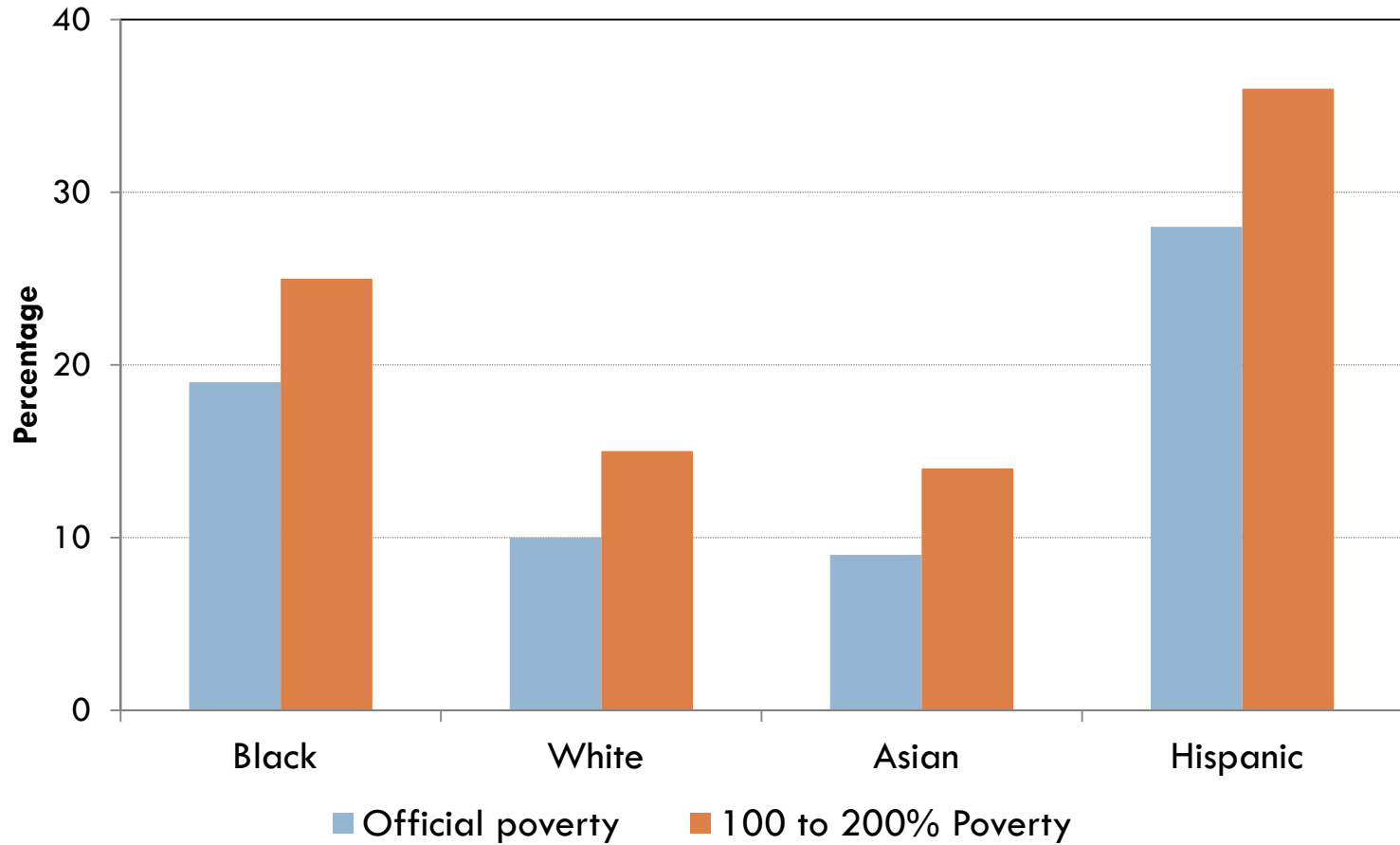




# Extended family arrangements

- Extended families are also more common among Black immigrants than among US-natives
- They serve an instrumental purpose in meeting short-term needs
- Caribbean Blacks are more likely to live in extended families than Black African immigrants
  - ▣ Possibly because Caribbean immigrants are more likely to qualify for family-reunification and have lower migration costs

# Young children of immigrants in poverty



# Family poverty status

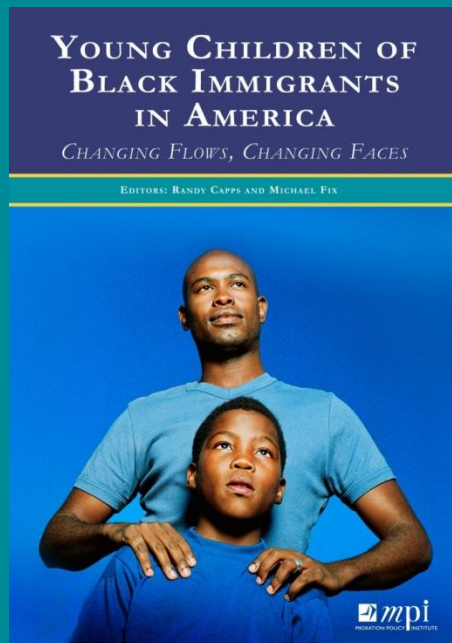
- Among immigrant families, Black as well as Hispanic families have the highest rates of poverty
  - ▣ Among Hispanics, poverty rates are highest among Black Hispanics
- For Black immigrant families, the poverty disadvantage is counterintuitive given their high levels of parental schooling and labor force participation
- Their high rates of poverty have important implications for longer-term disadvantages
  - ▣ Poverty in childhood affects subsequent educational, psychological, and social development

# Summary and conclusions

- Black immigration to the US has important implications for the welfare of their families
- Black immigrant families generally encounter serious socioeconomic constraints relative to other immigrant families
- There are important similarities in the family characteristics of the two major Black immigrant groups
  - E.g., Black immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean are more likely to be poor compared to the families of US-natives
- However, the major groups also differ on important dimensions such as parental citizenship status and family structure

# YOUNG CHILDREN OF BLACK IMMIGRANTS IN AMERICA:

## Changing Flows, Changing Faces



More information at  
[www.migrationpolicy.org](http://www.migrationpolicy.org)