



# REGIONAL RESOURCE

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## **The Demographics of Redistricting in the South: A Perspective From the 2000 Census** By Douglas Jacobson

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In many ways, the decennial Census sets the tone for the nation. From congressional and statehouse representation all the way to school district board councils, the data generated from this report affect a range of issues such as redistricting, congressional reapportionment, federal funding for states and localities, and the way people think about the country. Both the public and private sector look to the Census for guidance. Businesses use the Census to determine population shifts and potential sites and ventures, while public safety officials, such as fire departments and police, use it to locate their precincts. Public works such as water towers and roads depend heavily on the Census as well. When all these factors are taken into consideration, the Census becomes more than just an enumeration of the individuals in the nation; it is an indispensable tool for government and private enterprise alike.

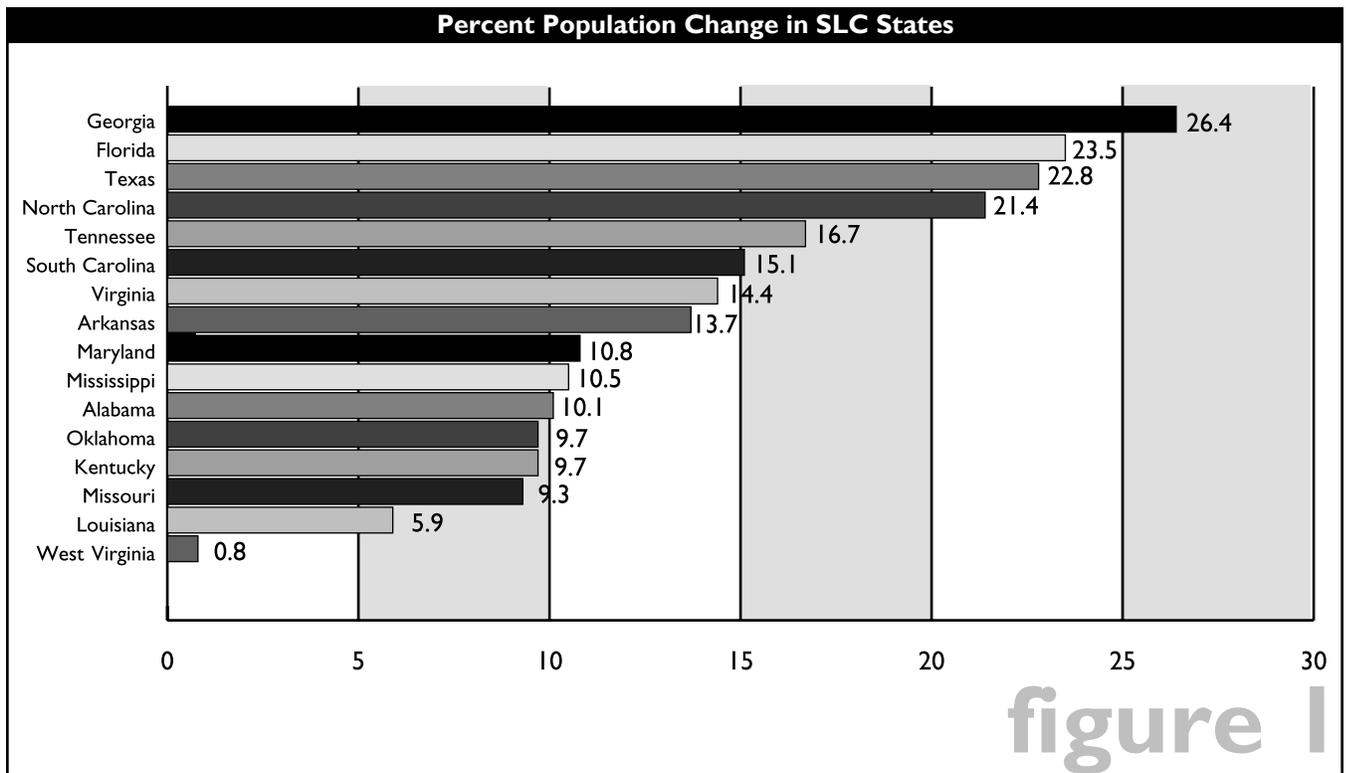
First and foremost, however, the Census provides an account of the country's inhabitants, including their occupations, ethnicity, race and place of residence. The Census offers a means of comparing population shifts over the decades and the ensuing effect on politics, issues on which this report focuses. The states of the Southern Legislative Conference (SLC) experienced a sizable increase in population in the last decade. However, the massive growth in the 1990s has brought about challenges as well as opportunities. Sprawl, redistricting battles and minority population growth all have taken center stage in state government in the recent past and continue to do so. There are three main issues which dominate the discussion of demographics in the South: general population growth in the SLC states; the growth of the Hispanic population and the ensuing effect on culture and politics; and the relationship between race and redistricting.

### **General Growth in the SLC States**

While each state in the union experienced population gains in the 1990s, SLC states attracted new residents by the millions to their vibrant urban areas, and this growth was not restricted to metropolitan areas alone. Eight of the 16 SLC states grew at a higher percentage rate than the U.S. average (13.2 percent), and four SLC states, Texas, Florida, Georgia and North Carolina, posted growth rates in the 1990s of more than 20 percent. Georgia, fueled by metropolitan Atlanta's explosive growth, set the pace with a 26.4 percent increase in population, closely followed by Florida (23.5 percent) and Texas (22.8 percent). The previous decade was the first in the 20th century in which Florida did not lead the South in percentage growth. Only Louisiana and West Virginia posted growth rates below 9 percent, with 5.9 percent and 0.8 percent, respectively. Figure 1 further illustrates the SLC states' growth rates.

