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**Review of *The Texas Challenge: Population Change and the  
Future of Texas* edited by Steve H. Murdock, Nazrul Hoque,  
Martha Michael, Steve White, and Beverly Pecotte**

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**The Texas Challenge: Population Change and the Future of Texas**, edited by Steve H. Murdock, Nazrul Hoque, Martha Michael, Steve White, and Beverly Pecotte. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997. xxvi+233 pp. Tables, figures, references, and index. \$19.95 paper. (ISBN 0-89096-724-5).

Steve H. Murdock, in collaboration with four secondary authors, has produced an intriguing but somewhat puzzling book on population change and the future of Texas. While population studies are certainly within the authors' domain of Rural Sociology, Texas is no longer a "rural" state based on population. Over eighty percent of the state's population now resides in urban areas, although Texas laws, traditions, and attitudes still honor and project a rural mystique. This might have been emphasized as part of the *Texas Challenge*.

Throughout the text the authors emphasize four major trends in Texas population: the changing rate of population growth and the relative role of migration and immigration in that growth, the aging of the population, the growth in the size of the minority population, and finally, the changing composition of households in Texas population.

The authors begin by focusing on the current and future state of Texas population. Texas has one of the fastest growing populations in the country and the size of that growth also ranks Texas among top growth states in the U.S. Murdock et al. project this growth into the future and discuss the continuing increase of minority populations and the aging of the population base. They move on to discuss present and future trends in Texas households, along with changing population and income trends, and suggest implications of these for business activity and fiscal resources.

This exhaustive study then explores the labor force and labor force training programs, followed by an investigation of the impact these projected population changes will have on the schools and colleges in Texas. The potential effects of population changes on human services then become the focus of discussion before the authors move on to present an assessment of the population changes on the youth and correction services and the Texas prison system. The final, summary chapter is an insightful wrap-up of the various points, factual data and conclusions reached in the preceding chapters.

Each chapter generally begins with an introductory overview of the topic, followed by a detailed discussion, strongly supported by factual data and projections. This data is most often presented in table or graph forms. The main text, however, is heavily weighted with numbers and percentages, and the text is frequently bogged down by the sheer amount of numerical analysis. Still, the authors have done a masterful job of crystallizing the conclusions and assessments reached in the discussion and showing their projected implications on the future of Texas population. A quick read of the summary sections included in each chapter and a thorough read of the final chapter would give the reader the essence of the book.

In their introduction, Murdock et al. deal with broad questions of population as well as the limitations of the work. The latter discussion includes only the examination of the implications of demographic change for the demand for goods and services, when (as the authors note) it is evident that many factors besides population will affect such demand. The authors also point out that the work is limited by the inherent uncertainties that exist in all forms of (population) projections. Yet nowhere do the authors deal with the location or distribution of Texas population, now or in the future. This is a very important topic and one that would certainly have an impact on the various kinds of programs the authors analyze.

The book's greatest limitation is that its authors appear quite unaware of the existing literature on Texas. I was particularly surprised to discover

that the authors made no reference to the large body of other important works on Texas population—my own included. A great deal of work has been published on the subject of minorities and rural/urban migration, yet none of these works are cited. While the authors of this book do not have to agree with the conclusions of other researchers' work on population, they certainly should have been aware of them.

In the end, while there is much factual information in the book, I found it a contribution unfulfilled. It is well-organized and the research reported is clearly and succinctly summarized and tied to future implications and prediction, yet it fails to acknowledge that Texas is no longer a rural state, a fact that careful reading of the literature on Texas population would surely demonstrate. **Robert K. Holz**, *Austin, Texas*.