METROPOLITAN POLICY PROGRAM
THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

One-Fifth of America:
A Comprehensive Guide to America's First Suburbs

February 15, 2006
8:15 a.m.

Featuring:

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, New York

Rep. Michael Turner, Ohio 3rd

E.J. Dionne, The Brookings Institution

Bruce Katz, The Brookings Institution

Margaret Keliher, Dallas County, TX

Dan Onorato, Allegheny County, PA

Robert Puentes, The Brookings Institution

Ron Sims, King County, WA

Tom Suozzi, Nassau County, NY

Chris Zimmerman, Arlington County, VA

One-Fifth of America: A Comprehensive Guide to America's First Suburbs

I How were first suburbs selected for our study?

II What are the major findings of this research?

III What kind of policy implications arise as a result?

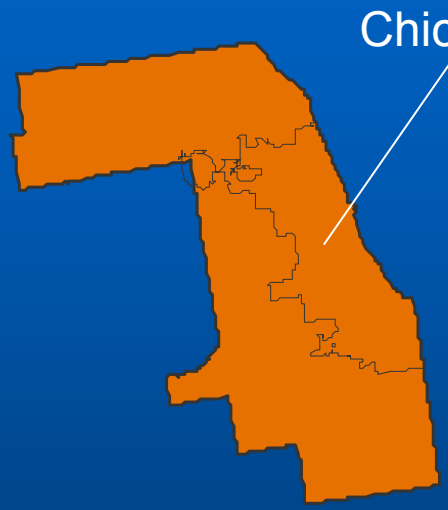
How were first suburbs selected for our study?

- Used county-level geography
- They existed in 1950 as counties that were part of 1950 ‘standard metropolitan areas’ (SMAs)
- County had to be contiguous with a center city that was ranked in the top 100 in 1950
- Data for the central city is not included if such existed within the county

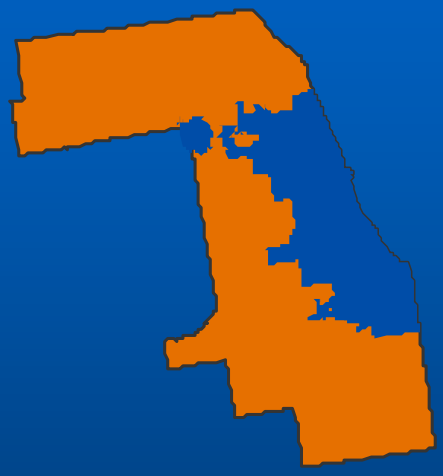
Fulton County, GA

Lake County, IN

For example, in Cook County the first suburbs are defined as those outside (or excluding) Chicago



Cook County

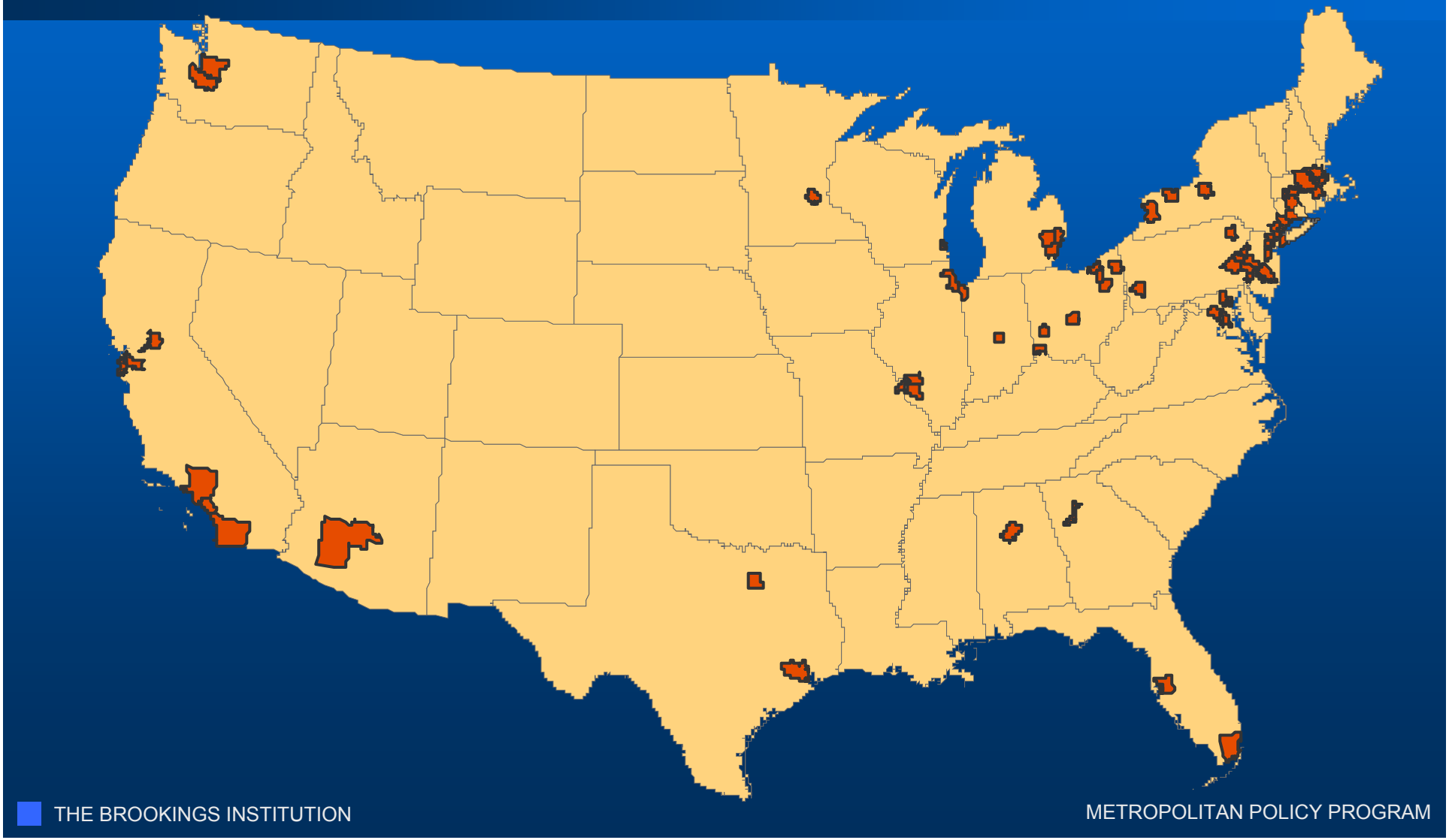


Cook County Suburbs

Example:

