

**ETHNICITY
AND
LANGUAGE**

Chapter 10. Ethnicity and Language

In Chapter 1 we traced the history of Chamorros and Carolinians in the Northern Mariana Islands from Spanish times, through the German and Japanese Administrations, and into the American Administration. In this chapter we will be looking at the current social and economic situation of the various ethnic groups in the Northern Mariana Islands, but will be spending most of the time looking more closely at the Chamorros and Carolinians.

The data on ethnicity for the 1980 Census of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands were derived from the answers to question 4. The 1980 census marked the first time that a general question on ethnicity was asked in a decennial census. The question was based on self-identification and was open-ended (respondents were required to provide the answer). Ethnicity refers to a person's island or atoll of birth or affiliation, nationality, or country in which the person or person's parents were born. Thus, persons reported their ethnic group regardless of the number of generations removed from their country of origin. Furthermore, responses to the ethnicity question reflected the ethnic group(s) with which persons identified and not necessarily the degree of attachment or association the persons had with the particular group(s).

Ethnicity is different from other population characteristics that are sometimes regarded as indicators of ethnicity, namely country of birth and language spoken at home.

A large number of persons reported their ethnicity by specifying a single ethnic group, but some reported two, three, or more ethnic groups. All responses were coded manually by a procedure that allowed for identification of all single ethnic groups reported. In addition, selected two- and three-part combinations of ethnicity were identified by unique codes (these categories were selected since they were reported frequently in Census Bureau surveys taken prior to the 1980 census). All other multiple responses were coded according to the first ethnic category reported.

In published tabulations, multiple groups were designated in general open-ended categories such as "Chamorro and other groups," rather than in specific multiple ethnic groups such as "Chamorro-Carolinian." A person who reported "Chamorro-Carolinian" ethnicity, for example, was included in the category "Chamorro and other groups" and in the category "Carolinian and other groups."

Chamorro was the largest ethnic group reported in the 1980 census (Table 10.1). Of the 16,780 persons in the CNMI in 1980, 9522 or 57 percent reported single Chamorro ethnicity, that is, Chamorro and no other ethnicity. Another 526 persons (3 percent) reported as Chamorro in combination with other ethnicity responses.

The second largest group was the Carolinians. In 1980, there were 2280 Carolinians identified by single ethnicity (14 percent of the total population), and 292 (2 percent) identified with some other group. Persons who identified as Chamorro-Carolinian or vice versa would have been reported

twice, in both groups. In fact, since 526 of the 553 multiple responses involved Chamorro ethnicity, it is likely that most of the multiple Carolinian responses were in combination with Chamorro responses.

In 1980, 1685 persons (10 percent) of all respondents were Filipino. Almost all of the Filipinos were migrants. Although 92 percent of persons reporting single Chamorro ethnicity and 97 percent of those reporting single Carolinian ethnicity were born in the CNMI, only 6 percent of the Filipinos were born in the CNMI. Also, while Filipinos constituted 10 percent of the total CNMI population, they were less than 1 percent of the CNMI-born population, compared to 33 percent (1 out of every 3) of the population born outside the CNMI. No other group is having such a profound demographic effect on the CNMI population.

