

Ethnic Diversity in Wisconsin

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At the time of European discovery and colonization of North America, there were about four million Native Americans in what is now the United States. The trans-Atlantic slave trade, practiced for three centuries prior to the early 1800s, had brought over 470 thousand Africans to this country. Since our independence, we have admitted over 78 million immigrants, originally mainly from Europe, later from Asia and Latin America. Consequently, the United States (a nation of immigrants) has become a mosaic of races and cultures, and this great human and cultural diversity is visible in almost every part of America, including Wisconsin.

This presentation on ethnic diversity in our state will be divided into three parts. The first part will focus on diversity in terms of race and Hispanic origin of Wisconsin's population. The second part will examine diversity among the white population, predominantly of European origin, in terms of ancestry. In both parts, emphasis will be put on immigration history and geographic distribution of major racial and ethnic groups in Wisconsin. The last part of the presentation will be devoted to the discussion of selected outcomes of ethnic diversity in our state.

Racial and Hispanic Origin Groups

According to the 2010 census data, over 16% of Wisconsin's population (almost 950 thousand) belongs to one of several racial/ethnic minority groups. African Americans (350 thousand) comprise the largest minority group in our state; the Hispanic or Latino population (336 thousand) forms the second largest group. The population of Asian origin (128 thousand) ranks third; and Native Americans, mainly American Indians, form the smallest group (48 thousand). The proportion of white non-Hispanic population in Wisconsin is much greater (83%) than that in the United States (63%); from this point of view, our state is less diverse than 38 other U.S. states.

Milwaukee County is the home to over 45% of all minority population in Wisconsin. Minority groups also account for 45% of that county's total population. African Americans comprise the largest group here; two-thirds of all blacks in the state live in this county. Dane County has the second largest minority population in Wisconsin (over 9% of all minority population in the state). No group is dominant here; the population is fairly evenly split between African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. Several counties in northern Wisconsin have high proportions of minority people, including Menominee (89%), Sawyer (21%), Forest (18%), and Ashland (16%). The great majority of non-white population here is of Native

American origin. Hispanics are dominant in a number of less urbanized counties. Asian Americans form a clearly dominant minority group in Marathon, La Crosse, and Eau Claire Counties.

The minority population in Wisconsin has been steadily and rapidly increasing since the 1950s, and this population has also become more diverse. African Americans used to form the dominant group; now, they comprise less than half of the total minority population, and they may become the second largest group (after Hispanics) in the near future. While the minority population quadrupled since 1970, the white population increased by only 15 percent during the last 40 years.

While the first **African Americans** came to Wisconsin as fur traders in the 1790s, the large-scale migration occurred after 1910 when many blacks from southern states chose Wisconsin, especially Milwaukee, to escape racial conflict and seek economic opportunities. The size of this group has been rapidly increasing since the end of WW II. As mentioned a moment ago, African Americans form the largest minority group in the state, and they are highly concentrated in Milwaukee County, particularly the city of Milwaukee which is the home to over 68% of all blacks in the state. Other communities with large number of African Americans are Madison, Racine, and Kenosha. These four cities have over three-fourths of Wisconsin's African Americans.

Very high territorial concentration (segregation) of blacks in Wisconsin, particularly in the city of Milwaukee, has been documented in several studies and criticized by many politicians, scholars, and civic leaders. The statement that "90 percent of the metro area's black population lives in the city ... suburban whites are notably hostile to building any form of public transit to connect city people to suburban jobs, further exacerbating segregation's ill effects"¹ is an example of such criticism. According to one source, only Detroit and New York City have similar levels of segregation.² The same source also states that while "moderately priced rental housing is the only type of housing the urban poor can afford," some "suburbs and outlying towns like New Berlin and West Bend have been in the news lately because of efforts in those towns to prevent the construction of moderately priced rental housing. If this kind of housing was built, some fear, the urban poor might relocate and try to build lives and raise their kids among the middle and upper classes." In the city of Madison, on the other hand, African Americans and other racial groups are much more dispersed.

