

## Census offers new proof that Hispanic, Asian growth skyrocketed in past decade

By Carol Morello and Dan Keating, Thursday, March 24, 9:15 AM

The nation's racial and ethnic mix shifted sharply over the past decade, driven by soaring numbers of young Hispanics and Asians and an aging white population that was essentially stagnant.

The census statistics released Thursday from the 2010 count underscore the country's rush toward a day, barely three decades from now, when non-Hispanic whites will be a minority.

Hispanics accounted for more than half the nation's growth between 2000 and 2010, jumping to more than 50 million because of high birth rates and immigration. One in six Americans are now Hispanic.

The growth was most dramatic in states that have not traditionally had large Hispanic communities, particularly in the South. Their numbers more than doubled in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina and Tennessee, for example, and almost doubled in many other states, including Virginia. Seven states would have lost population if it weren't for Hispanics.

Like Hispanics, Asians also experienced double-digit increases. In 25 states, including Virginia, Asians rose by a greater number of people than blacks did. Asians make up 5 percent of the nation's 309 million residents, and African Americans account for 12 percent.

The black population remained stable, slightly outpacing the nation's 9.7 percent growth rate, while whites who aren't Hispanic barely inched up at all — just 1 percent — and diminished as a proportion of the population, from 69 percent to about 64 percent.

Demographers said this first round of census figures offers a clear window to the decades ahead.

“The futures of most metropolitan areas in the country are contingent on how attractive they are to Hispanic and Asian populations,” said John Logan, a Brown University sociologist who has analyzed most of the census figures.

Non-Hispanic whites and blacks are getting older as a group, he added. “These groups are tending to fade out,” he said.

Maryland was one of 15 states that lost non-Hispanic whites and gained minorities.

Many of the most significant demographic trends were first noted in earlier censuses and picked up steam over the past decade. They include the movement of blacks from cities to the suburbs

and from the North to the South, a growing number of people who identify themselves as multiracial and the rapid rise in minorities.

In a harbinger, the jump in Hispanics was most pronounced among children, with almost five million more than in 2000. The underage population of non-Hispanic whites fell by 4.3 million, while black and American Indian children also declined.

“This was a pivot decade,” said William H. Frey, a demographer with the Brookings Institution. “We’re pivoting from a white-black-dominated American population to one that is multiracial and multicultural.”

About 9 million Americans described themselves in the census as multiracial, a quarter more than in the previous census. Many described themselves as Hispanic — an ethnicity — and white — a race.

Although just 3 percent of Americans say they are multiracial, it reflects a growing number of interracial marriages and a growing willingness of people to identify themselves as belonging to more than one race.

“That’s a tremendous leap forward in American society for tolerance, openness and of young people’s willingness to get over the difficulties that might exist to find romance, marriage and ultimately children,” said Edwin C. Darden, a former vice president with the Association of MultiEthnic Americans.

The biggest demographic shift is the soaring growth rate of Hispanics and their dispersal across the country.

Jeffrey Passel, a demographer with the Pew Hispanic Center, said the rapid growth of Hispanics in the Midwest and Southeast is largely a byproduct of a previous wave of recent immigrants heading there in the 1990s. Their presence encouraged friends and families to join them. In states such as Maryland, North Carolina and Georgia, for example, almost one in 10 residents is now Hispanic.

Many of the new Hispanic residents were born here. This past decade was the first since the 1960s when the number of Hispanic births surpassed the number of immigrants, Passel noted. More than half the children in California and New Mexico are Hispanic.

Arturo Vargas, executive director of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, said the census figures underscore the need to improve education for Latino children, who are now about one in four of all American children.

“Unless we do a better job of educating Latino children today, we’re putting at risk this country’s economic success tomorrow,” he said.