

## **THE U.S. CENSUS AT THE BEGINNING OF A NEW MILLENNIUM**

Presented at the 20th Annual Meeting of the Population Census Conference

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**Abstract:** This paper will discuss findings on population growth, aging, racial and ethnic diversity, and household composition from the United States' most recent decennial census, Census 2000.

### **Introduction**

The U. S. Census Bureau celebrates its 100th anniversary as a government agency this year. During this time, the tools used to compile the census have changed “From Inkwell to Internet,”<sup>1</sup> but the commitment to accuracy and completeness has remained steadfast.

Article I, Section 2, of the United States Constitution mandates a population census every ten years. The first U.S. census was conducted in 1790, 110 years before the agency was established. The most recent decennial census, Census 2000, provides the important demographic and socio-economic information that this country's leaders need to make informed decisions.

In 2000, everyone in the United States was asked the same questions about relationship to householder, race, Hispanic origin, sex, age, and housing tenure. These data are sometimes called the “short-form” or the 100-percent data were released between March 2001 and June 2002. In addition, about one in six housing units received a longer questionnaire that asked for information on 27 additional subjects. Data from this instrument are sometimes called the “long-form” or sample data. Data release from the long-form questionnaire has begun and will be completed in 2003.

This paper will cover some of the findings from Census 2000 on the demographic characteristics of the United States reported on the short form at the beginning of the new millennium. (See Figure 1.) It will include historical statistics to provide perspective on the changes that have taken place. It will also provide global comparisons from the Census Bureau's International Programs Center, where possible.

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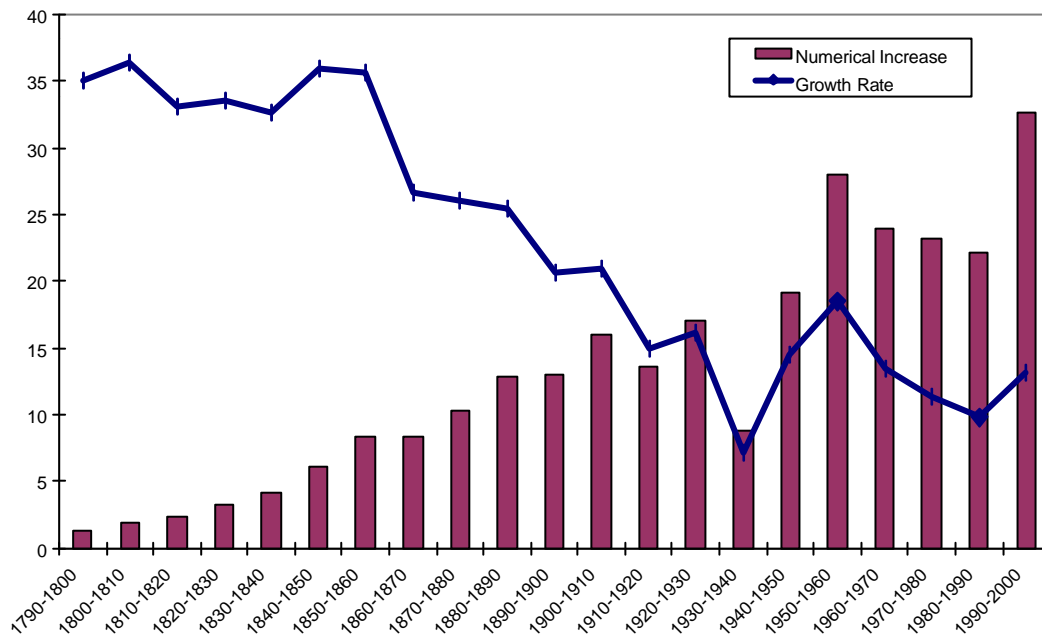
<sup>1</sup> The title of a video that celebrates the Census Bureau's first 100 years.

### Historical Population Growth (1790 to 2000)

Although only 3.9 million people were counted by the first U.S. census in 1790, the population tripled by 1830. Growth rates remained above 30 percent every decade until 1860, but continued above 20 percent for the remainder of the 19th Century. (See Figure 1.)

