

### Reflections on the New Orleans, Louisiana field trip

The following text has the objective to inform, based on the author's perspective, about the visited places in New Orleans (NOLA). Features the author found interesting such as the levees system, the preparedness and risk reduction contrast, and the culture diversity are the topics that are being touched in this text.

The first parade was in the Bonnet Carré Spillway. This structure is designed to alleviate the high streamflow in the Mississippi river. The water finds its way towards Lake Pontchartrain, a key water body that intakes all the runoff in the city.

During the visit to the central part of NOLA it was surprisingly found an existing contrast in the city. Not only for the architecture differences that can clearly be seen while traveling along the city but by the flood management in which clear differences can be noticed. First, from the author's point of view, there are two different zones in NOLA. The first is the wealthiest zone that surrounds Lakeshore Drive, and the second zone, mid-low class, which is the rest of the city, including the visited places Orleans and Jackson parish. It is needed to emphasize that this classification, made by the author of this reflection, has been made based on a simple view during the course's field trip.

For the first zone, the management is holistic. The land has been modified to have a steep that can let surface runoff towards Lake Pontchartrain. Also, the terrain is elevated 5 ft, a feature that decreases the possibility of flooding and levees are present in all the land. The second zone, has levees as well, artificial walls that are 3ft high. But they have a latent constraint: the terrain is under sea level. It means that when a heavy rain happens, this area is prone to be affected by flooding. In the past, 2005, this area was completely devastated by hurricane Katrina and the extreme weather conditions that caused hundreds of human loss.

Besides de Bonnet Carré, and as mentioned in the last paragraph, there is a levees system around the city, which reflects the efforts of the Louisiana state to reduce risks of flooding in the New Orleans city. Nonetheless, some walls (I-walls) used as protections against water raising in

the channels connecting the Mississippi to the lake, are not safe due to its architecture and need to be replaced with new and more resistant T-walls which design increases its resistance against high water pressures.

In spite of all the previous said about structures and security for the NOLA population, it is concerning what the authorities and stakeholders do for preserving ecology with the life surrounding these structures. Debris and pollutants are accumulated along the channels and other water bodies along its way to the Gulf of Mexico.

Additionally, during the field trip other places such as Los Isleños, the Battlefield National Park, the Saint Vincent de Paul Cemetery, showcased the diverse culture existing in New Orleans.

For example, contrary to what many think, people do not bury corpses below the surface due to flooding happening in the zone, the real reason behind is that it is a common practice in France and parts of Europe.

To conclude with this reflection the author highlights that the people decided to stay in this city.

Although this field trip was not intended to do exhaustive research to find the reasons driving the decisions in people, it is still being found interesting the population's decisions to continue living in a place that has high flooding risk levels.