	2000 Population
Cook County	5,376,741
Chicago	2,896,016
Cook County First Suburbs	**2,480,725**

There are 64 first suburban counties found throughout the nation



Nine first suburban counties are located in the West and Southwest

Maricopa County, AZ

San Diego County, CA

Orange County, CA

Los Angeles County, CA

Alameda County, CA

Sacramento County, CA

San Mateo County, CA

King County, WA

Pierce County, WA

Six are found in the South and Southeast

Dallas County, TX

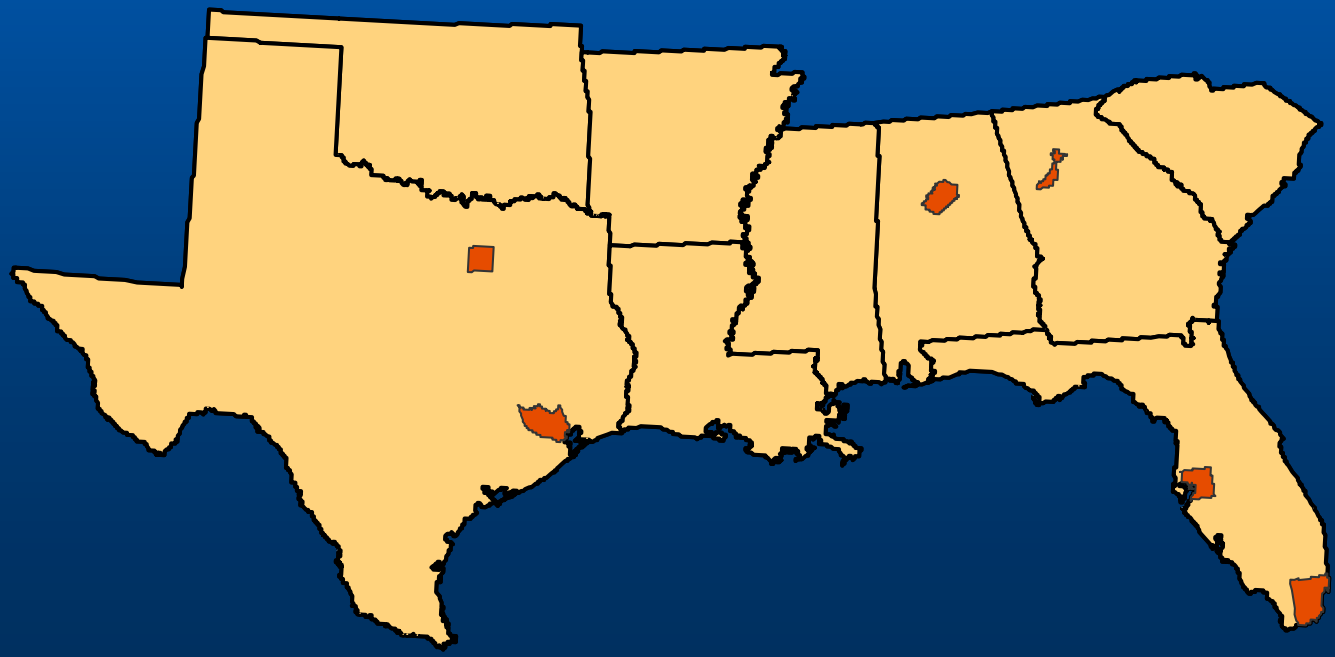
Harris County, TX

Jefferson County, AL

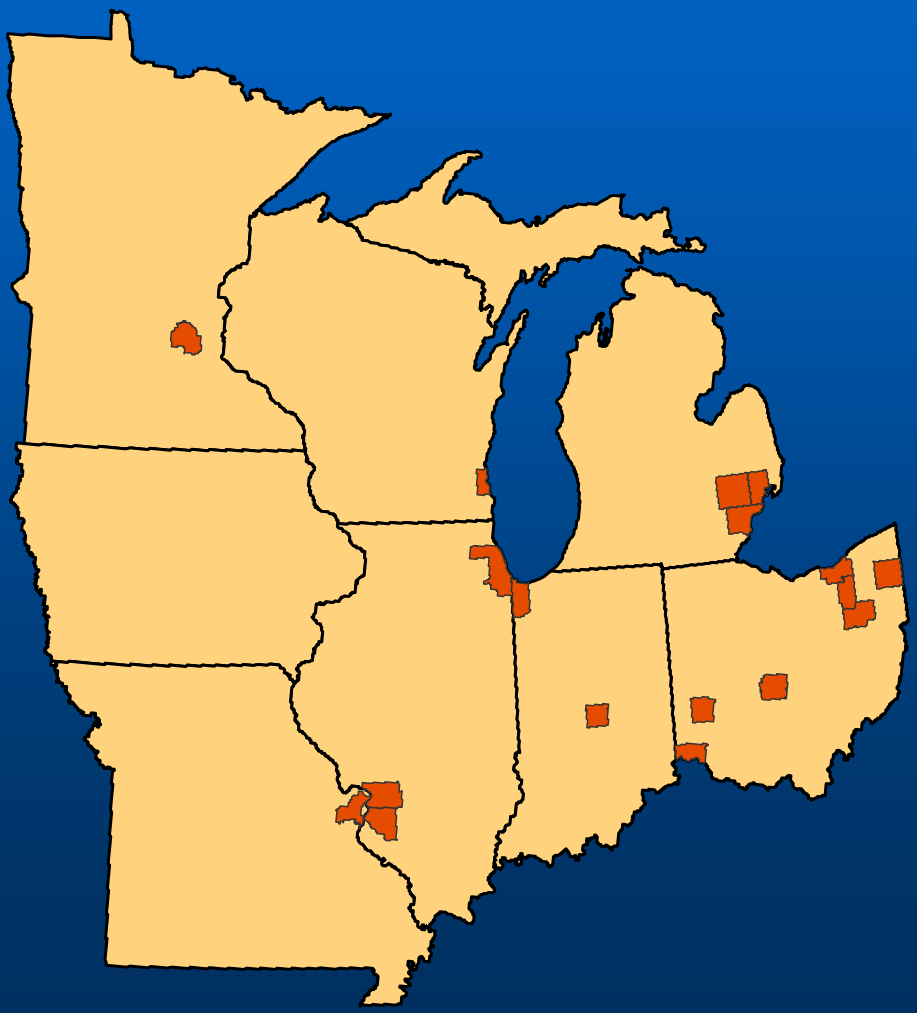
Fulton County, GA

Hillsborough County, FL

Dade County, FL



Most are found in the Midwest ….



Examples:

Cuyahoga County, OH

Franklin County, OH

Wayne County, MI

Oakland County, MI

Lake County, IN

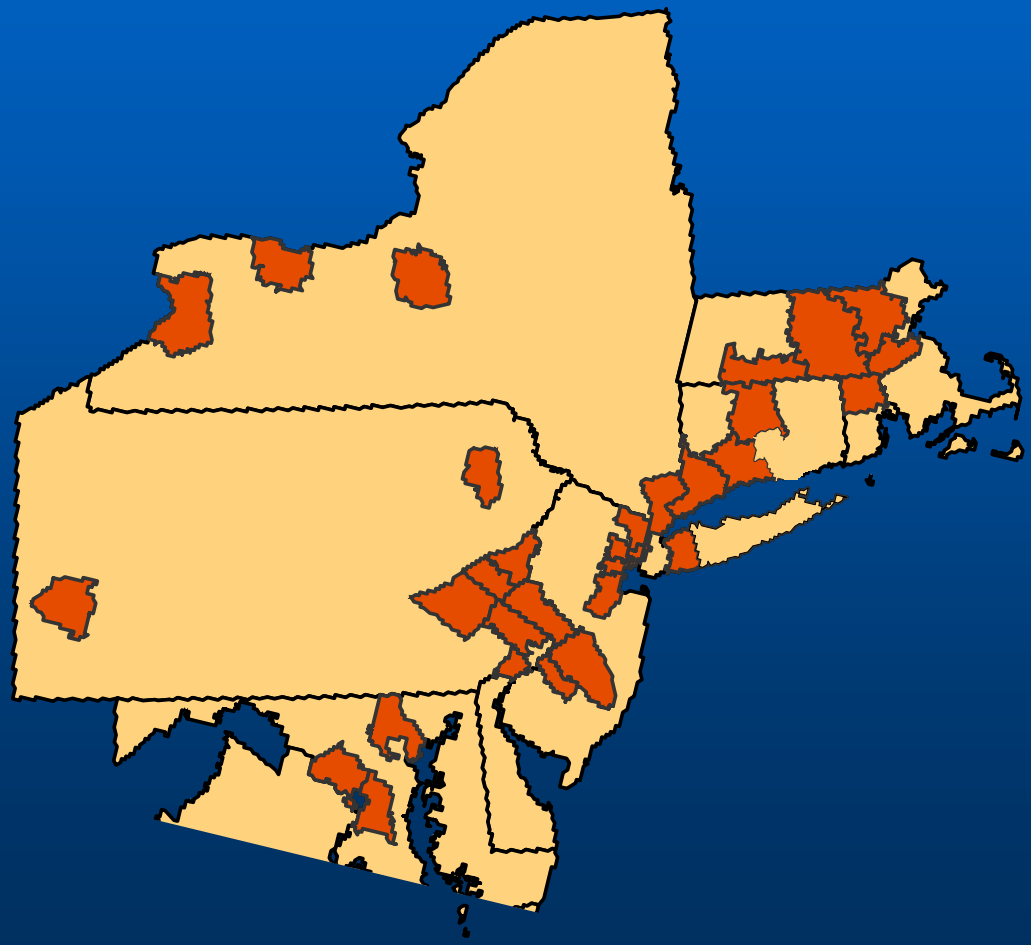
Milwaukee County, WI

Hennepin County, MN

Cook County, IL

St. Louis County, MO

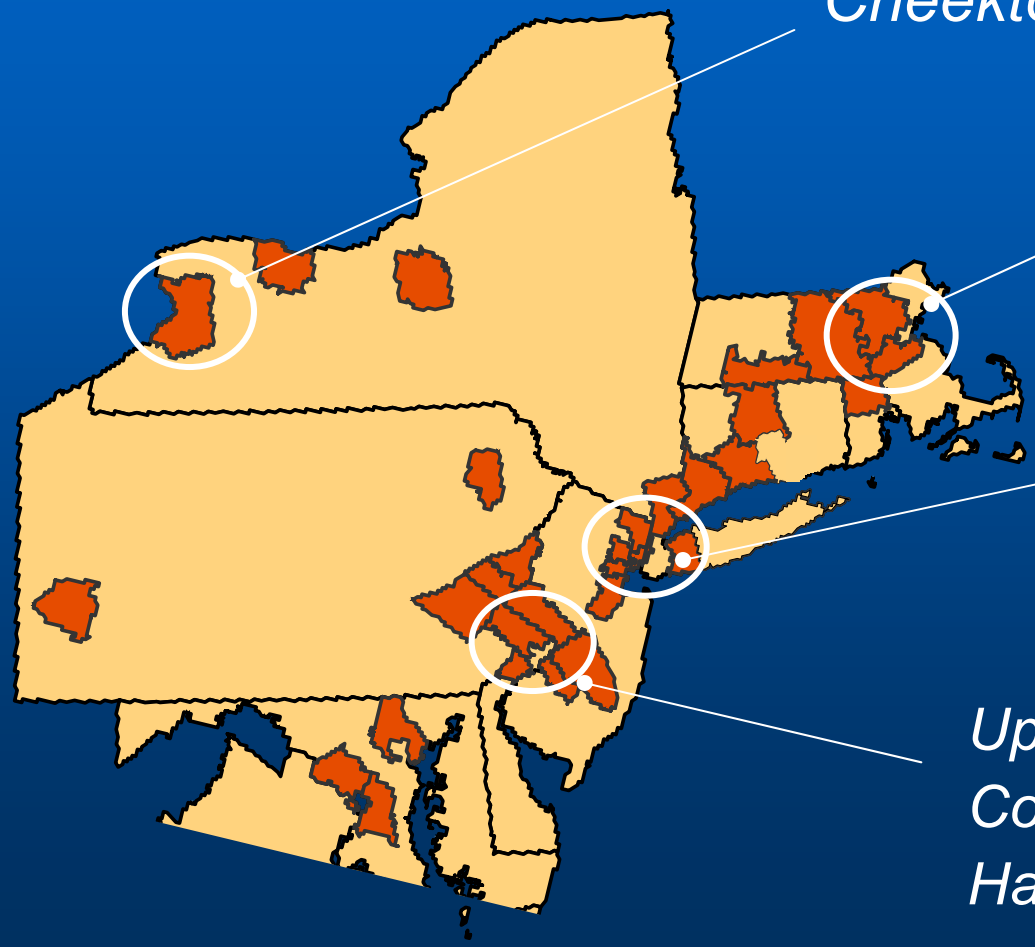
…. and the Northeast



Examples:

Allegheny County, PA
Lackawanna County, PA
Baltimore County, MD
Arlington County, VA
Middlesex County, MA
Providence County, RI
Onondaga County, NY
Bergen County, NJ
Nassau County, NY
Westchester County, NY
Fairfield County, CT

Though we use county level data, we recognize the importance of the local municipalities in these places



Cheektowaga, NY

Medford, MA
Quincy, MA

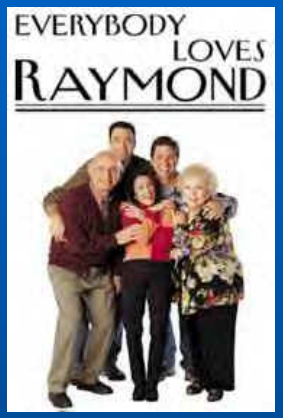
Teaneck, NJ