The **Hispanic** population, numbering 336 thousand and comprising 6% of the state's population, forms the second largest minority group in Wisconsin. Although we do not have reliable data on Hispanics before 1970, Wisconsin attracted some immigrants from Latin America as early as the 1860s. The Hispanic population has been growing very fast over the past two decades and is very likely to become the dominant minority group in the state in the near future. It is already the largest minority group in the country. Although the Hispanics are less territorially clustered than African Americans, over 37% of

¹ "Report: Milwaukee is the Most Racially Segregated Urban Area in America."

<http://cognidissidence.blogspot.com/2013/04/report-milwaukee-is-most-rationally.html> (accessed July 4, 2013)

² "Milwaukee's Residential Segregation—It's Not Simply Black and White."

<http://law.marquette.edu/facultyblog/2010/12/20/milwaukee%E2%80%99s-residential-segregation-%E2%80%93-it%E2%80%99s-not-simply-black-and-white/> (accessed July 4, 2013)

them live in Milwaukee County. Most of Wisconsin's other large cities also have significant number of Hispanics. In Racine, Kenosha, and Beloit, the Hispanics comprise over 15% of the total population.

Wisconsin's Hispanic population includes several groups that share a common cultural heritage originating in a Spanish-speaking country. Although the term *Hispanic* unites these groups for purposes of census data collection, they usually have separate ethnic identities and social networks. Mexicans and Puerto Ricans form the two largest Hispanic groups in Wisconsin. Economic opportunities first brought Mexicans to Wisconsin. In the early 1900s seasonal workers from Texas and Mexico came to work during the summer on farms in various parts of state. In the 1920s, when immigration restrictions were placed on Europeans, jobs in tanneries, meat-packing plants, and other industries in large urban centers also attracted Mexican immigrants. Immigration increased again between 1951 and 1964 when an agreement between the U.S. and Mexico encouraged *braceros* (contract workers) to work temporarily in low-wage jobs in both rural and urban areas. Many *braceros* returned later and found permanent jobs in Wisconsin.³ A large-scale immigration of Puerto Ricans to Wisconsin took place after WW II. These immigrants were originally farm laborers in Michigan; after the harvest season, many moved to Chicago and then to Milwaukee. Some Puerto Ricans also came from an industrial city of Lorain in Ohio, others were recruited by Wisconsin employers through the Wisconsin State Employment Service in Milwaukee in the early 1950s.⁴

The **Asian** population, which amounts to over 128 thousand and comprises over 2% of state's population, forms the third largest minority group in Wisconsin. It is by far the most diverse group in terms of place of origin of its members. The numerous subgroups of Asians listed in the census publications are diverse, and their histories of entry into our state and spatial distribution vary considerably. Wisconsin did not attract any significant numbers of Asians before World War II. Restrictive immigration laws and distance barriers were responsible for a very small percentage of Asians among the foreign-born population until the 1950s.

Asian Americans are concentrated in major urban areas. About one-third of them live in the Milwaukee metro area, one-third in the Madison area, and the remaining one-third in other larger cities, including Green Bay, Wausau, Appleton, Sheboygan, Eau Claire, and La Crosse. Every tenth resident of Eau Claire and Wausau is of Asian origin. The two largest groups of Asians in Wisconsin are the Hmong and Asian Indians.

The **Hmong** people are the most recent Asian immigrants. Although their primary motive for migration to the U.S. was political, economic factors came to play as well. The Hmong became involved in the fighting in Vietnam in the early 1950s, when the French engaged them as scouts. Later they were recruited as Special Forces by the CIA. After the fall of Saigon in 1975 and the subsequent U.S. withdrawal from South Vietnam, the Hmong were forced to flee for their lives to camps in Thailand where more than 1.2 million refugees spent years waiting to be processed into the U.S.

³ Zaniewski and Rosen (1998). *Atlas of Ethnic Diversity in Wisconsin*. University of Wisconsin Press.

⁴ Dictionary of Wisconsin History. Wisconsin Historical Society
<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp> (accessed July 5, 2013)

The efforts of churches, social service agencies, and private charities became a major determinant of where the Hmong refugees settled once they entered the U.S. With financial assistance from the federal government, private and religious agencies, the Hmong were placed with American sponsors in a number of states. This early dispersal was not conducive to the formation of the discreet ethnic concentrations so common among other immigrant groups.