**Figure 1.**  
**Census-to-Census Growth in the United States: 1790 - 2000**

(Growth rate in percent and numerical increase in millions)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

As the 20th Century approached, the population spread into the new frontier states. By 1900, the U.S. land area stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific and included 76.0 million people. The 1920 census counted nearly 105.7 million people, but the 10-year growth rate dropped below 20 percent for the first time in U.S. history.

Population growth between 1930 and 1940 was the slowest in census history, just 7 percent, but as World War II ended, a post-war baby boom added millions of people to the population. The 1960 census included all of the current 50 states and counted 179.3 million people. The 18-percent increase between 1950 and 1960 has proven to be the highest growth rate of any ten-year period during the 20th Century.

Census 2000 counted 281.4 million people in the United States. The growth rate of 13.2 percent was the highest since the 1960s (13.4 percent). The 33 million people added to the United States' population between 1990 and 2000 was the largest census-to-census increase ever. The last decade of the 20th Century was the only one in which every state gained population.<sup>2</sup>

U.S. growth during the 1990s is even more remarkable when it is compared with estimates of growth rates in other large, more-developed nations.<sup>3</sup> Estimates indicate that the U.S. growth rate was higher than that of Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, and many other developed countries. (See Table 1.) While the United States grew 13 percent over the decade, one-quarter of all other more developed countries, including Russia, lost population.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Marc J. Perry and Paul J. Mackun, *Population Change and Distribution: 1990 to 2000* (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2001), pp. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> More developed countries include all of North America and Europe, as well as Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. The remaining countries are considered less developed countries.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, International Database.

Table 1.

Total Midyear Populations and Rates of Change for Large More Developed Countries and Census-to-Census Growth Rates for the United States: 1990 and 2000\*

Country	Population in millions		Percent Change
	1990	2000	1990 to 2000
United States	248.7	281.4	13.2
Australia	17.0	19.2	12.6
Canada	27.8	31.3	12.5
Serbia	9.2	10.0	8.5
Netherlands	15.0	15.9	6.3
Switzerland	6.8	7.3	6.2
Austria	7.7	8.1	5.4
France	56.7	59.3	4.6
Greece	10.2	10.6	4.4
Germany	79.4	82.8	4.3
Denmark	5.1	5.3	3.8
Sweden	8.6	8.9	3.7
Finland	5.0	5.2	3.6
United Kingdom	57.6	59.5	3.3
Slovakia	5.3	5.4	2.8
Belgium	10.0	10.2	2.7
Japan	123.5	126.5	2.4
Spain	39.4	40.0	1.6
Italy	56.8	57.6	1.5
Belarus	10.2	10.4	1.5
Poland	38.1	38.6	1.4
Portugal	9.9	10.0	1.3
Czech Republic	10.3	10.3	-0.4
Russia	148.1	146.0	-1.4
Romania	22.9	22.4	-2.0
Hungary	10.4	10.1	-2.2
Ukraine	51.7	49.2	-4.8
Bulgaria	8.9	7.8	-12.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Database

\*Large countries are those with populations of 5 million or more. International estimates are from June to June, while the U.S. numbers are from April to April.

### U.S. Age Distribution in 2000

Between 1990 and 2000, the median age for the United States as a whole rose from 32.9 to 35.3 years – the highest recorded by any census. The rise was associated with

the aging of the baby boom cohort. As the oldest members of this cohort turned 45 to 54 years old, that age group increased 49 percent – more than the growth in any other age group<sup>5</sup> shown in Figure 2.

In contrast, the population aged 65 and over increased at a slower rate than the total population for the first time in the census' history. This slower pace reflected the fact that relatively few children were born in the late 1920s and the early 1930s. While the total population aged 65 and over rose from 31 million in 1990 to 35 million in 2000, the percentage of people aged 65 and over declined from 12.6 percent to 12.4 percent.<sup>6</sup> In 2000, there were 19 people aged 65 and over for every 100 people of working age, that is aged 15 to 64. This ratio was slightly lower than the ratio in other more developed countries, but it was more than double the ratio in less developed countries.<sup>7</sup>