Southern Legislative Conference

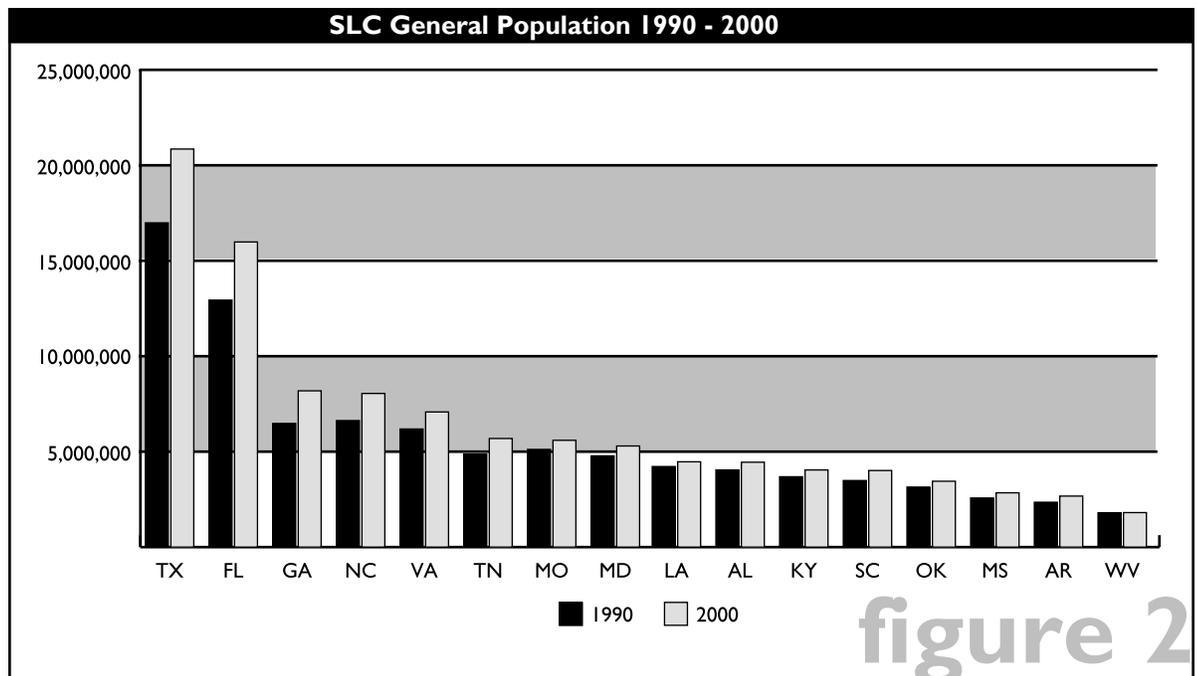
Alabama ■ Arkansas ■ Florida ■ Georgia ■ Kentucky ■ Louisiana ■ Maryland ■ Mississippi ■ Missouri  
North Carolina ■ Oklahoma ■ South Carolina ■ Tennessee ■ Texas ■ Virginia ■ West Virginia



Source: Census 2000

On a national scale, SLC states make up five of the country's 12 most populous, eight of the top 20, and 13 of the top 27. Texas, which in 1990 trailed New York by 1 million residents, leads the SLC with almost 21 million inhabitants, with Florida a close second at almost 16 million. Texas bypassed New York

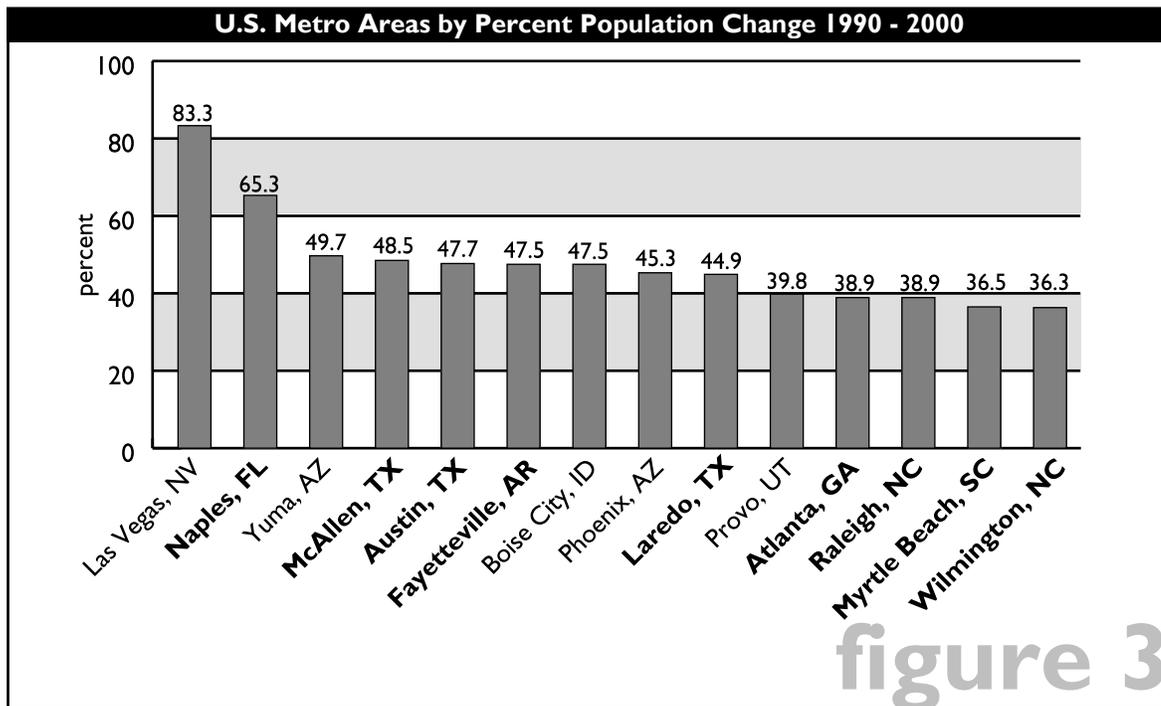
during the 1990s and now is in second place in the nation, trailing only California. West Virginia remains the smallest SLC state, with a population of just over 1.8 million. Figure 2 offers a comparison of SLC state populations in the year 2000, compared both with each other and with their 1990 populations.



