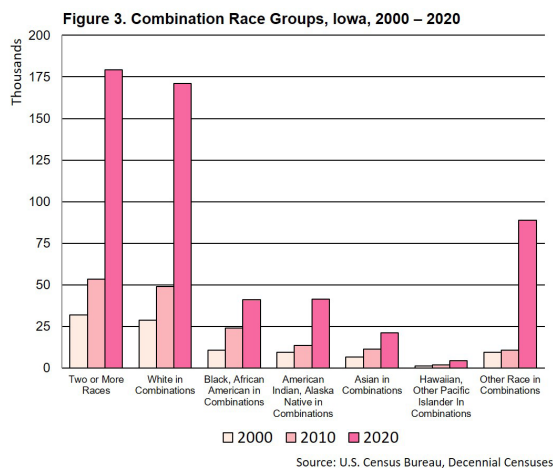
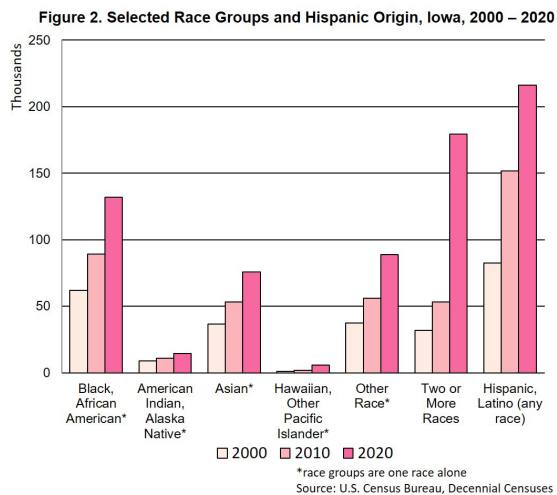
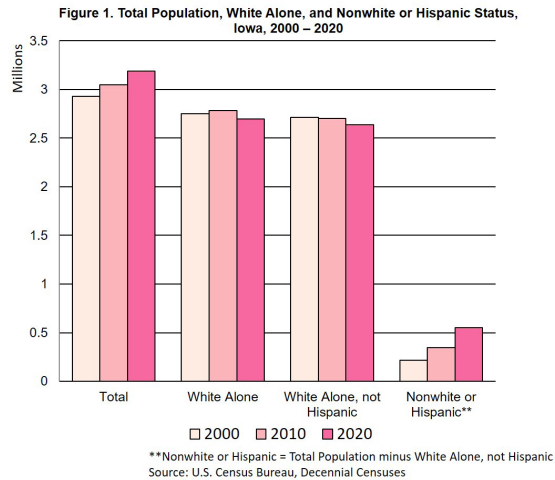


Indicators Program

Census 2020: Race and Hispanic Origin in Iowa, 1980 - 2020

Sandra Charvat Burke



Since the first Decennial Census in 1790, the U.S. Census has asked questions about the race of U.S. residents. Later censuses asked about Hispanic ethnicity as well.¹ In 2020, Iowa's total population numbered 3,190,369, an increase of 4.7% from 2010. There was, however, significant variation in how Iowa's residents identified themselves with regard to race and Hispanic ethnicity (Table 1).

The Decennial Census, as a self-report survey, uses a social, self-identification definition of race and is not "an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically."² Since Census 2000, the categories used for the race question have included five basic categories of: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, along with another category of Some Other Race. These categories follow the standards delineated by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 1997.³ Many persons identify as only one race but since Census 2000 individuals may choose more than one race.

In 2020, most Iowans (94.4%; 3,011,086) chose just one race. As in the past, those who identified as White Alone (84.5%; 2,694,521) were the most numerous single-race group. Next were Blacks or African Americans Alone (4.1%; 131,972), Some Other Race Alone (2.8%; 88,720), Asian Alone (2.4%; 75,629), American Indian or Alaska Native Alone (0.5%; 14,486), along with Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (0.2%; 5,758) (Figures 1, 2; Table 1).