In 2000, the total U.S. dependency ratio<sup>8</sup> was 51, compared with 48 in other more developed countries and 61 in less developed countries. When the United States is compared with less developed countries, its fertility rate is low. However, the fertility rate is high when compared with other more developed countries – two births, on average during their reproductive lives, compared with an average of 1.4 births in other more developed countries.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "Nation's Median Age Highest Ever, But 65-and-Over Population's Growth Lags, Census 2000 Shows," *U.S. States Department of Commerce News*, May 15, 2001

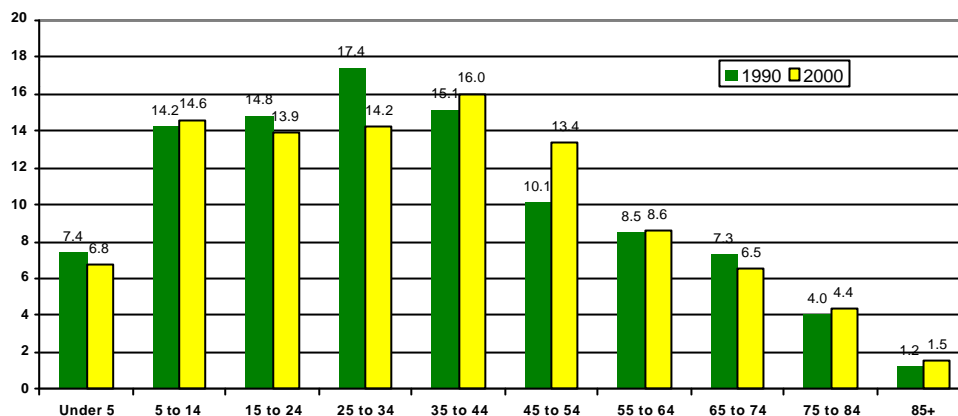
<sup>6</sup> Lisa Hetzel and Annetta Smith, *The 65 and Over Population: 2000* (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2001) p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas M. McDevitt and Patricia M. Rowe, *The United States in International Context: 2000* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 2002), pp. 5-9.

<sup>8</sup> The commonly used age dependency ratio is the number of people ages under 15 and 65 and over per 100 people ages 15 to 64. A dependency ratio of 50 means that there are twice as many people ages 15 to 64 than the combined number under 15 and 65 and over. This ratio is sometimes used as a surrogate for the economic dependency ratio, which is the number of people not working per 100 people working in a population. The age dependency ratio is often used because it eliminates differences in definitions of the labor force characteristics between countries.

<sup>9</sup> McDevitt and Rowe, pp. 3-9.

**Figure 2.**  
**U.S. Age Distribution in Percent: 1990 and 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 and 1990 census.