Secaucus, NJ
Hempstead, NY

Upper Darby, PA
Conshohocken, PA
Haddonfield, NJ

Having a TV show is not a prerequisite for qualifying as a first suburb

Westchester County, NY

Los Angeles County, CA



Nassau County, NY

Cook County, IL

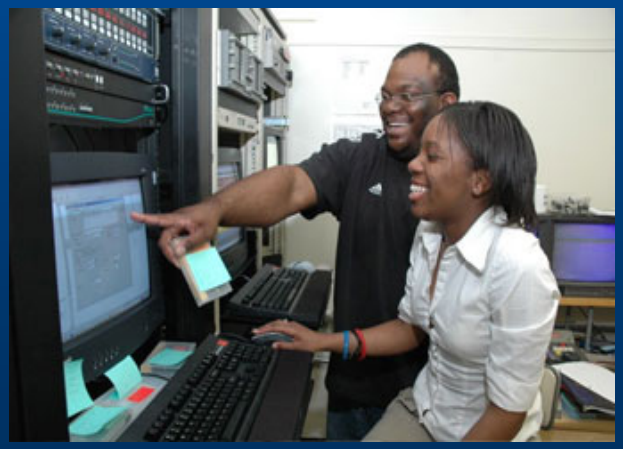
Orange County, CA

Our analysis examines the demographic, market, and economic trends for these 64 places

INDICATORS:

- ✓ Population
- ✓ Race and ethnicity
- ✓ Immigration
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Household type and size
- ✓ Housing
- ✓ Educational attainment
- ✓ Income and poverty
- ✓ Employment
- ✓ Commuting
- ✓ Governance

Dallas County, TX



Prince George's County, MD

The geographic units of analysis discussed here are:

- **First Suburbs**
- **Primary Cities**
- **Newer Suburbs**
- **United States**

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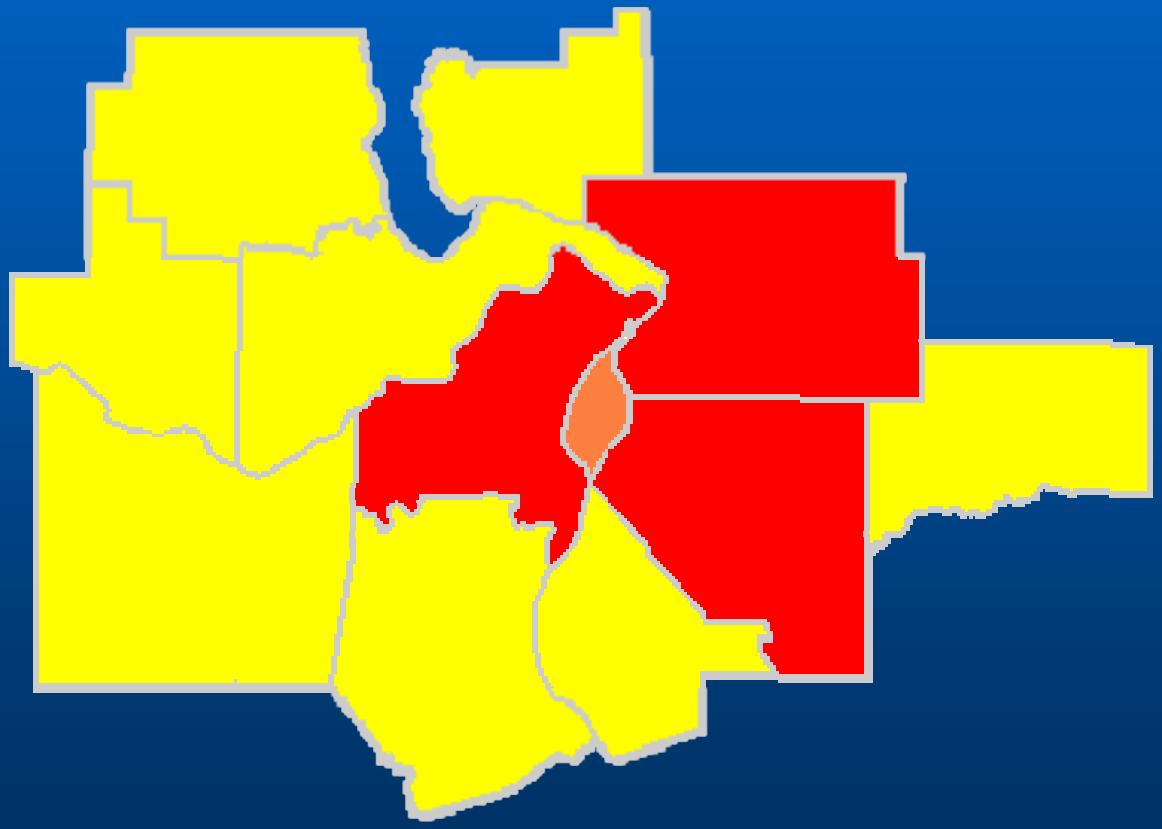


St. Louis Metropolitan Area

First Suburbs:
St. Louis County
Madison County
St. Clair County

Primary City:
St. Louis city

Newer Suburbs:
Metro remainder

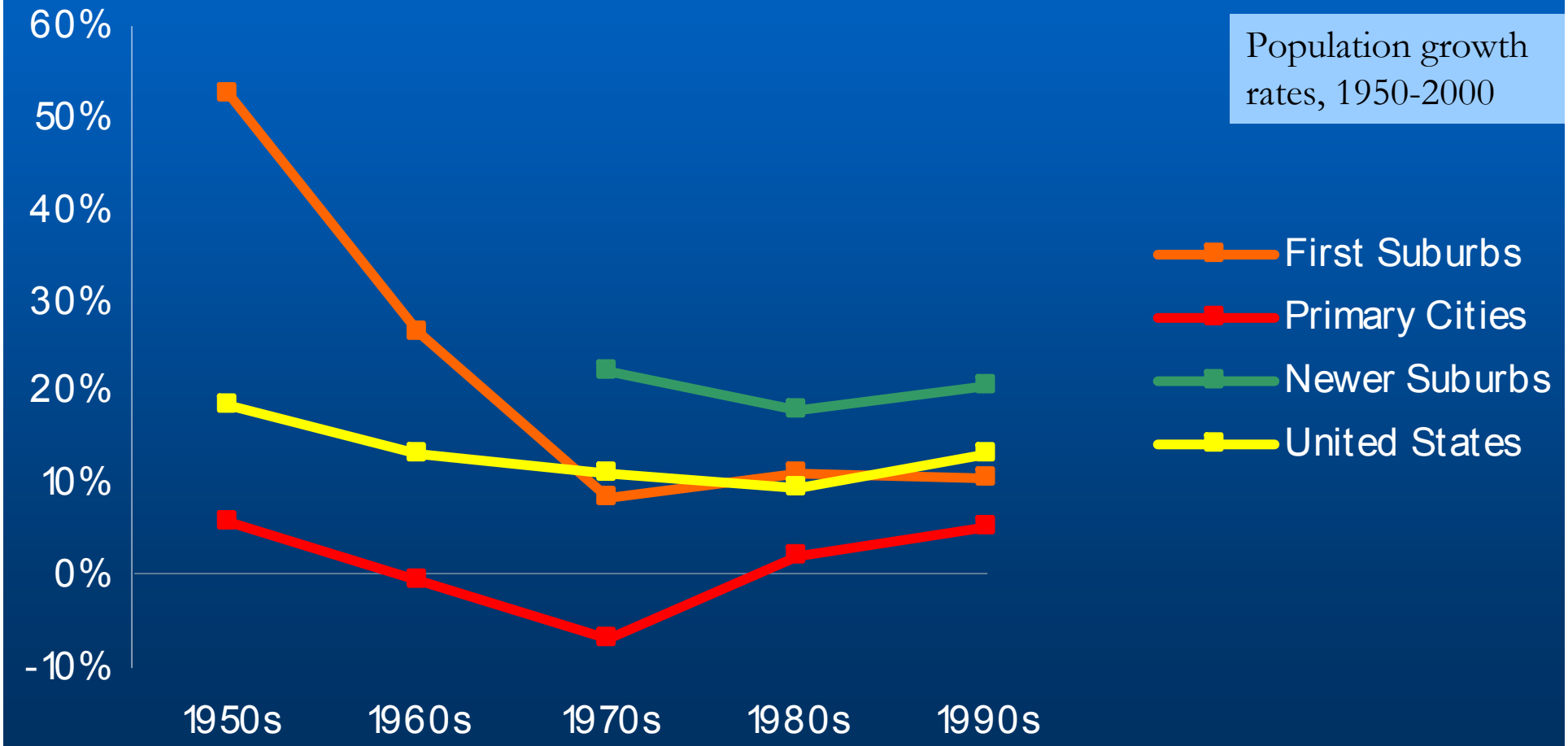
One-Fifth of America: A Comprehensive Guide to America's First Suburbs

I How were first suburbs selected for our study?