These single-race groups did not account for the entire population, however. The Census reporting included a category of "Two or More Races," that combined together all those who chose multiple race identities. There were 179,283 Iowans (5.6%) who identified as multiracial and who selected various combinations of races. There were 57 possible combinations of the basic race groups that could include two, three, four, five, or six race choices. In 2020, the multiracial individuals in Iowa accounted for more people than any of the individual Nonwhite race groups alone. The Two or More Races group increased dramatically (236%) between 2010 and 2020 and had also gained during the previous decade as well (67.8%) (Figures 1 - 3, Table 1)

In 2020, among the 179,283 Iowans who identified as multiracial, a large majority (170,730; 95%) chose just two racial categories. There were only 8,553 Iowans who chose three or more race categories. In addition, the most common two-race choices were between a

Census 2020: Race and Hispanic Origin in Iowa, 1980 - 2020

Table 1. Race and Hispanic Origin or Latino, Iowa, 2000 - 2020.¹

Race or Ethnicity	2020		2010		2000		Change 2010-2020		Change 2000-2010	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population	3,190,369	100.0	3,046,355	100.0	2,926,324	100.0	144,014	4.7	120,031	4.1
One Race Only	3,011,086	94.4	2,993,022	98.2	2,894,546	98.9	18,064	0.6	98,467	3.4
White Alone	2,694,521	84.5	2,781,561	91.3	2,748,640	93.9	-87,040	-3.1	32,921	1.2
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	2,638,201	82.7	2,701,123	88.7	2,710,344	92.6	-62,922	-2.3	-9,221	-0.3
Black or African American Alone	131,972	4.1	89,148	2.9	61,853	2.1	42,824	48.0	27,295	44.1
American Indian or Alaska Native Alone	14,486	0.5	11,084	0.4	8,989	0.3	3,402	30.7	2,095	23.3
Asian Alone	75,629	2.4	53,094	1.7	36,635	1.3	22,535	42.4	16,495	44.9
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Alone	5,758	0.2	2,003	0.1	1,009	0.03	3,755	187.5	994	98.5
Some Other Race Alone	88,720	2.8	56,132	1.8	37,420	1.3	32,588	58.1	18,712	50.0
Two or More Races (57) ²	179,283	5.6	53,333	1.8	31,778	1.1	125,950	236.2	21,555	67.8
Two Races (15)	170,730	5.4	50,055	1.6	29,959	1.0	120,675	241.1	20,096	67.1
Three Races (20)	7,817	0.2	3,013	0.1	1,676	0.1	4,804	159.4	1,337	79.8
Four Races (15)	609	0.0	207	0.0	95	0.0	402	194.2	112	117.9
Five Races (6)	111	0.0	56	0.0	46	0.0	55	98.2	10	21.7
Six Races (1)	16	0.0	2	0.0	2	0.0	14	700.0	0	0.0
Hispanic or Latino (can be any race)	215,986	6.8	151,544	5.0	82,473	2.8	64,442	42.5	69,071	83.8
White alone, not Hispanic, or Latino	2,638,201	82.7	2,701,123	88.7	2,710,344	92.6	-62,922	-2.3	-9,221	-0.3
Nonwhite or Hispanic, Latino ³	552,168	17.3	345,232	11.3	215,980	7.4	206,936	59.9	129,252	59.8

¹Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses; ²Number of possible race combinations; ³Nonwhite or Hispanic, Latino = Total Population minus White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino

Nonwhite category and White. The exception to this was for Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders for whom the most common two-race choice in 2020 was with Asians (Table 2).

Following the OMB guidelines, the Decennial Census also included a separate question that asked all persons if they were of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. Hispanic or Latino origin is defined as an ethnicity, *not* as a race group, and is reported as a category *separate* from that of race.³ In 2020, 6.8 % (215,986) of Iowans said they were Hispanic or Latino. This could include those of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, or Spanish heritage along with other groups of Central or South American heritage.² Persons who identify as Hispanic or Latino can be of any race. Overall, those identifying as Hispanic or Latino comprised the largest minority group in Iowa, not only in 2020, but for the two previous Censuses as well (Figure 2, Table 1).

Race groups can be reported in conjunction with Hispanic or Latino identity. The category of White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino shows those who identified as White but not as Hispanic and represented the predominant race/ethnic group in Iowa in 2020 (2,638,201; 82.7%). One way to view the less predominant groups as a whole

is to subtract the White Alone, not Hispanic group from the total population. This gives the combined number of people who identify with Nonwhite race groups, as multiracial, or as Hispanic or Latino. In Iowa in 2020, this group numbered more than a half million (552,168) and was 17.3% of all Iowans (Figure 1, Table 1). Although the White Alone, not Hispanic group decreased by 2.3% between 2010 and 2020, the Nonwhite races, those identifying with multiple races, and those who were Hispanic or Latino all increased during the decade (Figures 1, 2; Table 1). A similar pattern was apparent in the previous decade as well. Overall, Figure 2 shows and expands the details of what is combined of the less predominant groups in Figure 1 from the bars labeled Nonwhite or Hispanic. Also to note, those who identified as Nonwhite, multiracial, or Hispanic have largely accounted for Iowa's population growth since 2000 (Figures 1, 2; Table 1).

