

Patterns in Tennessee's Black Population, 2000-2010

The recent increase in the rate of growth in the black population has important implications for the state's population mix.

by **H. Ronald Moser***

Introduction

The black population constitutes a significant market in Tennessee and is receiving increased attention from retailers and other business people in the state. Based on U.S. Census data, an estimated 1,057,315 blacks currently reside in Tennessee, accounting for 16.7 percent of the state's total population. According to 2010 Census figures, only 10 states have a larger percentage of nonwhites than Tennessee, and in absolute numbers, only 17 states have a larger nonwhite population. These numbers are the same for the 2000 Census results.

Importance of Minorities

Consideration of the black population is an important subject for many Tennessee business people in general as well as for planners of both public and private facilities and programs. The purpose of this paper, then, is to look at the minority population in Tennessee with respect to size, recent growth, components and sources of changes, and geographic distribution. By describing these patterns, the researcher hopes to provide the reader with considerable data from which conclusions might be drawn (Tomazic and Moser, 1994).

Data on the size and location of any racial, ethnic, or social group can be highly significant. Residency or migration patterns indicate the relative attractiveness or unattractiveness of a state or region. Furthermore, this can yield information about trends in labor markets, housing markets, and general business activity. Such information can also indicate levels of consumer expenditure behavior, income and saving habits, recreational activity, style preferences, and general standards of living. For minorities, residency and migration patterns have often been restricted (Lamon, 1981). However, changes in socioeconomic conditions have served to promote a new minority middle class that is more knowledgeable, confident, and influential. Furthermore, continued development is likely to be accompanied by rising real income with greater influence and more discretionary income. Thus, minorities form a potential market for many goods and services that retailers and other businesses will wish to develop.

Minorities in Tennessee

Racial identification in the 2010 Census was self-determined, and there was no definition provided by the Census for what qualifies a person as a member of a particular racial group. Therefore, the answers to the questions about one's racial background may not have scientific accuracy in every

Consideration of the black population is important for Tennessee business people as well as for planners of public and private facilities and programs.

Tennessee's Black Population

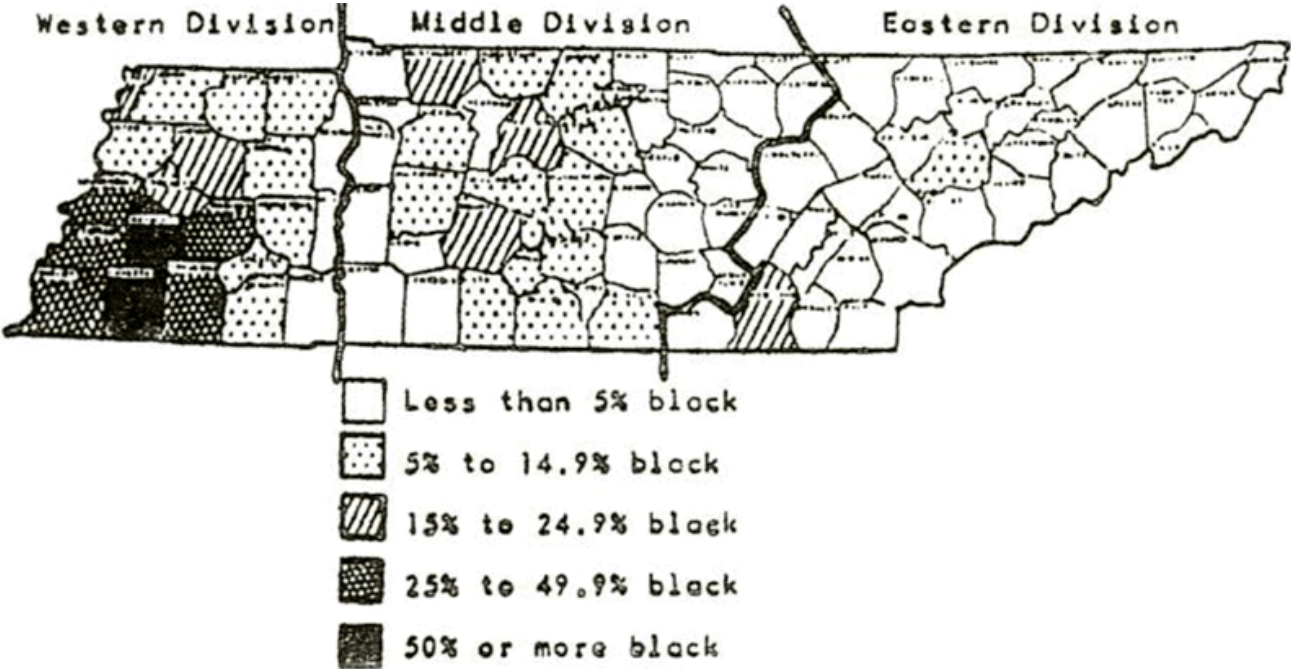
case, and the probability of error increases because of the diversity of backgrounds of American citizens. However, the perception of one's racial or minority status is much more meaningful since it identifies where individuals fit themselves into a society or community. Thus, the data are adequate for most purposes, including the analysis and observations made in this research (Moser and Tomazic, 1986).