Table 10.1. Ethnicity by Birthplace: 1980

Ethnicity	Numbers		Percent		CNMI of Total	
	Total	Born in CNMI	Not Born in CNMI	Born in CNMI		Not Born in CNMI
Total persons.....	16780	11993	4787	71.5	28.5	100.0
Single Ethnic group.....	15577	11411	4166	73.3	26.7	92.8
Carolinian.....	2280	2203	77	96.6	3.4	13.6
Chamorro.....	9522	8771	751	92.1	7.9	56.7
Marshallese.....	129	32	97	24.8	75.2	.8
Palauan.....	735	153	582	20.8	79.2	4.4
Ponapean.....	198	25	173	12.6	87.4	1.2
Trukese.....	248	59	189	23.8	76.2	1.5
Yapese.....	89	25	64	28.1	71.9	.5
Other Micronesian.....	72	4	68	5.6	94.4	.4
Other Pacific Islander...	34	11	23	32.4	67.6	.2
Asian.....	2068	121	1947	5.9	94.1	12.3
Filipino.....	1685	99	1586	5.9	94.1	10.0
Japanese.....	210	13	197	6.2	93.8	1.3
Korean.....	114	5	109	4.4	95.6	.7
European.....	60	1	59	1.7	98.3	.4
Other single ethnic group	153	4	149	2.6	97.4	.9
Multiple ethnic group.....	553	484	69	87.5	12.5	3.3
Carolinian and other.....	292	272	20	93.2	6.8	1.7
Chamorro and other.....	526	476	50	90.5	9.5	3.1
Other Pac. Is. & other...	118	86	32	72.9	27.1	.7
Asian and other.....	141	125	16	88.7	11.3	.8
Not specified/not reported.	650	98	552	15.1	84.9	3.9

Source: PC80-1-C/D57A, Table 26

As the TTPI headquarters administration was winding down, the proportion of the population from other areas in the old TTPI was probably also decreasing, at least temporarily (the affects of the Compacts are yet to be

felt in terms returning and new migration for the higher standard of living found in the CNMI). The largest TTPI group in 1980 was the Palauans, with the 735 persons making up 4 percent of the population total for the CNMI. Many Palauans were long term residents, with about 1 in 5 having been born in the CNMI. There were 129 Marshallese (1 percent of the total CNMI population), and 561 from the Federated States of Micronesia (3 percent of the total). There were 26 Kosraeans, 198 Pohnpeians, 248 Trukese, and 89 Yapese (although some of the Yapese from the Outer Islands may have been included in the Carolinian category, since Woleaian and Ulithian were coded there). Thus, the 1,425 persons from the old TTPI were 8 percent of the total population in 1980 and formed the fourth largest group.

Most of the other groups were very small. Only 60 persons were reported in the "European" categories, where Whites would be expected to be reported. It is very likely that many Whites did not report or reported an ambiguous entry and, therefore, were recorded in the "Not specified" and "Not reported" categories.

As was usually found in the States, persons reporting multiple ethnicity responses were more likely to have been born in the CNMI, than those who reported only a single entry. Of all persons who reported a single entry, 73 percent were born in the CNMI (compared to 72 percent of all persons), while 88 percent of those reporting a multiple ethnic response were born in the CNMI. Almost all persons in the largest groups, however, were born in the CNMI. While 97 percent of the single Carolinian ethnic responses were for persons born in the CNMI as were 93 percent of the persons reporting multiple ethnic responses, 92 percent of the single Chamorros and 90 percent of the multiples were born in the CNMI.

The median age for both Chamorros and Carolinians was younger than for the population as a whole in 1980. While the median age for the whole population was 19.6 years, it was 16.5 for both Chamorros and Carolinians (Table 10.2). As noted earlier, persons reporting single ethnicity responses tended to be younger than those reporting multiple ancestry responses. So, while the median age for Chamorros reporting a single ethnicity was 17.0, the median age for those reporting Chamorro and some other group was 9.4; the comparable median ages for Carolinians were 17.4 and 11.3, respectively. On the other hand, since most of the Filipinos were migrants, with few children, the median age was higher, at 34.0 years.

While about 15 percent of the population was less than 5 years old in 1980, about 17 percent of the Chamorros and 16 percent of the Carolinians were in this age group (and only 6 percent of the Filipinos). Almost 30 percent of the multiple Chamorro ethnicity persons were under 5 as well as 24 percent of the multiple Carolinian ethnicity persons. Altogether more than half of the persons claiming multiple Chamorro ethnicity were under 10, as were 44 percent of the Carolinians.

In general, the age structure for both Chamorros and Carolinians was regular, with proportions of the population decreasing with age. The structures for the multiples were somewhat more peaked than the singles. The Filipino age structure was very different, with small numbers of young and elderly, and most of the people bunched in the middle. More than 1 in every 4 Filipinos was between 35 and 44 in 1980, creating a large bulge in the age

structure for the total population of the CNMI as well (more than 1 in 10 for the whole population). Almost 3 out of every 4 Filipinos, in fact, were between 25 and 54 in 1980.

