

Cities, Suburbs, Neighborhoods, and Schools: How We Abandon Our Children

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Dimensions of Poverty

- First and foremost poverty is about money
 - Poverty Line compares family income to amount needed to buy necessities
- Families don't exist in isolation
 - Connected to people who live near them and depend on resources, services, and opportunities in their communities
 - Likewise, they tend to be disconnected from people, resources, and opportunities far from them
- *The “spatial context of poverty”*

*“I Dream’d in a dream I saw a city
invincible” – Walt Whitman*



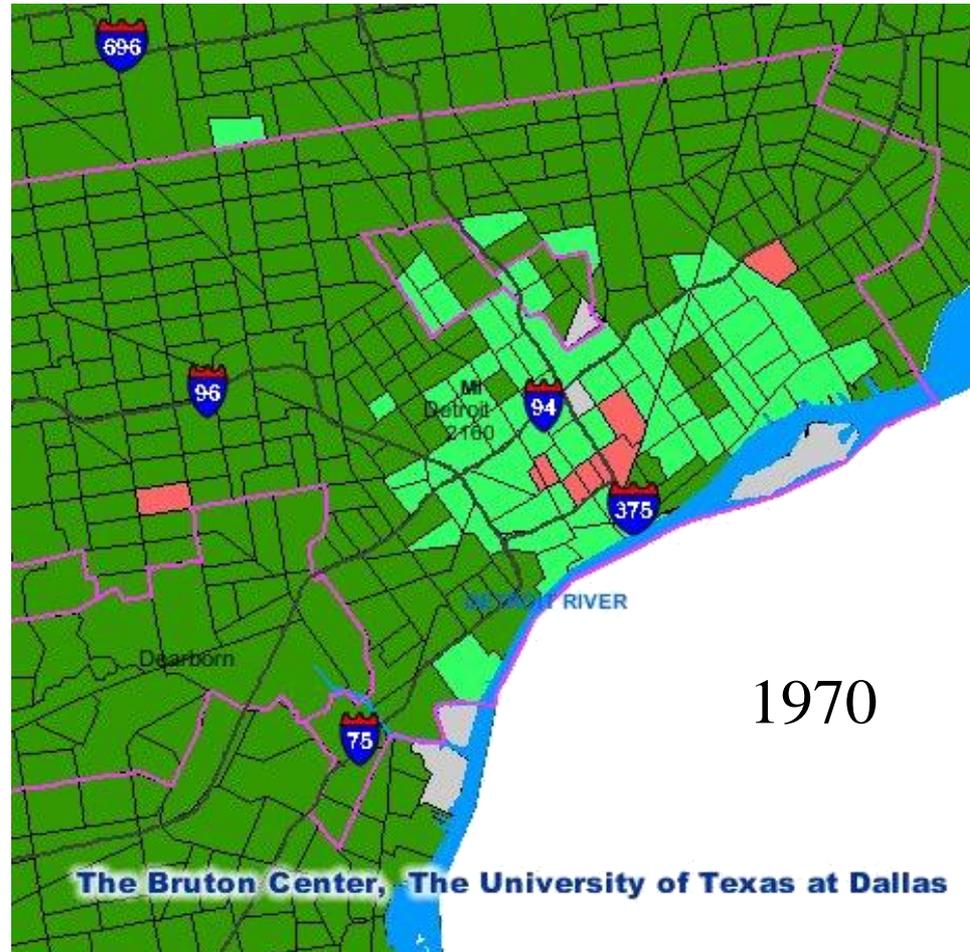
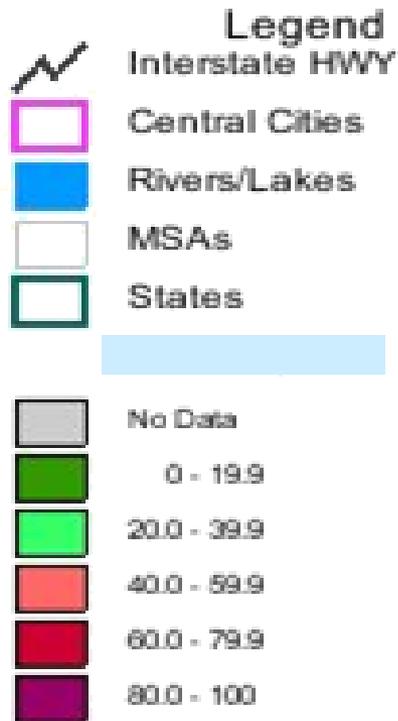
Photos by Camilo José Vergara,

<http://invinciblecities.camden.rutgers.edu/intro.html>

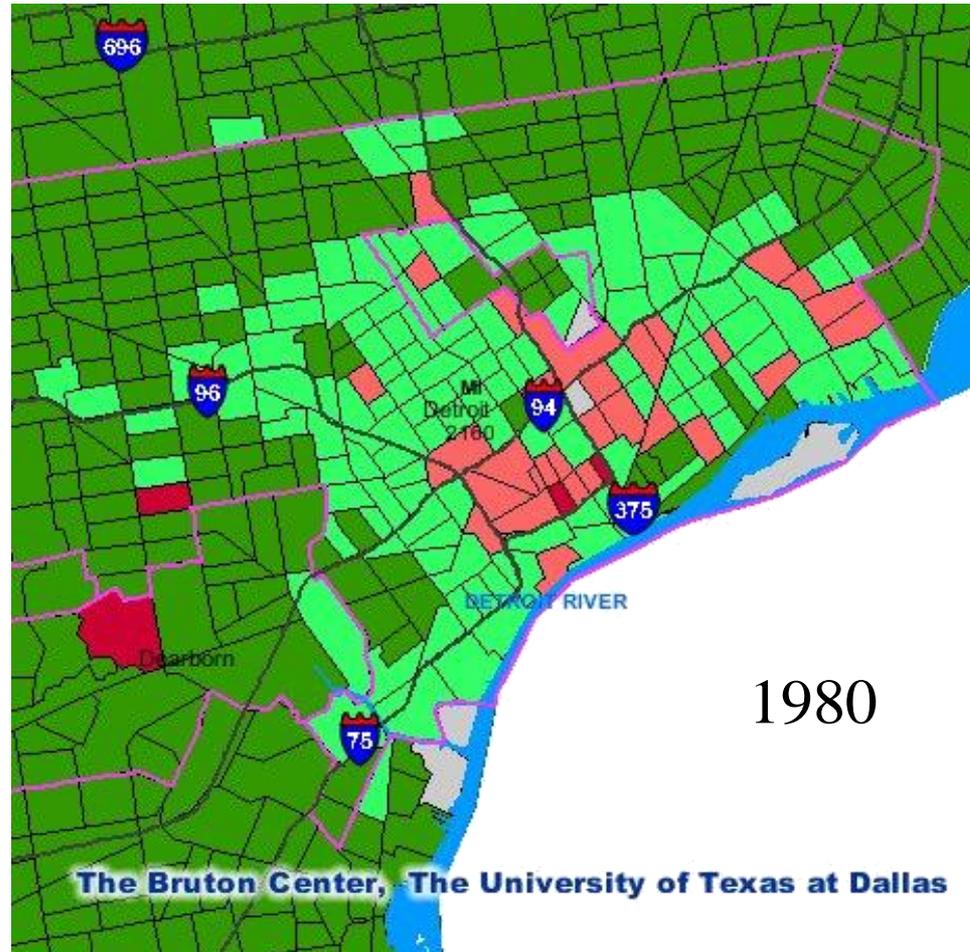
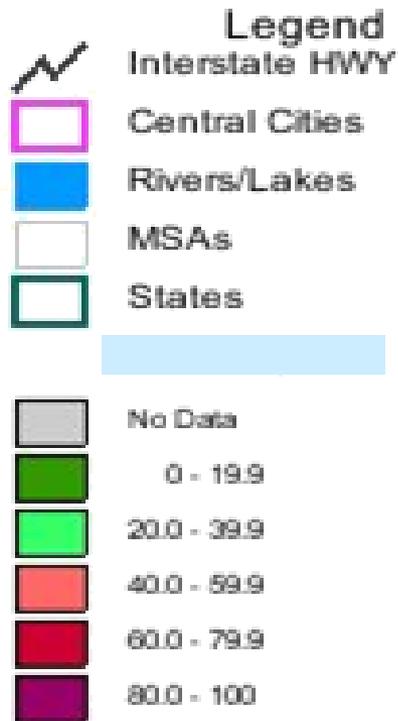
History of Concentrated Poverty

- Wilson and other scholars call attention to harsh conditions in urban ghettos, “underclass areas,” etc., in major US areas.
- Concentration of poverty *doubled* between 1970 and 1990.
- In the 1990s, with strong economy and housing policy changes, there was “stunning progress.”
- But what has happened since then?