Source: Census 2000

SLC metropolitan areas posted nine of the top 14 growth rates in the country, and Naples, Florida, led the SLC with a 65.3 percent increase. Three Texas metropolitan areas made the top 10 in growth- McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, Austin-San Marcos, and Laredo. Overall, more than 1 million people live in each of 22 SLC state metro areas (including the Baltimore-Washington, D.C. area). Overall, the SLC's population increased by 17.1 percent, second only to the Western region. Florida, where every county gained population, provides a telling example of the

Southern population explosion. However, not all the news was good for SLC cities. Some cities, such as St. Louis, Missouri, and Jackson, Mississippi, lost sizable portions of their urban populations in the 1990s. Population decreases in entire metropolitan areas remain a relatively rare phenomenon in the South, with only four SLC metropolitan areas losing population. Alexandria, Louisiana, was the site of the largest exodus, with a 4 percent decrease. Figure 3 shows the national top 10 metropolitan areas in percentage population increase.



Source: Census 2000

figure 3

The explosive growth in Southern suburbs and loss of population in many rural areas and cities have led to mixed results. Two suburban Alabama counties (Shelby and Baldwin) led that state in population growth, while most Alabama cities lost population. Birmingham continued its decrease, losing almost 9 percent of its residents during the 1990s; the city has lost 100,000 people since 1960. Montgomery added residents only by pursuing a policy of annexation. Metropolitan areas remain the South's economic engines, while rural areas and inner cities continue to shrink in influence and wealth. While "white flight" once drove city dwellers to the suburbs, this situation has changed somewhat in cities such as Birmingham and St. Louis, which generally are thought to be losing population at the current time because of badly performing schools and school systems, crime and lack of housing. Even a city as business-oriented as Huntsville, Alabama, lost population to the suburbs. Huntsville expected to see a population increase to 176,000; however, results turned out appreciably lower, at only 158,000. The city has challenged the results. The extent that a declining urban population base depletes a state's coffers depends on the state's reliance on property taxes to fund public works and projects. Alabama, like many states, can be comfortably divided into rural, suburban and urban areas and lifestyles. As people leave urban and rural areas for the suburbs, the result often is an increase in traffic, crowded schools and shortages of public services.

Some states flourish from their ability to attract population because of climate, infrastructure, new jobs and for other reasons. Florida, for example, because of its cost of living, consumer protections, and lack of a state income tax, attracts thousands of retirees from around the country. According to Census figures, there are 2.5 million Floridians over the age of 65, constituting about one out of every six residents. Since 1990, the state's over-65 population has increased by 16.5 percent. The Pinellas County community of Clearwater boasts both the highest percentage of residents over 65 and 85. Other SLC states have become relocation destinations for retirees, who also have been relocating to the mountains of Tennessee and north Georgia and the coasts of South Carolina and Mississippi.

Some cities have experienced a trend of white residents returning to urban areas. Atlanta, for example, experienced a 13 percent increase, while the black population has dropped 3 percent. Only five states grew faster than Georgia in the 1980s, with only eight rural counties losing population. Atlanta functioned as the nexus of the South's growth throughout the 1990s, but metro areas such as Nashville, Orlando and Raleigh-Durham have grown at an impressive pace as well. The areas around North Carolina's Research Triangle grew by 38.4 percent in the 1990s, while Nashville's growing population has resulted in nationally recognized sprawl. Orlando grew by 34.3 percent, with that gain not solely attributable to retirees.

### **POVERTY IN THE SOUTH**

The South managed a reduction in poverty levels over the past decade, but rates remained high compared to the rest of the country. Only two SLC states, Maryland and Virginia, ranked above the U.S. average in median income. The last four spots in the national ranking were occupied by Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, and West Virginia; however, Louisiana and Mississippi posted two of the largest decreases in poverty rate. Poverty also declined in Florida from 12.8 percent in 1999 to 12.1 percent in 2000, while median household income increased almost \$600. Florida ranked 37th overall. Although poverty statistics are difficult to interpret because researchers use estimates, two SLC states, Florida and Mississippi, showed statistically significant decreases in their poverty rates, and none showed an increase. Florida posted a 1.2 percent decrease, while Mississippi's rate decreased 2.4 percent, a greater percentage decrease than any state except New Hampshire and North Dakota. The city of Miami faces a particular challenge, as almost one-third of the city's population lives below the poverty level, a greater percentage than in any other city of 250,000 or more. New Orleans and Atlanta rank just behind Miami and, because of margin of error, could possibly have higher rates than Miami. St. Louis also ranks high on the poverty list, with more than 20 percent of its residents below the limit.

Much of the growth in SLC states has been fueled by an influx of Hispanics, with Atlanta posting a 226 percent increase in Hispanic population. With 4.1 million residents, Atlanta grew by almost 39 percent overall, the highest growth rate for any Southern city with more than 1 million people. Nearly one out of every 10 residents of Atlanta was born abroad.

Other areas are experiencing very different trends. Fourteen of rural Eastern Kentucky's counties lost population during the 1990s, mainly because the population has been decimated by low birthrates, out-migration and mortality. Many of the region's high school and college graduates leave the area to find employment. However, local officials point out that while the coal counties suffered, the state's 49 Appalachian counties actually posted a 6.4 percent gain in population, suggesting that the state's economic development efforts may be making an impact. Louisiana's wealth is concentrated largely in the southern half of the state, with 13 of its 16 smallest parishes (by population) in the north of the state, while 12 of the 16 largest are in the south. White families in Louisiana increasingly are moving to the suburbs, and cities such as New Orleans struggle to fund and repair their streets, school systems and other buildings, while rural areas often simply lack jobs.

Population changes also have political effects. As in other communities across the South, some Louisiana officials believe the Census undercounted their communities, which leads to a dearth of funding.

Some states have been slow to rise to the challenge of keeping their best and brightest employed in-state. Compared to other SLC states, Louisiana's population gains remained modest, with only 5.9 percent growth, while the SLC average was 13.8 percent. Furthermore, the caliber of the émigrés, who consist mostly of young professionals, is more alarming than the raw numbers.<sup>1</sup> Sociologists suggest that while higher paying jobs served as the bait in the 1980s, quality-of-life issues such as public health and safety and affordable housing played a larger role in the past decade. The number of births also has dropped steadily, with Louisiana home to 10,000 fewer births a year than two decades ago. Some even forecast that, after the 2010 Census, Louisiana will lose at least one congressional seat. Of particular interest, while Louisiana placed next to last in growth in the

SLC, there were nine other states in the union which experienced even less growth.