Table 10.2. Ethnicity by Age and Sex: 1980

Age Group	Chamorro		Carolinian		Total	Filipino		
	Total	Total	Single Respon	Multipl. Respon		Single Respon	Multipl. Respon	
Total.....	16780	10048	9522	526	2572	2280	292	1685
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 5 yrs.	14.7	16.9	16.2	29.5	16.3	15.3	24.0	5.9
5 to 9 yrs.....	12.8	14.5	14.0	23.4	15.2	14.5	20.5	4.2
10 to 14 yrs....	13.1	15.2	15.1	17.7	15.0	14.3	20.5	2.5
15 to 19 yrs....	10.1	11.4	11.6	8.2	11.5	11.9	7.9	1.8
20 to 24 yrs....	9.0	8.9	9.1	4.9	8.7	9.0	5.8	8.5
25 to 29 yrs....	8.7	7.7	7.8	4.9	7.7	7.8	6.5	14.7
30 to 34 yrs....	7.8	6.0	6.1	4.0	6.4	6.6	5.1	15.4
35 to 44 yrs....	10.1	6.6	6.8	3.0	7.3	7.7	4.1	26.2
45 to 54 yrs....	6.9	5.5	5.6	2.1	5.5	5.9	2.7	17.4
55 to 59 yrs....	2.3	2.1	2.2	.8	1.9	2.1	.3	2.4
60 to 64 yrs....	1.6	1.7	1.8	.4	1.5	1.6	.7	.5
65 yrs or more..	2.9	3.6	3.7	1.1	3.0	3.2	1.7	.5
Median.....	19.6	16.5	17.0	9.4	16.5	17.4	11.3	34.0

Source: PC80-1-C/D57A, Table 21

The data used to create Table 10.2 also show that the middle ages have a different distribution by ethnicity than the young and older ages. Almost 60 percent of the total CNMI population was Chamorro, 15 percent was Carolinian, and 10 percent was Filipino. For persons less than 20, more than 2/3s were Chamorro, and 1 in 6 were Carolinian (with less than 1 in 20 being Filipino). However, the proportions Carolinian and especially Chamorro decreased after that. For the 35 to 44 year age group only 2 in 5 were Chamorro, and only 1 in 10 were Carolinian, while more than 1 in 4 were Filipino. From there, the proportions of Chamorros and Carolinians increased, reaching 73 percent Chamorro and 16 percent Carolinian for the oldest group.

Of the 14,316 persons 5 years and over in 1980, 710 (5 percent) spoke only English at home (Table 10.3). Most of these people were not native to the CNMI. In fact, 94 Chamorros and only 6 Carolinians spoke English at home in 1980. On the other hand, more than 5 percent of the Filipinos were in this category; we cannot determine how much of this English speaking had to do with intermarriage causing English to become the language for communication.

Of the 95 percent of the population which did not speak English at home in 1980, only a small proportion spoke English. About 3 percent of the total population who spoke a language other than English at home, spoke English more

frequently than that other language, but this was true for only 2 percent of the Chamorros, and less than 1 percent of the Carolinians. About 5 percent of the Filipinos spoke English more frequently than the other language. Another 14 percent of the Filipinos spoke English and the other language equally often, compared to 9 percent for the total population (and 6 percent of the Chamorros and 4 percent of the Carolinians). Although 87 percent of the total population who did not speak English at home spoke the other language more frequently than English, 90 percent of the Chamorros and 93 percent of the Carolinians were in this category. About 2 percent of the total population, the Chamorros, and the Carolinians did not speak English at all.