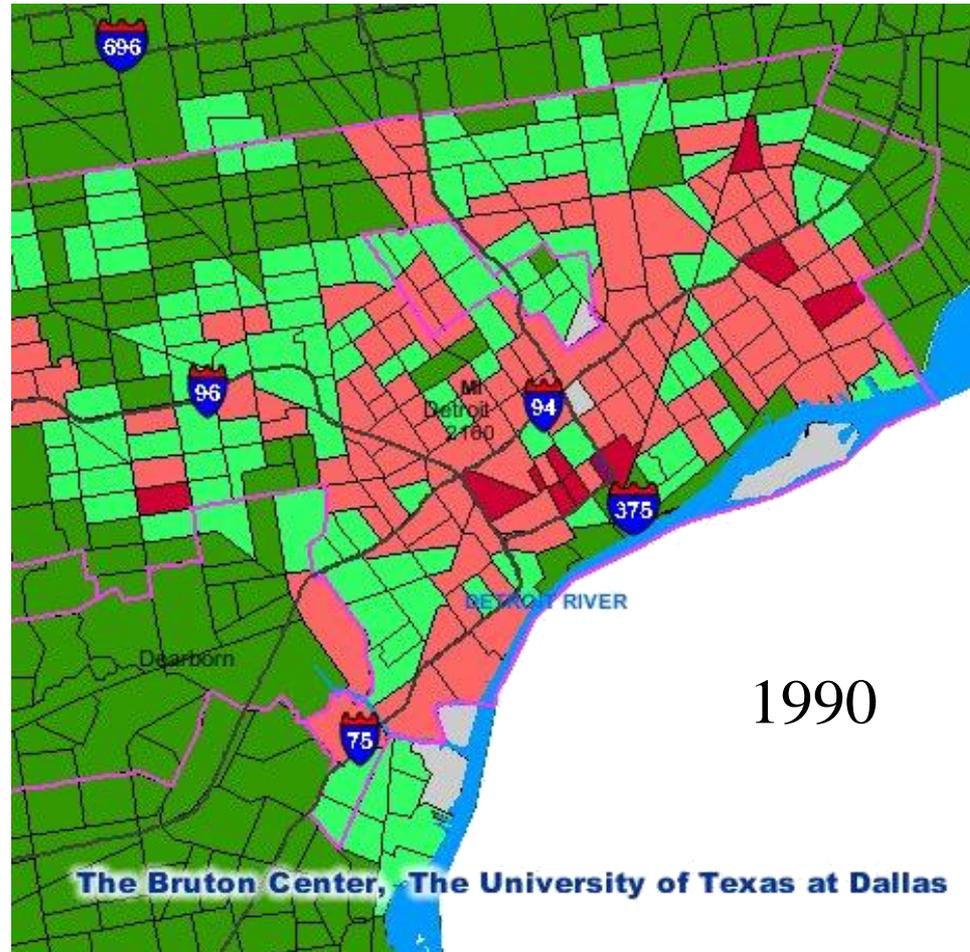
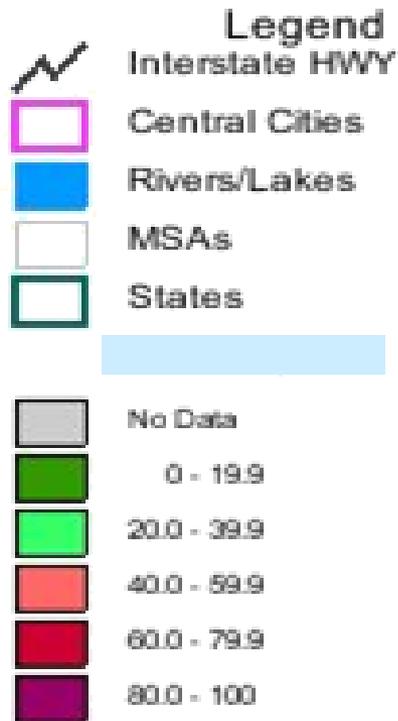
Poverty Level: Detroit Neighborhoods, 1970-2000



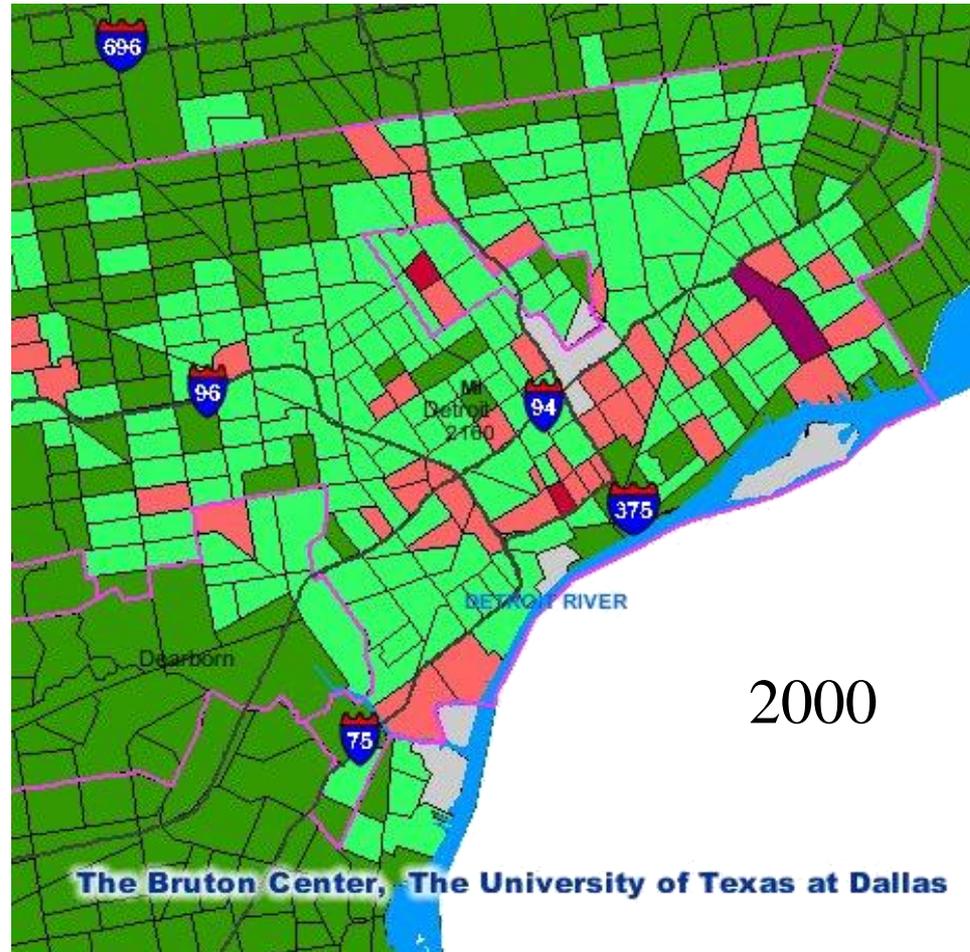
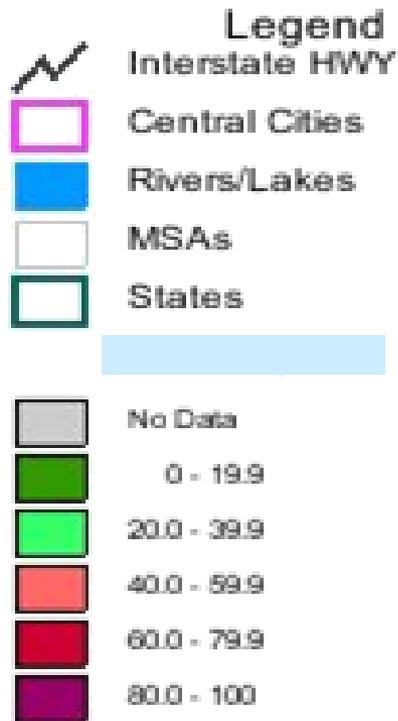
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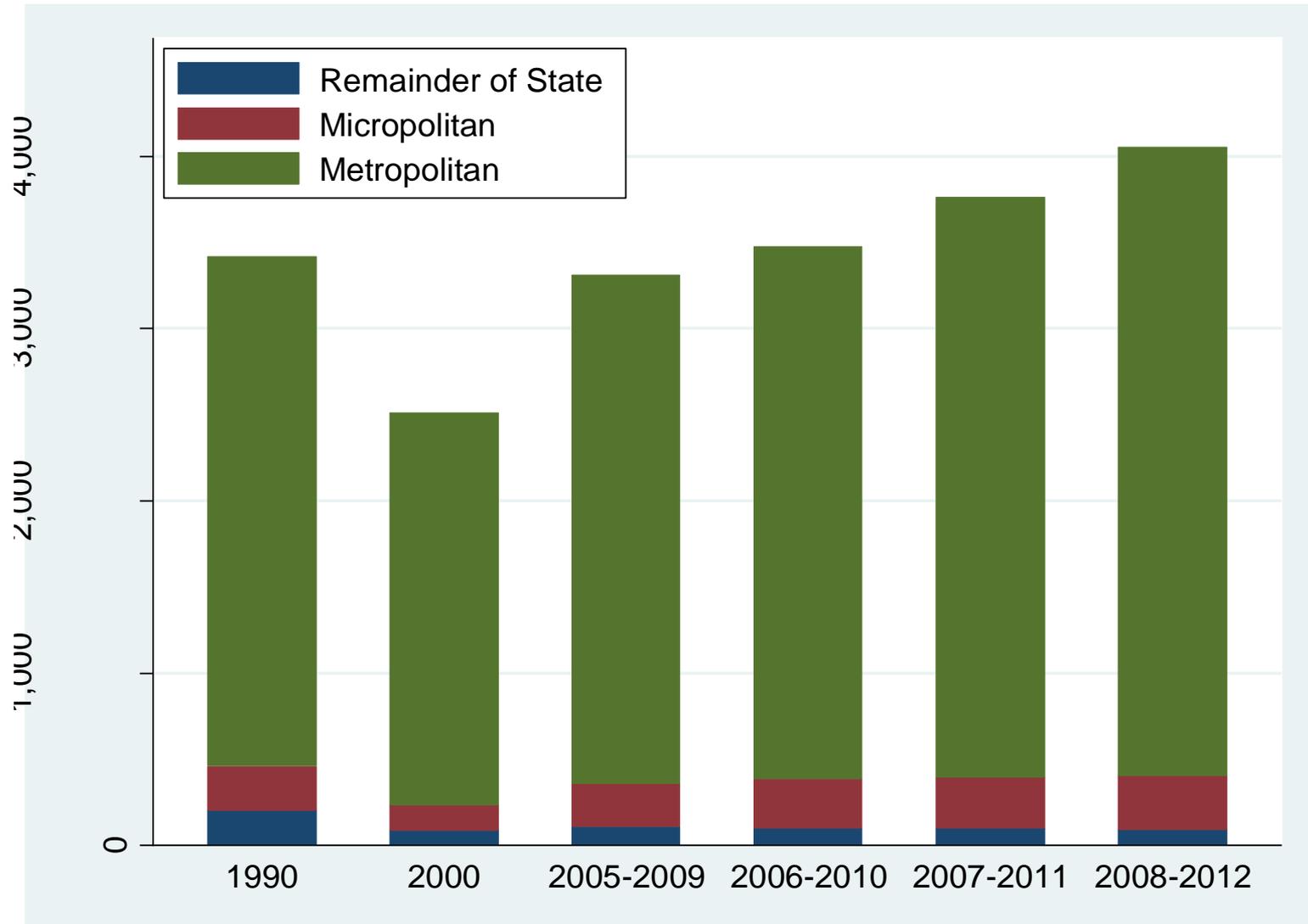
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Number of High-Poverty Census Tracts

