

# **An Update of Regional Cultures, Persistence and Change:**

**A Case Study of the Mormon  
Culture Region**

# What's a Culture Region

- American society consist of geographic areas that are distinct from one another on the basis of distinct cultural traits. The South is perhaps the most acknowledged culture regions in the United States and much has been written about it. The extent of distinctiveness is the fundamental basis for identifying a culture region.

# Criteria for identifying CR

- Two main criteria have been specified for defining culture regions: (1) the ways in which cultural differences are manifested, and (2) the self-awareness of the regions' residents. Socioeconomic characteristics were noted as important manifestations of culture in Hertzner's 1939 article.

# Some Specific Criteria

- Voting patterns, opinions toward religious, moral and political issues, international relations, race, work women's roles, and alcohol use as evidence of differences between residents in certain geographic areas of the United States.

# Perpetuation of culture regions

- Values and identity of residents help sustain uniqueness.
- Natural resource and existing industrial infrastructures help sustain distinctness.
- Selective in-migration helps preserve cultural uniqueness

# Threats to uniqueness

- Some culture regions have been obliterated.
- French Culture Region of the Mississippi Valley, Dixie? Catskills
- Modernization forces such as increased communication, transportation, economic development, and urbanization threaten the uniqueness of culture regions.
- Browns' remark "The familiar Catskill culture is gone now"

# Utah's Reputation

- Mormon Settlement and continued influence
- This is the right place (Brigham Young)
- Geographers' and Sociologists' Characterizations (Menining; O'Dea)
- Bernstein's "Unusual Utah"

# Two supportable hypotheses

- 1. Bases on evidence of obliterating influences – Utah should be becoming more similar to the nation as a whole.
- 2. Based on evidence of persistence of culture regions, particularly where religion is a key influence, Utah should remain distinct.

# Analytical Design

- Similar to McKinney's and Borgue's comparisons of the South with the non-South.
- We analyze trends for 24 socioeconomic characteristics – classified into seven general dimensions: (1) population structure (2) economic (3) family (4) health (5) education (6) deviance and (7) lifestyle.

# Population Findings

- Percent LDS has remained relative stable for Utah and Nation.
- More rapid population growth for Utah than the nation is not new.
- Utah has urbanized more rapidly.
- Utah's percent white declined more rapidly in the 1990s.
- Utah's median age is lower throughout even while changing as US changes.

# Economic findings

- Difficult to judge Utah as distinct when examining economic characteristics.
- Per capita income widened until 1990s.
- Percent in AG similar 1950-2000.
- Convergence in percent in manufacturing
- Cross over in female labor force participation.

# Family Findings

- Differences in family size (TFR) widened and shrunk.
- Not much difference in divorce rates but Utah's is finally lower.
- Leveling and even a decline in divorce rates in the 1990s is interesting

# Health Findings

- Utah is a healthy state!
- Male and female life expectancy is higher for Utah.
- Infant mortality rates were higher for US but are now about equal.
- Utah has much lower death rates from heart disease and cancer – and the patterns of change are interesting.

# Education findings

Percent not graduating from high school was higher for the nation until 2000.

Percent graduating from college is higher at all point than for the nation as a whole.

Utah's per pupil expenditure has fell significantly behind the nation- widening much in the 1990s.

# Deviance findings

Utah did not experience the sharp increase in manslaughter as the nation did.

Auto theft diverged in the 1950 and converged in the 1990s.

# Lifestyle findings

- Cigarette consumption is lower in Utah than for the nation – patterns of change are similar!
- Utahns consumed fewer gallons of beer than the US residents – per capita.

# Conclusions

- Utah remained distinct from the nation as a whole over the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the midst of tremendous change.
- In 1950 Utah was distinct on 14 of the 24 indicators.
- Between 1990 and 2000 differences narrowed on eight of the characteristics and widened on two, (population growth and per pupil expenditures).