Wisconsin communities with the largest Hmong population today are dispersed widely throughout the state and include Milwaukee, Sheboygan, Wausau, Green Bay, Madison, Appleton, and Eau Claire. Most Hmong are still concentrated within the central city boundaries of these cities.

The migration of **Asian Indians** to Wisconsin is a relatively recent event, too. Most of them have arrived in the U.S. since 1965. Around that time Congress changed the immigration and family reunification laws to allow greater numbers of students and professionals to enter the country. After the first groups of immigrants found jobs and established themselves financially, their families were permitted to follow. The Asian Indian population is diverse and includes peoples of different religious and linguistic affiliations. The majority of Asian Indians are Hindus, but other religious groups (Muslims, Sikhs) are also represented. Although most of Asian Indians are proficient in English, many of them may identify with the language most commonly spoken in their home region. Many "Asian Indians are very well educated and ... are doctors, engineers, and technology experts." This community is also "well represented as small business owners, motel owners and taxi cab drivers. About 55% of motels in the US are owned by Asian Indians."⁵

Native Americans have inhabited Wisconsin for more than ten thousand years. By the time of European contact in the mid-1700s, many different Native American groups were living in Wisconsin. By the mid-1700s, infectious diseases brought by the Europeans and inter-tribal conflicts eliminated several groups from this area. From about 1635 to 1815 Native Americans' continuous involvement with the French, British and American fur traders brought about a dependence on European trade goods and a consequent reduction of traditional economies and crafts. As European settlements increased in Wisconsin, Native Americans were forced to cede their lands and were moved to reservations located on the least productive and desirable lands in the state. The first reservations were established in northern Wisconsin in 1854.

Many of Wisconsin's Native Americans still remain concentrated within or near the reservations. Modern Wisconsin's reservation lands belong to the Chippewa, Menominee, Stockbridge-Munsee, Oneida, Potawatomi, and Ho-Chunk nations.

Six Ojibwa (Chippewa) reservations are located in northern Wisconsin: the Lac Cour Oreilles in Sawyer County, the Bad River in Ashland County, the Lac du Flambeau in Vilas and Iron Counties, the Red Cliff in Bayfield County, the Mole Lake Reservation in Forest County, and the St. Croix in scattered areas of Burnett, Polk, and Barron Counties.

⁵ "Indian American Demographics" in Amerindia
http://www.ameredia.com/resources/demographics/south_asian.html (accessed July 7, 2013)

The Menominee Reservation encompasses Menominee County in northeastern Wisconsin. Adjacent to the Menominee land is the Stockbridge-Munsee Reservation in the northeastern part of Shawano County. This group was moved to Wisconsin by the U.S. government in the early 1800s, along with the Oneida from New York. Today the Oneida Reservation is located near Green Bay in Brown and Outagamie Counties. Potawatomi lands are located in discontinuous areas of Forest County and other sites scattered throughout the state. The Ho-Chunk communities are also dispersed—the major settlements are found near Wittenberg, Wisconsin Rapids, Black River Falls, Tomah, La Crosse, and the Wisconsin Dells area.

Each minority group shows a different pattern of distribution. African Americans are dominant in most of larger urban agglomerations, especially in Milwaukee, Madison, Racine, and Beloit. The Hispanic population is the dominant minority in most rural (agricultural) areas of southern and central Wisconsin and a few urban centers (Green Bay and Kenosha). Asians form a series of clusters, mainly in suburban belts around major cities, but also in some larger urban centers (Wausau, Appleton, La Crosse, and Eau Claire). Finally, Native Americans form the dominant minority group in most of northern and some parts of west-central Wisconsin.

Ancestry Groups

The second component of ethnic diversity is classification of the remaining population, predominantly of European origin (white race) on the basis of ancestry. Unlike the data on race, which is collected from the entire population, the data on ancestry is collected from a sample population, so there may be problems of data reliability. Moreover, the latest information on ancestry comes from the 2000 Census. Although the American Community Survey has been collecting such information for the past decade, there are even more concerns about the reliability of this information. The second part of this presentation examining ethnic diversity among the white population is based on the 2000 census data.