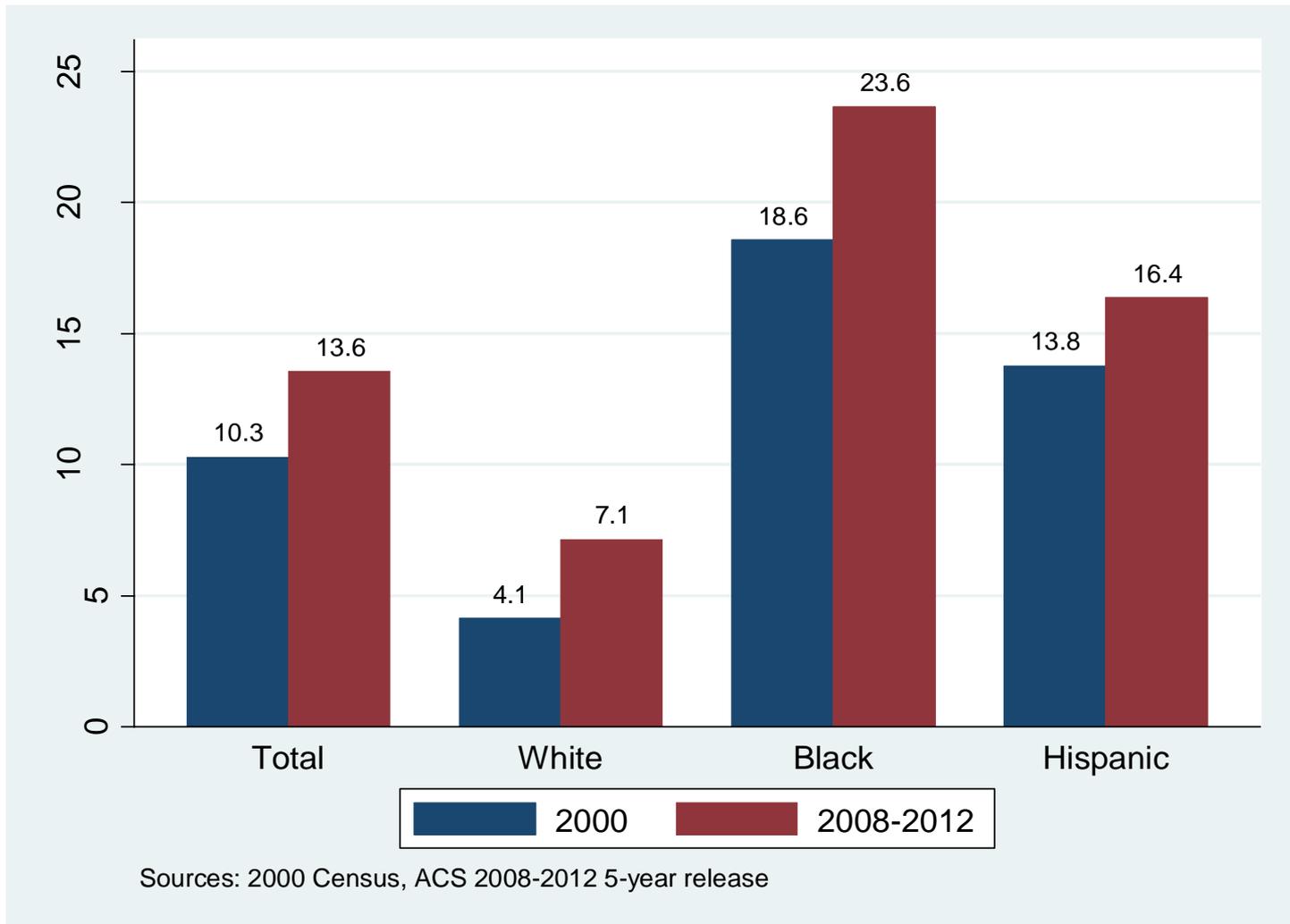


Population of High-Poverty Areas

Year	Population				Change since 2000	
	Persons	(%)	Poor	(%)	Persons	Poor
1990	9,592,333	4.0	4,802,686	15.1		
2000	7,198,892	2.6	3,487,015	10.3		
2005-2009	9,506,534	3.2	4,687,383	11.9	32%	23%
2006-2010	10,309,844	3.5	5,049,956	12.3	43%	32%
2007-2011	11,224,438	3.8	5,484,665	12.8	56%	43%
2008-2012	12,409,009	4.1	6,079,614	13.6	72%	57%

Year	Total	White	%	Black	%	Hispanic	%
2000	7,198,892	1,439,889	20.0%	3,010,537	41.8%	2,236,604	31.1%
2008-2012	12,409,009	3,191,497	25.7%	4,545,112	36.6%	3,899,857	31.4%
Change	5,210,117	1,751,608		1,534,575		1,663,253	
% Change	72%	122%		51%		74%	

Concentration of Poverty, 2000 to 2008-2012



Metropolitan Areas with the Highest Concentration of Poverty Among Blacks

	Total	Black*		
		Poor		
		All census tracts	High-poverty census tracts	%
Detroit-Livonia-Dearborn, MI	727,260	262,488	130,698	49.8
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	251,557	94,843	46,736	49.3
Rochester, NY	116,570	40,344	18,410	45.6
Tallahassee, FL	111,243	37,048	16,498	44.5
Dayton, OH	120,049	37,637	16,511	43.9
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	403,714	132,603	57,160	43.1
Gary, IN	128,769	43,084	17,911	41.6
Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN	169,553	54,249	22,463	41.4
Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	131,685	47,491	19,160	40.3
Memphis, TN-MS-AR	581,908	168,252	65,711	39.1

*Metropolitan areas with at least 100,000 blacks.

Source: 2008-2012 American Communities Survey.