Of the 1,545,323 persons in Tennessee who were classified as nonwhites by the 2010 Census, 67.9 percent classified themselves as black, 5.8 percent as Asian or Pacific Islanders, 1.3 percent as American Indian, and 1.0 percent as other race. Since none of the last three categories contain more than 7 percent of the nonwhites, it seems reasonable to focus on blacks when discussing minorities in Tennessee. Furthermore, blacks are a significant component of the population in many counties in Tennessee, particularly in the Western Division and highly urbanized counties.

Historically, total population growth in Tennessee has increased at an accelerating rate in every decennial census since 1950, and it seems to be continuing to increase. The state's population growth rate was only 8.4 percent in the 1950s but rose slightly to 10.1 percent in the 1960s before climbing to 16.9 percent in 1970. The growth rate for the 1980s was somewhat lower at 10.4 percent. The 2010 Census count showed that Tennessee had a total population of 6,346,105, its highest population ever. This figure represents a growth of 656,822 people or 11.5 percent from the 2000 population of 5,689,283. Tennessee's growth rate during the relevant 10-year period was almost 20 percent higher than the comparable national growth rate of 9.7 percent. Only 18 of the 50 states experienced a larger percentage increase than did Tennessee. Tennessee ranked 17th among the states in total population size in 2010 and 16th in 2000 (Moser and Johns, 2011). The pattern of growth rates among Tennessee's black population contrasts sharply with that of the state as a whole, showing large peaks and valleys over the past 60 years.

This recent increase in the rate of growth in the black population has important implications for the population mix in Tennessee. In 2000, blacks represented 16.4 percent of the state's population. In 2010, the proportion of blacks was 16.7 percent of the state's population. This figure represent a 0.3 percent increase and is the smallest increase since 1980, when the state had a .01 percent decline from 1970 to 1980.

Racial identification in the 2010 Census was self-determined. The Census did not define what qualifies a person as a member of a particular racial group.



Distribution by Region and Counties

While the proportion of blacks in the population continues to grow, blacks are not evenly distributed among the regions and counties of Tennessee. Traditionally, Tennessee is divided into three grand divisions, western, middle, and eastern. Of these, the Western Division contains a far greater percentage of blacks. The concentration of blacks in this segment of the state reflects Tennessee's border with Mississippi, where the area most heavily populated by blacks is in the southwest quadrant of the state (Hollman and Waller, 1981:3).

While the proportion of blacks in the population continues to grow, blacks are not evenly distributed among the regions and counties of Tennessee.

Tennessee's Black Population

Western Division

The Western Division, with 21 counties, mostly rural but also including Shelby County (Memphis), has the greatest concentration of blacks. In aggregate, 39.0 percent of the population in 2010 was black in every western county except the three that border the Tennessee river, each having a black population of at least 8 percent. Nine of these 21 western counties had black population proportions greater than the state average of 16.7 percent, and seven of these nine counties were 25 percent or more black. Two of the counties, Shelby and Haywood, had more blacks than whites. These are the only two counties in Tennessee where this pattern occurs. Thus, as one moves to the southwest corner of the state, the proportion of blacks becomes greater.

