



CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S SURVEY: A PORTRAIT OF DIVERSITY

November 2004

California women reflect the state's majority-minority population.

As a result of the dramatic racial and ethnic change immigration has made in California, whites account for just under half of the state's adult women. According to recent population figures, the other major population groups are Latinas (30%), Asians (13%), and blacks (7%). Roughly two in three California women were born in the United States. Although most white and black women were born in the United States, most Latina and Asian women were born in other nations. Consequently, whites and blacks make up most of the U.S.-born population, but Asians and Latinas account for most of the naturalized citizens and non-citizens in California today.

The age and employment profile of women is shaped by immigration and an aging population.

Thirty-one percent of women are younger than age 35, 39 percent are between the ages of 35 and 54, and 30 percent are age 55 and older. Latinas are more likely than whites to be found in the youngest age group—reflecting the presence of more immigrants. Whites make up the highest percentage of women age 55 and older—reflecting the aging of the U.S.-born population. A majority of women are engaged in full-time or part-time employment. Whites are much more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to be retired, while Latinas are the most likely to be homemakers.

Marital status and motherhood indicate a high degree of household diversity.

Just over half of California women are married (54%), while 24 percent were never married and the remaining 22 percent are either divorced, separated, or widowed. Among those who are married, about six in 10 have children and a majority are employed. Reflecting the aging of the population, whites are most likely to be widowed. About four in 10 women have children age 18 or younger, with Latinas most likely and whites least likely to have children.

Education and income vary considerably by race and ethnicity.