As mentioned earlier, Europeans comprised a great majority of immigrants coming to the United States and Wisconsin before WW II. Originally most migrants came from the British Isles, later from Western and Northern Europe, and in recent decades from Eastern and Southern Europe. Population of European ancestry accounts for over 80% of the state's total population today. Over half of them trace their roots to Western Europe, 19% to the British Isles, 14% to Northern Europe, 13% to Eastern Europe, and 3% to Southern Europe. Compared to the entire country, Wisconsin has more people of West and North European origin, a similar proportion of population of Eastern European ancestry, and much less people tracing their roots to the British Isles and Southern Europe. The population of German ancestry is by far the largest group in our state, and it accounts for over 35% of total state's population. The next three largest groups include people of Irish, Polish, and Norwegian ancestry, and they comprise 9%, 8% and 7% of the state's total population respectively. These four largest ancestry groups account for almost 60% of Wisconsin's population. Our state has been particularly attractive to immigrants from Belgium, Luxembourg, and Norway; over 10% of U.S. population of ancestries resides in Wisconsin.

The **Germans** were the largest immigrant group to settle in Wisconsin during the 19th century. In 1870 one one-third of Wisconsin's foreign-born population was German. These early immigrants were a

diverse group characterized by a wide range of occupations, several different religions, and a variety of social and political affiliations. The first German immigrants who settled in rural southern and eastern Wisconsin were well known for their skills in dairying and cheese production. In the city of Milwaukee, German immigrants established the breweries and meat-packing plants and many other successful enterprises.

The immigration of Germans to Wisconsin occurred in three major waves. The first wave (1844-55) was in response to a series of crop failures in southwestern Germany. The second wave (1865-73) brought many from northwestern Germany where wheat farmers had experienced a significant economic depression. The final wave, which began in the late 19th century, was comprised of people from northeastern Germany. This last group was part of the large wave of immigration that included people from eastern and southern Europe.

The largest concentration of German Americans is in the Milwaukee metro area which contains a quarter of all Wisconsin's population of German ancestry. The highest percentage of population of this ancestry is found in two areas: (1) in eastern and south-eastern Wisconsin, especially in Manitowoc, Calumet, and Washington counties; and (2) in north-central parts of the state, including Marathon and parts of Lincoln and Taylor counties. German Americans comprise over 70% of the total population in many places in these two regions. The two most "German" cities are New Holstein and Kiel located in the area known as Wisconsin's Holyland which "is known for its distinctive agricultural landscape, a close-knit community life, and deep Roman Catholicism brought by Germans who began settling the region in the 1840s."⁶

Several push factors operating in **Ireland** in the middle of the 19th century encouraged large numbers of people to flee their homeland. In addition to the well-known potato famines and outbreaks of disease, the general populace experienced political repression, and the discrimination against the Roman Catholics was acute.

The first Irish immigrants came to Wisconsin in the 1830s; this group constituted a secondary migration from the east coast of the United States. A second group emigrated directly from Ireland between 1845 and 1851. Some Irish immigrants were able to purchase land, whereas those of poorer circumstances found employment on prosperous Yankee and English farmsteads. Many Irish immigrants worked in the lead mines of southwestern Wisconsin, some constructed railroads and canals, and others were employed as factory workers in the large urban centers.

The vast majority of Irish were Roman Catholics, and they established churches in rural villages and urban neighborhoods. The Irish group's command of English language was a definite aid in their adjustment and assimilation.

⁶ The Holyland (Wisconsin) in *Wikipedia*; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holyland_%28Wisconsin%29 (accessed August 5, 2013)

The distribution of population of Irish ancestry is similar to that of the state's total population. Milwaukee and Dane counties have a quarter of all Irish Americans in Wisconsin. However, several parts of southwestern and southern Wisconsin have high proportion of Irish Americans, including the cities of Darlington and Shullsburg in Lafayette County and Williams Bay Village in Walworth County where every fourth person is of Irish descent. In Milwaukee County, Irish Americans comprise a relatively high percentage (over 25%) of total population in Wauwatosa and northeastern parts of the county (Shorewood, Whitefish Bay, and Fox Point).

