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Cartographic Design

Final Map Style Sheet – New Orleans Underwater

*A. More Artifact Than Art*

1. Who is your map for?

The map is for an audience with various map-reading abilities. The map will be used for educational purposes, to highlight the effects of Hurricane Katrina and the social inequalities the storm brought to light.

2. How will you know when you’re done?

I will know when I’m done making the map when all of the variables can be easily understood. The land and flood regions will be easily discernable, and the population dots will not overcrowd or create unnecessary noise. Additionally, the map will have a blurb conveying the purpose of the map, a clear legend, and a scale bar.

3. What’s the point?

The point of the map is to emphasize the racial inequalities revealed through the failure of New Orleans’ disaster relief program after Hurricane Katrina. The dots show the segregated nature of the city, while the flood area shows how many people were affected. The different intensities of flooding across space will be described in the blurb, as too many different variables would make the map appear noisy.

4. Object in the world.

This map will exist on a monitor on my website.

*B. Geographic Frameworks*

1. Reference scale

As the map shows a relatively small city, the scale bar helps the viewer grasp how big the area is in real life. New Orleans has an odd and disorienting shape, so the north arrow also helps the map viewer orient themselves.

*C. Visual Argument*

1. Simplify the world/visual hierarchy

I chose to show the fewest variables needed to make my point—the location of land, the location of flooding, the location of water, and the racial make-up of New Orleans through dots. Additionally, I chose colors that sit back on the page in order to bring the dots to attention.

2. Separable Part

Below the map’s title are quick, easy to read statements about the map. These make it easier for the viewer to grasp what’s important without having to read a block of text. They can quickly figure out that the white areas are water, the blue area is flooding, and that the dots represent 25 people of a particular race/ethnicity. Additionally, there is a tab on the map of quick facts about Hurricane Katrina that are easier to read than a block of text.

*D. Lettering*

1. Visual Association

Each water body is labeled in blue italics.