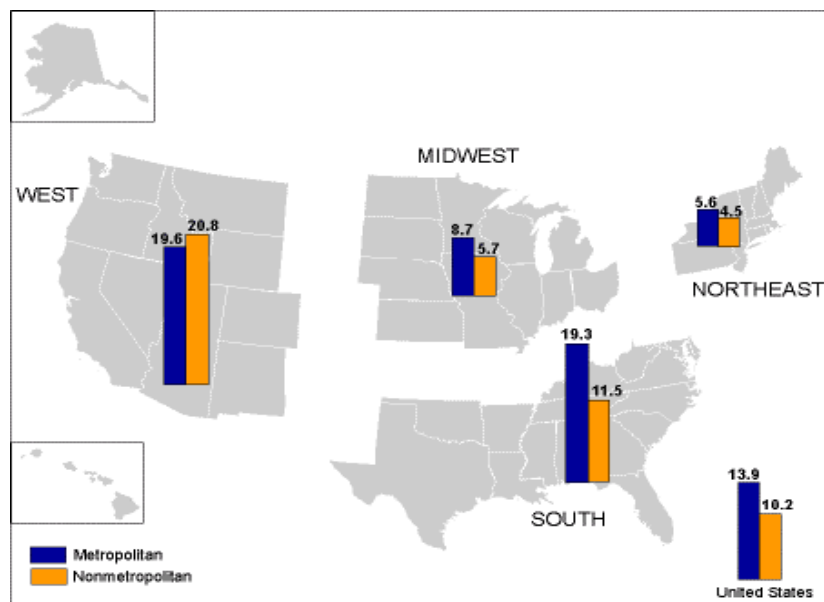
## Population Redistribution

During the 1990s, the regions<sup>10</sup> with the fastest population growth in the United States were the West (20 percent) and South (17 percent). The increases in the Midwest and the Northeast were below the U.S. average, 8 percent and 6 percent, respectively. The South remained the most populated region of the nation, containing 36 percent of all U.S. residents. Twenty-three percent of U.S. residents lived in the Midwest and 22 percent in the West. With 19 percent of all U.S. residents, the Northeast was the least populated region of the country.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The Northeast region includes the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The Midwest region includes the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The South region includes the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia, a state equivalent. The West region includes the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

<sup>11</sup> Marc J. Perry and Paul J. Mackun, p. 2.

**Figure 3.**  
**Percentage Change in Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Populations by**  
**Region: 1990 to 2000.**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 and 1990 census.

Nationwide, nonmetropolitan areas grew more slowly than metropolitan areas, 10.2 percent compared with 13.9 percent. This was true in every region of the country except the West, where nonmetropolitan growth slightly outpaced metropolitan growth (20.8 percent and 19.6 percent, respectively). In the South, the difference between metropolitan growth and nonmetropolitan growth was particularly extreme (19.3 percent and 11.5 percent, respectively). However, that pattern was also clear in the Midwest (8.7 percent, compared with 5.7 percent) and in the Northeast (5.6 percent compared with 4.5 percent). By 2000, 80 percent of U.S. residents lived in metropolitan areas.<sup>12</sup>

Population gains varied by the size of the metropolitan area. The very largest metropolitan areas, those greater than 5 million residents, grew the slowest, increasing only 10.8 percent over the decade. The fastest growing metropolitan areas were those with populations of 2.0 million to 4.9 million (19.8 percent). The next fastest group were metropolitan areas with populations of 1.0 million to 1.9 million (17.7 percent). They were followed by metropolitan areas with populations of 250,000 to 999,999 (13.1 percent) and those with populations of less than 250,000 (11.1 percent).<sup>13</sup>

During the 1990s, the fastest growing state was Nevada, with a 66 percent increase. It was followed by Arizona (40 percent), Colorado (31 percent), Utah (30 percent), and Idaho (29 percent) – all in the western part of the United States. The next fastest growing states were two southern states, Georgia (26 percent) and Texas (23 percent). The slowest growing state was in the Midwest, North Dakota, where the

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6.

population increased by only 0.5 percent. It was followed by West Virginia (0.8 percent) in the South and Pennsylvania (3.4 percent) in the Northeast.<sup>14</sup>

California was the largest state both in 1990 (29.8 million) and 2000 (33.8 million). However, Texas (20.9 million) surpassed New York (19.0 million) to become the second largest state in 2000. Florida, with a population of 16.0 million in 2000, retained its standing as the fourth largest state, while Illinois (12.4 million) overtook Pennsylvania (12.3 million) to become the fifth largest state.<sup>15</sup>

A county map of the United States reveals some patterns that cut across state and regional boundaries. In the east, slow growth dominated a group of counties extending from Maine to eastern Kentucky. Across the Plains states, a swath of counties stretching from Canada to Mexico lost population.<sup>16</sup> Even so, only 686 of the 3,141 counties and equivalent areas in the United States lost population.

### **Greater Racial Detail**

Census 2000 included separate response boxes for 15 racial categories (which collapsed into six categories) and allowed for write-in responses to specify tribal affiliation and other racial groups. It was the first U.S. census in history to allow respondents to identify themselves as belonging to more than one racial group.

The six racial categories in Census 2000 were:

- White,
- Black or African American,
- American Indian and Alaska Native,
- Asian,
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and
- Some Other Race.

The fifty-seven possible combinations of these categories, plus the six-single race categories, mean that respondents could report a total of 63 distinct categories. Only 2.4 percent of respondents identified with more than one race, however. (See Table 2.)