Table 10.3. Ethnicity by Language and Ability to Speak English: 1980

Language and Ability	Chamorro				Carolinian			
	All per- sons	Total	Sin- Res-	Mult- Res-	Total	Sin- Res-	Mult- Res-	Filli- pino
			ple	ple		ple	ple	
Total 5 yrs and over..	14316	8353	7982	371	2153	1931	222	1585
Speaks only English.....	710	94	85	9	6	4	2	83
Percent.....	5.0	1.1	1.1	2.4	.3	.2	.9	5.2
Speaks other language.....	13606	8259	7897	362	2147	1927	220	1502
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
English more frequently..	2.7	1.7	1.6	3.3	.6	.6	.5	5.4
Both equally often.....	8.6	6.3	6.0	14.4	4.1	3.2	12.3	14.2
Other language more often	87.1	90.0	90.4	80.9	93.3	94.2	85.0	80.3
Doesn't speak English....	1.6	2.0	2.0	1.4	2.0	2.0	2.3	.1

Source: PC80-1-C/D57A, Table 31

Although 64 percent of the population 16 years and over was in the labor force in 1980, this was true for only 58 percent of the Chamorros and 50 percent of the Carolinians (Table 10.4). On the other hand, 90 percent of the Filipinos were in the labor force, probably because so many were immigrants, and they had to work in order to stay in the CNMI. Also, Filipinos are not part of either traditional Chamorro or the Carolinian culture, so they cannot rely on relatives to take care of them when they are not working.

Almost everyone in the CNMI who wanted a job could get one in 1980. The total unemployment rate was only 2.4 percent. The rate was only marginally higher for Chamorros at 3.0 percent, and for Carolinians was 3.4 percent (the rate for Filipinos was only .6 percent - only 8 Filipinos were reported as unemployed).

Chamorros were more likely than the total population or than Carolinians to take part-time rather than full-time employment. Although 6 percent of the total employed work force was working part-time, 7 percent of the Chamorros

only worked part-time, compared to 4 percent of the Carolinians and 2 percent of the Filipinos.

Table 10.4. Ethnicity by Labor Force Participation: 1980

Labor Force Participation	All persons	Chamorro		Carolinian		Filipino		
		Total	Single Res-ponse	Multiple Res-ponse	Total		Single Res-ponse	Multiple Res-ponse
Total 16 yrs and over.	9599	5111	4964	147	1308	1210	98	1467
In the labor force.....	6102	2972	2886	86	656	602	54	1322
Percent.....	63.6	58.1	58.1	58.5	50.2	49.8	55.1	90.1
Civilian Labor Force...	6089	2971	2885	86	656	602	54	1319
Employed.....	5941	2881	2797	84	634	580	54	1311
At work 35+ hrs.....	5448	2590	2517	73	575	523	52	1270
At work part-time....	335	195	187	8	27	26	1	33
Percent.....	5.8	7.0	6.9	9.9	4.5	4.7	1.9	2.5
Unemployed.....	148	90	88	2	22	22	0	8
Percent.....	2.4	3.0	3.1	2.3	3.4	3.7	0.0	.6
Not in Labor Force.....	3497	2139	2078	61	652	608	44	145

Source: PC80-1-C/D57A, Table 38

A discussion of Chamorro and Carolinian distribution in the various industries appears in Table 13.7 in the industry chapter. Table 10.5 shows the distribution for industries for single and multiple ethnicity for Chamorros and Carolinians, and for Filipinos.