The heavy black population in the Western Division can be distributed in several ways. For example, while approximately more than one-third of the population there is black, 57.6 percent of all Tennessee blacks reside in these Western counties, and 53.3 percent of the state's blacks reside in the seven southwesternmost counties. Of the 12 counties in Tennessee whose black populations were greater than the state average, nine were in the Western Division.

Among the individual counties, Shelby (Memphis) had the largest black population. This concentration indicated a black population ratio of at least three to one over any other county in the state. In fact, 45.7 percent of all blacks in Tennessee reside in Shelby County. If one looks at the ratio of blacks to total population, the highest ratio occurs in Shelby County (52.1 percent), followed by Haywood (50.4 percent), Hardeman (41.4 percent), Madison (36.3 percent), Lauderdale (34.9 percent), Fayette (28.1 percent), and Lake (27.7 percent). These seven counties, all of which are contiguous except for Lake, are 48.9 percent black.

In fact, 45.7% of all blacks in Tennessee reside in Shelby County.

Tennessee's Black Population

Western Division Counties: Black Population Change and Rank, 2000-2010

County	Census				Change			
	2000		2010		2000		2010	
	Number	Rank	Number	Rank	Number	Rank	%	Rank
Benton	348	69	321	69	-27	72	-7.8	78
Carroll	3,050	26	2,879	27	-171	89	-5.6	72
Chester	1,558	41	1,569	41	11	58	0.71	61
Crockett	2,088	36	1,843	40	-245	92	-11.7	86
Decatur	407	66	338	68	-69	79	-17.0	93
Dyer	4,795	18	5,477	18	682	14	14.2	32
Fayette	10,355	9	10,784	10	429	17	4.1	52
Gibson	9,497	13	9,340	15	-157	87	-1.7	66
Hardeman	11,516	8	11,281	9	-235	91	-3.0	67
Hardin	944	51	896	52	-48	76	-5.1	71
Haywood	10,106	11	9,465	14	-641	95	-6.3	75
Henderson	2,042	38	2,187	33	145	28	7.1	42
Henry	2,787	28	2,599	30	-188	90	-6.7	76
Lake	2,481	30	2,171	34	-310	93	-12.5	89
Lauderdale	9,236	14	9,720	13	484	15	5.2	48
Madison	29,810	5	35,636	5	5,826	6	19.5	25
McNairy	1,537	42	1,550	42	13	55	0.85	60
Obion	3,196	23	3,367	24	171	27	5.4	47
Shelby	435,824	1	483,381	1	47,557	1	10.9	37
Tipton	10,202	10	11,449	8	1,247	11	12.2	34
Weakley	2,424	31	2,736	29	312	22	12.9	33
Total	554,203		608,989		54,786		9.9	
Tennessee	932,809		1,057,315					

Tennessee's Black Population

Middle Division

Another concentration of counties with a high proportion of blacks is in the Middle Division of the state. This area consists of a north-south corridor extending from Montgomery, Robertson, and Sumner counties on the Kentucky border to Giles and Lincoln on the Alabama border. The 14 counties that make up this corridor represent 34 percent of the counties in the Middle Division of the state and have a black-to-total population ratio of 11.7 percent. A total of 27.5 percent of all Tennessee blacks reside in these 14 counties. By far the largest black population in the Middle Division is in Davidson County (Nashville), which also contains the largest percentage of blacks (27.7 percent). Montgomery County was next with 19.1 percent black, while Maury and Rutherford counties were 12.5 percent black. These four counties accounted for 23.6 percent of all Tennessee blacks. Sumner County also had a large black population, but it was lower proportionately at 6.4 percent.

Davidson, Montgomery, Maury, and Rutherford counties accounted for 23.6% of all Tennessee blacks.