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp 2-3.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

Table 2

**Population by Race and Hispanic Origin for the United States: 2000**

Race and Hispanic or Latino	Number (in thousands)	Percent of total population
<b>RACE</b>		
<b>Total Population</b> .....	281,422	100.0
One race.....	274,596	97.6
White.....	211,461	75.1
Black or African American.....	34,658	12.3
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	2,476	0.9
Asian.....	10,243	3.6
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander..	399	0.1
Some other race.....	15,359	5.5
Two or more races.....	6,826	2.4
<b>HISPANIC OR LATINO</b> .....		
<b>Total population</b> .....	281,422	100.0
Hispanic or Latino.....	35,306	12.5
Not Hispanic or Latino.....	246,116	87.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

People who identified themselves as White alone, not in combination with any other race, accounted for the largest single response – 75 percent of all people living in the United States. With a 12 percent share of the population, Black or African American alone was the second largest racial group. Some Other Race alone ranked third with a 6 percent share of the population and Asian alone was fourth with a 4 percent share. The smallest single race groups were the American Indian and Alaska Native population (0.9 percent) and the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population (0.1 percent).<sup>17</sup>

Of the 7 million respondents who identified themselves as belonging to more than one racial group, 93 percent reported exactly two races. Excluding combinations with Some Other Race, the most commonly selected combination was “White *and* American Indian and Alaska Native” (16 percent of the population reporting two or more races). The next largest groups were “White *and* Asian” (13 percent) and “White *and* Black or African American” (11 percent).<sup>18</sup>

Because the two-or-more-races category did not exist in earlier censuses, comparisons for this group cannot be made over time. Moreover, the differences between the 1990 and 2000 racial categories make comparisons difficult for every group. In order to help demographers understand change among these various groups, the U.S. Census Bureau developed ranges showing minimum and maximum growth rates over the decade (see Figure 4):

- **THE WHITE POPULATION:** Census 2000 found that 211.5 million people in the United States were White alone and an additional 5.5 million reported

<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Grieco and Rachel Cassidy, Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: 2000 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 2001), p.3-6

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

White and at least one other races. When these numbers are compared with the 1990 count of 199.7 million Whites, the growth rate for this group ranges from 5.9 percent for White alone to 8.6 percent for White alone or in combination with one or more races.<sup>19</sup>

- **THE BLACK POPULATION:** Census 2000 found that 34.7 million people were Black or African American alone and an additional 1.8 million reported Black or African American and at least one other race. When these numbers are compared with the 1990 count of 30.0 million, the growth rate for this group ranges from 16 percent to 22 percent.<sup>20</sup>
- **THE AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE POPULATION:** Census 2000 found that 2.5 million people were American Indian and Alaska Native alone and an additional 1.6 million reported American Indian and Alaska Native and at least one other race. When these numbers are compared with the 1990 count of nearly 2.0 million, the growth rate for this group ranges from 26 percent to 110 percent.<sup>21</sup>
- **THE ASIAN POPULATION:** Census 2000 found that 10.2 million people were Asian alone and an additional 1.7 million reported Asian and at least one other race. When these numbers are compared with the 1990 count of 6.9 million, the growth rate for this group ranges from 48 percent to 72 percent.<sup>22</sup>
- **THE NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER POPULATION:** Census 2000 found that 399,000 people were Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone and an additional 476,000 reported Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander and at least one other race. When these numbers are compared with the 1990 count of 365,000, the growth rate for this group ranges from 9 percent to 140 percent.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Grieco, *The White Population: 2000* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 2001), pp. 2-3.

