

THE ETHNO-RACIAL GAP IN FAMILY-FRIENDLY 'FRINGE' BENEFITS

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BACKGROUND

- Labor markets in the US are undergoing dramatic changes, not the least of which is increasing racial and ethnic diversity. At the same time, economic restructuring and women's entry into the labor force have made the ability to balance work and family life all the more important to workers and their families.
- Current literature suggests that even after controlling for numerous worker, occupation and job-level characteristics, it is possible that black and Hispanic workers continue to lack access to certain fringe benefits, though there is little research examining whether such gaps exist or how they have changed in recent years.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

We seek to answer the following research questions regarding access to various forms of fringe benefits:

- Compared to non-Hispanic whites, do black and Hispanic workers have less access to employer-provided health insurance, paid holidays, paid vacation days, paid sick leave, paid time off to care for a child, the option to choose their start/end times, and the ability to change their schedule from full-to-part time (or vice versa), and how have these disparities changed over time?
- To what extent does citizenship, as well as differences in human-capital characteristics (that is, education, job skill, number of years at current employer, and number of years in the labor force), and other employment characteristics (including public-sector employment, firm size, union status, and part-time work) explain racial/ethnic gaps in access?
- Finally, does the racial/ethnic gap in access persist after we introduce other correlates of fringe-benefit access? These correlates include gender, family income, marital status, age, number of children and rural residence.

DATA & METHODS

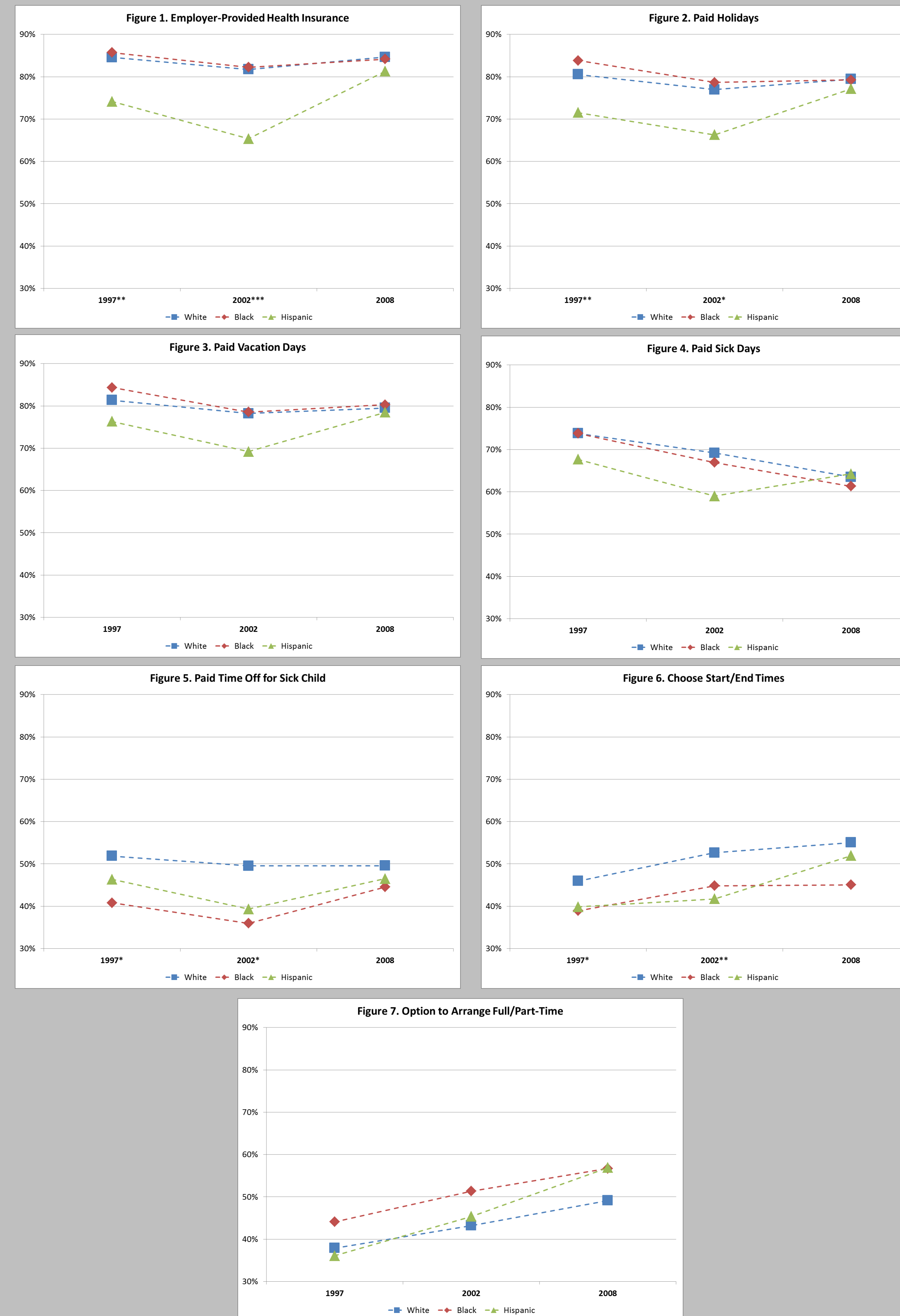
National Survey of the Changing Workforce