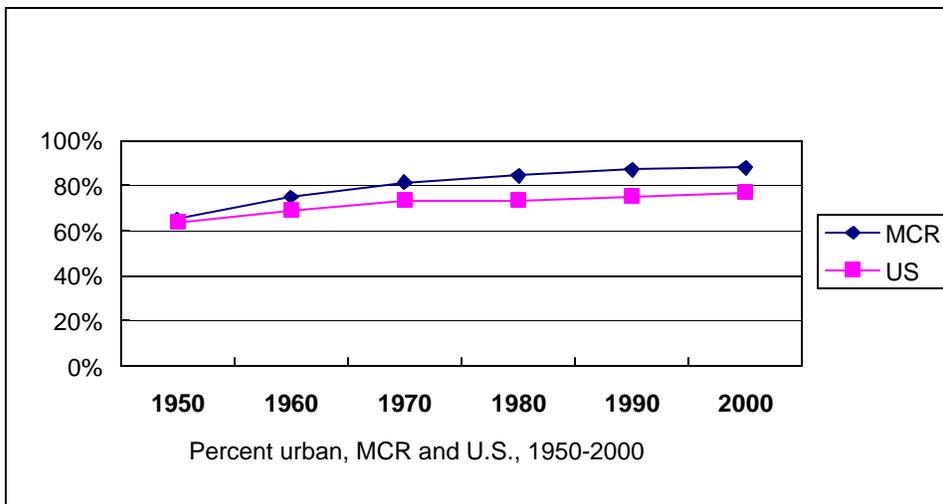
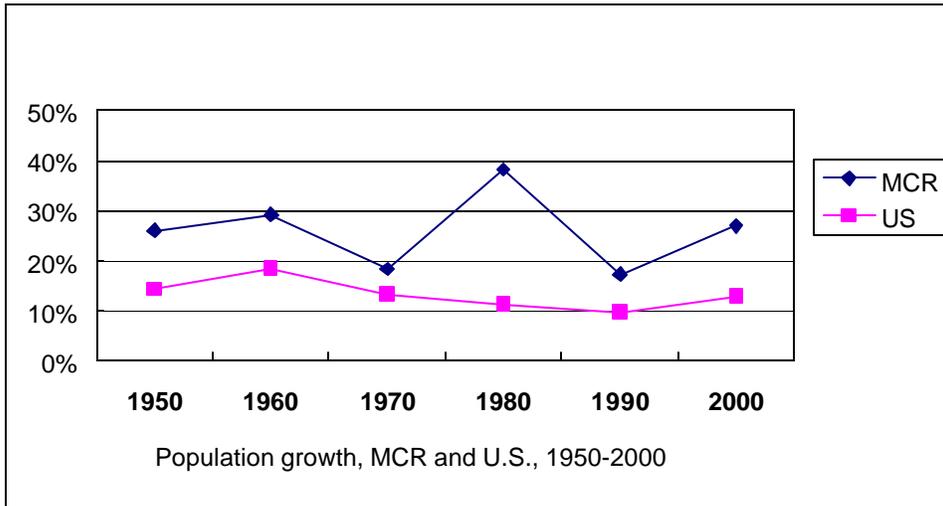
# Distinct 1950 vs 2000

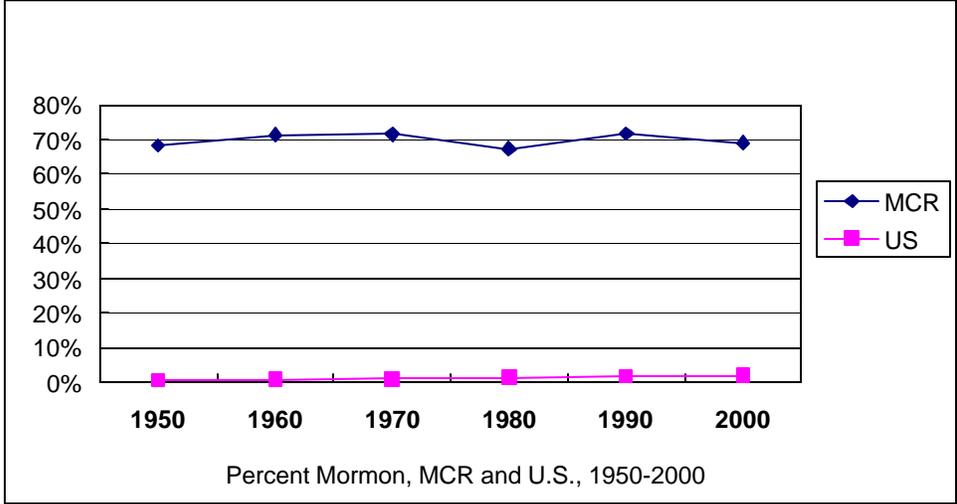
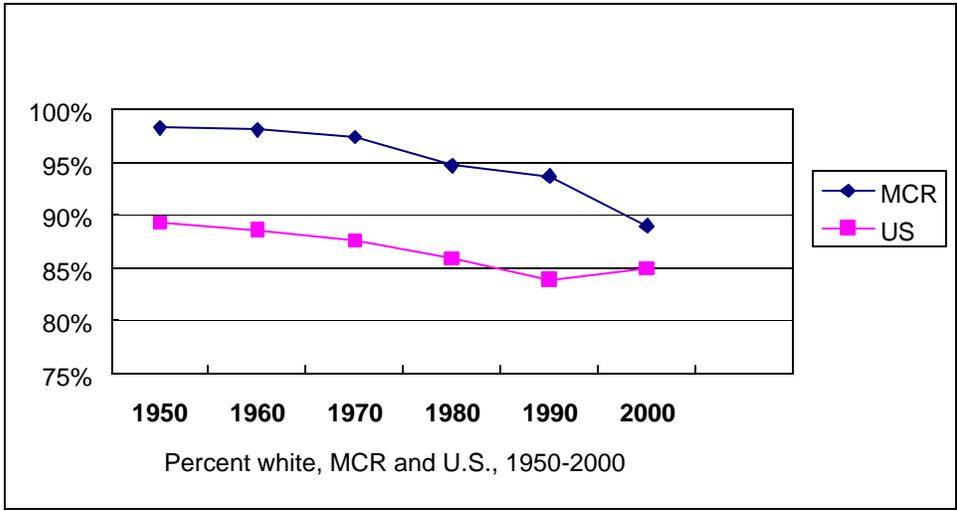
- 1950- (1) pop growth (2) % white (3) % LDS\* (4) % manufacturing (5) age\* (6) female workers (7) female life expt\*. (8) heart disease\* (9) cancer\* (10) beer\* (11) manslaughter\* (12) cigarettes\*
- Also distinct in 2000
- Additional Distinct in 2000 - % urban; income; family size; per pupil expenditure