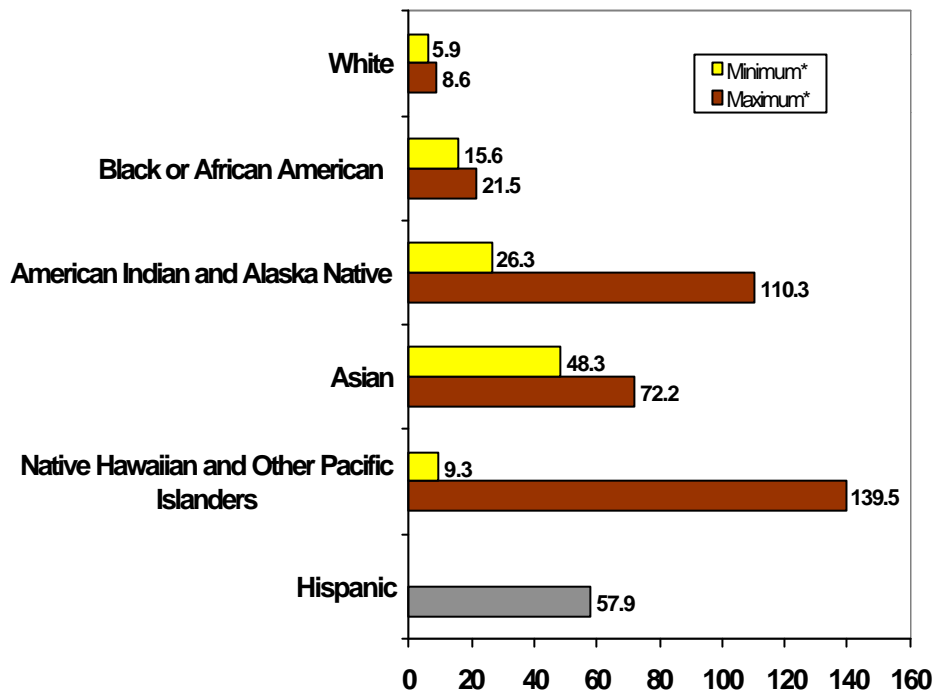
<sup>20</sup> Jesse McKinnon, *The Black Population: 2000* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 2001), p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Stella U. Ogunwole, *The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2000* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 2002), p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Jessica S. Barnes and Claudette E. Bennett, *The Asian Population: 2000* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 2002), p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Grieco, *The Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Population: 2000* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 2002), p. 3.

**Figure 4.**  
**Growth Rates for Major Racial Groups\* and the Hispanic Population: 1990 to 2000**



\*Minimum and maximum growth rates are for the racial groups only. Minimum growth includes only the race alone categories while maximum growth includes both the race alone and in combination categories.

## The Growing Hispanic Population

Being Hispanic is an ethnicity and people who are of Hispanic origin may be of any race. On the Census 2000 questionnaire, people who were not of Hispanic origin marked the box “**No**, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.” Those who were of Hispanic origin had the option to mark a box indicating the specific group they belong to: Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other (such as Columbian, Honduran, or Venezuelan).<sup>24</sup>

Between 1990 and 2000, the Hispanic population within the 50 states and the District of Columbia grew from 22 million to 35 million – a 58 percent increase, compared with the 13 percent increase for the population as a whole. (See Figure 4.) People of Mexican origin dominated this group, representing 59 percent of all Hispanics living in the United States in 2000. The next largest places of origin were Puerto Rico, accounting for 10 percent of all U.S. Hispanics, and Cuba, accounting for 4 percent. During the 1990s, the large Mexican population increased 53 percent, while the smaller Puerto Rican and Cuban populations grew relatively slowly – increasing 25 percent and 19 percent, respectively. However, other Hispanic populations almost doubled during the 1990s, bringing their share of the total Hispanic population up from 23 percent to 28 percent.<sup>25</sup>

Because Hispanics may be of any race, they are represented in every racial category. In 2000, the largest share of Hispanics (48 percent) said they were White alone. Only 2 percent reported that they were Black alone and just over 1 percent reported American Indian and Alaska Native alone. However, 42 percent identified themselves as Some Other Race alone. People of Hispanic origin dominated the Some Other Race alone category, accounting for 97 percent of all people who reported this option. Additionally, 6 percent of Hispanics indicated that they were of more than one race – almost always reporting Some Other Race as one of them.