II What are the major findings of this research?

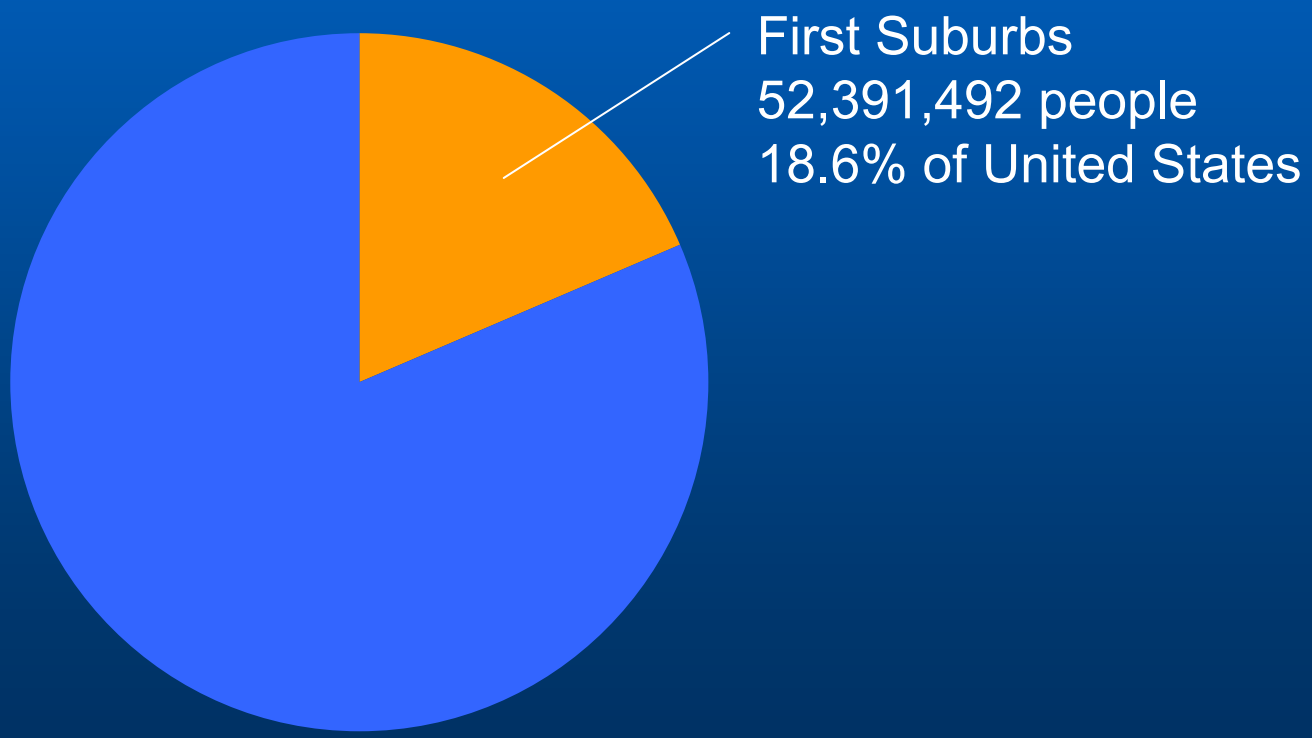
III What kind of policy implications arise as a result?

First suburbs have evolved from being fast growing to moderately growing places by the end of the century



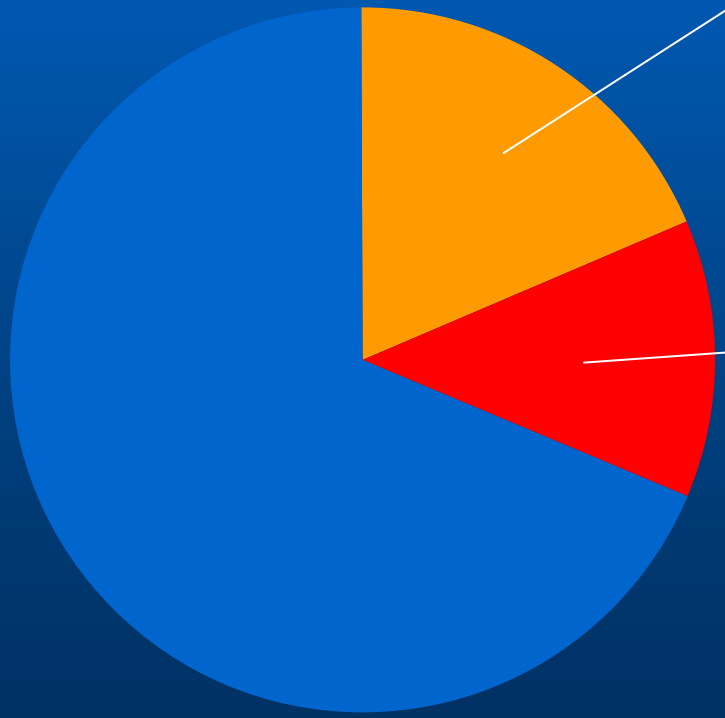
By 2000, about one-fifth of the nation's population – 19 percent – lived in first suburbs

