

BY WILLIAM H. FREY

## After the largest catastrophe-driven migration in U.S.

history, the question remains: How many long-term residents (who gave the city its distinctive style and spirit) will return to New Orleans – not only to the touristed New Orleans of the French Quarter and the Garden District, but also to the neighborhoods that have endured hard times and face still harder times? For, in contrast to New South cities such as Atlanta and Houston, New Orleans has never shed its heritage of racial segregation and poverty.

The new migrants from the Crescent City are unique. Unlike the waves of migration of Southern blacks in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, those fleeing the wreckage of New Orleans had no time to think about why or where they were moving. Moreover, these African-Americans plainly had strong ties with place – Louisiana leads the nation in the reluctance of native-born to leave.

In explaining migration, economic models generally stress financial incentives. For many of these migrants, though, the psychic costs of dislocation from longstanding networks of friends and family far outweigh the potential economic benefits of resettlement in Houston or Little Rock. Many of them will almost certainly want to return to New Orleans.

Wise redevelopment efforts would thus do well to capitalize on the loyalty of these true New Orleaners. If the new masters of the city



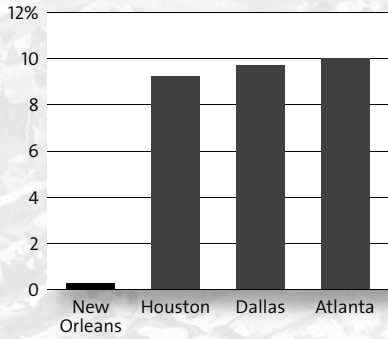
do not open their arms to them, they will join friends and relatives elsewhere, to form Big Easy satellites in far flung cities including Atlanta, Los Angeles and San Francisco-Oakland.

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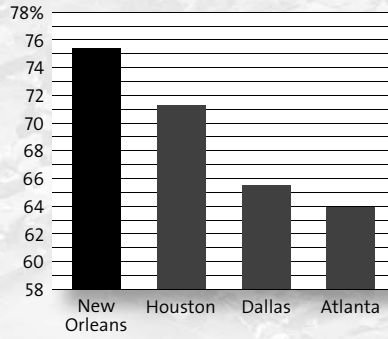
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## NEW ORLEANS COMPARISON WITH “NEW SOUTH” METROS