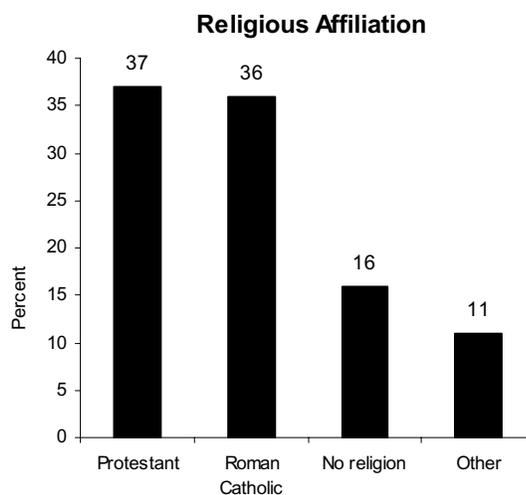
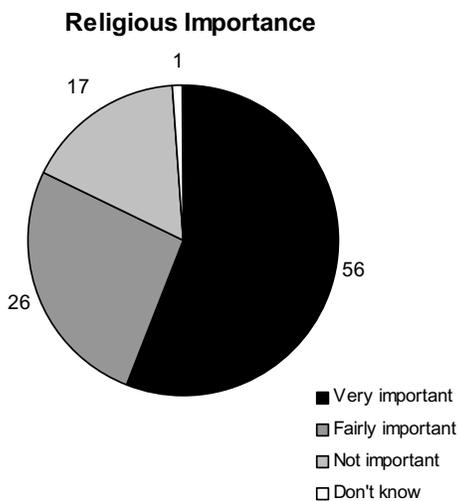
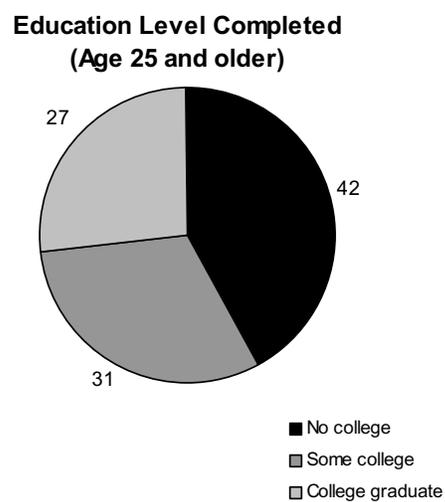
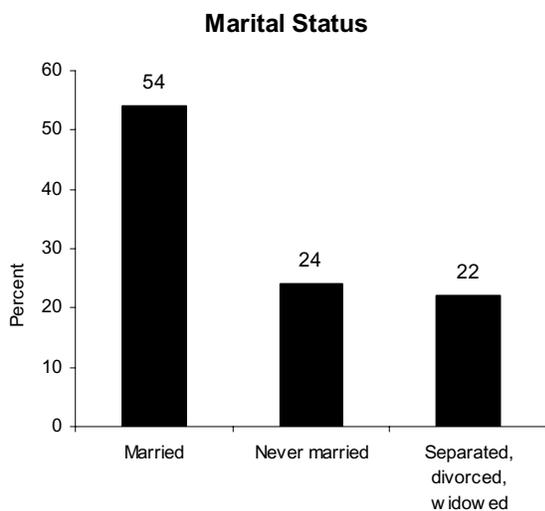
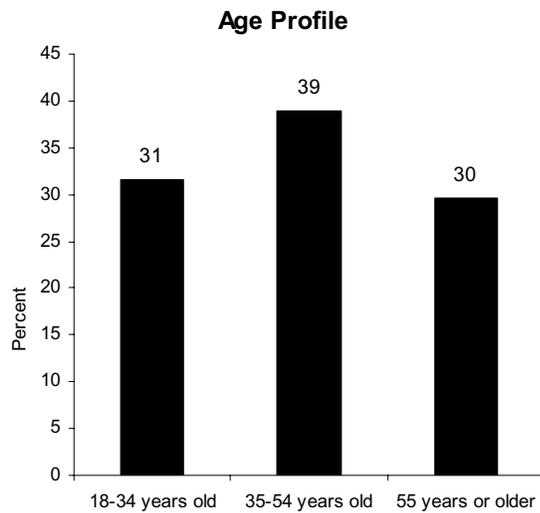
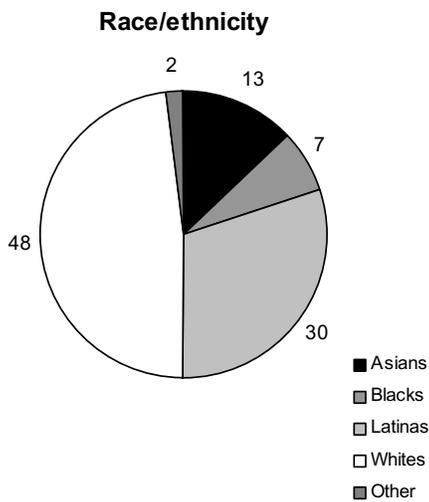
Although 42 percent of women who are age 25 or older have not taken any college courses, 31 percent have some college training, and 27 percent report that they are college graduates. Latinas are more likely than any other racial/ethnic group to say that they have not had any college training, while whites and Asians are the most likely to report that they have college degrees. Thirty-seven percent of women live in households with annual incomes under \$40,000; 31 percent are in the \$40,000 to \$79,999 bracket; and 32 percent have household incomes of \$80,000 or more. Looking across racial/ethnic groups, whites and Asians are much more likely to be found in the highest income bracket, while blacks and Latinas are most often found in the lowest income bracket.

California women are deeply rooted in their homes and local communities.

Despite all of the demographic and economic shifts that have been occurring in California, a majority of women report that they are homeowners and have lived in their home for five or more years. Whites are more likely than others to be long-term homeowners; however, Latinas are more likely than others to have a child in a local public school.

Religion plays an important role in the lives of California women.

Most California women (82%) say that religion is an important part of their life, with 56 percent saying it is very important. Blacks (82%) and Latinas (67%) are more likely than whites (48%) and Asians (45%) to say that religion is a very important part of their life. When asked about religious preference, Protestant (37%) and Roman Catholic (36%) are named about equally, while 11 percent name other religions and 16 percent give no religion. Whites (49%) and blacks (76%) most often describe themselves as Protestant, and Latinas most often say they are Roman Catholic (72%).



Sources: PPIC Statewide Surveys conducted from October 10 to November 1, 2004, including 2,369 adult women reached through a random telephone survey and interviewed in Chinese, English, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese; California Department of Finance population estimates, May 2004, and Current Population Survey, March 2004.