- We draw on data from three waves of the National Survey of the Changing Workforce (NSCW) from 1997, 2002 and 2008 collected by the Harris Poll at the Families & Work Institute.
- Researchers collected data on a nationally representative sample of US workers beginning in 1992 and then approximately every five years, surveying a random sample of approximately 3,000 respondents in each survey year.
- Not all variables related to fringe-benefits have been asked consecutively, and the survey did not include many fringe-benefit items until 1997. We therefore limit our focus to items asked in the three most recent waves of the survey: 1997, 2002, and 2008 (n=10,588).

Plan of Analysis

- To answer our first research question, we use descriptive statistics to analyze differences in access across racial/ethnic lines for each year the NSCW was conducted.
- We also estimate multivariate logistic regression models, treating access to each variable as a binary occurrence (where '0' is no Access and '1' means the respondent reported access).
- Our first set of models includes dummy variables for race/ethnicity (where non-Hispanic white is the reference group) and year (initial models not shown). After examining the effects of citizenship (Table 1), we then introduce measures for Human Capital (Table 2), followed by other correlates.
- All analyses are weighted based on age, race/ethnicity and sex.

DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS



Research Question #1

- Figures 1 through 7 illustrate the percent of workers in each sample year who report access to each fringe benefit.
- We found no racial/ethnic differences with respect to Paid Vacation Days (Figure 3) and Paid Sick Days (Figure 4) in any sample year.
- Black workers (compared to whites) reported less access to Paid Time Off to Care for a Child (Figure 5) in 1997 and 2002, and the Ability to Choose Start/End Times in all three survey years (Figure 6). In all three survey years, they reported less access to the Ability to Choose Start/End Times.
- Hispanic workers (compared to whites) reported less access to Employer-Provided Health Insurance (Figure 1) and Paid Holidays (Figure 2), and the Ability to Choose Start/End Times (Figure 6), though these gaps were only significant in 1997 and 2002. The white/Hispanic gap in Paid Time Off to Care for a Sick Child was significant only in 2002 (Figure 5).
- No racial/ethnic gaps are statistically significant in 2008.

FINDINGS FROM LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODELS

Table 1. Odds Ratios From Logistic Regression Models Predicting Access to Fringe Benefits (Race/Ethnicity, Citizenship & Year)

	Health Insurance	Paid Vacation Days	Paid Holidays	Paid Sick Days	Paid Sick Days (Child)	Choose Start/End Times	Arrange FT/PT Schedule
Race (White)							
Black	1.05	1.09	1.11	0.95	0.66 **	0.71 ***	1.35 ***
Hispanic	0.65 **	0.79	0.77 *	0.99	0.82	0.78 *	1.18
Citizenship							
Noncitizen	0.58 **	0.86	0.67 *	0.47 ***	0.85	0.97	1.02
Year (1997)							
2002	0.77 **	0.79 **	0.78 *	0.75 ***	0.87	1.28 ***	1.27 ***
2008	1.04	0.91	0.94	0.61 ***	0.95	1.45 ***	1.66 ***
CONSTANT	5.58 ***	4.40 ***	4.19 ***	2.93 ***	1.08	0.86 ***	0.60 ***
N	8122	7960	7949	7869	3349	9309	8937
Pseudo R-Square	0.012	0.003	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01

Research Question #2

- Some variation exists by race/ethnicity in initial models. Even after controlling for Citizenship (Table 1), gaps remain across a number of benefits. Controlling for citizenship attenuates (but does not entirely close) the Hispanic/white gaps in Health Insurance and access to Paid Holidays.
- Introducing numerous controls for Human Capital explains much of these racial/ethnic gaps in access (Table 2). We also find a Hispanic advantage in access to Paid Sick Days once Education is included.
- With respect to Health Insurance, the effect of our Hispanic variable is erased once we account for Education and Job Skill. Education also eliminates the white/Hispanic and white/black gap in access to Paid Holidays and the ability to Choose Start/End Times.
- These models highlight the importance of controlling for factors like Job Skill and Public-Sector employment, which are typically not considered in previous literature but attenuate much of the racial/ethnic gap.

Table 2. Odds Ratios from Logistic Regression Models Predicting Access to Fringe Benefits (Race/Ethnicity, Year, Citizenship & Human Capital)

	Health Insurance	Paid Vacation Days	Paid Holidays	Paid Sick Days	Paid Sick Days (Child)	Choose Start/End Times	Arrange FT/PT Schedule
Race (White)							
Black	1.08	1.25	1.26	1.17	0.76 *	0.88	1.42 ***
Hispanic	0.82	0.99	1.02	1.46 *	1.06	0.98	1.15
Citizenship							
Non-citizen	0.66 *	1.01	0.76	0.46 ***	1.03	0.95	0.99
Year (1997)							
2002	0.84	0.96	0.85	0.68 ***	0.73 **	1.20 **	1.17 *
2008	1.00	0.96	0.84	0.46 ***	0.74 **	1.28 ***	1.56 ***
Education (-HS)							
HS/GED	2.42 ***	3.14 ***	2.50 ***	1.76 ***	1.41	0.98	0.79
Trade/Tech/2-yr	2.50 ***	3.53 ***	2.79 ***	2.17 ***	1.60 *	1.44 *	0.79
BA Degree	3.45 ***	3.82 ***	3.09 ***	4.01 ***	2.65 ***	1.95 ***	0.69 *
>BA Degree	4.04 ***	2.38 ***	2.67 ***	4.66 ***	2.84 ***	2.16 ***	0.76
Tenure w/ Emp.							
Yrs. in Labor Force	1.06 ***	1.05 ***	1.04 ***	1.03 ***	1.03 ***	1.02 ***	1.00
1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.99	1.00	1.00	1.00
Job Skill (High-Skill)							
Low-Skill	0.61 ***	0.83	0.89	0.63 ***	0.63 **	0.59 ***	1.31 **
Middle-Skill	0.91	1.12	0.88	0.67 ***	0.73 **	0.78 ***	1.01
Public Sector							
1.32	0.72 **	1.16	2.98 ***	2.50 ***	0.56 ***	0.69 ***	
Firm Size							
1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	
Union							
4.47 ***	0.65 ***	0.87	0.97	0.78 *	0.35 ***	0.58 ***	
Part-Time							
0.14 ***	0.16 ***	0.18 ***	0.32 ***	0.59 ***	1.15	3.08 ***	
CONSTANT	2.63 ***	1.56 *	1.53 *	1.57 *	0.81	0.72	0.65 **
N	7633	7474	7463	7391	3144	7975	7664
Pseudo R-sq	0.21	0.16	0.13	0.12	0.07	0.06	0.06

Research Question #3

- In models not shown here, we also control for Gender, Family Income, Marital Status, Age, Number of Children, and Rural Status. Upon introducing these controls, our black dummy variable is no longer significant with respect to Paid Days to Care for a Child.
- Our full models account for all the racial/ethnic variation in five of these seven fringe benefits; the effects of our Hispanic variable (in access to Paid Sick Days) and our black variable (with respect to Arranging a Full/Part-time Schedule) remain significant and positive in these final models.
- We will expand this research to include a number of other fringe benefits and also consider interactions between race/ethnicity and factors like Job Skill and Citizenship.

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