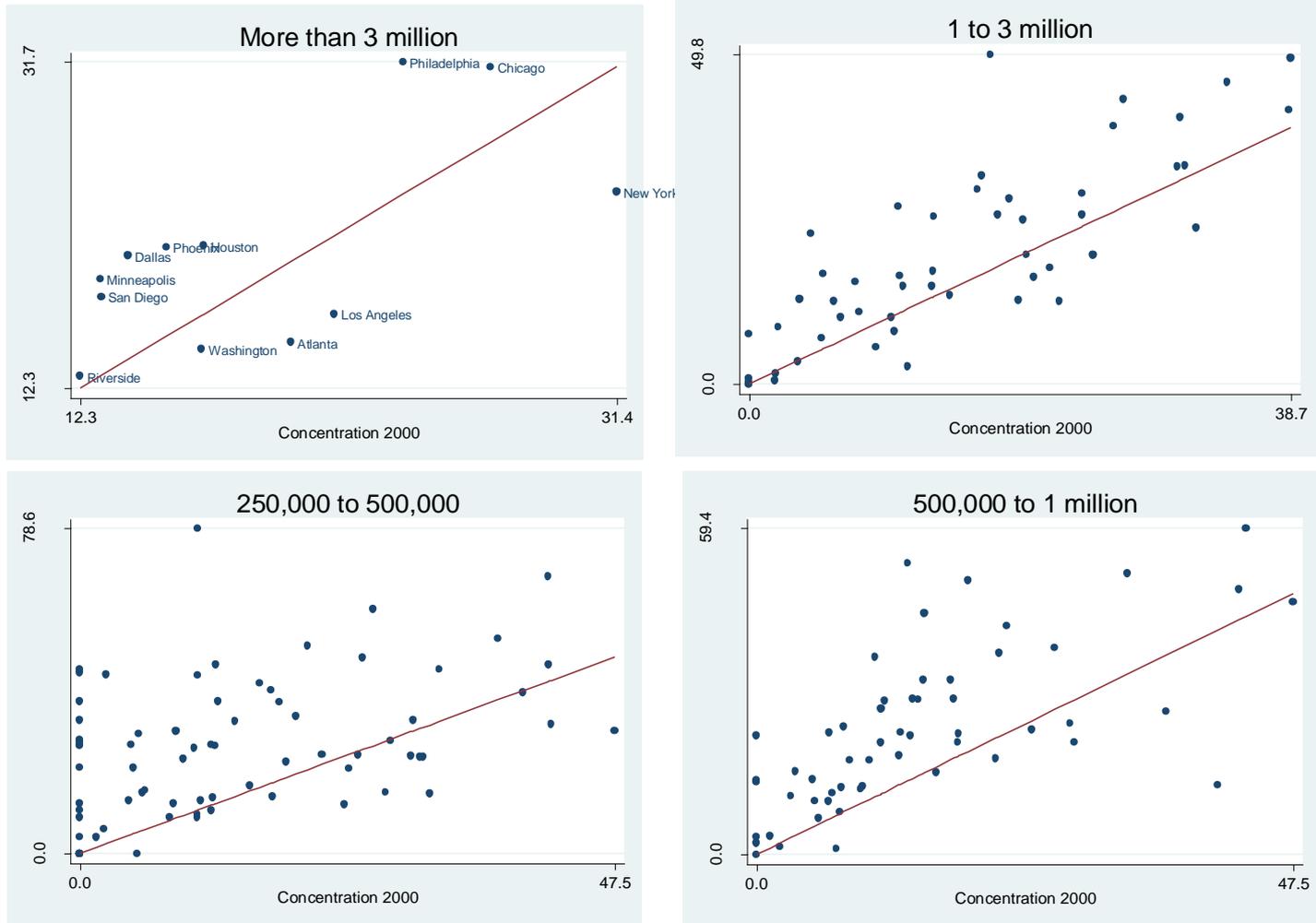
Metropolitan Areas with the Highest Concentration of Poverty Among Hispanics

	Hispanic**			
	Total	Poor		
		All census tracts	High-poverty census tracts	%
Philadelphia, PA	290,652	93,338	49,199	52.7
Laredo, TX	236,080	73,844	38,554	52.2
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	696,694	260,977	131,992	50.6
Brownsville-Harlingen, TX	353,240	133,144	66,461	49.9
Springfield, MA	103,370	41,965	20,723	49.4
Fresno, CA	460,606	148,272	67,303	45.4
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	144,697	38,216	15,025	39.3
Hartford-W. Hartford-E. Hartford, CT	146,028	42,653	16,704	39.2
Las Cruces, NM	134,588	42,900	14,965	34.9
Visalia-Porterville, CA	264,202	83,236	28,475	34.2

**Metropolitan areas with at least 100,000 Hispanics.

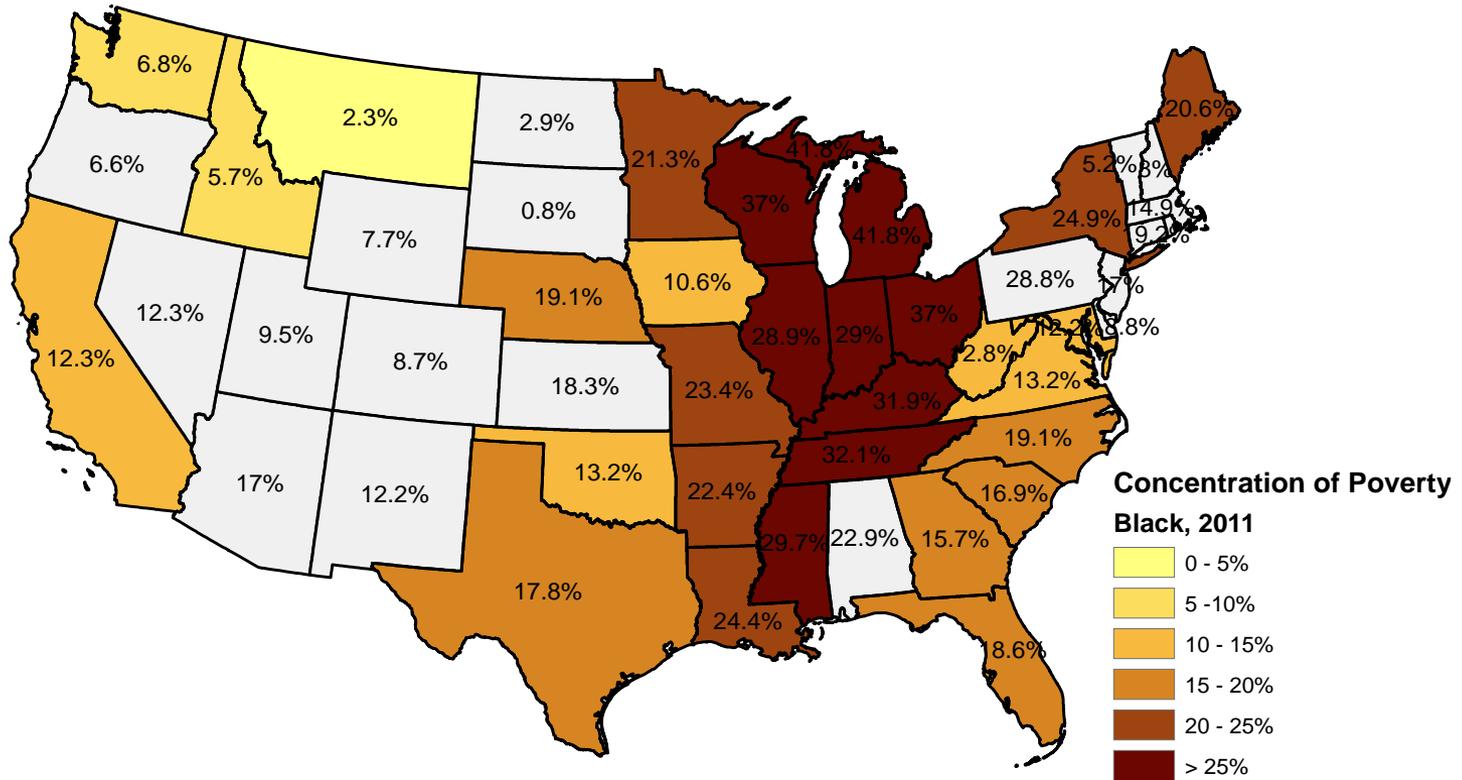
Source: 2008-2012 American Communities Survey.

Another Look at Concentration of Poverty in Metropolitan Areas by Size.

