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## Census Shows More Black Residents Are Leaving New York and Other Cities

By [SAM ROBERTS](#)

After shrinking for decades, the proportion of New Yorkers who are white and non-Hispanic appears to have leveled off since 2000 and may even have risen slightly in 2006, the latest year surveyed by the census, according to results released yesterday.

If that trend is sustained, it would make New York one of a handful of major cities — with Atlanta, Boston, San Francisco and Washington — where whites had become a minority, but where black flight has exceeded the departure of whites since the beginning of the decade. In Boston, the figures indicate that whites became a majority again in 2006.

New York City lost 361,000 white residents in the 1990s, but since 2000 has gained more than 53,000. They accounted for 34.8 percent of the population in 2006, slightly more than in 2005 (although some of the percentage increase might have been because people living in group quarters, like dormitories and prisons, were not included in 2005).

The citywide trend was propelled by growth in Manhattan and Brooklyn, the only counties in the region where the number of white residents increased since 2005, the [Census Bureau](#) reported last month. That increase in those boroughs over several years helped drive the overall citywide numerical increase since 2000 as well as the possible percentage rise since 2005, which would mark a reversal of a trend that extends at least as far back as 1940.

New York's population has historically been in flux, so even several years of relative stability may not be enough to suggest that equilibrium has been achieved in the degree of diversity that distinguishes the city from most other municipalities in the United States and elsewhere.

Kenneth T. Jackson, a [Columbia University](#) historian who recently returned from Croatia, said: "There they all look alike and they're killing each other. Here, we're all different and we live in peace."

According to the latest census count, more than 27 percent of New Yorkers are of Hispanic origin, nearly 24 percent are black and almost 12 percent are Asian.

“The decline of the white population seems to have come to an end,” said Andrew A. Beveridge, a demographer at [Queens College](#) of the [City University of New York](#). “After at least six decades of decline, the white population has stabilized, and there is evidence that it even increased during the last couple of years. Unlike other cities, such as Detroit, it may be possible for New York City to be diverse, but with relatively stable populations from a wide range of racial and ethnic groups.”

David R. Jones, president of the Community Service Society, a liberal research and advocacy group, said: “The city is becoming so attractive to upwardly mobile young people who are not predominantly minority that you’re seeing a blip. This is what a healthy city sees when it’s prosperous. At the same time, we have to cushion the blow for the working poor.”

William H. Frey, a demographer at the [Brookings Institution](#), said that the trend since 2000 confirmed “black and other minority flight away from many cities” that attract young professional and high-income whites.

But Joseph J. Salvo, director of the New York Department of City Planning’s population division, cautioned against reading too much into the latest figures, given that many Hispanic people identify themselves as white and taking into account the diversity within the white population.

That “internal mix of ethnics” has shifted, he said, as older Europeans die or move away and are replaced by, among others, Eastern Europeans from the former Yugoslavia and Soviet Union.

“The city’s capacity to attract young whites from other places in the nation does allow it to maintain a consistent number of small white households in Manhattan, western Brooklyn and, more recently, western Queens.” Mr. Salvo said.

In the region, Asians were the only major racial or ethnic group to record population gains in every county in 2006. The Hispanic population grew in most counties, and the number of black residents declined in every borough except Richmond and in some suburban counties.

During the same time that the city’s white population has stabilized, the region has been on the verge of becoming the first metropolitan area outside the South and West where minorities form more than 50 percent of the population. In 2006, non-Hispanic whites

made up 51.2 percent of the population of the region, including the city, down from 51.5 percent in 2005.

The Census Bureau's latest American Community Survey detected evidence of the city's continued revival since 9/11, including a continued influx of large numbers of immigrants and a rising demand for real estate.

"It's counterintuitive in some ways," Professor Jackson said. "You'd think after 9/11 fear would have taken hold and people would have moved away.

The proportion of immigrants in the city, 36.9 percent, continued to inch toward the record of about 40 percent early in the 20th century, with 95,000 arriving in 2006 compared with 75,000 the year before. The proportion of people who speak a language other than English at home rose slightly to nearly 48 percent. In Queens, nearly 49 percent of the population is foreign-born.

The 169,000 more foreigners who arrived in the region in 2006 brought their share to 28.1 percent, which broke a 2005 record.

Mean commuting time decreased, if barely perceptibly, to 39 minutes in the city (from 39.1 minutes) and to 34.1 minutes in the metropolitan area (from 34.2 minutes).

The latest results also revealed a number of demographic nuggets that define New York in contrast to the rest of the country.

In Brooklyn, 9.4 percent of teenagers age 15 to 19 are neither in school nor in the labor force, compared with the national average of 5.1 percent.

In the city, New Yorkers 15 and older who have never been married now outnumber married New Yorkers, not counting separated couples. About 4 percent of households are composed of opposite-sex unmarried partners, and just less than 1 percent of same-sex partners.

The Puerto Rican population has declined to one-third of Hispanic New Yorkers.

About one in five people between the ages of 65 and 75 are in the labor force.