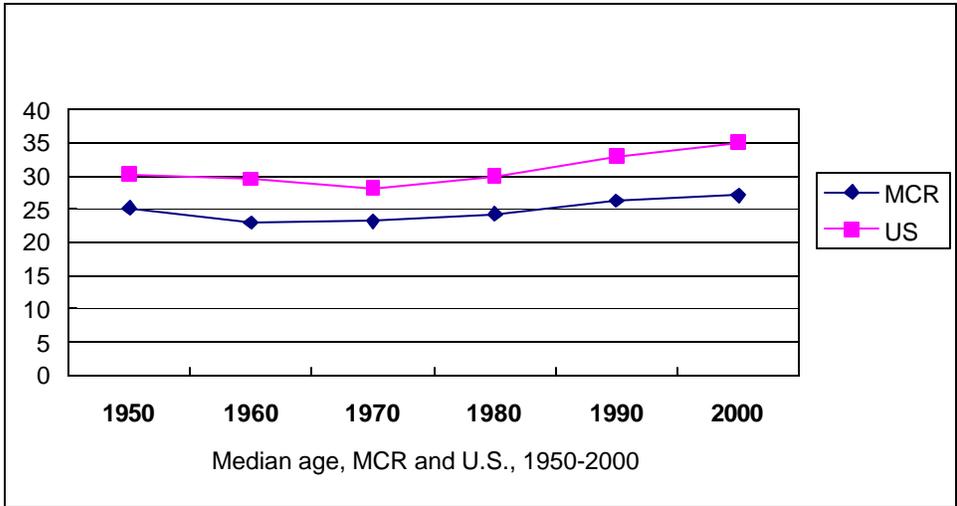
# Final conclusions

- Utah remains distinct but is similar to nation on many characteristics.
- These differences and similarities are important to the state
- Utah represents a unique part of the spatial mosaic of national diversity that give the nation its overall character.
- Will Utah Converge?