Race in Combinations

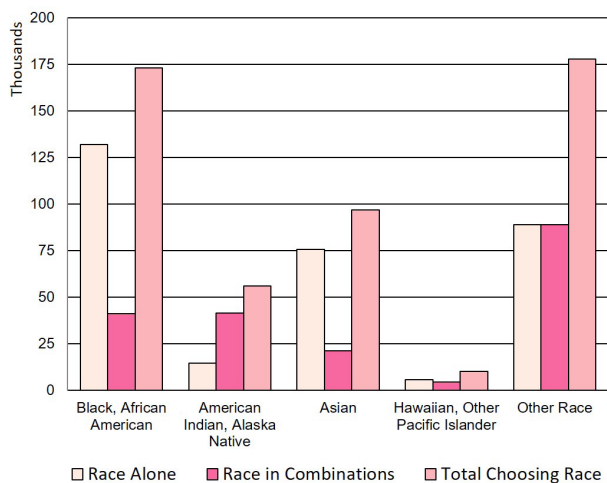
Starting with Census 2000, as individuals were able to select multiple races as part of their identity, it was possible to get a more detailed understanding of how Iowans perceived their racial identity and heritage. It is somewhat problematic, however, that by combining all the multiracial choices into the "Two or More Races"

Table 2. Race Combinations and Selected Two-Race Combinations,* Iowa, 2000 - 2020.¹

Race Combinations	2020	2010	2000	Change 2010-2020		Change 2000-2010	
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total with White Race	2,865,585	2,830,454	2,777,183	35,131	1.2	53,271	1.9
White Alone	2,694,521	2,781,561	2,748,640	-87,040	-3.1	32,921	1.2
White in Race Combinations	171,064	48,893	28,543	122,171	249.9	20,350	71.3
White in Two-Race Combinations*	162,829	45,776	26,817	117,053	255.7	18,959	70.7
Total with Black or African American Race	172,988	113,225	72,512	59,808	52.8	40,713	56.1
Black or African American Alone	131,972	89,148	61,853	42,824	48.0	27,295	44.1
Black or African American in Race Combinations	41,016	24,077	10,659	16,984	70.5	13,418	125.9
Black or African American and White*	31,415	19,063	7,856	12,352	64.8	11,207	142.7
Total with American Indian or Alaska Native Race	55,958	24,511	18,246	31,447	128.3	6,265	34.3
American Indian or Alaska Native Alone	14,486	11,084	8,989	3,402	30.7	2,095	23.3
American Indian or Alaska Native in Race Combinations	41,472	13,427	9,257	28,045	208.9	4,170	45.0
American Indian or Alaska Native and White*	33,145	9,475	7,075	23,670	249.8	2,400	33.9
Total with Asian Race	96,861	64,512	43,119	32,349	50.1	21,403	49.6
Asian Alone	75,629	53,094	36,635	22,535	42.4	16,459	44.9
Asian in Race Combinations	21,232	11,418	6,484	9,814	86.0	4,944	76.4
Asian and White*	15,391	8,663	4,369	6,728	77.7	4,294	98.3
Total with Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Race	10,073	3,847	2,196	6,226	161.8	1,651	75.2
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Alone	5,758	2,003	1,009	3,755	187.5	994	98.5
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander in Race Combinations	4,315	1,844	1,187	2,471	134.0	657	55.3
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and White*	1,121	860	468	261	30.3	392	83.8
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and Asian*	1,816	218	275	1,598	733.0	-57	-20.7
Total with Some Other Race	177,619	66,742	46,858	110,877	166.1	19,884	42.4
Some Other Race Alone	88,720	56,132	37,420	32,588	58.1	18,712	50.0
Some Other Race in Race Combinations	88,899	10,610	9,438	78,289	737.9	1,172	12.4
Some Other Race and White*	81,757	7,715	7,049	74,042	959.7	666	9.4

¹Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses; *Two-Race Combination

Figure 4. Selected Race Groups, Alone and in Combinations, Iowa, 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses

group, that some of the diversity and details of multiracial identities are hidden and not readily apparent. If the multiracial combinations are not used, then racial identities are missed and *understated*. Adding those that chose a race group alone together with those who chose that group in combination with another race, shows that there are more people with a specific racial identity than just those who chose it as their only race (Figures 3, 4; Table 2).

