

Whites minority in many places

WASHINGTON (AP) - Whites are now in the minority in nearly one in 10 U.S. counties. And that increased diversity, fueled by immigration and higher birth rates among Blacks and Hispanics, is straining race relations and sparking a backlash against immigrants in many communities.

"There's some culture shock," said Mark Mather of the Population Reference Bureau, a Washington-based research agency. "But I think there is a momentum building, and it is going to continue."

As of 2006, non-Hispanic Whites made up less than half the population in 303 of the nation's 3,141 counties, according to figures the Census Bureau is releasing Thursday. Non-Hispanic Whites were a minority in 262 counties in 2000, up from 183 in 1990.

The Census Bureau's report has population estimates by race and ethnicity for every county in the nation.

They are the first such estimates since Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in 2005, scattering hundreds of

thousands of people.

The biggest changes in were in Orleans Parish, La., home to New Orleans. The share of non-Hispanic Whites in Orleans Parish grew from 27 percent in 2005 to 34 percent in 2006, while the share of Blacks dropped from about 68 percent to 59 percent.

Many of the nation's biggest counties have long had large minority populations. But that diversity is now spreading to the suburbs and beyond, causing resentment in some areas.

Many Latinos say they see it in the debate over illegal immigration.

In northern Virginia, Teresita Jacinto said she feels less welcome today than when she first arrived 30 years ago, when she was one of few Hispanics in the area.

"Not only are we feeling less welcome, we are feeling threatened," said Jacinto, a teacher in Woodbridge, Va., about 20 miles southwest of Washington.

Woodbridge is part of Prince William County, which recently passed a resolution seeking to deny pub-

lic services to illegal immigrants. Similar measures have been approved or considered in dozens of communities across the nation. In all, state lawmakers have introduced more than 1,400 measures related to immigration this year, the National Conference of State Legislatures says.

Supporters say local laws are necessary because Congress has failed to crack down on the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants in the U.S. But many Hispanics legally in the U.S. say they feel targeted, too.

"I think across the board all of us feel like we're not welcome," said Jacinto, who was born in the U.S. and volunteers for an advocacy group called Mexicans Without Borders.

Prince William County has seen its Hispanic population more than double since 2000, to nearly 70,000 last year. Non-Hispanic Whites account for a little more than half the population, down from about two-thirds in 2000.

Greg Letiecq recently helped form a group to fight

illegal immigration in northern Virginia, called Help Save Manassas. The group is named for a city surrounded by Prince William County.

"It's not about ethnicity, it's not about race. It's about lawful behavior versus unlawful behavior," Letiecq said.

Still, he complained that many newcomers eschew American culture in favor of their Latino heritage.

"It's the folks who come in and try to maintain the culture of the country they came from," Letiecq said.

"They don't seem to embrace the American culture, the English language, the social norms of American culture."

Nationally, the number of minorities topped 100 million for the first time in 2006 — about a third of the population. By 2050, minorities will account for half of U.S. residents, according to Census Bureau projections.

"I don't think Latinos or any other so-called minority group are seeking to make White people a minority," Jacinto said. "It's just a reality."

Black homicide on scary uptick

WASHINGTON (AP) - Nearly half of the nation's murder victims in 2005 were Black, and the number of Black men who were slain is on the rise.

A majority of the Black murder victims were relatively young — between 17 and 29, the Justice Department said in a study released recently.

The department's Bureau of Justice Statistics report offers a snapshot of racial disparities among violent crime victims. Black people represented an estimated 13 percent of the U.S. population in 2005, the latest data available, but were the victims of 49 percent of all murders and 15 percent of rapes, assaults and other nonfatal violent crimes nationwide.

Most of the Black murder victims — 93 percent — were killed by other Black people, the study found. About 85 percent of White victims were slain by other White people.

National Urban League President Marc Morial, a former mayor of New Orleans, said the data reflect a trend that cannot be reversed by law enforcement alone. It will require changes in public education and a revival of federal summer jobs programs for economically disadvantaged young people, he said.

"The mixture of illegal drugs, easy access to handguns, and young men who feel locked out of economic opportunity is what these statistics reflect," Morial said.

An estimated 16,400 people were murdered in the United States in 2005, down from a peak of 21,400 a decade ago. Similarly, the number of Black people slain dropped over the last 10 years, from 10,400 in 1995 to almost 8,000 in 2005.

But the murder rate among Black men rose slightly between 2004 and 2005, continuing several years of dips and increases.

Two years ago, 6,783 Black men were murdered, up from 6,342 in 2004, the study shows. The murder rate among White men also rose, but less dramatically: 5,850 were slain in 2005, compared with 5,769 the year before.

Murders of women, White and Black, remained relatively unchanged between the two years.

Additionally, more than half of Black murder victims — 51 percent — were in their late teens and twenties.

Comparatively, just over a third — 37 percent — of White people murdered were between 17 and 29, the study shows.

The study did not take a detailed look at violent crime victims who are Hispanic or Latino, or other races. However, it concluded that violent crime victims were more often Black than any other race except American Indians.

Among the study's other findings: —Never-married Black people were more likely than all other Blacks to be victims of violence.

—Poorer Black people were at a greater risk of violence than households with higher annual incomes.

—Black people living in cities were more likely to be violent crime victims than people living in suburban or rural areas.

Bribery

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the news conference where he announced his resignation.

In an interview with The Times-Picayune, Thomas said he even contemplated suicide after he was approached by the FBI and that his lawyer and family "helped save my life, cause I thought about taking it."

City Council President Arnold Fielkow said the council will move quickly to appoint an interim replacement for Thomas and that an election to fill the seat per-

manently would likely be held Oct. 20.

Rep. William Jefferson, a New Orleans Democrat, also is facing federal corruption charges. Sen. David Vitter, a Republican from a New Orleans suburb, recently acknowledged that his phone number appeared in records of a Washington area business that prosecutors have said was a front for prostitution.

Meanwhile, a violent crime problem in parts of the city has further marred the hurricane recovery. New Or-

leans led the nation in murders per capita in 2006.

"This is a body blow to a community already reeling," U.S. District Judge Sarah Vance said at the hearing for Thomas.

Judge

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issues, including race relations and fairness in practice in criminal cases.

"People who know me and interact with me socially know I'm constantly trying to say things in a funny, pro-

Thomas has been on the council for 13 years and was serving as vice president. He is one of two members elected citywide and had expressed interest in the mayor's office.

vocative manner," MacArthur said.

MacArthur said he still considers his MySpace page a recreational endeavor and a place to state his opinions. But in hindsight, MacArthur said, he would have changed the prosecutorial comment to avoid controversy.

As for his MySpace page, he made it private this week, available only to friends.



SCHOLARS & DOLLARS Sentinel-Voice photo by Marty Frierson
 Napoleon McCallum, director of community development for Sands Corp., presented a check to the Urban Chamber of Commerce Scholarship recipients (L-R) Kendahl Williams, Alexsandra Preston, Leilani Roundtree and Keisha McDaniel during the chamber's eighth annual event held at the Venetian Hotel-Casino Saturday.



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