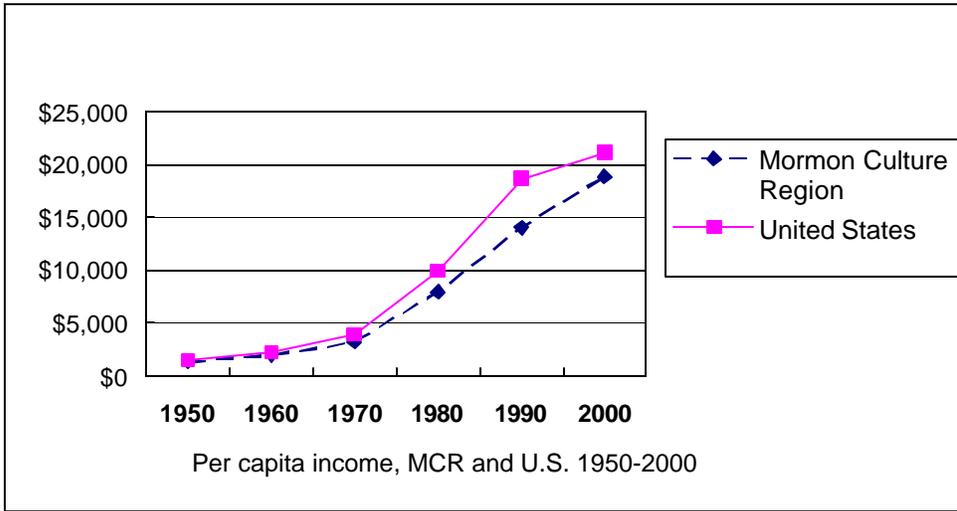
## Population

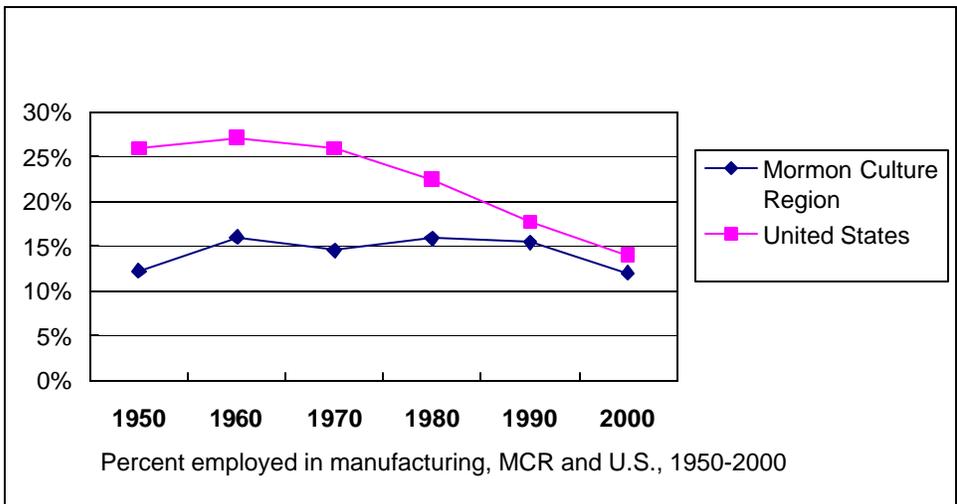
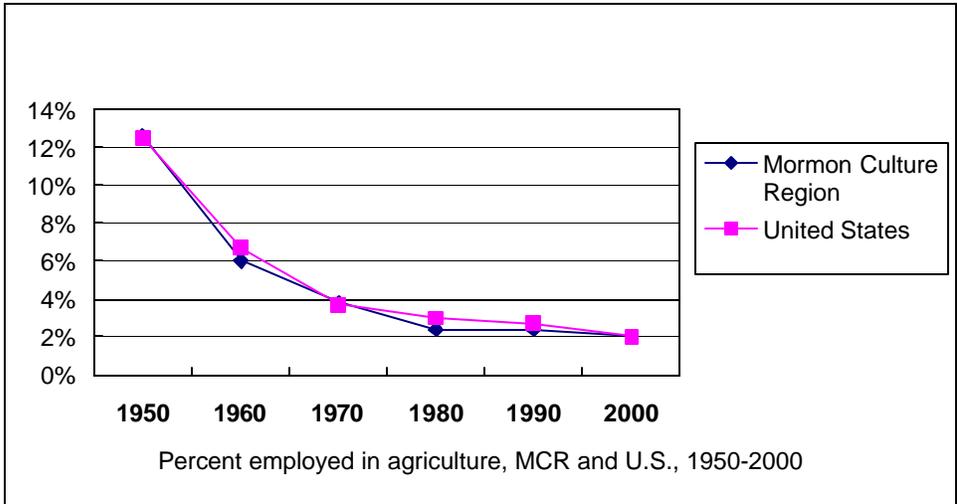