## The Geography of Race and Ethnicity in the United States

In 2000, each racial and ethnic group had its own unique geographic distribution within the United States. Although the White alone population could be found in all regions of the country, it was most heavily concentrated in the Northeast and Midwest.<sup>26</sup> The Black alone population was concentrated in counties in the South. In fact, they were the majority of the population in 96 counties and all but one of these counties were located in a loose arc stretching across the Coastal and Lowland South.<sup>27</sup>

The American Indian and Alaska Native alone population was concentrated in the West and Midwest, although they comprised the majority in 14 counties in the South and 12 counties in the Midwest. Alaska Natives accounted for 50 percent or more of the population in nearly all of the boroughs and census areas in northern and western Alaska.<sup>28</sup>

Over half of the Asian alone population (51 percent) lived in just three states: California, New York, and Hawaii. In Hawaii, Asians represented 58 percent of the

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<sup>24</sup> Betsey Guzman, *The Hispanic Population: 2000* (Washington, D.C., U.S. Census Bureau, 2001), p. 1

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>26</sup> Elizabeth Grieco, *The White Population: 2000*, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> Jesse McKinnon, *The Black Population: 2000*, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Stella U. Ogunwole, *The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2000*, pp. 3-4.

state's total population.<sup>29</sup> Over half of the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone population (58 percent) lived in just two states: Hawaii and California. The counties with the highest concentrations of this group were all located in Hawaii.<sup>30</sup>

In 1990, the majority of the Two or More Races population lived in the West. The heaviest concentration was in four counties in Hawaii where they accounted for 19 percent to 29 percent of the population.<sup>31</sup>

More than three-quarters of Hispanics lived in the West or the South and half lived in just two states, California and Texas. The counties with the highest concentrations of Hispanics were along the southwestern border of the United States. Hispanics were the majority in 35 counties in the South. All of these counties were in Texas, except one which was in Florida. They were also the majority in 15 counties in the West – 9 in New Mexico, and 2 each in Arizona, California, and Colorado.<sup>32</sup>

Every state in the United States is becoming more diverse. A simple way to illustrate this is to compare the 1990 non-Hispanic White population<sup>33</sup> with the 2000 non-Hispanic White single-race population. While this comparison is not perfect, the disparity is small. Using these categories, the non-Hispanic White population declined from 76 percent of the total population to 69 percent over the ten-year period. The non-Hispanic White population dropped as a percentage of the population in every state, with only the District of Columbia experiencing a slight gain (0.5 percent).

### **Changing household composition**

Census 2000 offered respondents 15 specified options and a write-in box to describe their relationship to person 1 – the householder (the person who owned, rented, or otherwise maintained the household). Based on information on household relationships, the Census Bureau was able to determine the number and types of households that fell into various categories.

In 2000, 274 million U.S. residents lived in households.<sup>34</sup> Between 1990 and 2000, the total number of households grew from 92 million to 105 million. As the number of people per household continued to decline, the number of households grew more rapidly than population – 15 percent, compared with 13 percent over the decade. The average number of people per household fell from 2.63 in 1990 to 2.59 in 2000.<sup>35</sup>

The Census Bureau defines two major categories of households: family and nonfamily. Family households consist of a householder living with one or more people who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Nonfamily households consist of an individual living alone or sharing a home with nonrelatives. Although family households continued to account for the largest share of all households, they fell from 70 percent in 1990 to 68 percent in 2000.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Jessica Barnes and Claudette E. Bennett, *The Asian Population: 2000*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>30</sup> Elizabeth Grieco, *The Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Population: 2000*, p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Nicholas A. Jones and Amy Symens Smith, *The Two or More Races Population: 2000* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 2001), p. 2-3.

<sup>32</sup> Betsy Guzman, *The Hispanic Population: 2000*, pp. 3-5.

<sup>33</sup> The population that is White, but not of Hispanic Origin. Historically, this is the largest racial or ethnic group in the United States.

<sup>34</sup> The remaining 7.8 million lived in group quarters (such as correctional institutions, nursing homes, and college dormitories).