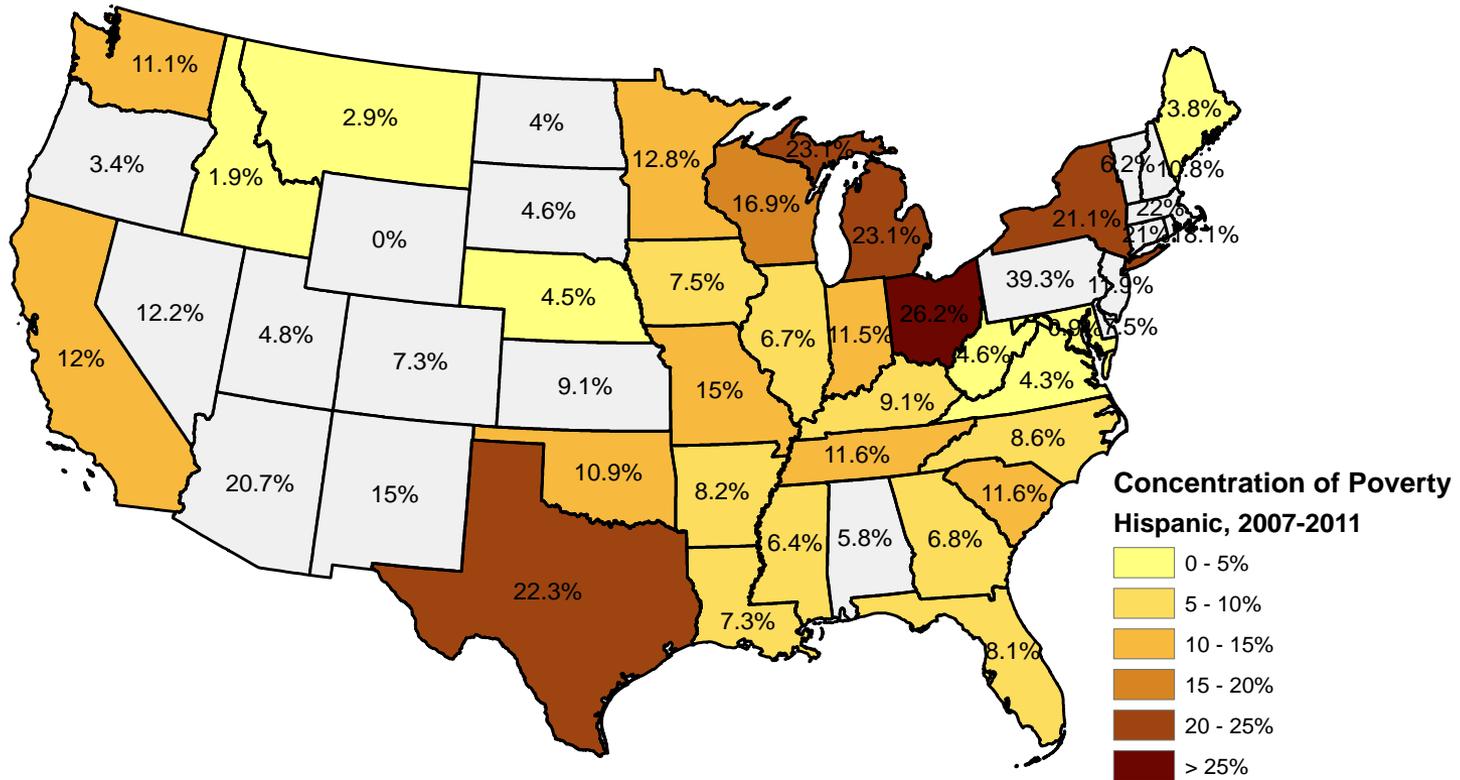


Metropolitan area above the diagonal experienced increases in concentration of poverty since 2000, those below experienced decreases.

