

# Pockets of City Grow Farther Apart on Race

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By Michelle Krupa, The Times-Picayune

A largely overlooked byproduct of the historic diaspora triggered by Hurricane Katrina, which shrank New Orleans' population by a quarter, is that parts of the city were more segregated last year than a decade earlier, according to an analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data collected last year.



While the proportion of black residents in the city shrank during the past decade, a few sections of town nonetheless had a higher proportion of African-Americans last year than they did in 2000, according to the study of census findings at the tract level by Tulane University geographer Richard Campanella.

"Paradoxically, while much of greater Gentilly and eastern New Orleans lost large numbers of African-Americans in absolute numbers, they simultaneously became more

African-American in a relative sense because the few whites who lived in those areas departed in even greater numbers than their black neighbors," Campanella, the author of six books about the city's landscape, noted in a summary of his findings.

Meanwhile, neighborhoods stretching from the Riverbend to Uptown and into Treme and St. Roch saw a parallel increase in the proportion of white residents, a change that reflects historic trends, Campanella wrote.

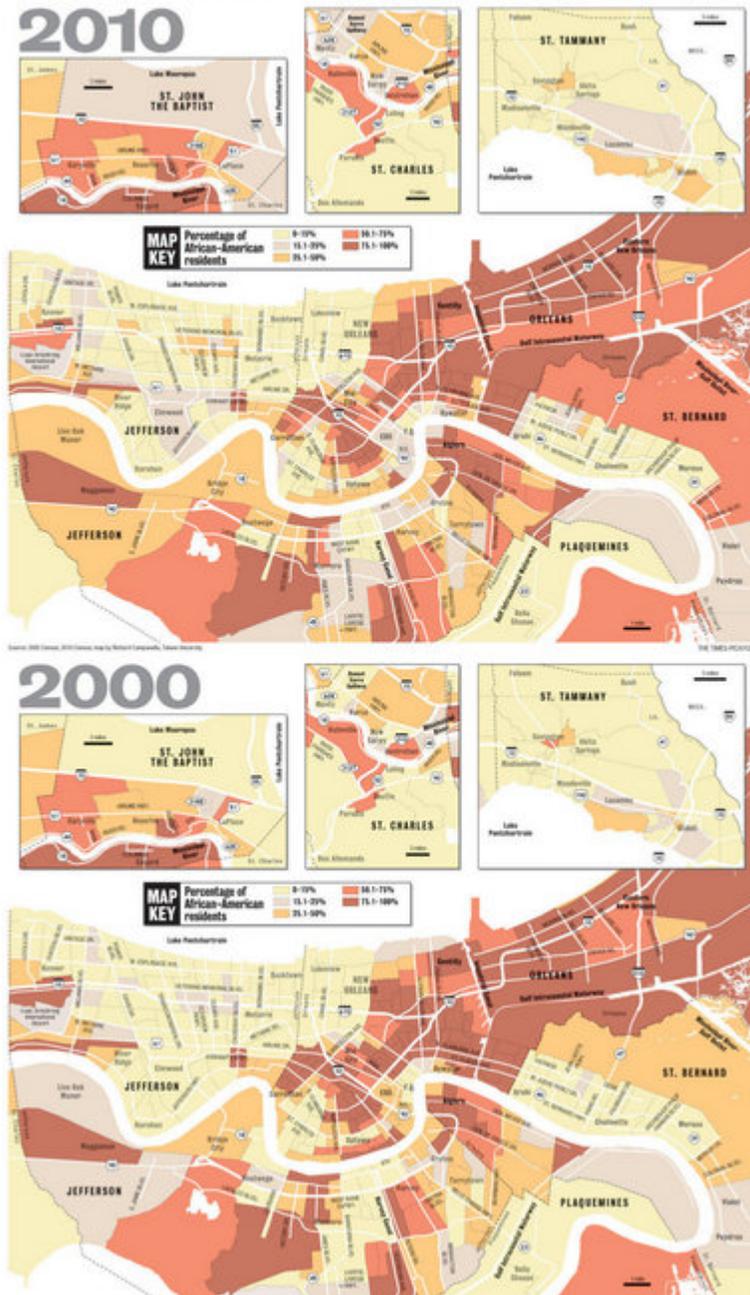
Even as housing patterns became somewhat more segregated in New Orleans, the suburbs became more diverse, Campanella found -- reflecting demographic trends seen across America.

## 'White teapot'

In the city proper, a settlement pattern Campanella has dubbed the "white teapot" -- with its "pot" planted in the Carrollton and university areas of Uptown and its "spout" stretching along St. Charles Avenue and Magazine Street through the French Quarter to the Industrial Canal -- long has been home to a large proportion of New Orleans' white population.

**PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE DESCRIBING THEMSELVES ONLY AS BLACK,**

and not Hispanic, compared with the total population in each census tract. Some neighborhoods, such as eastern New Orleans, Gentilly and Algiers, gained in percentage of black residents since 2000. But parts of Uptown, Carrollton, Bywater and Mid-City now have a lower percentage of African-Americans.



Indeed, the area in 2000 was home to 42 percent of the city's white residents, though it comprised just 10 percent of its land area, Campanella said. That pattern intensified and expanded during the past decade, he found.

Since 2000, "every single tract between Magazine and Tchoupitoulas -- including Riverside, Irish Channel and the Lower Garden District riverfront -- has seen increased white and decreased black populations, some of them dramatic," Campanella wrote.

Tracts in that area where at least half the residents were black in 2000 almost all fell below the threshold, while the number of tracts where fewer than 15 percent of residents were African-American grew, the analysis shows.

That also was the case for historic pockets of African-American residents within the "white teapot," particularly along Coliseum Street at Valence and along Burdette and Adams streets, he said.

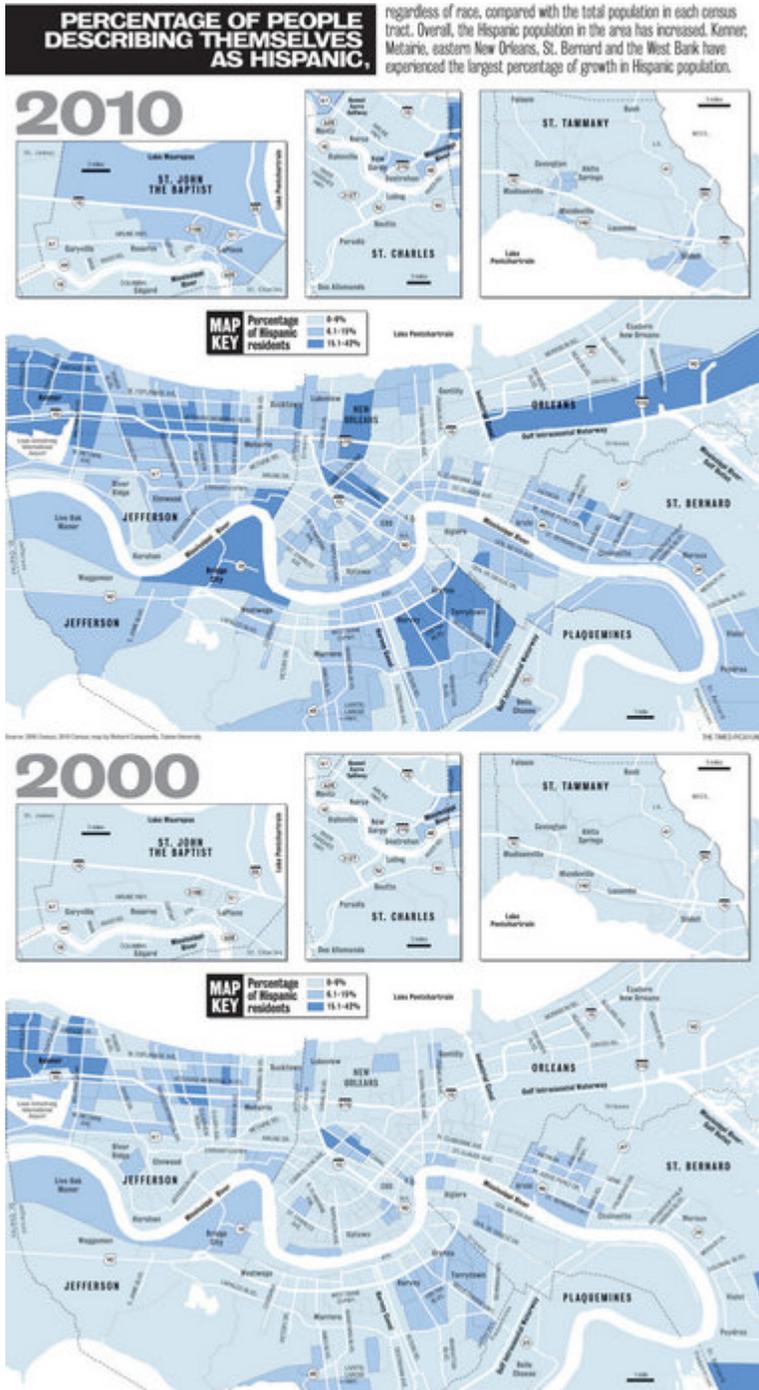
Meanwhile, census tracts that started gentrifying through an influx of white residents in the 1980s and 1990s, including those in the heart of Faubourg Marigny and Bywater, "accelerated that process in the 2000s, having lost half to three-quarters of their black populations," he wrote.

**More black residents in many suburbs**

Among the few census tracts that saw significant gains in the proportion of black

residents were in majority-white Lakeview and West End, Campanella found, though he noted that remarkable percentage increases owed often to the tracts' extremely small number of black inhabitants in 2000. Campanella found similar shifts in the Aurora and Brechtel sections areas of Algiers, which didn't flood.

Looking more broadly across the metropolitan area, Campanella noted upticks in the concentration of black residents in many suburbs, from Arabi to Harvey and points west along the West Bank to pockets of Metairie and north into central St. Tammany Parish.



The region also experienced a bump in its Hispanic population during the decade ending last year, with parishwide proportions ranging from 5 percent across much of the area to a high of 12 percent in Jefferson Parish, compared with a range of 2 percent to 7 percent a decade earlier. Because the census considers Hispanic origin an ethnicity, those residents can be of any race.

According to Campanella, the concentration of Hispanic residents in 2010 intensified in relative numbers and also spread out from four key hubs identified by the 2000 census: New Orleans' Mid-City neighborhood, Terrytown, the northern reaches of Kenner and the section of Metairie around Veterans and Causeway boulevards.

Elsewhere, the numbers of Hispanic residents grew in particular in majority African-American areas, especially those that flooded, he found. Perhaps the best example, Campanella said, is the Chef Menteur Highway corridor in eastern New Orleans, which offers new, lower-cost housing and proximity to recovery jobs.

At the same time, the region's Asian population didn't experience significant relative fluctuations, though Campanella identified new concentrations of Asian residents in 2010 in the West Bank's Woodmere and Timberlane subdivisions.

### **In sync with national trends**

In general, Campanella said the changes in racial and ethnic concentrations mirror national trends.

"We see a reversal of the standard mid- to late-20th century pattern of middle-class whites moving to the suburbs," he said. "The suburbs are diversifying in every way imaginable, while inner-cities are seeing a return of middle-class whites."

Focusing on the city, James Perry of the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center called the observations "stunning."

"People have for a long time argued that New Orleans isn't like the rest of the country, that in New Orleans there isn't a train track that you cross or a bridge you go over that divides the African-American community from the white community," he said.

"It may be true that the physical boundaries are not there in the way they are in other communities, but there's clearly a divide in settlement patterns between black families and white families," Perry said.

Campanella's analysis does not attempt to compare the prevalence of segregation in New Orleans to other cities. Other academics have found segregated housing patterns are strong here, although the city generally does not rank among America's most segregated.

Citing the landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling that outlawed segregation in public schools, Perry, whose organization spearheaded a federal lawsuit alleging racial discrimination in the state's Road Home program, said the "basic principle that separate cannot be equal" applies to a less-integrated New Orleans.

Without laying blame on any policy or official, Perry cited the lack of a hospital in eastern New Orleans six years after Katrina, though plans are on the table to offer a 24-hour urgent-care facility at the former Methodist Hospital by year's end.

"The battle cry that you hear from folks in New Orleans East is that this is a majority African-American community and we don't have a hospital," he said. "If you venture Uptown, you find majority-white communities that have hospitals."

### **'New demographic order'**

University of New Orleans political scientist Ed Chervenak said he sees the latest data as evidence that "we're operating under a new demographic order."

Noting that minority groups tend to compete with each other -- for jobs, housing and political clout -- rather than banding together against the majority, the growing concentration of Hispanic residents could change the dynamics of traditionally African-American areas, he said.

Though the region's political allegiances historically have cleaved along black-white lines, Chervenak said officials might now face a "black, white and brown divide."

Meanwhile, he cited a political theory that posits that "as people of different races and ethnicities interact, they become more comfortable with each other." The theory suggests that voters in diverse areas are less skittish about casting ballots for candidates whose races differ from their own.

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