Mississippi attracted a multitude of new residents through development on the Gulf Coast as well as the Jackson and suburban Memphis areas; however, the state will still lose a member of Congress. In Missouri, the city of St. Louis lost fewer people (12.2 percent) than had been expected, while suburban St. Louis and St. Charles counties posted substantial gains. The city of St. Louis now constitutes just 13 percent of the metro area's population. The city is the recipient of almost \$62 million annually in federal funds, much of which is earmarked for the federal Community Development Block Grant program for housing and economic development. However, the loss of 12.2 percent of the population translates into a loss of capital as well. Oklahoma's Tulsa and Oklahoma City's metro areas saw increases, while rural areas and some smaller cities suffered. Suburbs such as Edmond and Broken Arrow experienced the most growth in the state which, like many SLC states, is growing more diverse.

Nashville found itself with unwanted attention for its sprawl conundrum. Two suburban counties, Williamson and Rutherford, grew by more than 50 percent. City leaders and officials believe that access to higher education has driven their success, but suburban schools struggle to keep up with the growth. This surge in population has led to public outcry against an outer perimeter which would circle the city.

Similar to Nashville, the Dallas-Fort Worth area grew at a rate more than twice the U.S. average during the 1990s, and it exceeded 5 million residents for the first time. Texas also is becoming more diverse, especially in Metroplex suburbs such as Arlington and Plano, which are more integrated than large cities such as Houston and Fort Worth.

## **The Hispanic Population in the SLC<sup>2</sup>**

Hispanics have rapidly made their mark in the South. Long regarded as politically dormant, Latinos are becoming significantly more integrated into the South's political landscape. Hispanics are the South's (and the nation's) fastest growing minority, with their population increasing by 71.4 percent in the SLC states in the past decade. They historically have been concentrated in the two Southern states (Texas and Florida) which lie closest to Latin America and the Caribbean. Texas has the third highest percentage of Latinos in the country, while Florida ranks seventh in this category. While they have been a major political force in only two SLC states so far - Texas and Florida - their influence on issues such as education, social services and culture can be expected to be much greater in the future throughout the region. Hispanics are becoming more politically active and more likely to exercise their right to vote, as more immigrants from Latin America become U.S. citizens. While only 2.5 million Hispanics voted in the 1980 presidential election, the number who voted in the 2000 election is estimated at 5.5 million.

In Texas alone, Hispanics make up almost 23 percent of the state Senate (almost half the Democrats) and almost 20 percent of the House. In addition, six members of Texas' congressional delegation are Latino. Most Hispanics in Texas are of Mexican descent (76 percent), unlike in Florida, where Cuban-

Americans (31 percent) make up the largest group of Latinos. According to the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators, there are over 50 Hispanic state legislators currently serving SLC states, including 35 in Texas, 15 in Florida, and one each in Maryland, North Carolina and Tennessee. In Maryland and Virginia, the Mexican-American population more than doubled during the 1990s, while the number of individuals of Mexican origin in those two states and the District of Columbia, nearly 120,000, makes up one-fifth of the region's Latino population.

Hispanics will soon fulfill a prediction made by demographers by becoming the nation's largest minority. Of the country's 281 million people, 12.6 percent, or 35.3 million described themselves as Hispanic on the 2000 Census. The Latino population increased almost 60 percent from 1990, and the number of Hispanics exceeded Census Bureau estimates by 3 million. Hispanics can be of any race, and in the United States, about two-thirds of Hispanics are of Mexican descent.

Many individuals of Hispanic origin decline to list a country of birth, leading some to comment that as they assimilate, they lose their home identity. According to one professor of Latin American studies, "If you ask a person whose family has been here for a while...they really don't have a Latin American nationality."<sup>3</sup> Table 1 shows the ethnic breakdown of the Hispanic ethnicity in the SLC states.

**SLC Hispanic Population and Ethnic Groups 1990-2000**

State	1990			2000						
	Total Population	Hispanic Population		Total Population	Hispanic Population		Hispanic Type			
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Other Hispanic
AL	4,040,587	24,269	0.6	4,447,100	75,830	1.7	44,522	6,322	2,354	22,632
AR	2,350,725	19,876	0.8	2,673,400	86,866	3.2	61,204	2,473	950	22,239
FL	12,937,926	1,574,143	12.2	15,982,378	2,682,715	16.8	363,925	482,027	833,120	1,003,643
GA	6,478,216	108,922	1.7	8,186,453	435,227	5.3	275,288	35,532	12,536	111,871
KY	3,685,296	21,984	0.6	4,041,769	59,939	1.5	31,385	6,469	3,516	18,569
LA	4,219,973	93,044	2.2	4,468,976	107,738	2.4	32,267	7,670	8,448	59,353
MD	4,781,468	125,102	2.6	5,296,486	227,916	4.3	39,900	25,570	6,754	155,692
MS	2,573,216	15,931	0.6	2,844,658	39,569	1.4	21,616	2,881	1,508	13,564
MO	5,117,073	61,702	1.2	5,595,211	118,592	2.1	77,887	6,677	3,022	31,006
NC	6,628,637	76,726	1.2	8,049,313	378,963	4.7	246,545	31,117	7,389	93,912
OK	3,145,585	86,160	2.7	3,450,654	179,304	5.2	132,813	8,153	1,759	36,579
SC	3,486,703	30,551	0.9	4,012,012	95,076	2.4	52,871	12,211	2,875	27,119
TN	4,877,185	32,741	0.7	5,689,283	123,838	2.2	77,372	10,303	3,695	32,468
TX	16,986,510	4,339,905	25.5	20,851,820	6,669,666	32.0	5,071,963	69,504	25,705	1,502,494
VA	6,187,358	160,288	2.6	7,078,515	329,540	4.7	73,979	41,131	8,332	206,098
WV	1,793,477	8,489	0.5	1,808,344	12,279	0.7	4,347	1,609	453	5,870
SLC	89,289,935	6,779,833	7.6	104,476,372	11,623,058	11.1	6,607,884	749,649	922,416	3,343,109

Source: Census 2000

The Hispanic population of the SLC states increased 71.4 percent from 1990 to 2000, from about 6.8 million to more than 11.6 million. Latinos now account for over 11 percent of the population of SLC states. Nearly one-third of all Texans reported Hispanic ethnicity on the 2000 Census, while almost 17 percent of Floridians reported the same. Latinos now constitute a greater portion of all individual SLC states' populations, including 5.3 percent in Georgia, 5.3 percent in Oklahoma, 4.7 percent in North Carolina, and 4.3 percent in Maryland. Individuals of Mexican descent constitute the majority of Hispanics in all SLC states except Louisiana, Florida, where Cubans and Dominicans dominate, and around the District of Columbia (Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia). Table 2 offers a state-by-state breakdown of the growth of the SLC Hispanic population.