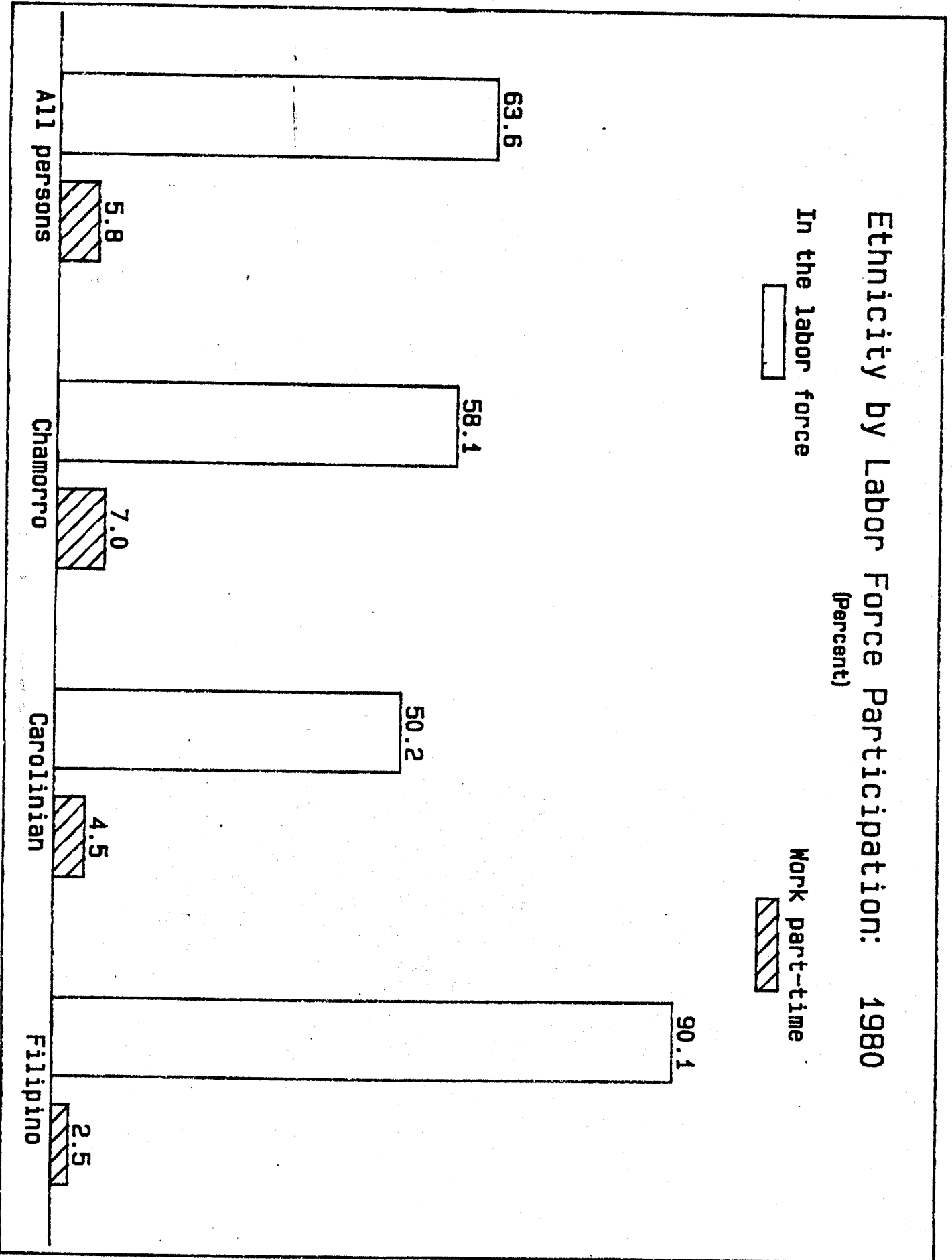
For Chamorros, about 1/4 of all persons were in public administration in 1980, and this percentage was about the same for both single and multiple ethnicity Chamorros. The next largest category for the single ethnicity Chamorros was professional and related industries at 18 percent, while only 10 percent of the multiples were in this industry. On the other hand, 21 percent of the multiples were in entertainment and related activities compared to 11 percent of the singles, which may have something to do with the age distribution.

For Carolinians there were also some discrepancies. Although 21 percent of the single ethnicity Carolinians were in professional and related industries, this was true for only 9 percent of the multiple ethnicity Carolinians.

FIGURE 10.1

Ethnicity by Labor Force Participation: 1980 (Percent)

In the labor force  Work part-time 



Exactly half of the Filipinos were working in construction in 1980, compared to 17 percent of the total population (and 7 percent of the Chamorros and 5 percent of the Carolinians). Another 15 percent were in entertainment and personal services, and 14 percent were in retail trade. Therefore, almost 80 percent of the Filipinos were in these three industry categories.