The majority of early **Polish** immigrants in Wisconsin came from the German-occupied part of Poland. It has been suggested that these newcomers were attracted to our state because of a well-known German settlement area. The majority of Polish immigrants settled in the city of Milwaukee, but Polish communities were found in other parts of Wisconsin.

The great wave of Polish immigration to America began about 1890 and ended when World War I broke out in Europe. Several push factors in Poland encouraged emigration. The Prussian occupation rendered the Poles second-class citizens: The Prussians imposed high taxes, restricted the right to own land, and limited the freedom of Poles to speak their language and practice their religion. Another reason to migrate was to avoid conscription into the Prussian army—a great number of emigrants were young men of draft age.

Many Polish immigrants came directly to Milwaukee and settled on the south side of the city. They also established a smaller ethnic neighborhood on the north-east side of the city. These two ethnic neighborhoods contained several Catholic churches, parochial schools, libraries, grocery stores, taverns, butcher shops, and bakeries. There were also Polish-language newspapers, a theater, and fraternal organizations. The Polish south side neighborhood was within walking distance of the heavy industries of the Menomonee River Valley, where many immigrants found employment in tanneries, meat-packing plants, and other factories.

Portage County in north-central Wisconsin is the largest rural Polish settlement in the United States. The Polish community there began in the early 1870s when the Wisconsin Central Railway recruited workers. Many railroad laborers soon bought land to farm, and the community grew through chain migration. By 1900, at least one-third of Portage County residents were of Polish descent and this area had become the State's leading producer of potatoes. Polish immigrants often worked at additional jobs in sawmills and lumberyards and often took on the seasonal work of harvesting cranberries.

Another major rural Polish community was established in Trempealeau County in the early 1860s. Most immigrants here also came from German-controlled parts of Poland (mainly Silesia). Like in almost every major Polish community in America, the church was the center of immigrant life. By 1912, four Polish churches existed in this area; the largest of them was in Independence.⁷ Parts of Oconto, Brown and Shawano counties became the third major rural Polish settlement in Wisconsin. This development resulted from recruitment efforts of a land agent who brought here over a thousand of Polish families

⁷ Mikos, S.G. (2012). *Poles in Wisconsin*. Wisconsin Historical Society Press.

between 1877 and 1900. Several Polish settlements existed here by the end of the 19th century: Hofa Park, Pulaski, Sobieski, Kosciuszko, and Krakow. Pulaski was the largest and most successful of them.

The present distribution of Polish Americans still reflects the early patterns of settlement in our state. Although Milwaukee is by far the largest cluster of that population (25% of the state's total population of Polish ancestry resides here), north central Wisconsin, especially Portage and Marathon Counties (as mentioned earlier), is the largest rural cluster of Polish Americans in the United States. In many parts of these two counties, over 40% of population is of Polish origin. Several townships are over 60% Polish.

The majority of **Norwegians** arrived in the United States between 1825 and 1915; from 1838 to 1865 Wisconsin was their primary destination. Norwegian pioneers established cohesive communities that were reinforced by Norwegian-language newspapers, churches, and social groups. The first Norwegian church and the first Norwegian American newspaper were established at Muskego in the 1840s. The majority of Norwegians settled in rural areas and specialized in dairy farming and tobacco growing, the latter concentrated primarily in Dane and Vernon Counties. The areas of early Norwegian settlement continue to be centers of Norwegian ancestry population today. Among the cultural traditions still celebrated are the many *lutefisk* (fish) and *lefse* (unleavened potato bread) dinners given by predominantly Lutheran churches.

We can identify two major clusters of Norwegian Americans in Wisconsin today. One of them is in the southern part of the state, the other in western Wisconsin along the Iowa and Minnesota border. Dane County is the home to over 12% of Norwegian Americans in the state. The cities of Madison and Eau Claire have the largest number of people of Norwegian ancestry. Every tenth resident of Madison and fourth resident of Eau Claire is of Norwegian descent. Strum Village (population of 937) is the most "Norwegian" settlement in the state—65% of its residents are Norwegian Americans. Westby and Blair cities in Vernon and Trempealeau Counties respectively are other predominantly Norwegian settlements (over 60% of total population is of Norwegian ancestry).