<b>Percent Increase in Hispanic Population 1990-2000</b>			
<b>State</b>	<b>Hispanic Population 1990</b>	<b>Hispanic Population 2000</b>	<b>Percent Increase</b>
Alabama	24,269	75,830	212.5
Arkansas	19,876	86,866	337.0
Florida	1,574,143	2,682,715	70.4
Georgia	108,922	435,227	300.0
Kentucky	21,984	59,939	172.6
Louisiana	93,044	107,738	15.8
Maryland	125,102	227,916	82.2
Mississippi	15,931	39,569	148.4
Missouri	61,702	118,592	92.2
North Carolina	76,726	378,963	393.9
Oklahoma	86,160	179,304	108.1
South Carolina	30,551	95,076	211.2
Tennessee	32,741	123,838	278.2
Texas	4,339,905	6,669,666	53.7
Virginia	160,288	329,540	105.6
West Virginia	8,489	12,279	44.6
SLC	6,779,833	11,623,058	71.4

Source: Census 2000

## Challenges for States

A large increase in the Hispanic population can present challenges for state governments, especially concerning language. Interestingly, SLC states are home to a growing population of residents for whom English is not their first language. The Census Bureau measures use of languages other than English by the percentage of the population over five years old that speaks such a language at home. SLC state percentages range from a low of 2.2 percent in West Virginia to a high of 32 percent in Texas. Overall, nearly one-fifth of the country's school-age children speak a foreign language at home.

North Carolina's experience with language diversity provides a case in point. The Census showed that North Carolina has the lowest rate of English proficiency among speakers of foreign languages. An estimated 29 percent of state residents who primarily speak another language cannot speak English well or at all. Many of these residents are Spanish speakers who have arrived recently. Of the 542,000 state residents who speak a foreign language, nearly two-thirds speak Spanish, posing a significant challenge for not just one state but for the region and nation alike.

President Clinton signed an executive order in 2000 which requires state and local agencies to offer services to those with limited English skills or risk losing federal funding. State and local agencies were forced to hire bilingual staff and translate materials into languages, most often Spanish, in order to continue receiving federal funds. North Carolina already provides English classes for both adults and children without a firm command of English, costing the state tens of millions of dollars. In 2000, almost 37,000 students enrolled in ESOL (English as a Second Language) classes at North Carolina community colleges, doubling the number of such students five years earlier.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, only 7 percent of Oklahomans over age 5 speak a foreign language at home. However, 60 percent of the almost 9,000 Latino students enrolled in the Oklahoma City School District have attained only limited English proficiency, but the system, which has tried to meet the challenge by hiring more than 200 bilingual assistants, is hard-pressed to meet their needs.<sup>5</sup> Oklahoma's Hispanic population is largely urban and suburban, with more Latinos in Tulsa and Oklahoma (Oklahoma City) counties than in the rest of the state combined. Memphis,

Tennessee, has seen a similar situation unfold. The Latino population in Shelby County more than tripled during the last Census period, although Hispanics still make up just 2.6 percent of the overall population of Memphis.

There also is some concern that although the Census data show that the Hispanic population in the SLC states has grown substantially, Latinos still have been undercounted. In Jefferson County, Alabama (Birmingham), the Census count of 10,284 Hispanics is thought to be only one-third of those actually in the area.<sup>6</sup> Some Hispanics may have avoided answering Census questions because of their status as illegal aliens, because of the language barrier, or because of a misconception that only the responses of American citizens would be counted. States and localities suffer when this happens because funding for services is calculated using Census numbers. "If you don't have proof of the number of people you have, you don't qualify for the dollars you deserve," remarked an Alabama county health department employee.<sup>7</sup> In Alabama's Franklin County, where Hispanics, according to Census data, make up 7.4 percent of the county's population, officials have instituted a Hispanic coalition with two full-time employees who offer citizenship and transportation assistance to Latinos. Residents and officials estimate that the county is actually as much as one-quarter Hispanic. The county educates 400 Hispanic students, but needs assistance to do so and hopes to double its yearly \$60,000 in federal assistance. Congress distributes about \$200 billion to states on the basis of population each year, and the 73,000 Alabamans not counted in 1990 cost the state \$329 million. In addition to attending to educational concerns, counties with an influx of Hispanics often must hire interpreters in order for their courts and health departments to serve the burgeoning Latino population.

In Orange County, Florida, nearly one in five residents is Hispanic, twice as many as in 1990. The entire Central Florida area, stretching from Orlando to Tampa, has seen sizable increases in the population of Latinos, often drawn there by the vegetable and citrus industries. In the Orlando area, more than half of the Hispanic community is made up of individuals of Puerto Rican descent, a change from the Cuban dominance of the state's Latino population. Florida's Hispanic population grew more than twice as fast as its

black population in the last decade, constituting almost 17 percent of Florida's residents. It grew by 70 percent over the last decade, compared with overall population growth of 23.5 percent. The increase in Hispanics helped Florida gain two Congressional seats, moving that number to 25. In Hillsborough County (Tampa), one in six residents claimed Hispanic ethnicity on the Census, and one in nine county schoolchildren speaks limited English, compared with one of 29 according to the 1990 Census. The county is home to about 180,000 Hispanics, more than nearby Polk, Pinellas and Pasco Counties combined.