Table 10.5. Ethnicity by Industry: 1980

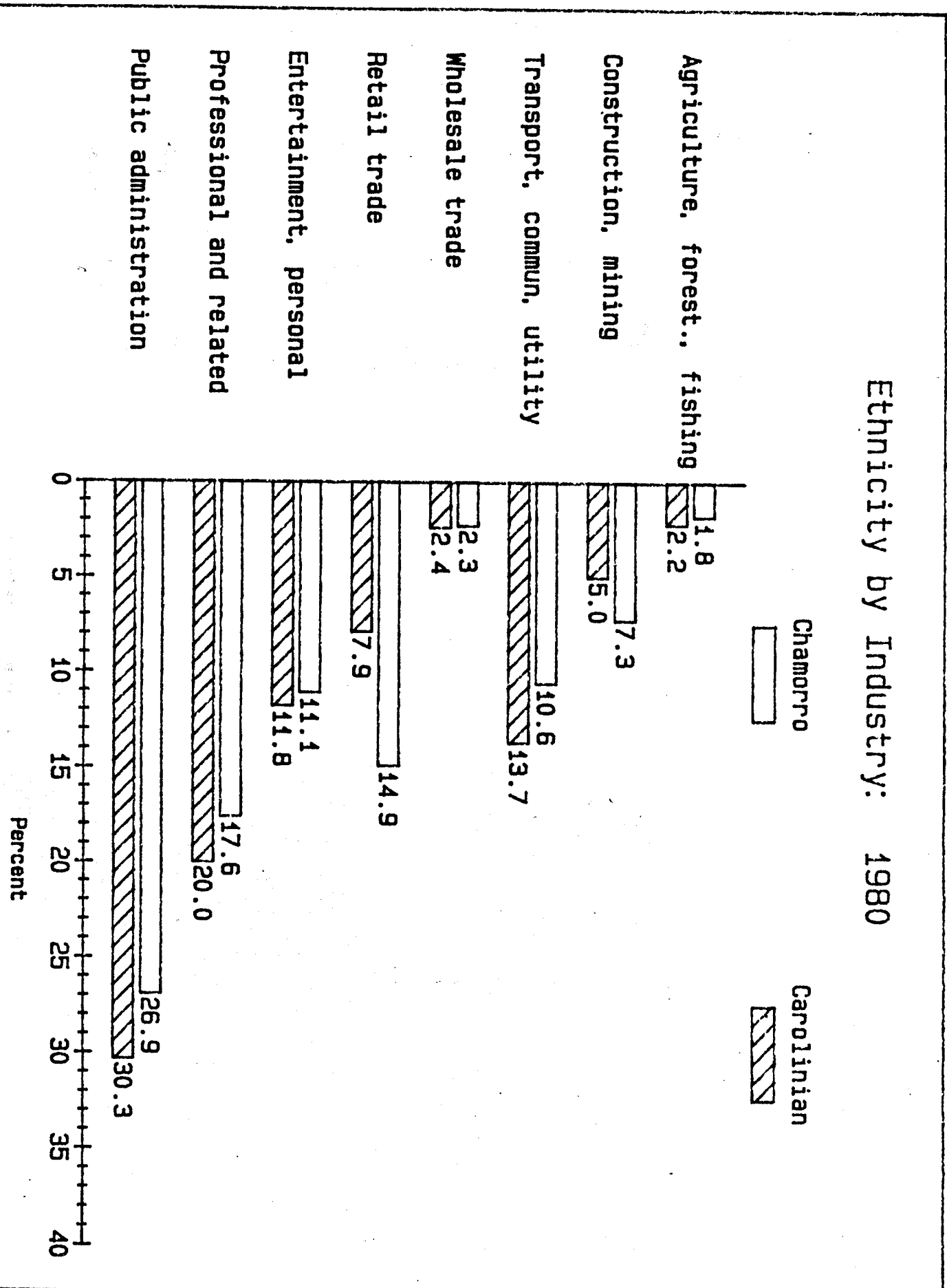
Industry	All persons	Chamorro		Carolinian		Filipino		
		Total	Single Res-ponse	Multiple Res-ponse	Total		Single Res-ponse	Multiple Res-ponse
Employed persons.....	5941	2881	2797	84	634	580	54	1311
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agricult., forest., fishing.	2.1	1.8	1.9	1.2	2.2	2.2	1.9	3.3
Construction, mining.....	16.9	7.3	7.4	3.6	5.0	5.3	1.9	50.0
Manufacturing.....	1.9	.8	.8	0.0	1.9	2.1	0.0	4.0
Transport, commun, utility.	8.7	10.6	10.4	15.5	13.7	13.3	18.5	2.8
Wholesale trade.....	1.7	2.3	2.1	6.0	2.4	2.2	3.7	.2
Retail trade.....	13.8	14.9	15.0	11.9	7.9	7.6	11.1	14.3
Finance, insurance.....	2.7	4.0	4.0	4.8	2.8	2.6	5.6	.7
Business and repair serv...	3.0	2.7	2.7	1.2	1.7	1.9	0.0	3.4
Entertainment, personal....	12.8	11.1	10.8	21.4	11.8	11.4	16.7	14.7
Professional and related...	15.1	17.6	17.9	9.5	20.0	21.0	9.3	3.7
Public administration.....	21.3	26.9	26.9	25.0	30.3	30.2	31.5	2.8
Primarily subsistence.....	.1	.1	.1	0.0	.2	.2	0.0	0.0