The majority of **Czech** immigrants came to Wisconsin in two waves. The first and the largest wave began in the mid-19th century and continued until WW I; during that period, the Czech lands were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The second group of Czech migrants comprised of political refugees who arrived from former Czechoslovakia after WW II, most of them prior to 1968.

The first Czech immigrants came to Milwaukee in 1848. Although many of them came here for economic reasons, some were attracted by Wisconsin's reputation for political and religious tolerance. By 1860, one-third of all Czech immigrants who came to the United States had settled in Wisconsin. The majority of these immigrants were from the region of Bohemia and were referred to as Bohemians before WW I. Many Czech immigrants were skilled laborers and could speak German, a distinct advantage in early Milwaukee. By the mid-1850s several Czech families had moved to the surrounding rural areas where they established productive farmsteads south of Milwaukee near Racine and in Kewaunee and Manitowoc counties. By the late 1850s, some Czech immigrants had purchased land to farm in western parts of Wisconsin in La Crosse, Richland, Vernon, and Crawford counties. Members of the large Chicago

Czech community also purchased land in western and northern Wisconsin. In the late 19th century, more Czech immigrants from Chicago settled in the cutover region of northern Wisconsin.

Today a quarter of people of Czech ancestry are found in three counties: Milwaukee, Manitowoc and Brown. Most parts of Kewaunee and northern parts of Manitowoc counties have the highest proportion of population of Czech ancestry in the state. In some towns (Franklin in Kewaunee County and Two Creeks town in Manitowoc County) that proportion is over 30%.

Most of the **Dutch** immigrants came to Wisconsin between 1840 and 1890. These immigrants could be divided into two groups on the basis of religious affiliation. The Protestants, who left the Netherlands because of a division in the Dutch Reformed Church, arrived in Wisconsin first and formed self-contained settlements in order to maintain their religious tradition. Most of them settled in Sheboygan, Fond du Lac, Columbia, and La Crosse Counties. The Dutch Catholics, who migrated mainly for economic reasons, assimilated more rapidly because members attended church services with neighboring Catholic immigrants. Most of these immigrants settled in the Fox River Valley area (Brown, Outagamie and Winnebago Counties). The influence of the Catholic Church on both groups is reflected in high percentage of Dutch Catholics who married other Catholics, in contrast to the Protestant Dutch who rarely married outside their group.

Every fourth person of Dutch ancestry lives in Outagamie or Brown County. However, the villages of Oostburg and Cedar Grove in Sheboygan County have the highest proportion of population of Dutch ancestry (55% and 42% respectively). Other places with high percentage of population are Little Chute and Kimberly in Outagamie County.

Belgian immigration to Wisconsin, compressed primarily into the years 1846 to 1857, was a response to crop failures, the scarcity of productive farmland, and unemployment in large urban centers of Belgium. Most Belgian immigrants had been peasant farmers. In addition, shipping agents in Antwerp actively recruited passengers with handbooks that promoted settlement in Wisconsin. In some cases, the Belgian government aided the poorest migrants. The early Belgian immigrants found employment in dairy farming, the logging industry, at sawmills and shipyards, and in the urban centers along Lake Michigan.

Belgian Americans are highly concentrated in northeastern Wisconsin. Almost 60% of them live in Brown, Kewaunee and Door Counties. Brown County is the home to 42% of all Belgian Americans in the state. Over half of population in Red River Town (Kewaunee County) and Union Town (Door County) is Belgian American.

Wisconsin's **Swiss** ancestry population of 59 thousand represents a small fraction of the state's total population. However, the town of New Glarus in Green County has been recognized as the most distinctively Swiss settlement in the United States. The majority of Swiss immigrants arrived in Wisconsin between 1845 and 1890. Responding to economic depression, the Swiss government encouraged and aided emigration by purchasing tracts of land in the Midwest for those who would consider leaving Switzerland. In 1845 a group from the canton of Glarus arrived in Green County where

they established New Glarus. The Swiss settlement area soon expanded into the adjacent counties Dane, Lafayette, Rock, and Sauk. Other Swiss communities were established in western Wisconsin in Buffalo and La Crosse Counties.