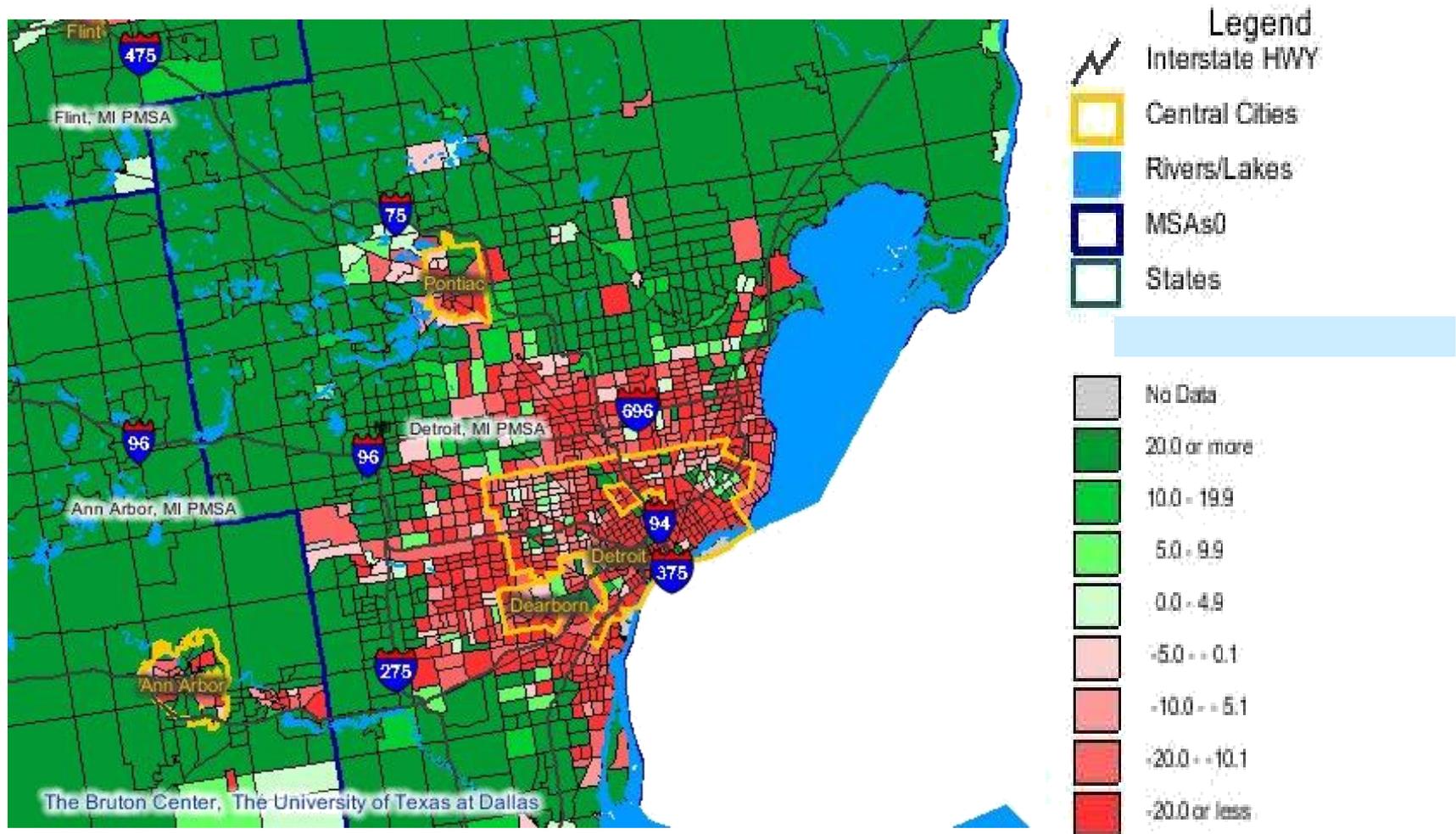
Black Concentration of Poverty



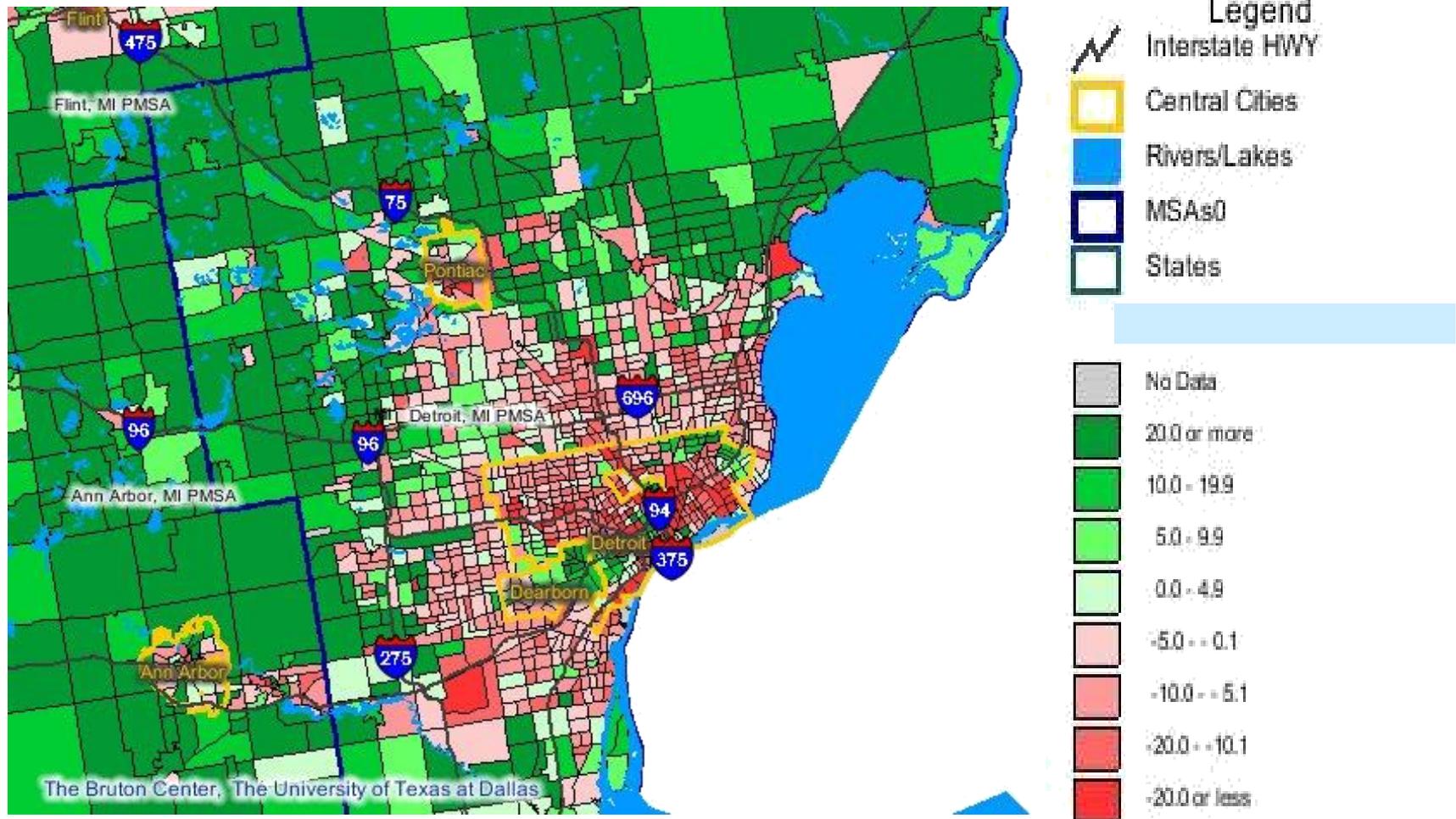
Hispanic Concentration of Poverty



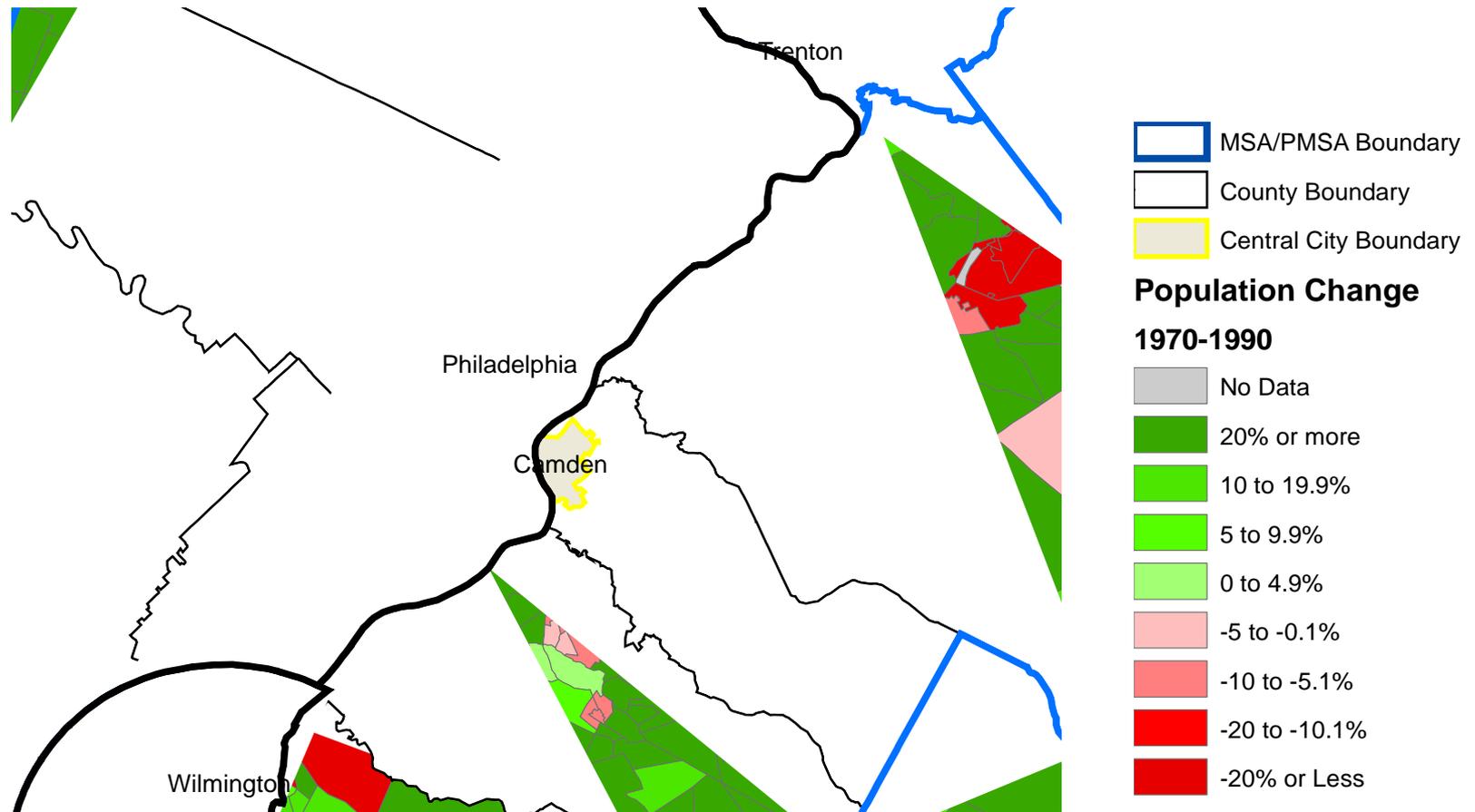
Population Changes, 1970-1990: The MSA Hollows Out