Source: PC80-1-C/D57A, Table 43

We have briefly described a few of the characteristics for the three major ethnic groups in the Commonwealth as of 1980. Since 1980 was the first time that a decennial census collected ethnicity data for the CNMI, these data are only a first step in analyzing the characteristics of the various ethnic groups.

FIGURE 10.2

Ethnicity by Industry: 1980



Finally, we want to touch briefly on language use in the CNMI again (see Table 10.3). Table 10.6 shows the distribution of languages spoken by age. People between 25 and 44 years were the most likely to speak English at home (as well as persons 5 to 14, presumably the children of the former group). The age structure for Chamorro and Carolinian speakers was about the same as for the total population, while Philippines language speakers were even more bunched up in the middle ages - 28 percent were between 35 and 44, another 19 percent were 45 to 54, and 18 percent were between 25 and 34.

Table 10.6. Language Spoken at Home by Age: 1980

Age Group	All English Persons	Only Chamorro	Caro- linian	Phil- ippines langs	All Others	
Total.....	14316	710	8516	1719	1405	1966
Percent....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
5 to 9 yrs.....	15.0	14.8	17.3	16.2	3.8	11.9
10 to 14 yrs....	15.3	11.0	18.0	16.9	2.8	12.8
15 to 19 yrs....	11.9	5.1	13.6	14.7	1.8	11.8
20 to 24 yrs....	10.6	7.3	10.7	10.5	9.1	12.0
25 to 29 yrs....	10.2	11.4	9.3	9.7	14.9	11.1
30 to 34 yrs....	9.1	13.0	7.3	7.3	17.7	11.1
35 to 44 yrs....	11.8	19.0	8.1	9.2	28.3	15.7
45 to 54 yrs....	8.1	8.2	6.6	7.6	18.6	7.2
55 to 59 yrs....	2.7	5.9	2.7	2.4	2.1	2.4
60 to 64 yrs....	1.9	2.7	2.2	1.7	.5	1.4
65 yrs or more..	3.5	1.7	4.3	3.6	.4	2.5

Source: PC80-1-C/D57A, Table 21

In this chapter we have briefly described the ethnic and language distribution of the CNMI population. The 1990 data will allow us to analyze the changes in the groups.