Tennessee's Black Population

Middle Division Counties: Black Population Change and Rank, 2000-2010

County	Census				Change			
	2000		2010		2000		2010	
	Number	Rank	Number	Rank	Number	Rank	%	Rank
Bedford	3,189	24	3,564	22	375	19	11.8	35
Cannon	187	73	168	75	-19	70	-10.2	83
Cheatham	532	59	564	61	32	45	6	45
Clay	115	80	104	82	-11	67	-9.6	82
Coffee	1,724	40	1,845	39	121	30	7	43
Davidson	147,696	2	173,730	2	26,034	2	17.6	29
Dekalb	250	71	250	71	0	62	0	62
Dickson	1,978	39	2,056	37	78	36	3.9	53
Fentress	18	90	31	88	13	55	72.2	11
Franklin	2,157	35	2,109	35	-48	76	-2.2	68
Giles	3,476	22	3,012	26	-464	94	-13.3	90
Gundy	20	88	37	86	17	52	85.0	8
Hickman	1,009	50	1,120	47	111	31	11.0	36
Houston	268	70	193	73	-75	82	-28	95
Humphreys	527	60	463	64	-64	78	-12.1	88
Jackson	16	92	30	89	14	54	87.5	7
Lawrence	587	56	642	59	55	38	9.4	41
Lewis	165	74	199	72	34	44	20.6	23
Lincoln	2,304	33	2,269	32	-35	73	-1.5	65
Macon	44	84	93	83	49	39	1.11	5
Marshall	2,081	37	2,003	38	-78	83	-3.7	69
Maury	9,904	12	10,154	12	250	24	2.5	56
Montgomery	25,848	6	32,982	6	7,134	4	28	18
Moore	156	76	145	77	-11	67	-7.1	77
Overton	56	83	87	84	31	46	55.4	13
Perry	130	78	119	79	-11	67	-8.5	79
Pickett	5	95	5	95	0	62	0	62
Putman	1,064	48	1,455	43	391	18	36.7	15
Robertson	4,691	19	4,934	19	243	25	5.2	49
Rutherford	17,312	7	32,886	7	15,574	3	90.0	6
Sequatchie	22	86	21	93	-1	65	-4.5	70
Smith	448	62	410	66	-38	74	-8.5	81
Stewart	159	75	188	74	29	48	18.2	27
Sumner	7,540	15	10,311	11	2,771	8	36.8	14
Trousdale	824	54	754	55	-70	81	-8.5	81
Van Buren	7	94	23	91	16	53	2.28	1
Warren	1,211	45	1,142	46	-69	79	-5.7	73
Wayne	1,145	47	978	50	-167	88	-14.6	91
White	378	68	459	65	81	34	21.4	21
Williamson	6,564	16	7,941	16	1,377	10	21.0	22
Wilson	5,563	17	7,297	17	1,734	9	31.2	17
Total	251,370		306,773		55,403		22.0	
Tennessee	932,809		1,057,315					

Tennessee's Black Population

Eastern Division

Other concentrations of blacks, albeit much smaller, occur in the Eastern Division. These are centered in the two largest counties in the region, Hamilton (Chattanooga) and Knox (Knoxville) counties. Hamilton County has a black-to-total population ratio of 20.2 percent and a total black population that is third highest in the state. Knox County had the fourth-largest black population, but its population ratio was only 8.8 percent. No other county in the Eastern Division had a black population of more than 5 percent.

Only Knox and Hamilton counties in the Eastern Division had a black population of more than 5%.

Significance of Regional Difference

It is interesting to note that if the state were divided in half, the distribution of blacks in the population would be quite extreme. The eastern half of the state contains substantial blocks of white counties where the proportion of blacks is very low. The Eastern Division of the state contains only 141,553 blacks, and these represent only 13.4 percent of all blacks who reside in Tennessee. If Knox and Hamilton counties were excluded from this area, the percentage for the Eastern Division is 1.5 percent black and contains only 3.4 percent of all blacks in the state.

The lowest proportion of blacks in the Middle Division is found in Pickett and Sequatchie counties, where the percentage of blacks is only 0.1 percent. Pickett County has the smallest absolute number of blacks in the state with only five. However, six other counties in the Middle Division have a population that is less than 1 percent black. All of these counties are concentrated on the eastern edge of the Middle Division. In the Eastern Division, Scott and Union counties have the lowest percentage of blacks, 0.1 percent. Eight additional counties in the Eastern Division also have populations that are less than 1 percent black. Five of these counties are on the northwestern edge of the Eastern Division, adjacent to the six counties in the Middle Division that have less than 1 percent black population. Thus, the preponderance of predominately white counties in Tennessee covers a wedge-shaped area that includes most of what is referred to as the Cumberland Plateau region. This wedge of white counties constitutes almost 20 percent of the land area in Tennessee.

The concentration of blacks in the western end of the state is no historical accident. In the second quarter of the 19th century, blacks, as slaves, were brought into this region in large numbers to provide the labor needed for the booming cotton culture that was developing in western Tennessee and northern Mississippi (Lamon, 1981:3-25). Since agriculture was of a different kind in the middle and eastern parts of Tennessee, fewer blacks settled or were settled in these regions. Also, unlike the eastern parts of the state, the average growth rate for the black population in the western part of the state was always significantly higher than that of the white population. This reflects the heavy dependence on agriculture in this part of Tennessee and the inability of blacks to migrate because of a lack of industrial skills (Lamon, 1981).

Between 1900 and 1940 the population growth rate for blacks in each region of the state fell considerably when compared to the white population. The average growth rate for the

Tennessee's Black Population

Eastern Division Counties: Black Population Change and Rank, 2000-2010

County	Census				Change			
	2000		2010		2000		2010	
	Number	Rank	Number	Rank	Number	Rank	%	Rank
Anderson	2,766	29	2,847	28	81	34	2.9	55
Bledsoe	458	61	470	63	12	57	2.6	56
Blount	3,077	25	3,380	23	303	23	9.8	39
Bradley	3,511	21	4,219	21	708	13	20.2	24
Campbell	120	79	125	78	5	59	4.2	51
Carter	566	58	760	54	194	26	34.3	16
Claiborne	224	72	282	70	58	37	25.9	19
Cocke	669	55	669	58	0	62	0	62
Cumberland	59	82	161	76	102	32	1.72	3
Grainger	67	81	107	81	40	42	59.7	12
Green	1,329	44	1,373	45	44	40	3.3	54
Hamblen	2,396	32	2,527	31	131	29	5.5	46
Hamilton	62,005	3	67,900	3	5,895	5	9.5	40
Hancock	33	85	24	90	-9	66	-27.3	94
Hawkins	830	53	740	56	-90	84	-10.8	84
Jefferson	1,027	49	1,048	48	21	51	2.0	59
Johnson	424	65	378	67	-46	75	-10.8	85
Knox	32,987	4	38,045	4	5,058	7	15.3	30
Loudon	447	63	533	62	86	33	19.2	26
McMinn	2,195	34	2,066	36	-129	85	-5.9	74
Marion	1,149	46	1,012	49	-137	86	-11.9	87
Meigs	138	77	116	80	-22	71	-15.9	92
Monroe	884	52	926	51	42	41	4.8	50
Morgan	440	64	806	53	366	20	83.2	9
Polk	22	86	50	85	28	49	1.27	4
Rhea	580	57	616	60	36	43	6.2	44
Roane	1,409	43	1,440	44	31	46	2.2	58
Scott	19	89	21	93	2	61	10.5	38
Sevier	396	67	711	58	315	21	79.5	10
Sullivan	2,888	27	3,329	25	441	16	15.3	31
Unicoi	12	93	36	87	24	50	2.0	2
Union	18	90	22	92	4	60	22.2	20
Washington	4,091	20	4,814	20	723	12	17.7	28
Total	127,236		141,553		14,317		11.3	
Tennessee	932,809		1,057,315					

Tennessee's Black Population

black population in the Western Division was half that of the white population and more than half in the Eastern Division. In the Middle Division, the black population actually suffered net losses in population, registering an average annual negative growth rate for the period of 1900 to 1940 of 0.6 percent. In fact, in this century, the peak population for blacks in the Middle Division occurred in 1900. Since 1950, the growth rate for the black population has been approximately half that of whites in the Eastern and Middle divisions. However, since 1950, the black population has exhibited a higher percentage of growth rate in every decade except 1960. This growth rate has occurred primarily in the Western Division of the state. This seems to reflect a stemming of out-migration by blacks from the region and even a return migration from outside the state. However, these migration patterns are quite pointedly urban rather than rural. Urban areas in Tennessee in all regions have gained black population at the expense of rural areas. citizens. However, the perception of one's racial or minority status is much more meaningful since it identifies where individuals fit themselves into a society or community. Thus, the data are adequate for most purposes, including the analysis and observations made in this research (Moser and Tomazic, 1986).

For the state as a whole, the counties with the largest absolute increase of blacks were (1) Shelby (47,557), (2) Davidson (26,034), (3) Rutherford (15,574), (4) Montgomery (7,134), (5) Hamilton (5,895), (6) Madison (5,826), (7) Knox (5,058), (8) Summer (2,771), (9) Wilson (1,734), and (10) Williamson (1,377). Two interesting observations can be made concerning these counties. First, six of these 10 counties contain cities of 75,000-plus population, illustrating the urban migration of blacks. Second, five of the 10 counties already had a black-to-total population percentage higher than the state average of 16.7 percent. Among these 10 counties, two are in the Western Division of the state, six are in the Middle Division, and two are in the Eastern Division.

Variations of gains and losses of blacks can be seen in the three regions. In the Western Division, 52 percent (11) of the counties had net gains in black population, while 48 percent (10) experienced a net loss. Overall, the black population in the region grew by 9.9 percent (54,786 blacks), but 53,383 (97.4 percent) of this total was due to increases in two counties, Shelby and Madison, which grew at a rate of 25.6 percent. Thus, the net gain for the balance of the region was only 1,403 blacks, and the growth rate was only 2.6 percent, between 2000 and 2010.

In the Middle Division, 36.6 percent (15) of the counties suffered a net loss in black population, while 58.5 percent (24) had a net gain, and 4.9 percent (2) had no change in black population. Overall, the black population in the region grew by 22 percent, which was the largest increase of the three divisions. Again, however, as in the Western Division, much of this growth was concentrated in those counties that contained cities of 75,000-plus population. Of the increase of 54,624 blacks in the division, six counties accounted for 98.6 percent of the growth: Davidson, Rutherford, Montgomery, Summer, Wilson, and Williamson. The net gain for the balance of the region was only 779 blacks for a growth rate of only 1.4 percent. The largest percentage of gains and losses are to be found among those counties that had very low black population. For example, Jackson County

The eastern half of the state contains substantial blocks of "white" counties where the proportion of blacks is very low.

gained 14 blacks for an increase of 87.5 percent, while Sequatchie County lost only one black for a net percentage loss of -4.5 percent.

In the Eastern Division, no counties suffered a net loss in black population, 97.0 percent (32) of the counties had a net gain, and 3 percent (1) had no change in black population. Overall, the black population of the region grew by 11.3 percent, and, as in the other regions, most of the growth was concentrated in counties with large urban populations. The black population increased by 14,317, and 94.3 percent of the increases were in the counties of Hamilton, Knox, Washington, Bradley, Sullivan, Morgan, and Sevier. As in the Middle Division, the largest percentage gains and losses were to be found generally among those counties with a low black population. Thus, Morgan County, which was only 3.7 percent black in 2010, registered the largest increase, 83.2 percent. Also, Sevier County, with only 0.8 percent black, registered the second largest increase, 79.5 percent.

Residential Distribution

Blacks in Tennessee are overwhelmingly urban in their residential patterns. According to the Census figures, 90 percent of the blacks in Tennessee were classified as urban, while only 10 percent were classified as rural.