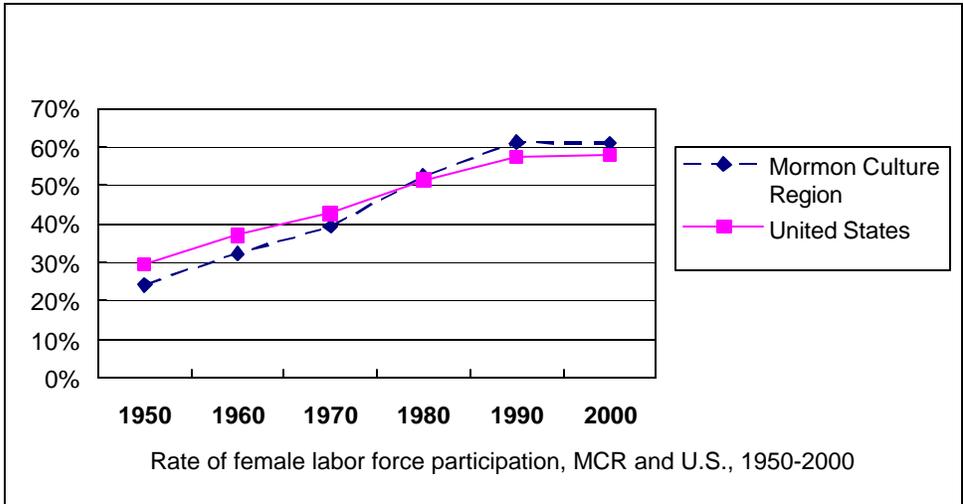




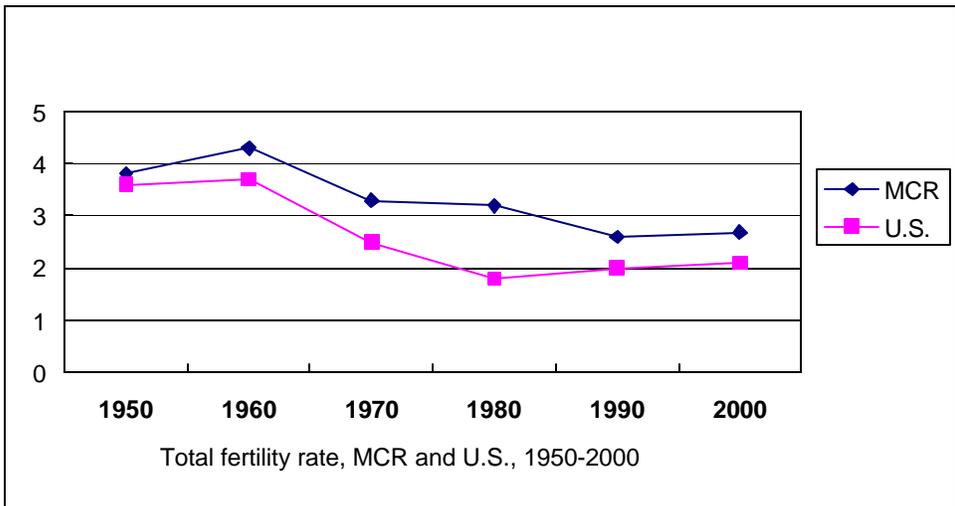
## Economic

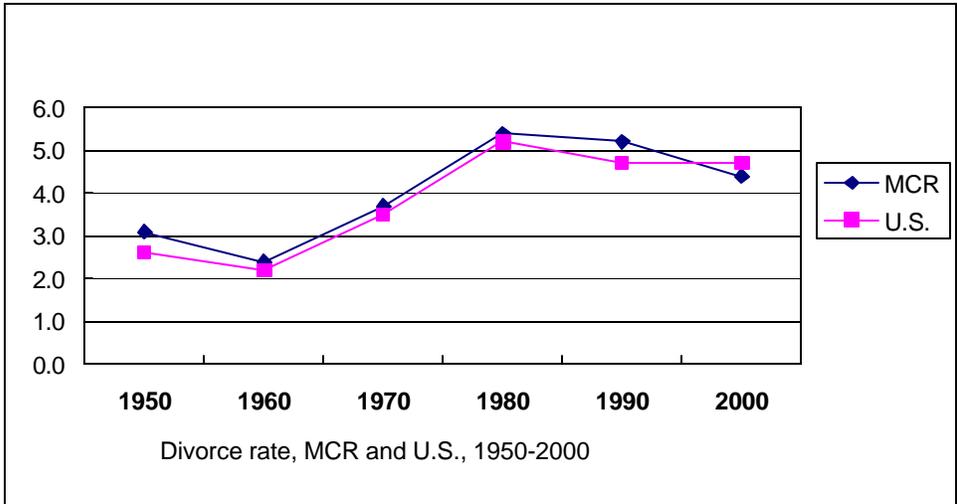




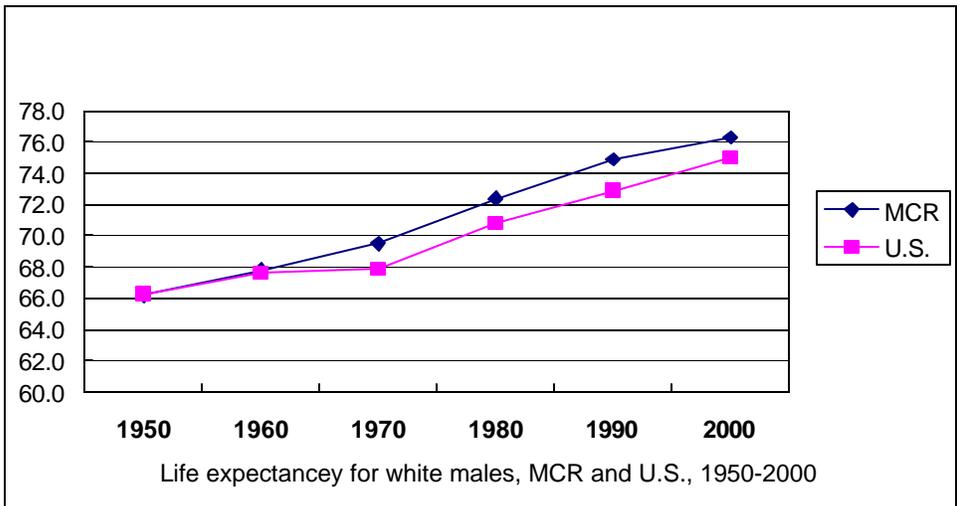