Over 50 million people live in first suburbs



And over 31 percent of the nation lived either in a first suburb or primary city

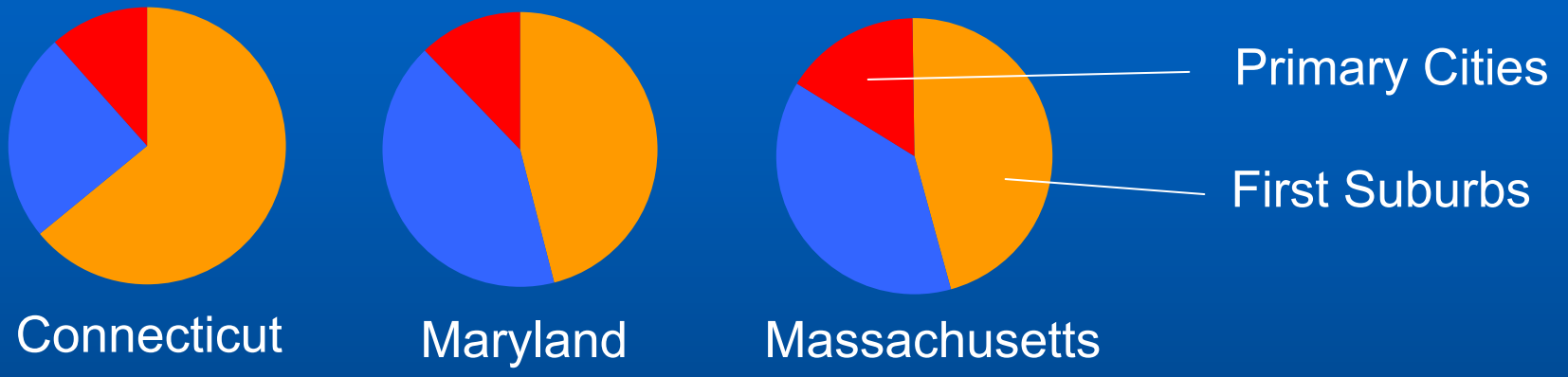
Almost 90 million people live either in first suburbs or the primary cities of first suburbs



First Suburbs
52,391,492 people
18.6% of United States

Primary Cities of First Suburbs
36,300,693 people
12.9% of United States

Within states, significant majorities of first suburbs and primary cities could form



Percent of select state's population living in a first suburb or primary city, 2000

Like national trends, population growth in first suburbs is strongest in the West and South

Rank	First Suburb	Percent growth 1950 - 2000
1	Orange County, CA	1216.0%
2	Maricopa County, AZ	678.0%
3	Dade County, FL	669.0%
4	San Diego County, CA	615.0%
5	Harris County, TX	587.0%
60	St. Clair County, IL	24.3%
61	Allegheny County, PA	13.0%
62	Essex County, NJ	11.3%
63	Hudson County, NJ	5.9%
64	Lackawanna County, PA	3.8%
	All First Suburbs	**161.3%**
	All Primary Cities	**5.3%**
	All Newer Suburbs	**75.1%**
	United States	**86.0%**

Population growth, 1950-2000

And since 1980, several northeast and Midwestern first suburbs saw population decreases

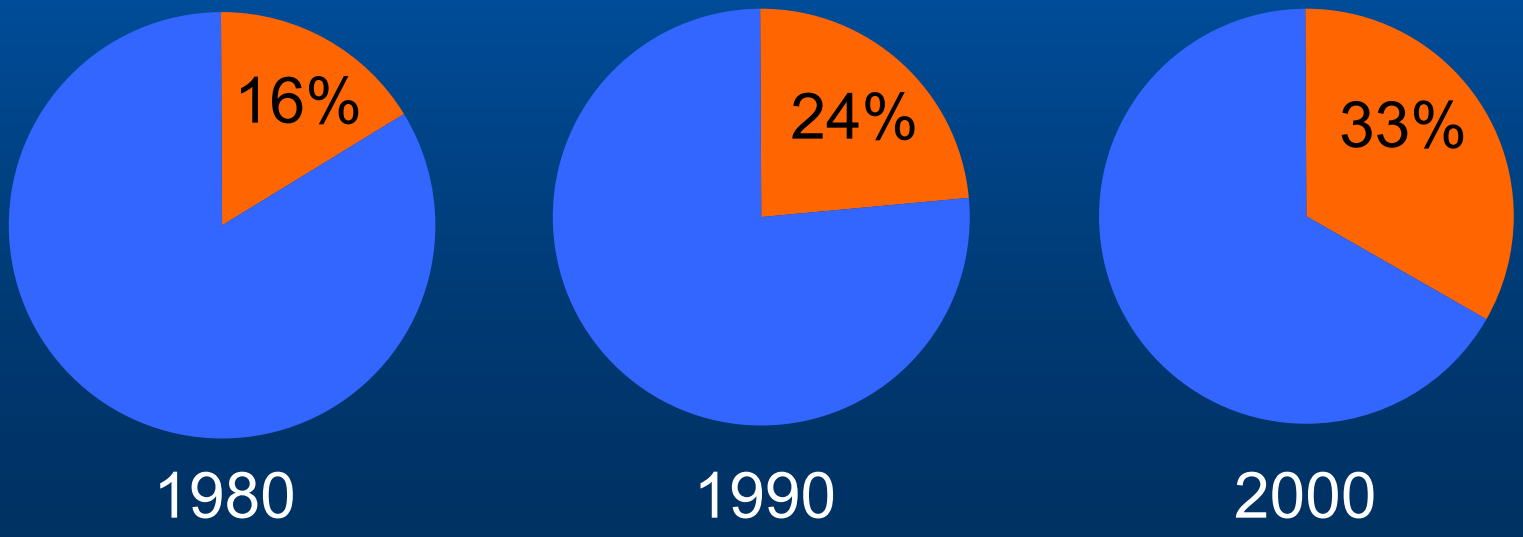
Slow-Growth Rank	First Suburb	Percent Growth, 1980-2000
1	Allegheny County, PA	-7.7%
2	Trumbull County, OH	-6.9%
3	St. Clair County, IL	-4.3%
4	Wayne County, MI	-2.2%
5	Lackawanna County, PA	-2.1%
6	Cuyahoga County, OH	-1.0%
7	Delaware County, PA	-0.7%
8	Essex County, NJ	-0.3%
9	Erie County, NY	0.0%
10	Nassau County, NY	1.0%