The Process Continues, 1990-2000

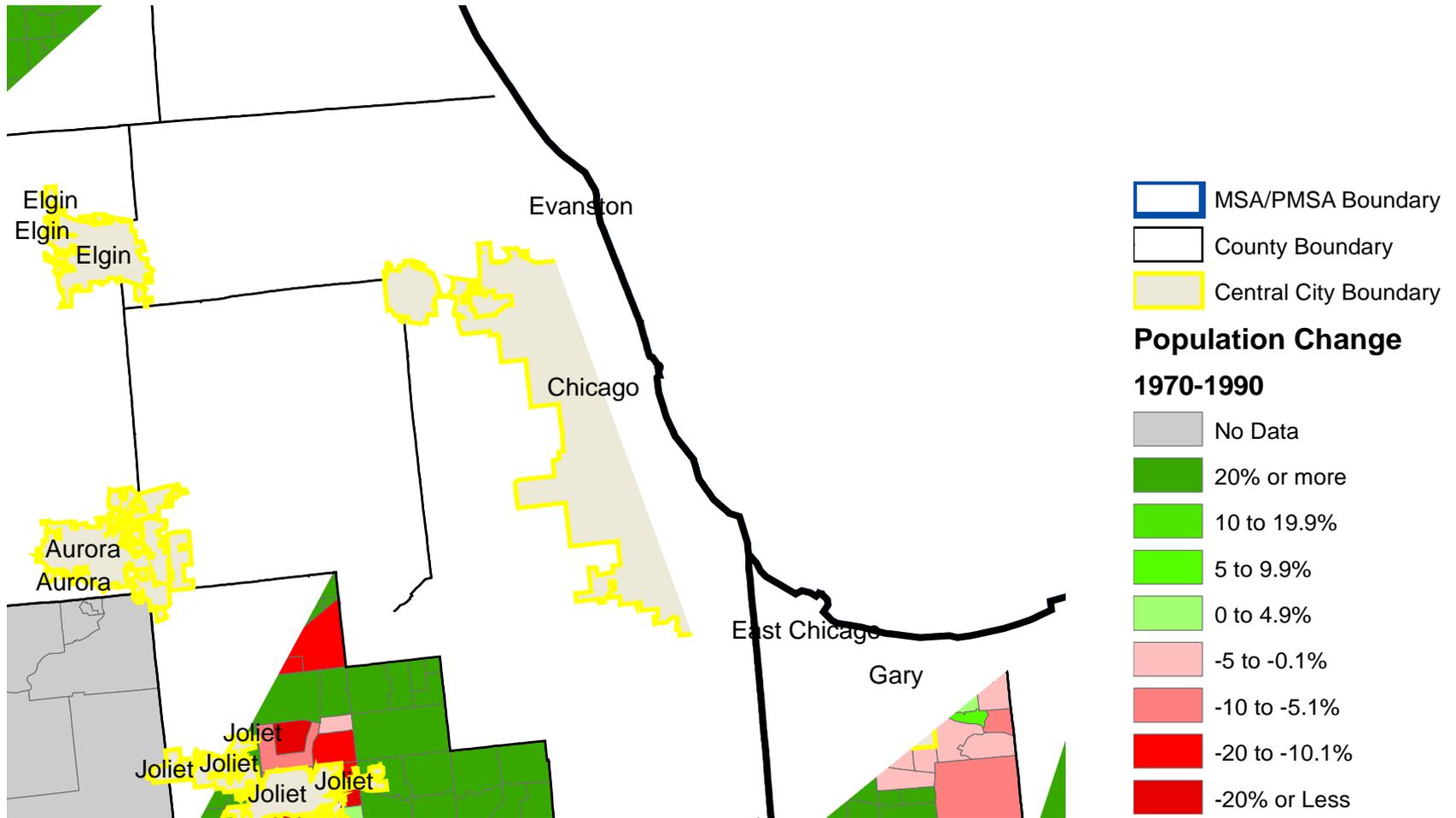


Suburban Sprawl and Central City Decline

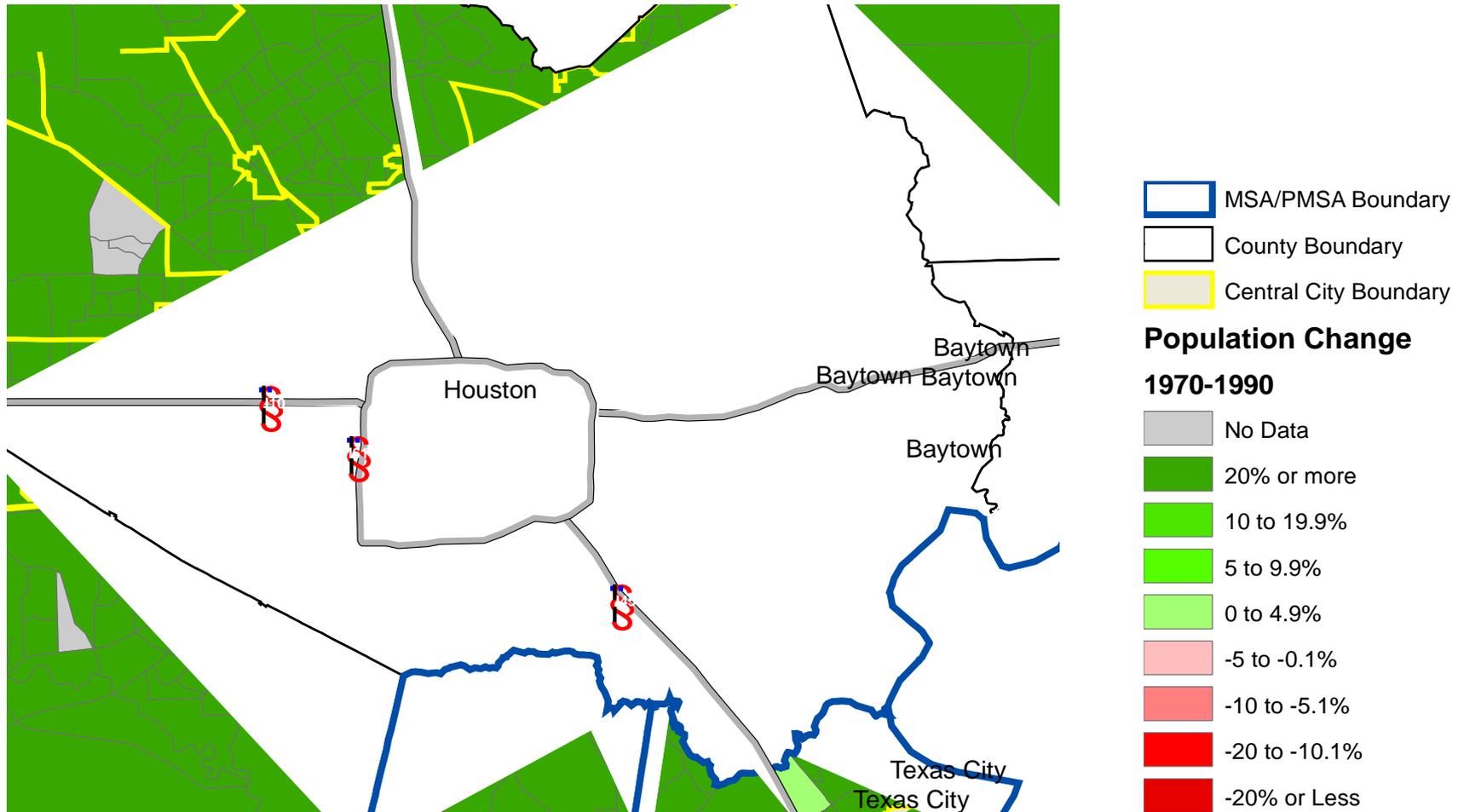


A large cause of concentration poverty historically has been rapid suburbanization, as the affluent moved out to exclusive suburbs and the poor were left behind in the central cities and older suburbs.

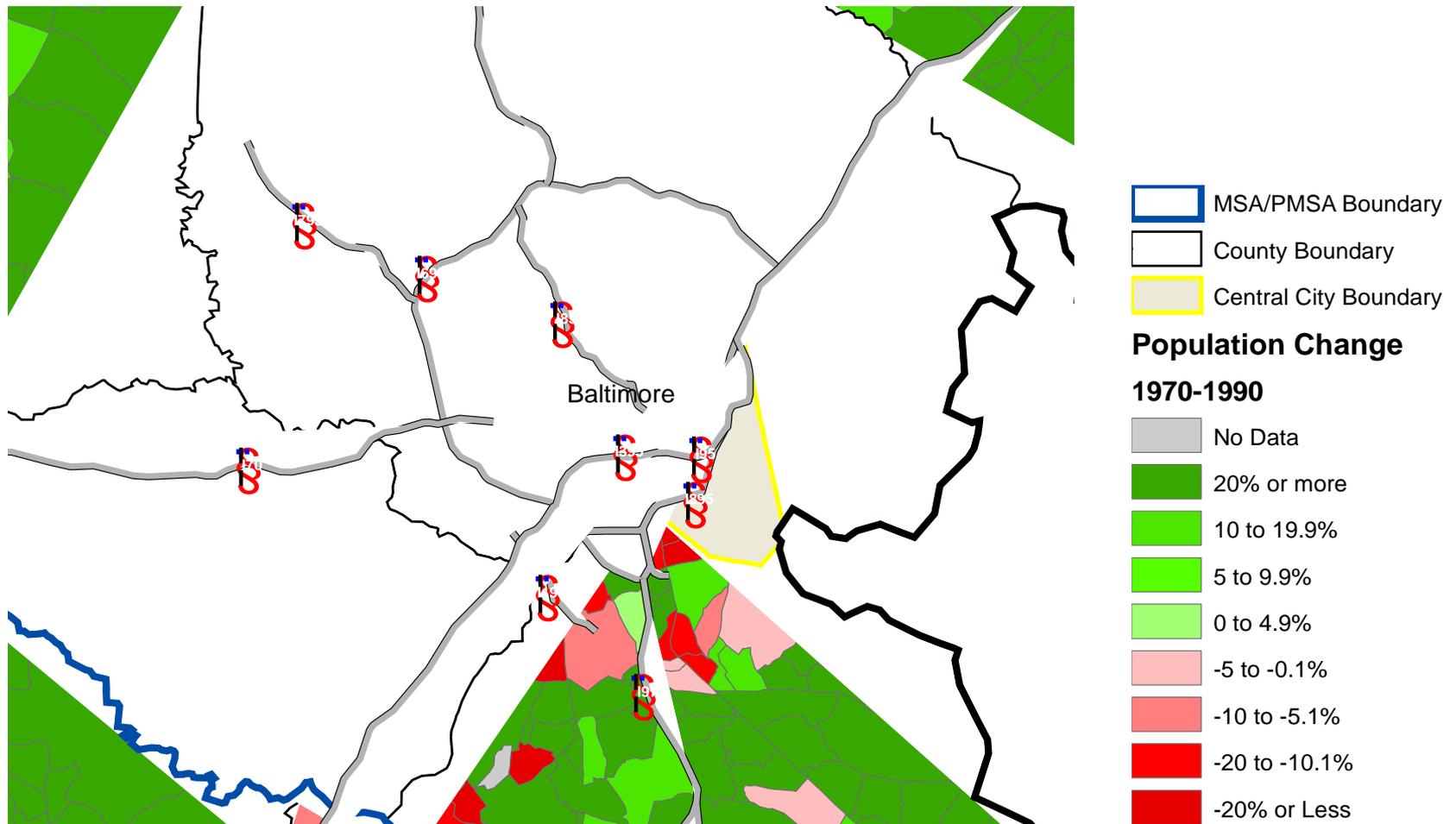
Population Change 1970-1990: Chicago Metropolitan Area