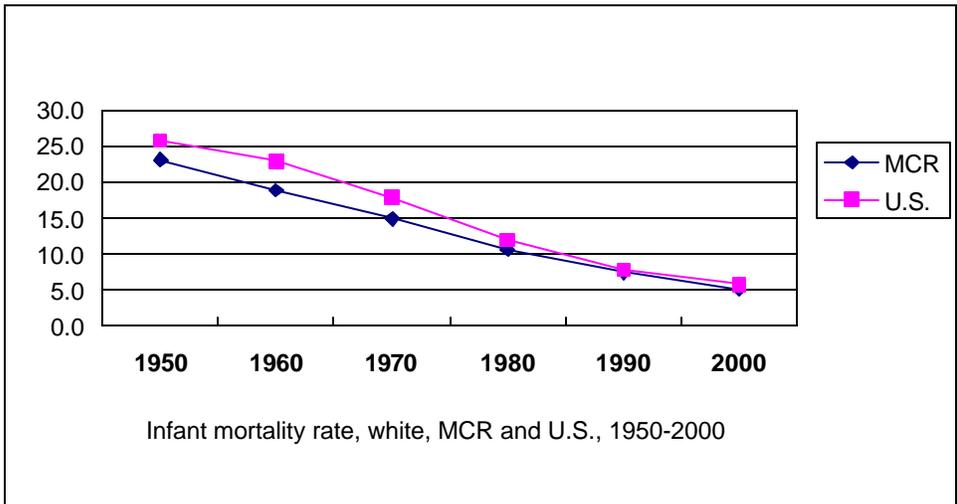
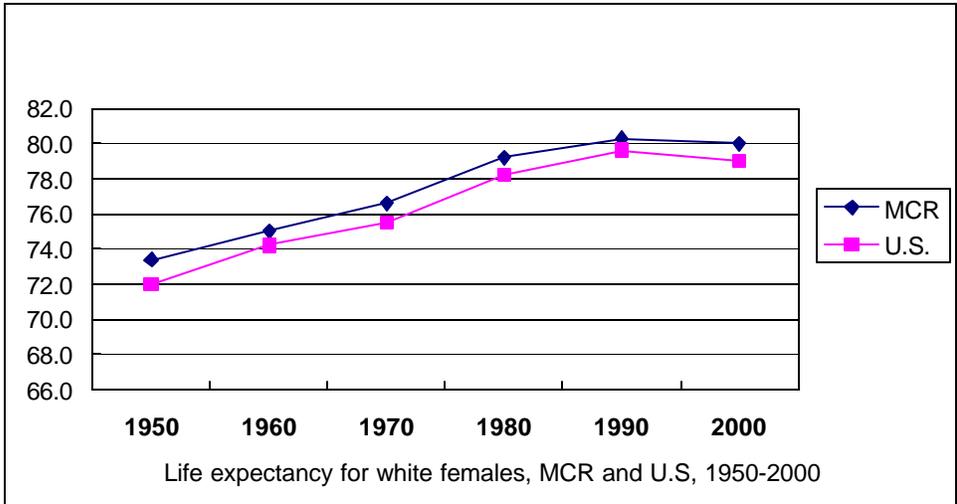
## Family

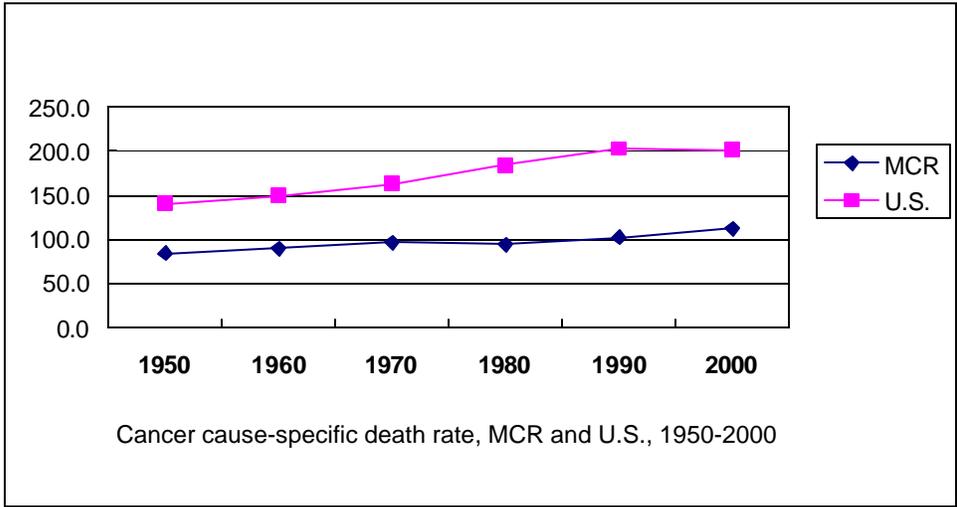
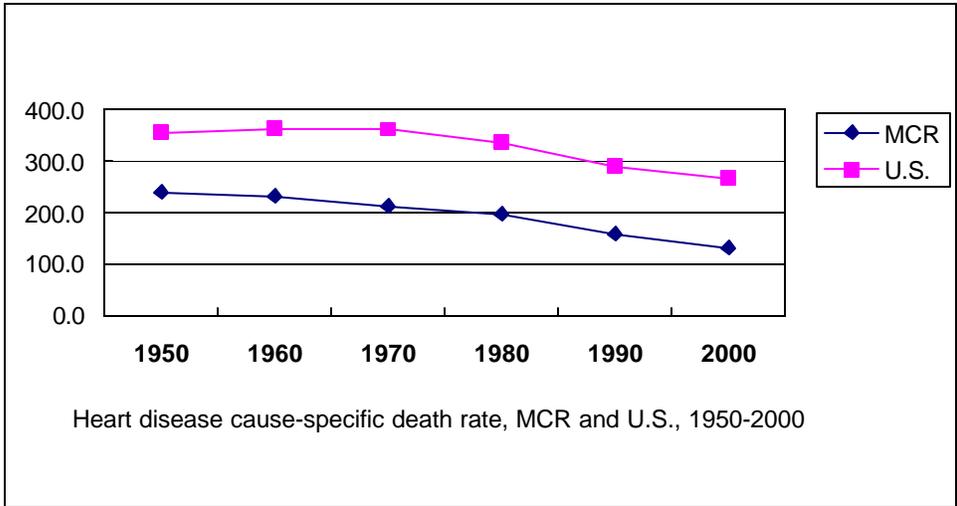