However, Central Florida is not the only part of the state in which there is a burgeoning Latino population. Hispanics are starting businesses and community organizations in Jacksonville and other cities across the state. Cubans still make up the largest Hispanic group in Florida, but other Latino groups, such as Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, are increasing at a faster rate. Cubans constitute more than 5 percent of Florida's total population, and two-thirds of the country's 1.2 million Cubans live in Florida.

In South Florida, more than half of Miami-Dade County residents are foreign born. Miami has long acted as a gateway for Latin immigration, but an increasing number of immigrants are opting to stay in the area. Experts opine that worsening economic conditions in Latin America have resulted in increased immigration to the United States.

Further north, in metropolitan Atlanta, one out of 10 residents is Latino or Asian. Hispanics now make up 6.5 percent of the area's population. "Ten years ago you couldn't find an Hispanic grocery store anywhere in Atlanta. Now, there are several," said the Atlanta Regional Commission's demographer. Atlanta ranked second in immigration increase, with 53 percent, ranking behind only Nashville, another SLC state capital, which posted a 57 percent increase. The U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce held its annual convention in Atlanta in September 2001, reflecting the growing importance of Georgia and the South to the Hispanic community, and vice versa. In a first for Georgia state politics, a Hispanic businessman announced that he would be a candidate for the state Senate in 2002.

Smaller cities such as Lexington, Kentucky, also have experienced enormous growth in their Hispanic populations.

Lexington's increased by 235 percent in the last decade and now exceeds 8,500. Unlike Texas or Florida, or even to a lesser extent, Georgia, the populations of states such as Kentucky have long consisted of mostly non-Hispanic whites and a small minority of non-Hispanic blacks. Even today, minorities make up only 8 percent of Kentucky's population. Michael Price, the state demographer, believes the change is economic-related. In the 1990s, low unemployment drew Hispanics to Kentucky (and across the South) to jobs others did not want.<sup>8</sup> In Shelby County, for example, there were just 90 Hispanic residents in 1990, a number which 10 years later increased to 1,415. Communities such as Shelbyville

are considered to be perfect for Hispanic immigration because of the combination of tobacco and horse farms, small factories, low unemployment, and a welcoming, small-town atmosphere.

The situation is different in other SLC states, such as West Virginia and Missouri. Missouri, for example, lags behind much of the SLC in the size (by percent) of its Latino population. Surprisingly, even though the Latino population nearly doubled during the 1990s to 118,000, Hispanics make up only 2 percent of the state's population, and slightly more than 3 percent of the population of St. Louis, the state's largest city.

<b>Percent of Total SLC Hispanic Population 1990-2000</b>				
<b>State</b>	<b>Hispanic Population 1990</b>	<b>Percent of Total SLC Hispanic Population</b>	<b>Hispanic Population 2000</b>	<b>Percent of Total SLC Hispanic Population</b>
Alabama	24,269	0.4	75,830	0.6
Arkansas	19,876	0.3	86,866	0.7
Florida	1,574,143	23.2	2,682,715	23.1
Georgia	108,922	1.6	435,227	3.7
Kentucky	21,984	0.3	59,939	0.5
Louisiana	93,044	1.4	107,738	0.9
Maryland	125,102	1.8	227,916	2.0
Mississippi	15,931	0.2	39,569	0.3
Missouri	61,702	0.9	118,592	1.0
North Carolina	76,726	1.1	378,963	3.3
Oklahoma	86,160	1.3	179,304	1.5
South Carolina	30,551	0.5	95,076	0.8
Tennessee	32,741	0.5	123,838	1.1
Texas	4,339,905	64.0	6,669,666	57.4
Virginia	160,288	2.4	329,540	2.8
West Virginia	8,489	0.1	12,279	0.1
SLC	6,779,833	100.0	11,623,058	100.0

Source: 2000 Census

Table 3 demonstrates an interesting phenomenon, the dispersal of Hispanics around the SLC. In 1990, Texas and Florida, the two SLC states with the vast majority of the total Hispanic population, contained over 87 percent of the Hispanics within the SLC states. In 2000 that number dropped to 80 percent, a striking decrease. It should be noted that this is not due to a shrinking Latino population in these two states - Texas gained 2.3 million Latinos, while Florida gained 1.1 million in the 10-year period. Rather it can be attributed to the massive influx of Hispanics to the region, both to large cities outside Texas and Florida, and to the suburbs and rural regions of the South. Many Hispanics now reside outside the South's larger cities. For example, the highest percentage of Latinos in Alabama are in rural De Kalb, Marshall, Blount and Franklin counties, where many are employed in poultry plants throughout northern Alabama. While just a decade ago, Florida and Texas dominated the SLC's Hispanic population, the 2000 numbers turned out much differently. Besides Texas (6.4 percent decrease), Louisiana (0.5 percent decrease) and Florida (0.1 percent decrease), every state in the SLC increased its percentage. While Florida and Texas still account for four-fifths of the region's Latinos, both have lost ground to other states. Georgia, for example, is now home to 3.7 percent of the SLC's Hispanic population, up from 1.6 percent in 1990, and North Carolina's share tripled from 1.1 percent to 3.3 percent.

As the population of Texas expanded by 23 percent during the 1990s, 60 percent of this growth was a result of Hispanic immigration. Texas overtook New York during the last decade to become the second most populous state in the nation. For the first time, Latinos became the largest ethnic group in Dallas, as the city's Hispanic population doubled during the 1990s from 210,000 to 423,000, or 35 percent of Dallas' population. Hispanics are not restricting their residence to apartments in the inner city. A large number are moving instead into single-family dwellings in suburban areas. However, segregation remains as Hispanics leave the inner city. According to John Logan, Director of the Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research, "Since 1980 and again in the last 10 years, we've seen a shift of all minority groups from central cities to suburban neighborhoods. In almost every case that has been accompanied by increased segregation in suburbia."<sup>9</sup> In the

Dallas metro area, the average Latino resides in an area which is 45 percent Hispanic. Texas Hispanics are growing more diverse as well. While in 1990 Latinos of Mexican origin accounted for 90 percent of Hispanics, that figure dropped to 75 percent in 2000. In Texas, Central and South American immigration increased 286 percent during the 1990s, from 388,000 to 1.5 million. By comparison, the Mexican population in Texas grew just 30 percent.