Between 2010 and 2020, the choice of race in combination increased significantly overall (236%) as well as for each individual race group. As an example, in 2020, the number of those of Some Other Race in combination increased from 10,610 in 2010 to 88,899, a 738% increase. Whites that chose race combinations increased from 48,893 in 2010 to 171,064 in 2020 (250%). A similar pattern was recorded for Native Americans or Alaska Natives for which a 208% increase in race

Census 2020: Race and Hispanic Origin in Iowa, 1980 - 2020

combinations was recorded between the decades (Figure 3, Table 2). Although the selection of race combinations by individuals in 2010 was greater than it had been in 2000, the gains were larger and more dramatic between 2010 and 2020 than in the previous decade.

As an example of how racial identity is understated, in 2020, 131,972 Iowans selected Black or African American Alone as their race identity. However, an additional 41,016 Iowans selected Black or African American in combination with another race group. Overall then, 172,988 Iowans said that Black or African American was a part or all of their racial identity. To focus only on the Black or African Americans who chose that identity alone missed nearly one-fourth of Iowans with Black or African American identity. In a similar fashion, the Some Other Race Alone category in 2020 missed half of those who reported Some Other Race as a choice (Figure 4, Table 2). Nonwhite groups are not the only ones affected. White identity was also understated. In 2020, in addition to the White Alone category, an additional 171,064 Iowans reported a White identity in combination with another race group (Table 2).

This situation was most dramatic for Native American and Alaska Natives. In 2020, 14,486 Native Americans or Alaska Natives chose that racial group alone. However, another 41,472 persons chose Native American or Alaska Native in combination with another race category. This gave a total of 55,958 who said that Native American or Alaska Native was part of their identity in 2020. Thus, using the category Native American or Alaska Native *alone*, significantly understated this group and *missed fully 74%* of Iowans with a Native American identity (Figure 4, Table 2).

The understating of racial identity was not only in 2020. At both Census 2010 and Census 2000, all the racial identities were understated when using just the “Alone” category for each race. And again, the Native American or Alaska Native group was especially affected. In both 2000 and 2010, more than half of those with a Native American or Alaska Native identity were missed when using just the “Alone” category (Table 2).

Overall then for Iowa between 2010 and 2020, diversity, in terms of Nonwhite groups, multiracial identities, and Hispanic or Latino increased. In this regard, Iowa was similar to other states and the nation as a whole. For the Decennial 2020 Census, the Census Bureau reports, “...that the U.S. population is much more multiracial and more diverse than what we measured in the past.”⁴ For the U.S. overall between 2010 and 2020, the White population remained the predominant race/ethnic group even though the White Alone population decreased, persons reporting multiracial identities increased significantly, and those who identified as Hispanic or Latino increased.⁴ These are the same patterns and trends observed in Iowa during the decade.

For both the 2010 and 2020 Decennial Censuses, the questionnaires used a two-question format with separate questions for race and for Hispanic or Latino. There was, however, somewhat greater guidance given and more “write in” space for the race question in 2020 compared with that for 2010. The Census Bureau has also noted an updating and improvement on data processing and coding procedures for 2020.⁴ These changes may have contributed to more thoughtfulness and to increased use of two or more races as individuals selected their racial identities.

Figure 5. Total Population, White Race, and Nonwhite Race Groups, Iowa, 1980 – 1990