<sup>35</sup> Tavia Simmons and Grace O'Neill, *Households and Families: 2000* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 2001) pp. 1-8

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

Between 1990 and 2000, the average number of people per family dropped from 3.16 to 3.14. Although the number of families maintained by a married couple grew from 50.7 million to 54.5 million, their share of all families dropped from 79 percent to 76 percent. In 2000, less than half of married-couple families contained children.<sup>37</sup>

Other types of families grew more rapidly over the decade. Family households maintained by women with no husband present rose from 10.7 million to 12.9 million, a 21 percent increase. Families maintained by men with no wife present increased to 4.4 million households, a 40 percent gain since 1990.<sup>38</sup>

**Figure 5.**  
**Percent of All Households by Household Type: 1990 and 2000**



\*No spouse present

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 and the 1990 census.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

Census 2000 was the first to collect information on multigenerational families, that is, households consisting of three or more generations. In 2000, 2.6 million householders lived with children and grandchildren. Another 1.3 million householders belonged to the middle generation and lived with both older parents and younger children. Census 2000 found 78,000 households that contained four generations.<sup>39</sup>

One-person households continued to grow – numbering 27 million in 2000, a 21 percent increase over 1990. This group of householders included young adults starting out on their own, separated or divorced people, and widowed or never-married older adults. In 2000, people living alone accounted for 81 percent of nonfamily households and 26 percent of all households. The remainder of nonfamily households was made up of two or more unrelated people, such as roommates or boarders.<sup>40</sup>

The census began collecting information on unmarried-partner households in 1990. Over the decade, unmarried partners grew from 3.5 percent (3.2 million) of all households to 5.2 percent (5.5 million). These households can be in either of the two major types. When someone in the household is related to the householder, such as his or her child, these households fall into the family household category. When no one in the household is related to the householder by blood, marriage, or adoption, the unmarried partners in the nonfamily household category.<sup>41</sup>

### The Next Steps

The information presented above comes from the Census 2000 data collected about everyone. Long form data covering population and housing topics described in Table 3, that are collected for about one-sixth of the population, are being released now and into 2003.

**Table 3.**  
**Census 2000 Long Form Data**

Population data	Housing data
Marital Status	Units in structure
Place of birth, citizenship, and year of entry	Number of rooms
School enrollment and educational attainment	Number of bedrooms
Ancestry	Plumbing and kitchen facilities
Residence five years ago (migration)	Year structure built
Language spoken at home	Year moved into unit
Grandparents as caregivers	House heating fuel
Labor force status	Telephone
Place of work and journey to work	Vehicles available
Industry, occupation, and class of worker	Farm residence
Income (previous year)	Value of home
	Monthly rent
	Shelter costs

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

## **Re-engineering the 2010 Census**

Even though the data from the Census 2000 long form have just started to be released, the Census Bureau has a good approximation of what it will show from information collected in the Census 2000 Supplementary Survey (C2SS). The C2SS is a test designed to demonstrate the feasibility of collecting long form type data concurrently with, but separately from the decennial census. It is part of the Census Bureau's testing of the American Community Survey (ACS), which is expected to replace the long form in 2010.

If Congress appropriates the necessary funds, \$218.9 million in the 2003 fiscal year, the Census Bureau will begin to re-engineer the decennial census so that only the short-form will be distributed in 2010. By that time, the information now collected on the long form will be available from the American Community Survey, which will collect detailed data throughout the decade.

The American Community Survey will be the largest continuous survey ever conducted outside the decennial census' long form. Every month, questionnaires will be mailed to 250,000 different addresses. Telephone interviews of individuals who do not return completed questionnaires will follow for households with identifiable telephone numbers. In addition, a sample of remaining non-respondents will then be visited by Census Bureau field representatives to conduct a computer-assisted personal interview.

The timeliness of the data that will be collected throughout the decade by the American Community Survey constitutes a major advance in the quality of the information that will be available. Rather than having long form data once every ten years, the country will get American Community Survey data every year. Annual estimates will be produced for geographic areas with more than 65,000 people and they will be released during the year after collection. Smaller areas will have moving averages based on 3 or 5 years of data that are updated every year. In its pilot program for the ACS, the Census Bureau has been able to release data products in July about the previous year.

As we move forward into the new millennium, the Census Bureau is looking forward to using new technologies and methods of data collection that will improve our ability to capture the diverse and changing demographics of the United States accurately and completely. We also want to deliver this information to the public as quickly as possible so analyses and decisions can be based upon data that is fresh and constantly updated. It is an exciting time of innovation for the United States census.