The Swiss were able to transplant their dairying skills to the new environment. Commercial production of cheese began in Green County in 1869. The commercial success that allowed the Swiss to prosper brought them into steady contact with the Yankees, Germans, and other immigrant groups. Inter-marriage with Germans was common, as most of the Swiss immigrants spoke German. Within a generation or two the Swiss identity had assimilated, and only remnants of their distinctive culture remain outside of Green County.

Today, Green and Dane counties have 30% of all Wisconsin's population of Swiss ancestry. Most towns in Green County are at least 20% Swiss, and the city of Monroe and the villages of New Glarus and Monticello (all in Green County) are the largest Swiss clusters in this area. In the last two settlements, over 35% of the population is of Swiss ancestry.

The **Luxembourgers** began their migration to the United States around 1840 when their small homeland experienced a great increase in population. Not much farmland was available, and the practice of primogeniture induced many from large peasant families to seek inexpensive land elsewhere. A good-to-average farmland in Luxembourg sold for 500 to 2000 francs but could be purchased in Wisconsin for 15 to 20 francs. Luxembourgers attended church with others in their Wisconsin settlement area who shared their faith, mainly the Germans and the Belgians. A great proportion of Luxembourgers married other Roman Catholics, had large families, and many were strong supporters of parochial education. Wisconsin has been the most attractive place for immigrants from Luxembourg in the entire country. Although the population of Luxembourger ancestry is relatively small, over half of that population resides in Ozaukee, Milwaukee, and Sheboygan counties. Port Washington is the largest cluster of Luxembourger Americans, while almost 20% of the population in the village and town of Belgium is of Luxembourger ancestry.

Some Implications of Ethnic Diversity

There are geographic, demographic, social, political and economic implications of ethnic and racial diversity in our state. Some of them have been present here for decades; others are of more recent origin. Some have come and are gone; some will become more prominent in the foreseeable future as the size and proportion of some ethnic and racial groups in the total population continues to increase.

Geographic (ethnic neighborhoods/landscapes and toponyms)

As previous maps and this graph indicate, some ethnic groups are more territorially concentrated than others. High degree of territorial concentration can sometimes be associated with distinctive ethnic landscapes characterized by unique farming methods or crops, religious structures, architectural styles, or various cultural landmarks.

Toponym is defined as the name of a place or any name derived from a place name.⁸ Names of human settlements and physical features can sometimes provide valuable information about the history of a certain area. The abundance of American Indian and French toponyms in Wisconsin very well reflects the early history of our state. Many settlements established by European immigrants in the 19th century were named after their countries, regions or cities of origin.

Demographic (age/race structure)

Age structure of a population can reveal some interesting information about the demographic past and future of a studied area. Median age is a good indicator of demographic conditions of a society; the lower the median age, the higher the fertility and growth rates and proportion of children in the society. All major racial/minority groups in Wisconsin have median age below 30 years of age. Consequently, they have been growing at a much faster rate than the rest of the population, and their share of the total population will be increasing. In Milwaukee, over 80% of population under 15 years of age is non-white. The ethnic structure of Wisconsin's population will be quite different ten or twenty years from now.

Political (senate and assembly representatives)

Wisconsin has one minority representative in the U.S. House of Representatives. Gwen Moore represents the 4th Congressional District where 36% of population is African American. Two state senate districts have African American representatives (Nikiya Harris-6th; Lena Taylor-4th). Three African Americans and one Hispanic representative are members of the State Assembly.

Religious (places of worship)

Numerous places of worship found throughout Wisconsin also reflect great ethnic diversity of our state. A church used to be one of the first public structures built after establishing an ethnic settlement over hundred years ago. As a particular settlement increased in population, additional churches were constructed. Most of them are still in use and are part of our urban and rural cultural landscape. Some of them are also architectural masterpieces. It would be hard to imagine Milwaukee's Southside skyline without St. Josephat's Basilica or St. Stanislaus Church, both built by Polish immigrants.

Language (bilingual education and ethnic newspapers)

Many public and private schools throughout the state offer Spanish/English and Southeast Asian/English Bilingual Programs that are "designed to preserve and develop the first language while ensuring full proficiency in English."⁹ The Milwaukee Public Schools District also offers French, German, Spanish, and Italian Immersion Programs.

