

Ethnic Group Incomes and Change

This graph incorporates both 1990 and 2010 median household incomes and compares the groups in this regard. (Scroll down to see graph.) Because Whites are often considered the standard for judging the relative economic success of other groups, the median income of Whites for both years is shown at the intersection of the main (100 percent) vertical and horizontal axes. Lighter vertical lines show the percentage of White income that any group's income represents. For example, the graph makes clear that in 1990 Nigerians averaged less than about 75 percent of White income, but by 2010 Nigerians had exceeded Whites in income.

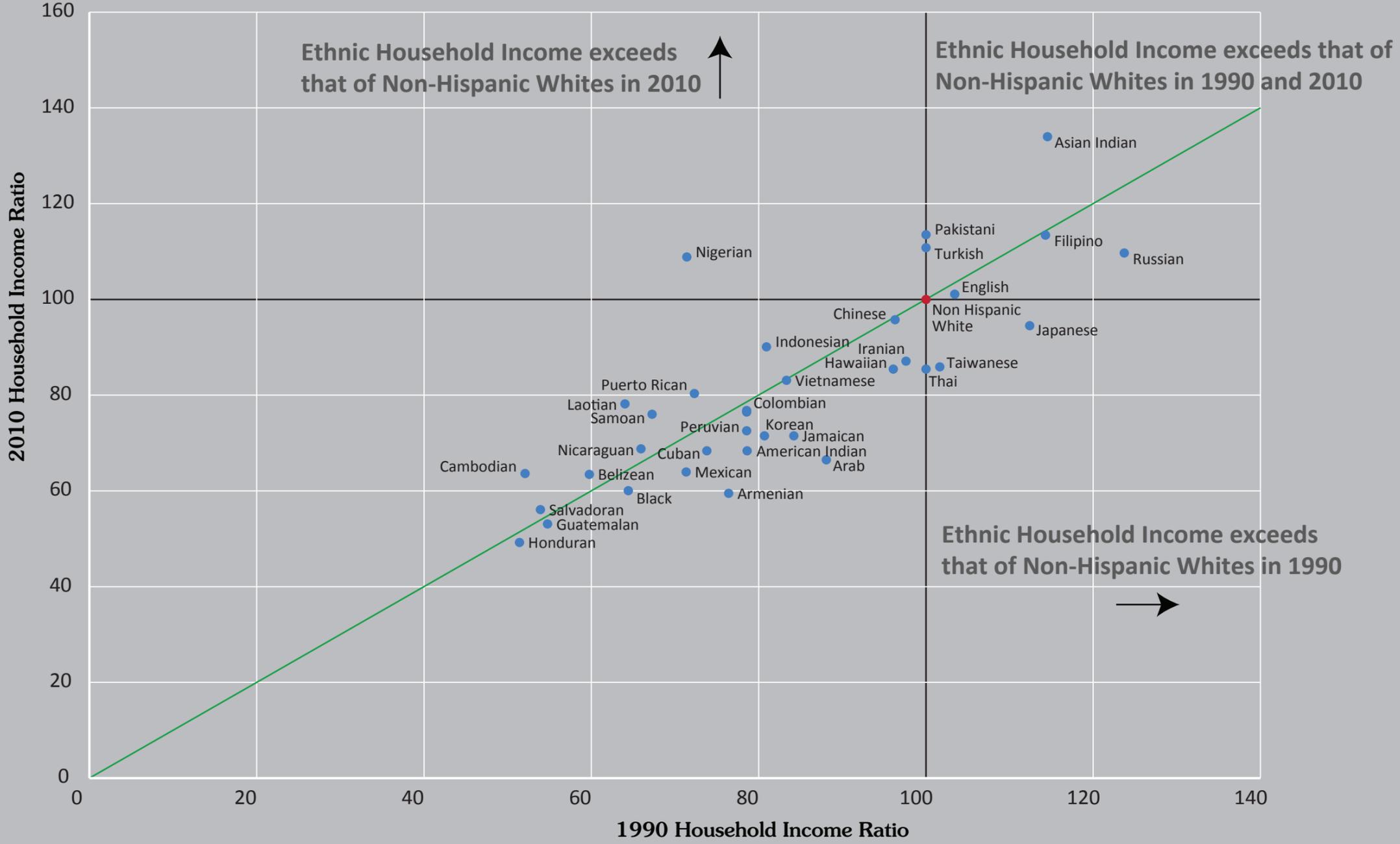
We believe that most viewers of this graph will check the position of the ethnic groups they are most familiar with. The graph may be provocative in presenting some findings that viewers didn't expect. Without additional research it is impossible to explain any group's relative position. Such explanations have been complex and have usually involved group differences in educational attainment, English-language skills, age of those employed, decade of average immigrant arrival, number of workers in a household, and job discrimination by employers.

Groups whose incomes averaged well above that of Whites in 2010 were Asian Indians, Pakistanis, Filipinos, and people whose reported ancestries were Turkish or Russian. In 1990 Japanese were also well above the White average, but by 2010 Japanese incomes had slipped, perhaps related to the difficulties in the Japanese economy. Three nationalities of Central American origin had the lowest incomes in both years: Hondurans, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans.

Groups with blue dots on or close to the diagonal line showed little or no change in average income relative to Whites. Such groups include Filipinos, Chinese, and Nicaraguans. Groups with a blue dot well above the diagonal improved their relative status in 2010, whereas those below the diagonal did better in 1990 than in 2010. The many groups in the lower left quadrant and well below the diagonal had lower incomes than Whites in 1990 with a decline in relative standing by 2010. This was the case with the large and important Mexican and Black populations although their declines in relative income were small. On the other hand, Puerto Ricans and Cambodians improved their average income relative to Whites in 2010 although their incomes were less than Whites in both years.

See graph below.

Ethnic Group Incomes and Change in 1990 and 2010



Household incomes are expressed as the ratio of ethnic income over Non-Hispanic White income.
 Ethnic identity is based on the response of the head of household in the Public-Use Microdata Sample files from the Census Bureau.
 Non-Hispanic White median household income in 1990 was \$42,000 and in 2010 was \$73,123.
 Note dots above green line indicate a higher income ratio for an ethnic group in 2010 than in 1990.