FIGURE 10.3

Speak Only Chamorro at Home by Age: 1980
(Percent)

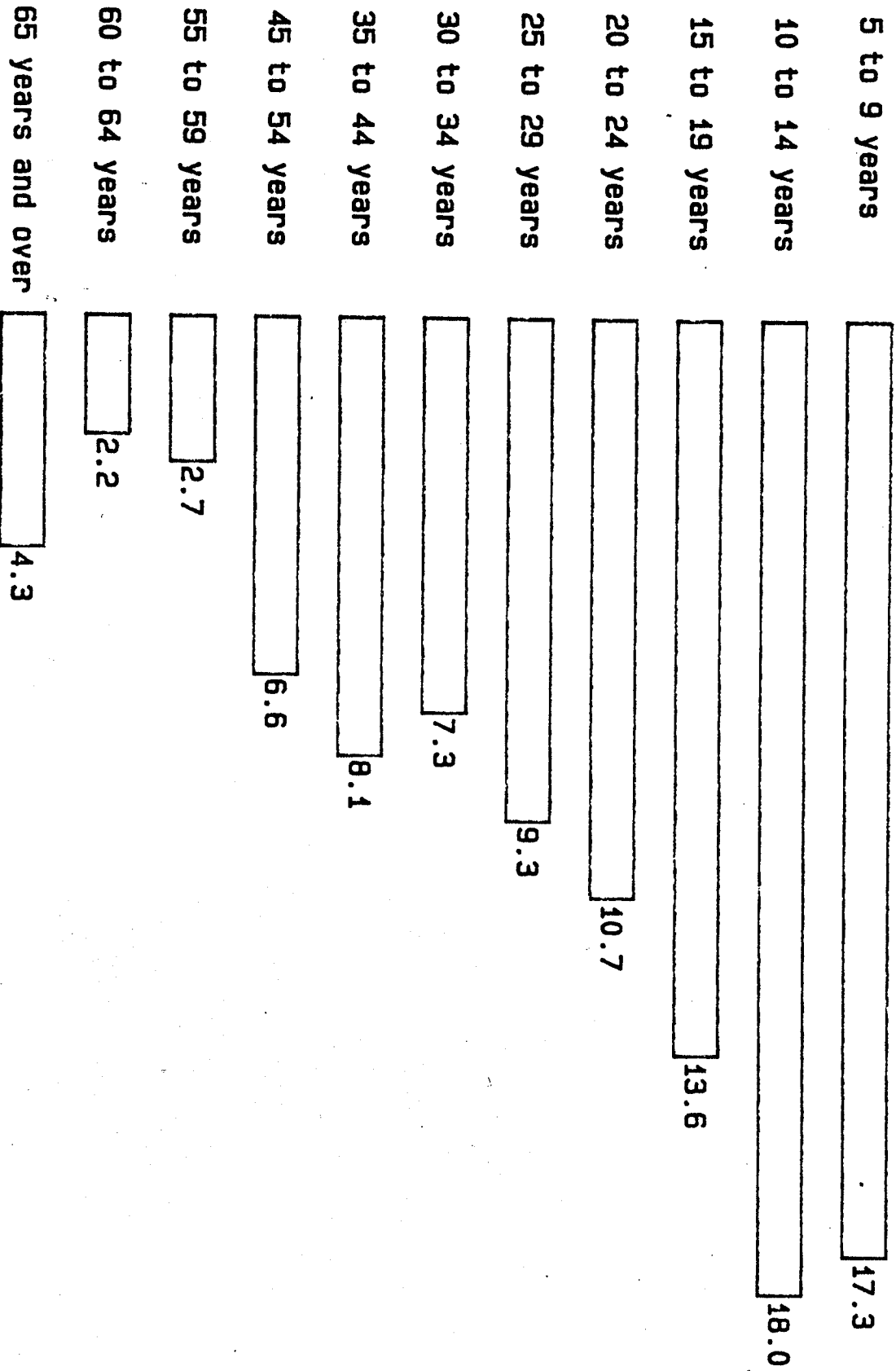


FIGURE 10.4

Speak Only English at Home by Age: 1980 (Percent)