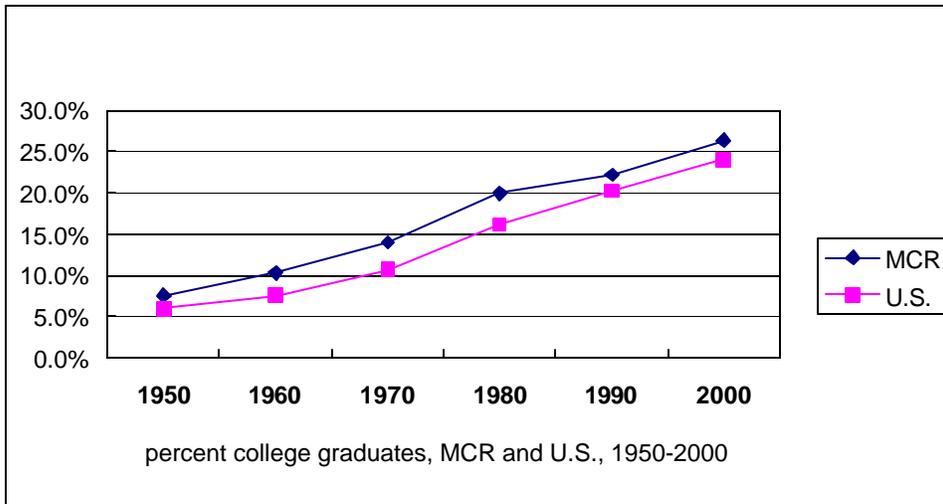
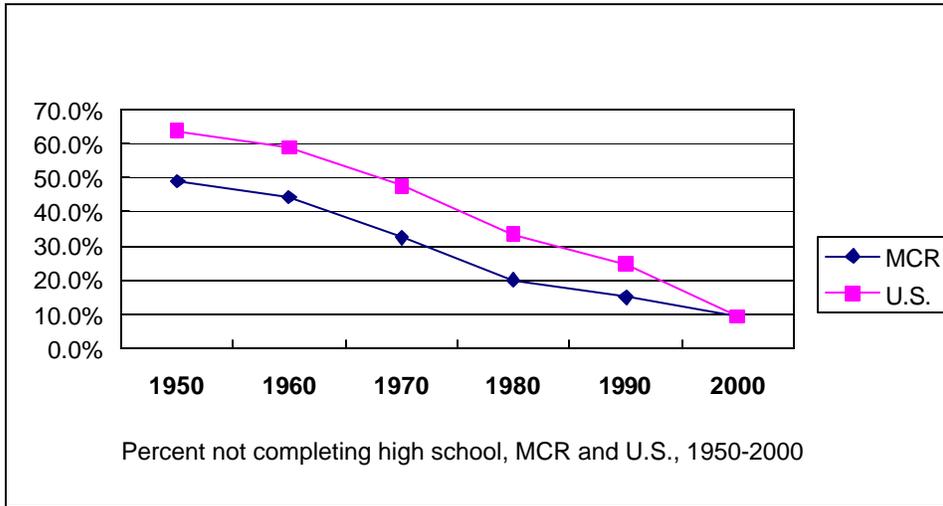
**Health**