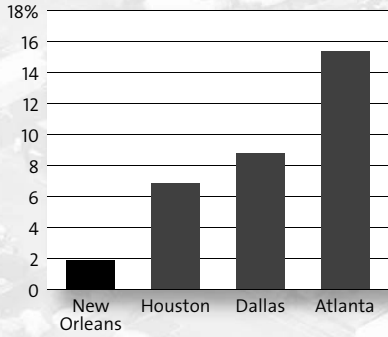
### METRO POPULATION GROWTH, 2000–2004



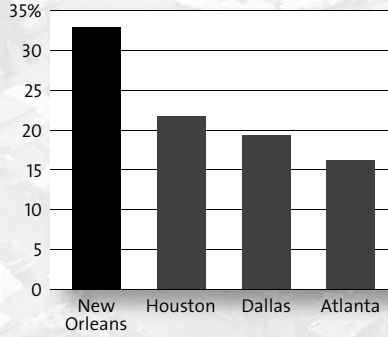
### BLACK-WHITE SEGREGATION, 2000



### BLACK POPULATION GROWTH, 2000–2004

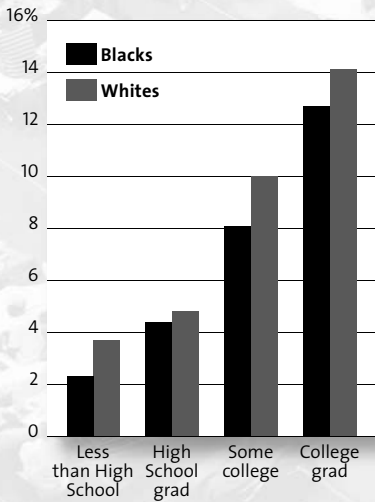


### BLACK POVERTY, 2000

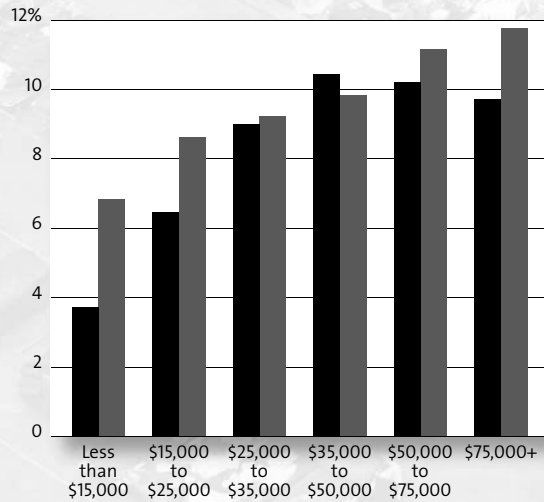


## OUTMIGRATION RATES FOR LOUISIANA, 1995–2000, PERSONS AGE 25+

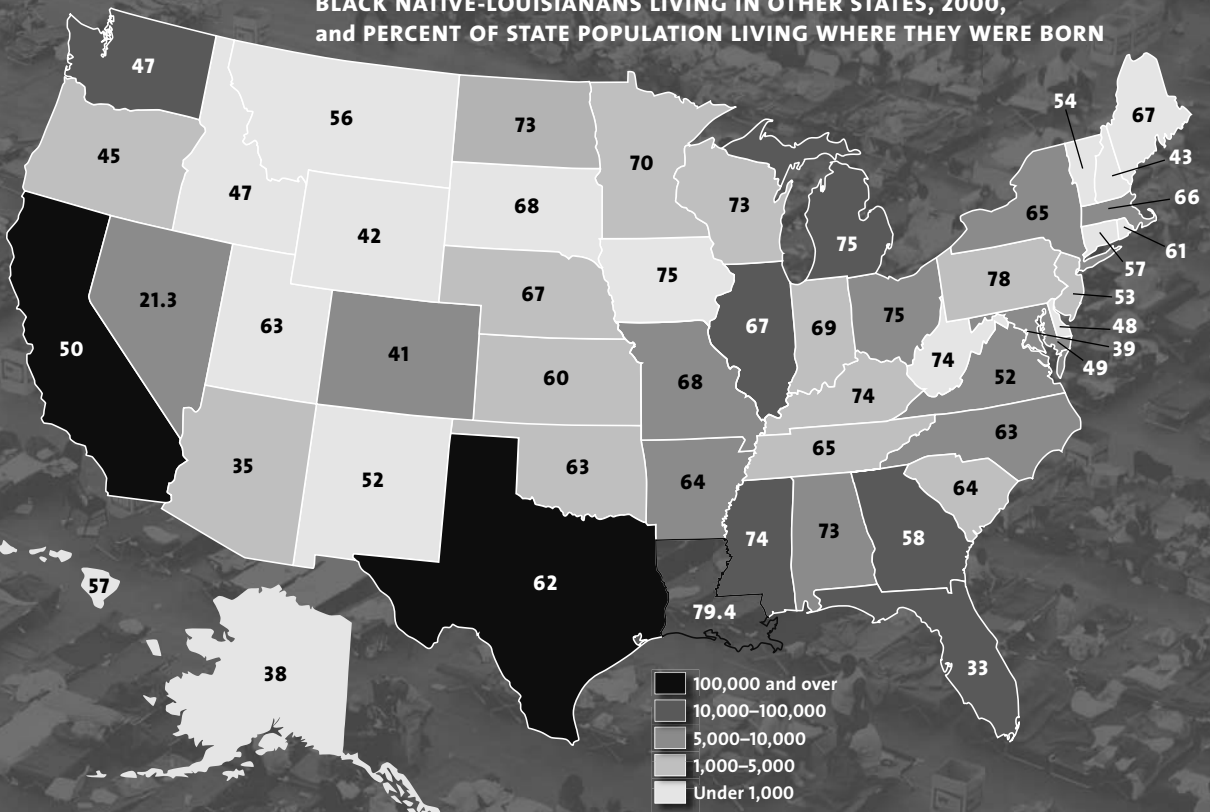
### OUTMIGRATION BY EDUCATION



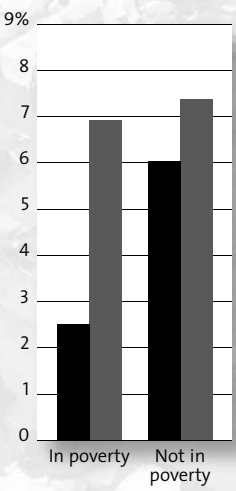
### OUTMIGRATION BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME



**BLACK NATIVE-LOUISIANANS LIVING IN OTHER STATES, 2000,  
and PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION LIVING WHERE THEY WERE BORN**



**OUTMIGRATION BY POVERTY**



**LARGEST METRO DESTINATIONS OF NEW ORLEANS OUTMIGRANTS, 1995–2000**

**TOP DESTINATION FOR BLACKS**

1. Atlanta
2. Baton Rouge, LA
3. Dallas
4. Houston
5. Lafayette, LA
6. Los Angeles
7. Washington, DC
8. Biloxi, MS
9. San Francisco

**TOP DESTINATION FOR WHITES**

1. Baton Rouge, LA
2. Houston
3. Biloxi, MS
4. Dallas
5. Lafayette, LA
6. Houma, LA
7. Atlanta
8. New York
9. Washington, DC

**SOURCE:** Author's calculations using data from the Global Development Network Growth Database, William Easterly and Mirvat Sewadeh, World Bank.