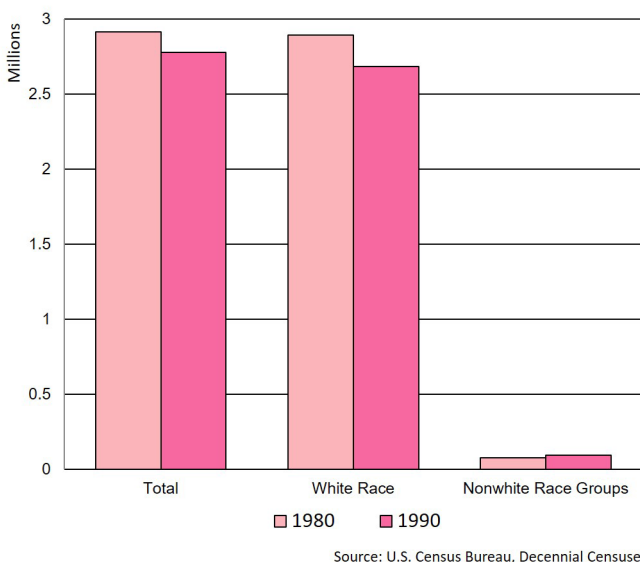


Figure 6. Selected Race Groups and Hispanic Origin, Iowa, 1980 – 1990

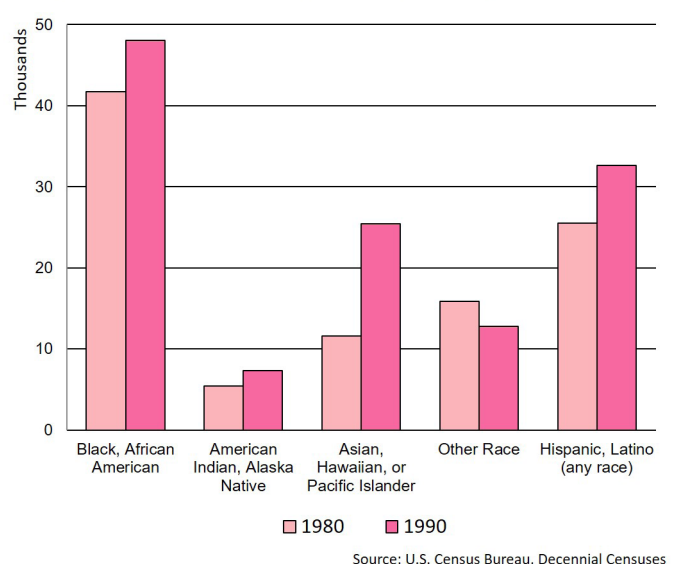


Table 3. Race and Hispanic or Latino, Iowa, 1980 - 1990.¹

Race or Ethnicity	1990		1980		Change 1980-1990	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	Percent
Total Population	2,776,831	100.0	2,913,808	100.0	-137,053	-4.7
White	2,683,090	93.6	2,839,225	97.4	-156,135	-5.5
Black or African American	48,090	1.7	41,700	1.4	6,390	15.3
American Indian or Alaska Native	7,349	0.3	5,455	0.2	1,894	34.7
Asian, Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander ²	25,476	0.9	11,577	0.4	13,899	120.1
Some Other Race	12,750	0.5	15,851	0.5	-3,101	-19.6
Hispanic or Latino (can be any race)	32,647	1.2	25,536	0.9	7,111	27.8
White, not Hispanic or Latino	2,663,840	95.9	na	na	na	na
Nonwhite or Hispanic, Latino ³	112,991	4.1	na	na	na	na

¹Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses; ²Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders were tabulated with Asians; ³Nonwhite or Hispanic, Latino = Total Population minus White, not Hispanic or Latino

It likely isn't possible with these data to tease out how much of the change in the race and Hispanic or Latino groups was due to actual demographic change among the groups or whether some of the change was due to increased thoughtfulness and attention that individuals may have given in reporting their racial identity. Likely, some may have reported themselves differently in 2020 than they would have in 2010. It is clear that more Whites selected multiple race categories than they had in the past. In addition, it is likely that heightened racial and ethnic awareness during the decade impacted how individuals self-identified.

Race 1980 and 1990

The 1980s were a difficult set of years for Iowa's population. Between 1980 and 1990, Iowa lost 4.7% of its population (-137,053) (Table 3). Iowa was among three other states (North Dakota, West Virginia, Wyoming) and the District of Columbia, that recorded a population loss that decade.

Because the race questions on the Census were changed in important ways in 2000 and multiracial selections were not tabulated prior to Census 2000, much of the race

data from 1980 and 1990 are not as directly comparable with those of 2000 and later as we would like. Still, despite the question changes, there are patterns and trends that can be compared.

In Iowa, Whites were the predominant race in both 1980 and 1990 as they have continued to be, even though their percent of the population had lessened by 2020 (Figures, 1, 4, 5; Tables 1, 3). It can also be seen that the Nonwhite groups (except Some Other Race) along with Hispanics increased during the decade of the 1980s even though the state as a whole declined and the White population lost 5.5%. Indeed, the statewide population decline in that decade would have been even higher had not the Nonwhite and Hispanic populations gained.

By 2000, Iowa had reversed the loss of the 1980s and has continued statewide on an upward trajectory ever since. Overall, since 2010, Iowa has continued gaining population but with some demographic changes. In 2020, Iowans identified racially and ethnically in more diverse ways than 10 years previously. This greater diversity reflects trends that have been ongoing, not only in Iowa, but nationwide as well.

Census 2020: Race and Hispanic Origin in Iowa, 1980 - 2020

This report and others in the series are available at: <https://indicators.extension.iastate.edu/Indicators/Census/>

Notes

¹<https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/decennial-census-measurement-of-race-and-ethnicity-across-the-decades-1790-2020.html>

²<https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html>

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/about/rdo/summary-files.html>

2020 Census State Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary file 2020 Census of Population and Housing Technical Documentation

³https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/fedreg_1997standards

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1997-10-30/pdf/97-28653.pdf>

⁴<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2021/population-changes-nations-diversity.html>

Sandra Charvat Burke

Iowa State University

Ames, IA

515-294-9307

scburke@iastate.edu

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