Of course, challenges for Hispanics are tempered by opportunities. In states such as Alabama and Arkansas, Hispanic residents initially began working in the poultry industry, but have since branched out into other areas, such as retail, service and construction, as opportunities present themselves. Gains have been made in other states as well. A survey of local Hispanics by the Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa, Oklahoma, showed that:

- ▶ Hispanic-owned businesses in the area have contributed a minimum of \$250 million to the Tulsa economy;
- ▶ 82 percent of males work full time;
- ▶ 44 percent speak English well or very well;
- ▶ 33 percent are interested in obtaining the equivalent of a high school diploma; however,
- ▶ 50 percent reported no health insurance.<sup>10</sup>

### **Redistricting and Race in the South**

Redistricting poses unique challenges both for politicians and parties. As populations shift, so do congressional and statehouse seats. Whether this shift benefits Democrats or Republicans often is a controversial matter which must frequently be settled by courts. Redistricting, which is determined by Census results and executed by state legislators, shapes politics for the succeeding decade. Congressional reapportionment depends on the Census count as well. Of the SLC states, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Texas are gaining a combined total of seven congressional seats. On the other hand, Mississippi and Oklahoma are losing one seat each. Any change in representation tends to make the process even more difficult. Changes in large states such as Texas or Florida may even tip the scales in the favor of one party at the national level; therefore, redistricting is

one case in which the actions of state legislators have national consequences.

On the national level, only four states are gaining two seats each in the U.S. House of Representatives, and three of those (Florida, Georgia and Texas) are SLC states. Arizona is the other. After winning a court battle with Utah, North Carolina gained a congressional district as well. On the other hand, both Mississippi and Oklahoma could be losing influence in Congress, as these two states both lose a seat. As a result of the 2000 Census, SLC states net five seats in the U.S. House, two fewer than the net gain in 1990, but nonetheless tied with the West for the highest gain.

In the SLC, maps usually are drawn by state legislators in all states except Arkansas, where a Board of Apportionment handles legislative maps, with the governor having veto power in most states and considerably more power in Maryland. In addition, nine SLC states must abide by some or all of the requirements of the Voting Rights Act, which protects minority voters and helps afford minority candidates an opportunity to represent their communities. While the judiciary has become increasingly involved in redistricting cases, courts generally have rejected maps based heavily on race, but not on politics.

In Arkansas, redistricting reflected growth in the state's northwest and declines in the Mississippi Delta. The state's new map includes a new majority black Senate district in

Little Rock's Pulaski County. The number of black majority districts in the House remains at 13. Governor Huckabee's plan would have created more such districts had it been accepted by the other members of the Board. Plans in Alabama also maintain the existing number of black districts in that state - 27 in the House and eight in the Senate. School board negotiations were interrupted after legislators could not agree on a formula to make sure blacks would win one-quarter of the seats. The Senate plan approved by the United States Department of Justice was endorsed by all eight of the Senate's current black members.

Race is an issue of utmost importance to redistricting and demographics. Courts often hear cases challenging the legality of districts which have been drawn to help elect blacks or Hispanics. Ten years ago black Democrats often sided with Republicans in order to increase representation, but the tide seems to have turned. Black Democrats now tend to be willing to lose some blacks in their districts in order to help their party throughout the state. Because minority districts took Democrats out of neighboring districts, enough areas came to be GOP-controlled to allow that party to take control of the legislatures in some SLC states. The battle now often pits communities of interest against party interest. A decade ago, legislators were under pressure to create districts which could be represented by minorities, but now they must focus on making them as compact as possible.

Percentage of Blacks in SLC State Legislatures 2000				
State	Blacks in Senate (percent)	Blacks in House (percent)	Black Population (percent)	Percentage of Blacks in Legislature
AL	8 of 35 (23)	27 of 105 (26)	26.0	25.0
AR	3 of 35 (9)	13 of 100 (13)	15.7	11.9
FL	6 of 40 (15)	16 of 120 (13)	14.6	13.8
GA	11 of 56 (20)	36 of 180 (20)	28.7	19.9
KY	2 of 38 (5)	4 of 100 (4)	7.3	4.3
LA	9 of 39 (23)	22 of 105 (21)	32.5	21.5
MD	9 of 47 (19)	29 of 141 (21)	27.9	20.2
MS	11 of 52 (21)	35 of 122 (29)	36.3	26.4
MO	1 of 34 (3)	9 of 163 (6)	11.2	5.1
NC	7 of 50 (14)	18 of 120 (15)	21.6	14.7
OK	2 of 48 (4)	4 of 101 (4)	7.6	4.0
SC	7 of 46 (15)	24 of 124 (19)	29.5	18.2
TN	3 of 33 (9)	14 of 99 (14)	16.4	8.3
TX	2 of 31 (6)	14 of 150 (9)	11.5	8.8
VA	5 of 40 (13)	10 of 100 (10)	19.6	10.7
WV	1 of 34 (3)	1 of 100 (1)	3.2	1.5
SLC	87 of 658 (13.2)	276 of 1930 (14.3)	18.3	14.0

Source: "Black Power In Dixie" Southern Political Report, Issue 556, May 21, 2001; National Caucus of Black State Legislators, *Legislative Directory*.

While the percentage of black legislators is less than the percentage of black population in each SLC state, it comes close to being equal in a few states. Table 4 demonstrates this. As shown in Table 4, some states fare better than others when comparing the number of blacks in their legislatures. Alabama comes closest, with 25 percent, the second highest percentage of any SLC state, while Mississippi's is 26.4 percent, but its general population is 36 percent black. Other states in which black representation approaches the percent of blacks in the general population include Florida (14.6 percent vs. 13.8 percent), Arkansas (15.7 vs. 11.9 percent) and West Virginia (3.2 percent vs. 1.5 percent). Some states, such as South Carolina, Louisiana, Georgia and Maryland (11.3 percent, 11.0 percent, 8.8 percent and 7.2 percent, respectively) have larger gaps. Overall, the black population of the SLC member states is 18.3 percent, with 14 percent reflected in the state legislatures.

