

Spelman College Census Information Center

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Spelman College

A Choice to Change the World

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Introduction

As previously discussed in the October 2009 newsletter for the Spelman Census Information Center, Atlanta has undergone many demographic changes since 2000. Most notably, the total population increased and the percentage of the foreign-born population increased. For the month of November, we will explore changes in the racial composition of the city of Atlanta and the potential implications for the Atlanta 2009 Mayoral election. Table 1 on page 2 will explore changes in the racial population from 2000 to 2008.

www.census.gov

www.cdc.gov/scientific.htm

www.quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13000.html

Table 1: Racial Changes in Atlanta, GA: 2000 to 2008

	Census 2000**	2006-2008 3-year estimates*	Percent Increase
	Atlanta, GA	Atlanta, GA	
Total Population	416,474	445,709	7.02%
Total people aged 18 years and over	323,470	352,929	9.11%
White	138352 (33.2%***)	171,258 (38.4%)	23.78%
Black or African American	255,689 (61.4%)	248,698 (55.8%)	---
American Indian and Alaska Native	765 (<1%)	867 (<1%)	13.33%
Asian	8,046 (1.93%)	8,399 (1.88%)	---
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	173 (<1%)	138 (<1%)	---
Some other race	8,272 (1.98%)	11,478 (2.58%)	38.76%
Latino or Hispanic (any race)	18,720 (4.49%)	21,672 (4.86%)	15.79%
Foreign born	27,352	30,383	11.08%

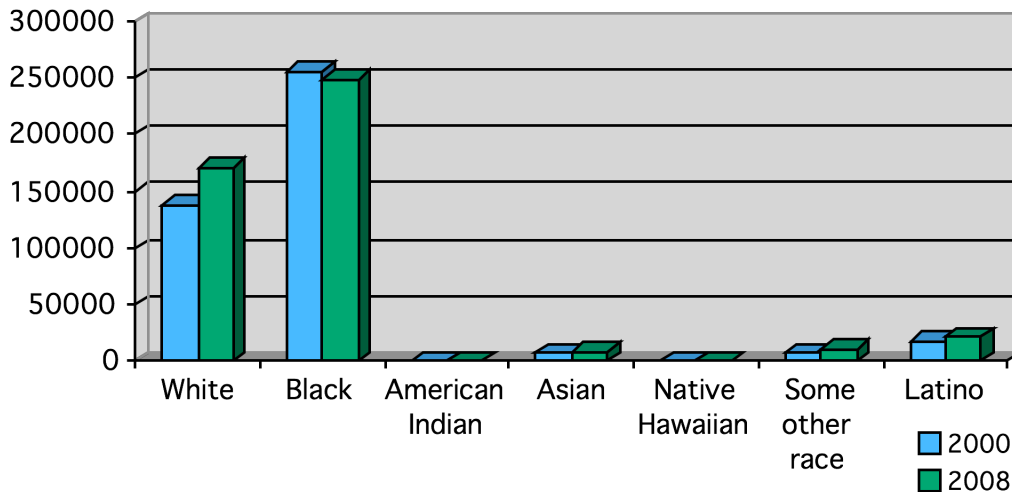
*Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2009a and 2009b **U.S. Census Bureau 2009c

**All percentages reported are rounded to the second decimal.

Table 1 shows the changes in the population of Atlanta between 2000 and 2008. Although African Americans maintained a majority presence in Atlanta from 2000 to 2008, there were other significant and interesting changes. All races except Pacific Islanders and African Americans saw an increase in their population. Both the **number** and **percentage** of African Americans living in the city of Atlanta actually decreased from 2000 to 2008. Graphs 1 and 2 visually demonstrate these changes.

