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Census Data Presents Rise in Multiracial Population of Youths

By **SUSAN SAULNY**

WASHINGTON — Among American children, the multiracial population has increased almost 50 percent, to 4.2 million, since 2000, making it the fastest growing youth group in the country. The number of people of all ages who identified themselves as both white and black soared by 134 percent since 2000 to 1.8 million people, according to census data released Thursday.

Census 2010 is the first comprehensive accounting of how the multiracial population has changed over 10 years, since statistics were first collected about it in 2000. It has allowed demographers, for the first time, to make comparisons using the mixed-race group — a segment of society whose precise contours and nuances were largely unknown for generations. The data shows that the multiracial population is overwhelmingly young, and that, among the races, American Indians and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are the most likely to report being of more than one race. Blacks and whites are the least likely.

In what experts view as a significant change from 2000, the most common racial combination is black and white. Ten years ago, it was white and “some other race” — a designation overwhelmingly used by people of Hispanic origin, which is considered by the government to be an ethnicity not a race.

“I think this marks a truly profound shift in the way Americans, particularly African-Americans, think about race and about their heritage,” said C. Matthew Snipp, a [professor in the sociology department at Stanford University](#).

Across the country, 9 million people — or 2.9 percent of the population — chose more than one race on the last census, a change of about 32 percent since 2000. But in the South and parts of the Midwest, the growth has been far greater than the national average. In North Carolina, for instance, the multiracial population grew by 99 percent. In Iowa, Indiana and Mississippi, the group grew by about 70 percent.

“The numbers, for mixed race families like my own, mean that the world must stop and recognize the changing face of today’s family, the changing face of today’s individual,” said Suzy Richardson, founder of [Mixed and Happy](#), a news and opinion Web site focused on issues of concern to multiracial families.

There are 57 racial combinations on the census. But of the population that chose more than one race, most chose one of the four most common combinations: 20.4 percent marked black and white; 19.3 percent chose white and “some other race.” The third most common pairing was Asian and white, followed by American Indian and white. These four combinations account for three-fourths of the total mixed race population.

For Michelle Hosenbackez, who is white and Hispanic and is married to a black Cuban man, the data suggests a future for her 16-month-old daughter that may be much different from her own childhood. Mrs. Hosenbackez, 27, of Raeford, N.C., said, “With the mixed race population growing the way it is, she will be able to say, ‘Hey, that person is like me.’ I want her to be able to build confidence in that identity.”