Both major parties attempt to utilize demographics to their advantage. Each of Florida's 120 state House and 40 Senate districts grew in population in the last decade, all benefiting from the state's 3 million new residents. Although Republicans control both chambers, Democrats look to minorities to help them regain the seats recently lost. "If minorities continue to vote for the Democratic Party, the Republican Party will slowly lose its ability to win statewide elections," notes a professor at one of the state's leading universities.<sup>11</sup> However, Republicans are in control of the process in Florida for the first time.

In Georgia, Republican legislators hoped for gains in the Senate as a result of population gains in the Atlanta suburbs; however, Democrats count on minority voters, whose numbers have increased in the metro area. Georgia's Democrat-dominated General

Assembly majority would also like to increase its strength, especially in the state's congressional delegation, which now includes only three Democrats, all of whom are black, although one represents a majority-white district. Multi-member districts have been envisioned as a way to strengthen their hand, with even black members supporting the idea. The final House map, approved by the United States Department of Justice in accordance with the Voting Rights Act, included 23 such districts, and 42 districts contain black majorities. In 1991 the General Assembly packed black voters into districts to assure minority representation, with some districts' black populations running as high as 90 percent, while strategists have calculated that a population of 30 percent is sufficient. This approach allowed Republicans to gain strength in many other districts. Georgia Democrats also have created a congressional district (the 13th) which would incorporate the state's densest Hispanic voting population (10 percent) with a large black population (42 percent). For the first time, the black metro-Atlanta delegation showed its strength in influencing how the congressional lines were drawn, threatening not to vote for a plan which they did not draw.

In other states, black lawmakers have not been able to exercise as much influence. Louisiana's Legislature passed a plan that decreased black majority House districts from 27 to 26, although minority lawmakers thought that might play into their hands in court. Black legislators also opposed the congressional map, which failed to create a second majority-black district, even though the state's population is 32 percent black.

Mississippi, which grew more slowly than most other states, lost a congressional district, a situation which puts extra pressure on lawmakers to draw boundaries. The outcome of one congressional race, which pits two relatively new congressmen against each other, could be crucial for control of the House of Representatives. In an ironic twist, black leaders decided to push for a hearing in a state, rather than federal, court to hear their case, which was brought before a judge by Democratic activists. Democrats also filed suit in Virginia, claiming that Republicans discriminated on the basis of race and gender in drawing lines.

In South Carolina, another state in which the Republican-black Democrat alliance of 10 years ago backfired on Democrats, black lawmakers maintained 27 majority black districts in the House. However, Republicans created 78 districts with a more than 75-percent white population. The plan was vetoed by Governor Hodges. Such districts often are criticized by minorities since they can elect representatives who have the option of ignoring a large minority of their constituents but still win re-election.

In Nashville and Memphis, some inner-city incumbents were concerned that the sizable increase in the Hispanic population would necessitate the creation of a majority-Hispanic district. However, due to the alleged undercount, such a district never materialized. Hispanics also fared poorly in Texas, which gained two new congressional districts which Latinos expected could be represented by a minority lawmaker. These districts were drawn in north Dallas and between Austin and Houston, areas without Latino majorities. Currently, six of the 30 Texas representatives in Washington are Hispanic. Hispanic leaders maintain that there could easily be as many as nine districts in the state that could elect Hispanics, while blacks argue that they should be able to send a third congressman to Washington. Hispanics grew faster than any other group in Texas in the 1990s, but the federal judges who drew the maps in the state after the Legislature failed to do so maintained that "the Latino population is not sufficiently compact and numerous to support another effective majority Latino citizenship district in Texas."<sup>12</sup>

## **PERSPECTIVE**

The growth of the Hispanic population, explosive increases in the populations of metropolitan areas, and the relationship between race and redistricting are the three demographic issues which stand out in SLC states. Southern states are becoming increasingly multicultural, and this phenomenon is beginning to be reflected in the political arena. At the same time, growth, both of minority populations and in general, can be beneficial but challenging. How states react to these issues will help define their success in the decade to come. **RR**

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Redman, Carl. "Out-migration a Real Threat." *The Advocate*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, September 9, 2001.
- <sup>2</sup> Following established practice, the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" will be used interchangeably.
- <sup>3</sup> Cohn, D'Vera. "Shifting Portrait of U.S. Hispanics." *The Washington Post*, May 10, 2001.
- <sup>4</sup> Glascock, Ned. "Fluency a Struggle for Many." *The News and Observer*, Raleigh, North Carolina, August 16, 2001.
- <sup>5</sup> For a more in-depth examination of this topic, please see Watts Hull, Jonathan. *Language Diversity and Southern Schools: The Growing Challenge*. Southern Legislative Conference Special Series Report, 1999.
- <sup>6</sup> Niolet, Benjamin and Rose Livingston. "Hispanic Figure Still Low." *The Birmingham News*, Birmingham, Alabama, March 15, 2001.
- <sup>7</sup> Livingston, Rose. "Franklin Official: Hispanic Count Off By Thousands." *The Birmingham News*, Birmingham, Alabama, March 16, 2001.
- <sup>8</sup> Mead, Andy. "Livin' La Vida Local." *The Lexington Herald-Leader*, Lexington, Kentucky, March 21, 2001.
- <sup>9</sup> "Spreading Out, Staying Isolated." *The Dallas Morning News*, April 4, 2001.
- <sup>10</sup> Diehl, Don. "Tulsa Booms as Hispanics Fuel Growth." *The Tulsa World*, June 21, 2001.
- <sup>11</sup> Maxwell, Scott. "GOP Gains Might Not Be So Large." *The Orlando Sentinel*, March 28, 2001.
- <sup>12</sup> Attlesey, Sam. "New Congressional Map Adds District to North Dallas County." *The Dallas Morning News*, November 15, 2001.

This Regional Resource was prepared for the membership of the Southern Legislative Conference (SLC) by Douglas Jacobson, SLC Research Associate.

The SLC is a non-partisan, non-profit organization serving Southern state legislators and their staffs. First organized in 1947, the SLC is a regional component of The Council of State Governments, a national organization which has represented state governments since 1933. The SLC is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia.