

Manhattan's diversity ebbing as city demographics evolve, new census figures show

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The ethnic diversity of Manhattan is slipping away, according to new census figures. Black and Hispanic populations have been declining for years, while more whites have moved to the city.

[Manhattan](#), the world's most famous melting pot, is losing its rich ethnic and racial diversity, new census figures show. The island's black and Hispanic populations have decreased over the last decade, while the number of whites has risen in nearly every neighborhood from the Battery to [Inwood](#). Overall, Manhattan's population has swelled by 5% to 1.6 million since 2000, and educated whites appear to account for the influx, a Daily News analysis of census data shows.

The white population rose by an estimated 11% to around 928,000 in the past decade and, for the first time ever, the Asian population topped 10% at about 165,000.

At the same time, the number of blacks dropped by 6% to less than 250,000, census estimates show. The Hispanic population also declined 4% to about 397,000.

The latest Manhattan census figures - based on survey data collected between 2005 and 2009 - also show fewer immigrant residents and fewer non-English-speaking homes than in 2000, the last time the census tallied the score.

Now only about a quarter of Manhattanites identify themselves as foreign-born.

That's in contrast to some of the outer boroughs where the percentage of foreign-born New Yorkers has increased since 2000, rising to 47.1% in Queens and 31.4% in the [Bronx](#). [Brooklyn](#) stayed flat at about 36%. Perhaps the most striking demographic shift in Manhattan was the higher number of whites in every Manhattan neighborhood except the upper East Side. That neighborhood has long been home to the highest percentage of whites on the island.

The two biggest seismic shifts occurred in [Harlem](#), historically the epicenter of the city's black community, and the lower East Side, a Hispanic stronghold. Between 2000 and 2010, whites went from 2% of Harlem's population to 9.8%. The black population shrank from 61.2% to 54.4% in the same period.

On the lower East Side, whites now make up more than a quarter of the population. Hispanics accounted for 44.4% of the population in 2000. Now, they account for a little more than a third.

While diversity has slumped, the borough's brain power has spiked: Nearly 60% of the island's population older than 25 holds a bachelor's degree.

[Mitchell Moss](#), director of NYU's [Rudin Center for Transportation Policy and Management](#), said Manhattan's job-obsessed environment and high wages account for the influx of educated whites.

"This is type-A culture," he said. "It's a work-oriented, achievement-oriented island. Because of that they want to be near their offices, it's a huge benefit to productivity."

He noted that Manhattan is safer than ever, with residents moving to sections that were once avoided because of crime.

"The success of making the city safe has made some of these places very attractive to live in," Moss said. "People are living next to the [Holland Tunnel](#), which was once no-man's land."

He said Manhattan has also managed to retain more families as suburban living has lost its luster.

"The halo is off the suburbs," he said. "They're stuck with rising property taxes and declining property values. People have come to realize the suburban myth is just a myth."

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