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The Cost of Segregation || Part I: Racial Attitudes



Max Ortiz /The Detroit News

Metro Detroit demonstrates patterns similar to other Great Lakes metro areas in its segregation: it has grown slowly and attention has focused on black-white relations.

The Racial Divide

Locale links segregated cities

The six most racially divided regions are clustered around the Great Lakes

By Gordon Trowbridge / The Detroit News

Detroit and other Great Lakes metro areas are the bastions of segregation in the United States, where common histories, growth trends and demographics have helped make them stand out from the rest of the country.

"When you look at the top five cities in segregation in 1910, all the way up to 1990, 2000, you're basically looking at the same set of cities," said Jacob Vigdor of Duke University

CyberSurvey

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of Duke University.

The common factors:

* Geography and history: Most of the nation's most segregated regions are clustered in the industrial Northeast and Midwest. The nation's six most segregated metro areas in a Detroit News analysis of 2000 census data all sit on the Great Lakes: Detroit; Gary, Ind.; Milwaukee; Chicago; Cleveland; and Buffalo.

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All developed rapidly beginning with the industrial boom at the start of the 20th century and attracted millions of rural Southern blacks in the early decades of the last century.

Those blacks typically lived in small, cramped areas such as Detroit's Paradise Valley until rising black incomes and open-housing laws allowed them greater freedom. And ever since blacks began escaping those neighborhoods, whites have been moving out of neighborhoods where blacks began arriving.

And all were shaken by racially tinged rioting between 1965 and 1968, although violence didn't often reach the levels of Detroit's 1967 riot.

* Slow growth: Researchers say there is a strong relationship between population growth and segregation. Fast-growing regions tend to integrate more quickly; slow-growing regions such as Metro Detroit have seen only small decreases in segregation, as measured by the index of dissimilarity.

The fast-growing Portland, Ore., and Las Vegas regions saw segregation levels fall more than 20 percent in the 1990s.

Phoenix and West Palm Beach, Fla., saw decreases of more than 15 percent.

Duke's Vigdor said new communities built from scratch seem to be more open to diversity.

"There are lots of new neighborhoods that don't have the reputation of being either all-black or all-white," he said.

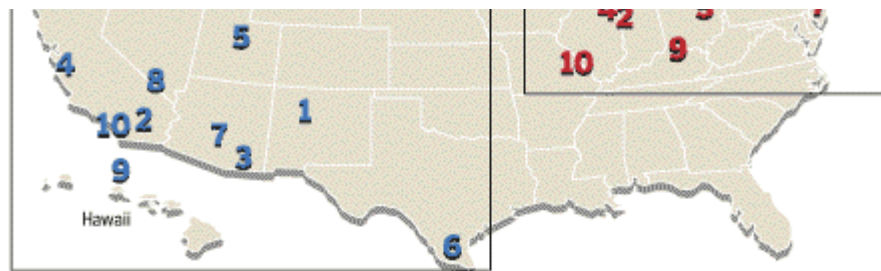
* A substantial black population and a black-white character: Regions with small black populations tend to be less segregated -- of the nation's five least segregated metro areas, none is more than 3 percent black. There's also a connection, although not as strong, between lower segregation and the presence of a third large minority.

"Where attention is not entirely focused on the history of black-white relations, I think that makes a difference," said John Logan of the State University of New York at Albany.

Still, other regions have similar traits and have still become less racially divided.

Metropolitan Pittsburgh, for example, lost population in the 1990s while Detroit gained 4 percent. Yet the level of segregation is 22 percent higher here. Metro Atlanta has a larger black population than the Detroit area, yet segregation is 34 percent higher here.





The 10 least segregated areas

RANK	METRO AREA	SEGREGATION SCORE	
		2000	1990
1	Albuquerque, N.M.	28.0	36.3
2	Orange County, Calif.	31.5	37.4
3	Tucson, Ariz.	35.1	39.7
4	San Jose, Calif.	35.4	39.7
5	Salt Lake City	37.0	50.4
6	McAllen, Texas	39.5	49.5
7	Phoenix	39.5	48.0
8	Las Vegas	39.6	51.1
9	Honolulu	40.4	44.3
10	Riverside, Calif.	42.0	41.6

The 10 most segregated areas

RANK	METRO AREA	SEGREGATION SCORE	
		2000	1990
1	Detroit	85.2	87.2
2	Gary, Ind.	82.8	88.5
3	Milwaukee	82.4	82.7
4	Chicago	79.2	82.9
5	Cleveland	77.6	82.4
6	Buffalo	77.4	80.0
7	Newark, N.J.	77.1	80.4
8	New York	74.9	76.0
9	Cincinnati	74.5	76.7
10	St Louis	73.9	77.3

Areas with large black populations

Researchers say metro regions where a large percentage of the population is black are more likely to be heavily segregated. But of the areas where blacks comprise 20 percent of the population or more, Metro Detroit's segregation score is the highest by eight points, and several have scores significantly lower than Detroit's:

METRO AREAS (OVERALL RANK)	SEGREGATION	
	PCT. BLACK	SCORE
Detroit (1)	22.9%	85.2
Newark, N.J. (7)	22.3	77.1
New York (8)	24.6	74.9
Philadelphia, Pa.-N.J. (13)	20.1	71.9
Miami, Fla. (17)	20.3	71.1
Birmingham, Ala. (21)	30.3	70.1
New Orleans (24)	37.6	68.4
Baltimore (26)	27.4	67.9
Memphis, Tenn.-Ark. (27)	43.4	67.7
Baton Rouge, La. (35)	32.2	64.9
Atlanta (37)	29.0	63.7
Mobile, Ala. (45)	27.4	62.2
Washington, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W. Va. (46)	26.1	62.2
Little Rock, Ark. (50)	21.9	60.6
Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (54)	20.6	59.4

Areas with slow growth

All of the most-segregated regions in the country had slow population growth, but slow growth doesn't automatically mean high segregation. Of the regions with population growth of less than 5 percent in the 1990s, segregation scores were sometimes significantly lower than Detroit's:

METRO AREA (OVERALL RANK)	POPULATION SEGREGATION	
	CHANGE	SCORE
Detroit (1)	4.0%	85.2
Gary, Ind. (2)	4.4	82.8
Milwaukee (3)	4.8	82.4
Cleveland (5)	2.2	77.6
Buffalo (6)	-1.6	77.4
Cincinnati, Ohio-Ky.-Ind. (9)	1.6	74.5
Youngstown, Ohio (11)	-1.0	72.8
Philadelphia, Pa.-N.J. (13)	3.6	71.9
Dayton, Ohio (14)	-0.2	71.5
Syracuse, N.Y. (18)	-1.4	70.5
Toledo, Ohio (20)	0.7	70.1
Pittsburgh (23)	-1.5	68.6
New Orleans (24)	4.1	68.4
New Haven, Conn. (28)	2.0	67.3
Rochester, N.Y. (29)	3.4	66.8

Note: Segregation ranks listed are from Detroit News ranking of the 100 largest metropolitan areas.

Source: Detroit News analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data

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