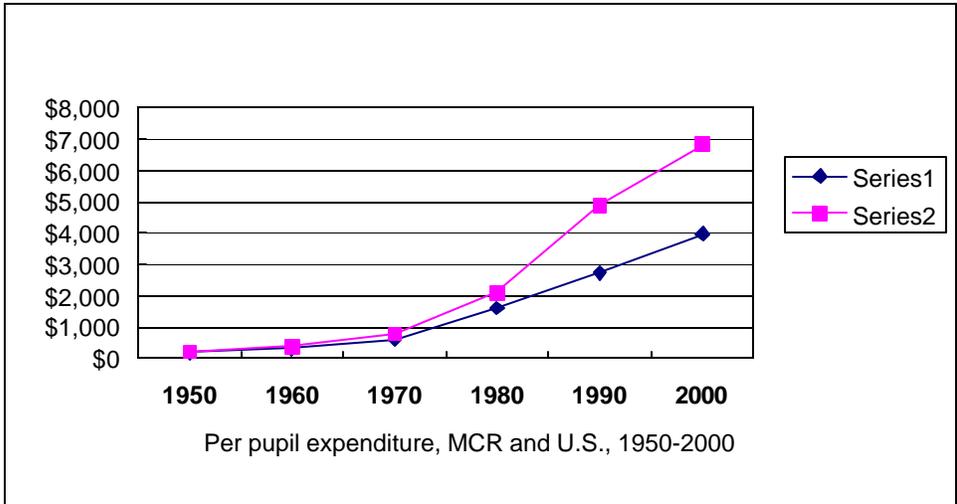




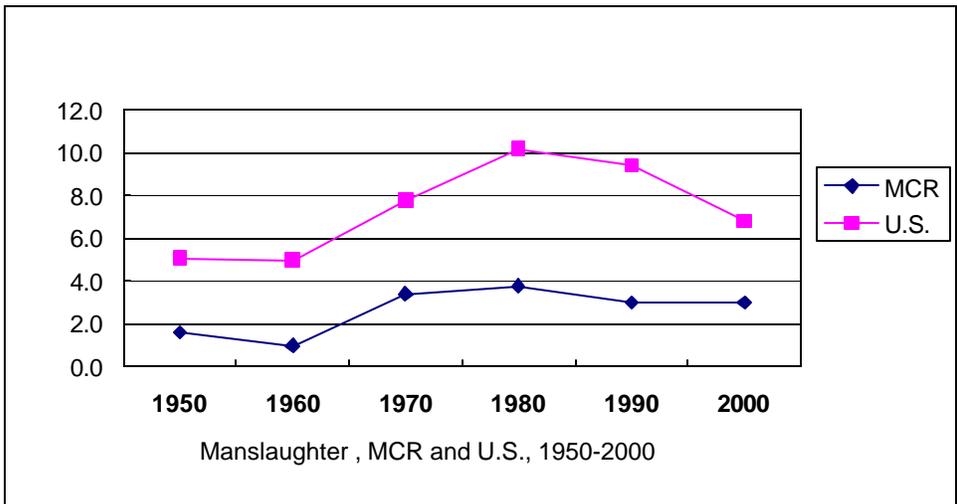


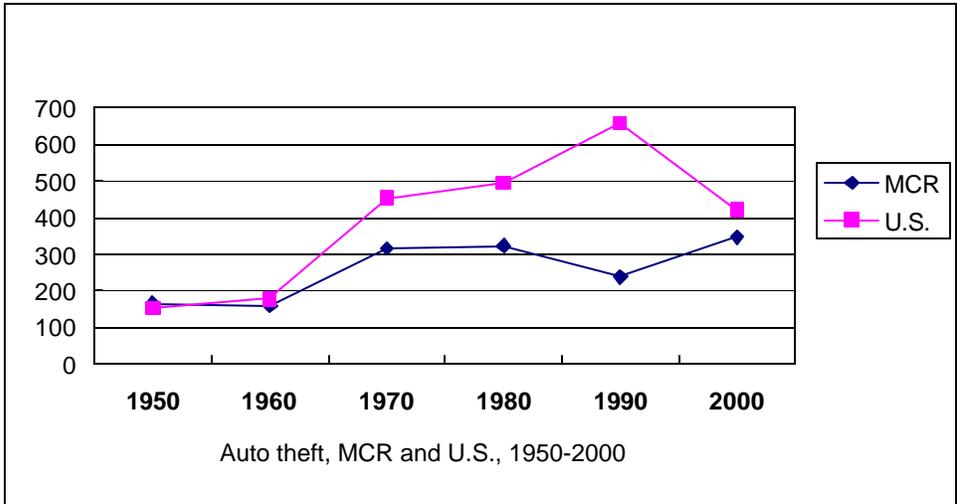
## Education





### Deviance





## Lifestyle

