

Race and Ethnicity in California: Demographics Report Series—No. 9 (June 2002)
Demographics of California Counties: A Comparison of 1980, 1990, and 2000 Census Data

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Executive Summary

The 2000 Census was the first U.S. decennial survey in which the majority of California's population (53.3 percent) identified as non-White. Over the last two decades, the state has experienced major growth in its non-White populations, particularly Latinos and Asians. Between 1980 and 1990, California experienced larger growth than the overall U.S. in its Asian, Latino, Black, and White populations; however, between 1990 and 2000, the state's growth in these groups was smaller than in the country as a whole. The reverse was true for American Indians, which had smaller growth in California than the U.S. during the 1980s, but larger growth during the 1990s. To examine the changes in the racial composition of California over the past twenty years, this report summarizes census data from 1980, 1990, and 2000 at the county and regional levels.

American Indians have made up similar population percentages over the past two decades when single-race responses from 2000 are compared with earlier years; however, looking at the 2000 multiple-race responses, the percentage of American Indians is more than double that of 1980 or 1990 in most parts of the state. Also, American Indians comprise a larger percentage of the population in the Northern and Eastern Mountain counties compared to other regions, though more of this growth took place in the 1980s than in the 1990s.

Asian/Pacific Islander population percentages in California increased during the 1980s and 1990s. Between 1980 and 1990, the largest growth in the Asian/Pacific Islander population was in the Central Valley, and the smallest was in the Coastal region; between 1990 and 2000, the largest growth was in the Eastern Mountain area, and the smallest was in Los Angeles.

Changes in the *Black* population have been mixed over the past twenty years. Some regions of the state have shown increases in population percentages (Sacramento Metropolitan Area, Southern Counties, Central Valley, and Northern Counties), others have experienced declines (Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area—despite the fact that these two areas have the largest percentages of Blacks). Also noteworthy, during the 1980s, the Eastern Mountain area showed much larger growth than other parts of the state in its Black population, namely due to growth in Amador and Del Norte counties; during the 1990s, however, this region experienced a decline.

The percentage of *Latinos* in each region of California has increased over the past twenty years. Overall, Latinos make up a larger percentage of the regional populations in the southern half of the state. During the 1980s, the largest growth was in the Southern and Eastern Mountain regions, and the smallest growth was in the San Francisco Bay Area. During the 1990s, Los Angeles had a smaller rate of growth than the rest of the regions in the state.

Over the past twenty years, the percentage of *Whites* in California has declined. During the 1980s and 1990s, the smallest rates of change in the White population were in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area, and the largest growth was in the Eastern Mountain Counties.

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