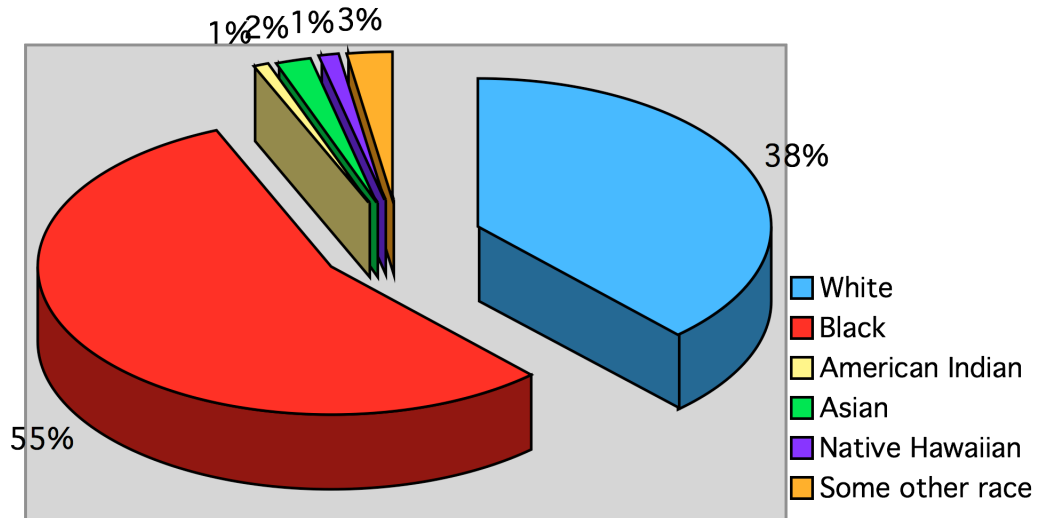
Graph 1

Racial Changes in Atlanta: 2000 to 2008



Atlanta's Population in 2008

Racial Breakdown of Atlanta: 2008



The Hispanic and Foreign-Born Population in Atlanta

As Table 1 and Graph 1 demonstrate, the Hispanic population in Atlanta increased by over 15% between 2000 and 2008. According to definition of Hispanic/Latino utilized in the US Census, Hispanics can self-identify as any race. The category “Hispanic”

is used to indicate ethnicity, not race. Table 1 shows that the population of Hispanic residents in Atlanta increased between 2000 and 2008 while the percentage of African Americans decreased. Other large increases in the population included the percentage of foreign-born

residents living in Atlanta. Compared to 2000, the percentage of foreign-born residents living in Atlanta increased by 11% in 2008. In summary, the number of Hispanic/Latino residents and foreign-born residents increased between 2000 and 2008.

The Election for Atlanta's New Mayor: 2009

Table 2

Breakdown:

As demonstrated in Table 2, there were 238,000 registered voters eligible to vote in the General and Special Municipal Election 2009. However, only 72,664 (30.53%) people actually voted in the first election. Of these 72,664 participating voters only 72,411 voted for the mayoral contest. A runoff for mayor was needed, and **more** voters actually voted in the **runoff** than the initial election. By less than a 1% margin of victory, Kasim Reed was elected as Atlanta's new mayor.

City of Atlanta General and Special Municipal Election 2009		City of Atlanta General and Special Municipal Election 2009 Runoff
Registered Voters	238,000	238,000
Number of voters who voted in General and Special Municipal Election 2009	72,664	78,111
Percentage of eligible voters who participated in election	30.53%	32.82%
Number of Precincts	161	161
Total votes for mayoral election	72,411	77,732
Total votes for Lisa Borders	10,272 (14.19%)	--
Total votes for Mary Norwood	33,279 (45.96%)	32,800 (49.45%)
Total votes for Kasim Reed	26,446 (36.52%)	34,788 (50.55%)
Total votes for Jesse Spikes	1,777 (2.45%)	--
Write-In Votes	60 (0.08%)	--

Source: Fulton County Board of Elections (2009).

A Breakdown of the Atlanta 2009 Mayoral Race (Continued)

According to an article in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, data from the 2009 Atlanta mayoral election show that voters tended to vote along racial lines. This is no surprise, as Atlanta has long been a predominantly black city (McWhirter & Perry 2009). As demonstrated earlier, blacks composed nearly 64% of Atlanta's population in 2000 until it declined to 55% in 2008 (See Table 1). At the same time, the population of whites in Atlanta increased. Relatedly, the city has elected a black mayor since 1973, when Maynard H. Jackson was elected as the first black mayor of Atlanta (Brown 2009). Examining the results of the 2009 mayoral

provides some interesting insight into voting patterns by race. Data referenced in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* show that in the November 3 election, Kasim Reed won "57 percent of his votes from five predominantly black council districts – on the east, west and south sides" (McWhirter & Perry 2009). **Spelman College, Morehouse College, and Clark Atlanta University** are all encompassed in City Council District 4, Precinct No. 04B (City of Atlanta 2009). Mary Norwood (a white candidate) gained 58 percent "of her vote from three predominantly white council districts -- on the north and northeast

sides of the city" (McWhirter & Perry 2009). Although Kasim Reed did win the re-election (see pg.5), it was a narrow win: less than 1% of the total votes. *If Atlanta continues to experience similar racial changes, the racial composition of the city and possibly the city's future leader of local government may also change.*

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The Census Information Center (CIC) is a cooperative program between the U.S. Census Bureau and 52 national, regional, and local non-profit organizations. This program represents the interest of underserved communities. The centers serve as repositories of census data and reports, making census information and data available to the public and the communities they serve. The CICs use census data in areas such as program planning, assessing advocacy needs, defining service areas, public policy development, developing new business enterprises, and conducting race/ethnic related research. Individually, and in concert with other community service organizations, the Spelman College's CIC focuses on strengthening community development organizations by improving access to information and national resources for Atlanta University Center (AUC) faculty and students, local activists, minority low income groups, housing, and neighborhood development organizations. Most of the Spelman CIC's projects involve assessment of area needs and local population characteristics.

Census Information Center History

The Primary Objectives are:

- Make the Spelman's CIC a resource for information on Census related data for diverse community groups
- Promote university community involvement in community development.
- Promote AUC student and faculty development and involvement in community services.
- Promote awareness of the Census as a resource base.
- Encourage AUC students and faculty to integrate Census material in their classrooms, research and career plans.

The Spelman College Census Information Center (CIC) was established in 2000 by economics professor Dr. Ronnie Tribble, and is now directed by Dr. Bruce Wade, professor and former chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

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