

TUESDAY, MAR 29, 2011 07:55 ET

The 10 most segregated urban areas in America

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Decades after the end of Jim Crow, and three years after the election of America's first black president, the United States remains a profoundly segregated country.

That reality has been reinforced by the release of Census Bureau data last week that shows black and white Americans still tend to live in their own neighborhoods, often far apart from each other. Segregation itself, the decennial census report indicates, is only decreasing slowly, although the dividing lines are shifting as middle-income blacks, Latinos and Asians move to once all-white suburbs -- whereupon whites often move away, turning older suburbs into new, if less distressed, ghettos.

We may think of segregation as a matter of ancient Southern history: lunch counter sit-ins, bus boycotts and Ku Klux Klan terrorism. But as

the census numbers remind us, Northern cities have long had higher rates of segregation than in the South, where strict Jim Crow laws kept blacks closer to whites, but separate from them. Where you live has a big impact on the education you receive, the safety on your streets, and the social networks you can leverage.

The following is a list of the nation's most segregated metropolitan areas of over 500,000 people. The rankings are based on a dissimilarity index, a measure used by social scientists to gauge residential segregation. It reflects the number of people from one race -- in this case black or white -- who would have to move for races to be evenly distributed across a certain area. A score of 1 indicates perfect integration while 100 signals complete segregation. The rankings were compiled by John Paul DeWitt of CensusScope.org and the University of Michigan's Social Science Data Analysis Network.

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-- Daniel Denvir