Six cities in the state have a population of more than 75,000 (see table). Within these six cities, blacks represent 39.0 percent of the population, more than double the proportion in the state. Furthermore, 67.8 percent of all Tennessee blacks reside in these six cities. This represents no increase from the 2000 Census, when blacks also constituted 39.0 percent of the population in these cities, and the blacks in these cities represented 71.1 percent of all Tennessee blacks. Overall, the black population in these six cities grew by only 8.1 percent. The white population grew in each of the cities, while two of the six cities lost white population between 2000 and 2010. The greatest gains tended to be in cities in the Middle and Western divisions, while smaller gains were registered by cities in the Eastern Division. This tendency of blacks to concentrate in metropolitan or major urbanized areas is similar in each of the three divisions in the state, and this fact should be significant for businesses as well as governments in Tennessee.

Conclusion

The data reviewed in this study indicate that the decline in the black population in Tennessee, noted in the earlier decades of the 20th century, has slowed and reversed, with the largest percentage gain occurring between 1990 and 2010. Although the proportion of blacks to total population has continued its historic decline, this appears to be stabilizing. This decline is not uniform across the regions of the state: the Western Division experienced a larger increase in proportion of blacks; the Middle and Eastern divisions experienced only a slight increase. More important, the data reveal the continuing urbanization of the black population in the state. Major urban areas in the state have continued to be a draw for blacks, and the black-to-total population ratio has increased. Even if no further information were available, these facts alone should be helpful to firms producing goods and services in Tennessee.

Six of the 10 counties with the largest absolute increase in black population contain cities of 75,000-plus population, illustrating the urban migration of blacks.

Tennessee's Black Population

Black and White Population in Tennessee Cities of 75,000+ in 2000 and 2010

	Blacks			Whites		
	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change
Memphis	399,208	409,687	2.6%	223,728	190,120	-15.0%
Nashville	146,235	170,907	16.9%	359,581	363,611	1.1%
Knoxville	28,171	30,567	8.5%	138,611	136,097	-1.8%
Chattanooga	56,086	58,507	4.3%	92,874	97,202	4.7%
Clarksville	24,030	30,798	28.2%	70,254	87,135	24.0%
Murfreesboro	9,560	16,510	72.7%	54,947	82,240	50.0%

As the changes noted in this paper develop further and the black population continues to grow, there will likely be changes in migration and age patterns as well as the occupation and wage structure for Tennessee. Thus, it is important that researchers begin looking at these variables, especially the latter two, since they should lead to a greater accumulation of capital, better social networking, and an upgrading of professional experience and competence. This trend will have important implications for state and local governments in Tennessee that must supply services to their citizenry. It is also important to distributors as well as to financial intermediaries, producers, and other businesses who might well benefit from a better understanding of market patterns and the demand for goods and services of this important and expanding urban component of the state's population.

Acknowledgment and Disclaimer

This population data is based upon work supported by Randy Gustafson, director, Tennessee State Data Center. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Tennessee State Data Center.

** H. Ronald Moser is a professor in the Labry School of Business Administration and Technology at Cumberland University in Lebanon, TN, and a retired MTSU professor (Management and Marketing).*

Six cities in the state have a population of more than 75,000. Within these six cities, blacks represent 39.0% of the population, more than double the proportion in the state.

References

Population estimates in this report are taken from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Local Population Estimates, Current Population Reports*, 03 June, 2011.

Hollman, Kenneth W., and E. Nolan Waller. (1981). "Mississippi's Minority Population." *Mississippi's Business*, 40 (December) 3:1-10.

Lamon, Lester C. (1981). *Blacks in Tennessee: 1791-1970*, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

Moser, H. Ronald, and Horace E. Johns. (2011). "Economic and Marketing Observations on the Population Changes in Tennessee," *Journal of Business and Economic Perspectives*.

Moser, H. Ronald, and Terry Tomazic. (1986). "Patterns In Tennessee's Black Population: An Assessment," *Journal of Business and Economic Perspectives*.

Terry Tomazic, and H. Ronald Moser. (1994). "Patterns in Missouri's Black Population: An Assessment," *Regional Business Review*.