Population Change 1970-1990: Houston Metropolitan Area



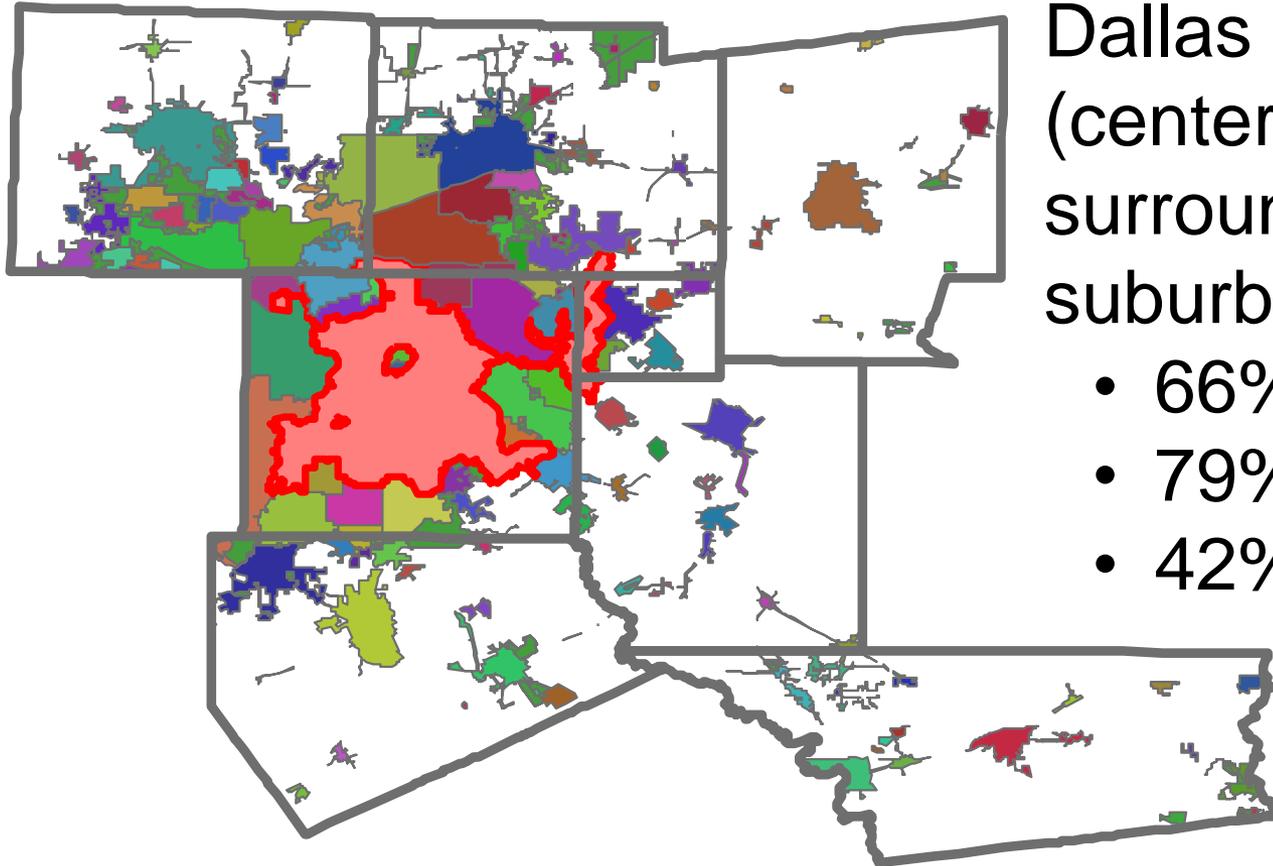
Population Change 1970-1990: Baltimore Metropolitan Area (18)



Institutional Context of US Suburban Development

- In US, major metropolitan areas have extensive political fragmentation
- Central cities are surrounded by politically independent suburbs
- Federal and state government play only a secondary role in development decisions
- Central cities are relatively poor and have greater minority populations
- Suburbs are rich and mostly white

Political Fragmentation, Dallas Metropolitan Area



Dallas central city
(center, in red) is
surrounded by 154
suburbs, containing:

- 66% of total
- 79% of whites
- 42% of blacks

“Exurban” Development



The rate of rural land conversion is far more rapid than population growth.

Photo: Wisconsin Alliance of Cities

Economically Exclusive Developments Over Large, Peripheral Areas

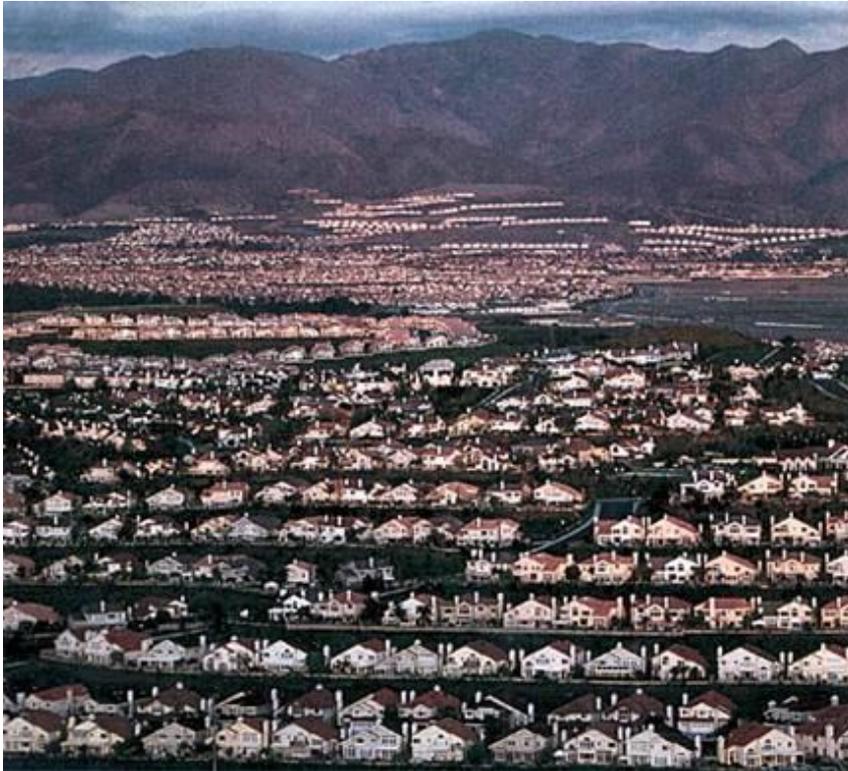


Photo credits: Left: Sierra Club; Right: North Texas Council of Governments

The policy conversation has to change.

- The policy conversation today is either *how to “fix” high-poverty neighborhoods* or *how to help residents leave*.
 - Enterprise Zones, Promise Neighborhoods, and many others
 - MTO, Section 8 vouchers, scattered site housing (but mostly still within central cities)
- These programs have a role to play, especially in the short run.
- But they *do not address the fundamental underlying issue*.
- The conversation should be *WHY are there so many high-poverty neighborhoods to begin with?*

WHY there are so many high-poverty neighborhoods?

- Concentration of poverty is the direct result of policy choices:
 - *Political fragmentation* means that hundreds of suburbs develop without regard for the larger impact of their choices.
 - Suburbs grow much faster than is needed to accommodate metropolitan population growth.
 - Thus, suburban growth comes at the expense of central cities and older suburbs (Cannibalistic growth).
 - Infrastructure of new suburbs is subsidized, even as older infrastructure is underutilized.
 - Exclusionary zoning ensures economic and racial segregation.
- By policy and tradition, we create *a durable architecture of segregation* that ensures the concentration of poverty.

The policy question: will we continue to build ghettos and barrios?

- Without abandoning efforts to help those who currently live in high-poverty neighborhoods, *we must nonetheless work to change the development paradigm that builds high-poverty neighborhoods in the first place.*
 - State and federal governments must begin to *control suburban development* so that it is not cannibalistic: new housing construction must be in line with metropolitan population growth.
 - Every city and town in a metropolitan should build *new housing that reflects the income distribution of the metropolitan area as a whole.*
 - Over decades, this will result in less differentiation among places, more in-fill development, higher density, more efficient public transportation, and fewer failing schools.
- The fundamental question is not how to fix Camden, but how to fix the metropolitan development paradigm that creates Camdens and Detroits in the first place.