⁸ *World English Dictionary* at <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/toponym> (accessed August 5, 2013)

⁹ Bilingual Multicultural Education. Milwaukee Public Schools website http://www.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/portal/server.pt/comm/schools/315/bilingual_education/38622 (accessed August 5, 2013)

Several ethnic newspapers and magazines used to be published in Wisconsin. *Gwiazda Polarna* (North Star) used to be the largest Polish-language weekly newspaper in America, and it is still published in Stevens Point. The rapidly growing Hispanic population created a market for Spanish-language print media, and the *Spanish Journal* is the largest bilingual newspaper in Wisconsin. Some radio and TV stations broadcast Spanish and other language programs (e.g. Hmong).

Social (ethnic festivals)

Milwaukee has been known as the city of festivals for some time. A series of ethnic festivals takes place in the Maier Lakefront Festival Park each summer, including Polish Fest, Festa Italiana, German Fest, African World Festival, Irish Fest, Mexican Fiesta, and Indian Summer Festival. Bastille Days and Greek Fest are other ethnic festivals taking place in Milwaukee County. Wilhelm Tell Festival in New Glarus has been held since 1938. *Syttende Mai* in Stoughton is the largest Norwegian Folk Festival in the country. These are just samples of numerous ethnic festivals held across Wisconsin each year.

Economic (beer industry, restaurants)

Milwaukee used to be known as the beer capital of the world. Pabst, Miller, Blatz, and especially Schlitz made Milwaukee famous. These breweries were established in the 1800s by German immigrants. Despite the fact that only Miller is producing beer in the city today, Milwaukee is still synonymous with beer for many Americans.

Although one can find a Chinese, Mexican, Italian or Greek restaurant in almost every corner of Wisconsin, there are also very unique ethnic restaurants in our state. *Norske Nook* Restaurant and Bakery, a chain of restaurants in northwestern Wisconsin (Osseo, Rice Lake, Eau Claire, and Hayward), has served their customers since 1973. *Al Johnson's Swedish Restaurant* in Sister Bay (Door County) with goats grazing the sod roof has served Swedish and other Scandinavian dishes for over 50 years. *Polonez Restaurant* in St. Francis (Milwaukee County) has been serving authentic Polish dishes since 1983. *Koreana* (Korean Cuisine and Sushi Bar) in Appleton offers authentic Korean food and sushi. These restaurants are just a few examples of a rich variety of ethnic cuisine found in our state.

Conclusions

The map showing the dominant ancestry groups shows that the population of German ancestry is dominant in about 90% of the state territory. In sharp contrast to the broad German ethnic area are the relatively small islands where other ethnic or racial groups are dominant. Most noticeable are the Indian reservation land located in the northern half of the state. Also apparent are the patches of Norwegian settlement in western parts of Wisconsin. The Polish settlement areas in Portage, Marathon, and Trempealeau counties are also clearly delineated. The Finnish and Italian ethnic regions are clearly evident in far northern Wisconsin. The smaller communities of the Swiss in Green County, the Belgians in Kewaunee and Door counties, and the Dutch in Sheboygan County are also conspicuous.

The index of ethnic diversity, which shows that areas with a low index of diversity have an ethnically uniform population, reveals few areas where one group maintains an absolute residential dominance; the most prominent areas of ethnic uniformity are three Indian reservations, Menominee, Red Cliff and Bad River.

The contrasts between these two maps and those of the individual ethnic groups encourage speculation about the future importance of ethnicity in Wisconsin. The ancestors of those who formed the ethnic communities within Wisconsin's largest cities continue to move outward, into the suburb and beyond. These shifts in population over relatively short distances have affected nearly all urban ethnic neighborhoods, and today most retain just a modicum of their original cohesiveness. Given the high level of mobility common to most residents of this country today, changes in the spatial distribution of population in rural and urban areas, ethnic regions will most likely continue to occur in the foreseeable future. Time, continued intermarriage, and the arrival of immigrants from various parts of the world will also eventually alter the distribution we now observe.