Population growth, 1980-2000

Only 1 of the 10 slowest growing first suburbs has experienced **positive** population growth since 1980

First suburbs went from being less diverse than the nation in 1980 to being more diverse by 2000

Percent of first suburban population other than non-Hispanic white, 1980-2000

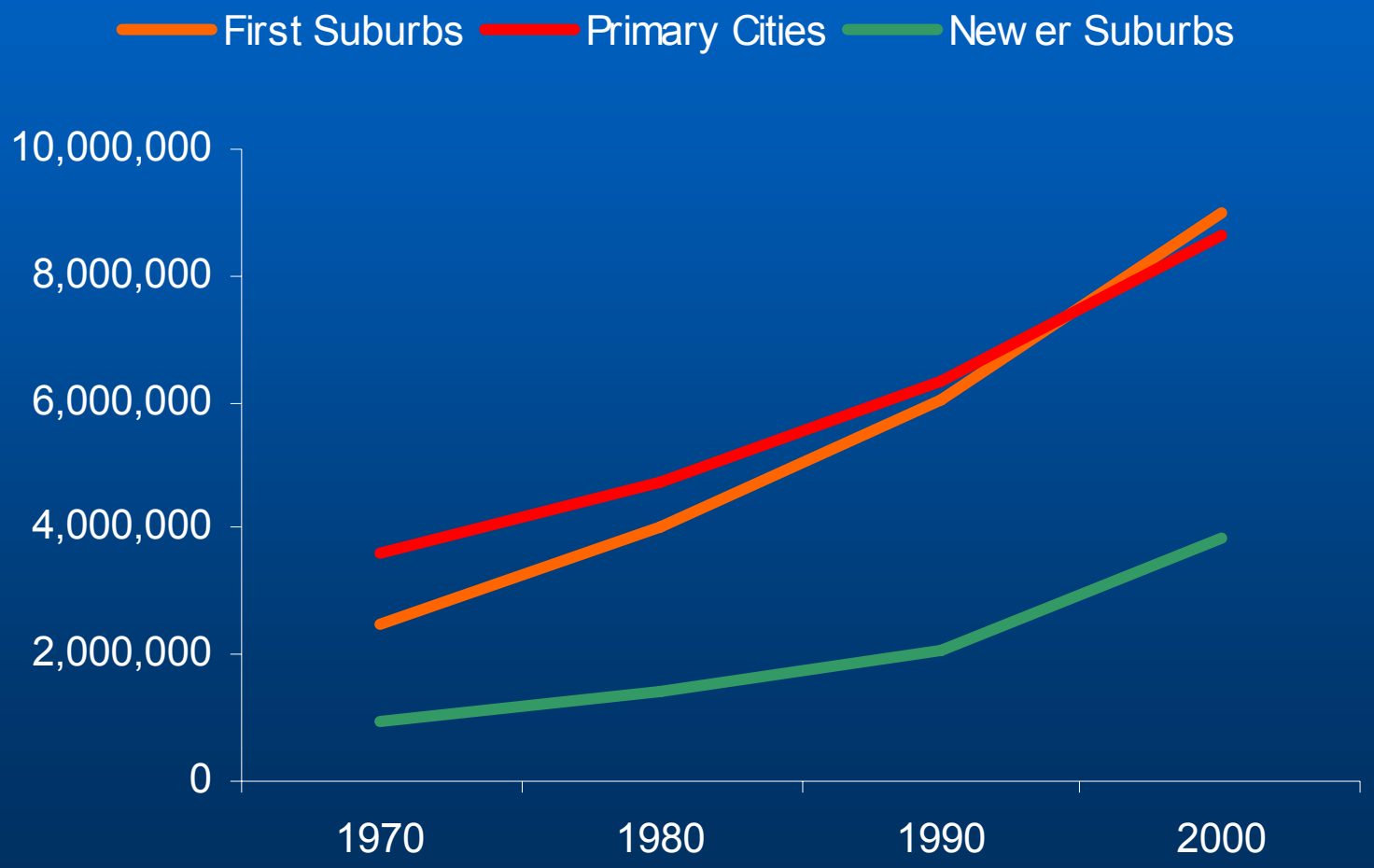


By 2000, one-third of first suburbanites were not white, but this varies significantly across the country

Rank	First Suburb	Population Other Than Non-Hispanic White
1	Dade County, FL	77.6%
2	Prince George's County, MD	75.7%
3	Los Angeles County, CA	68.2%
4	Hudson County, NJ	57.0%
5	Alameda County, CA	53.2%
61	Onondaga County, NY	6.2%
62	Summit County, OH	6.1%
63	Stark County, OH	6.0%
64	Lackawanna County, PA	5.1%
65	Berks County, PA	4.9%
	All First Suburbs	**33.4%**
	All Primary Cities	**61.1%**
	All Newer Suburbs	**21.0%**
	United States	**31.9%**

Percent of population other than non-Hispanic white, 2000

First suburbs are now home to a large and growing number of foreign-born residents



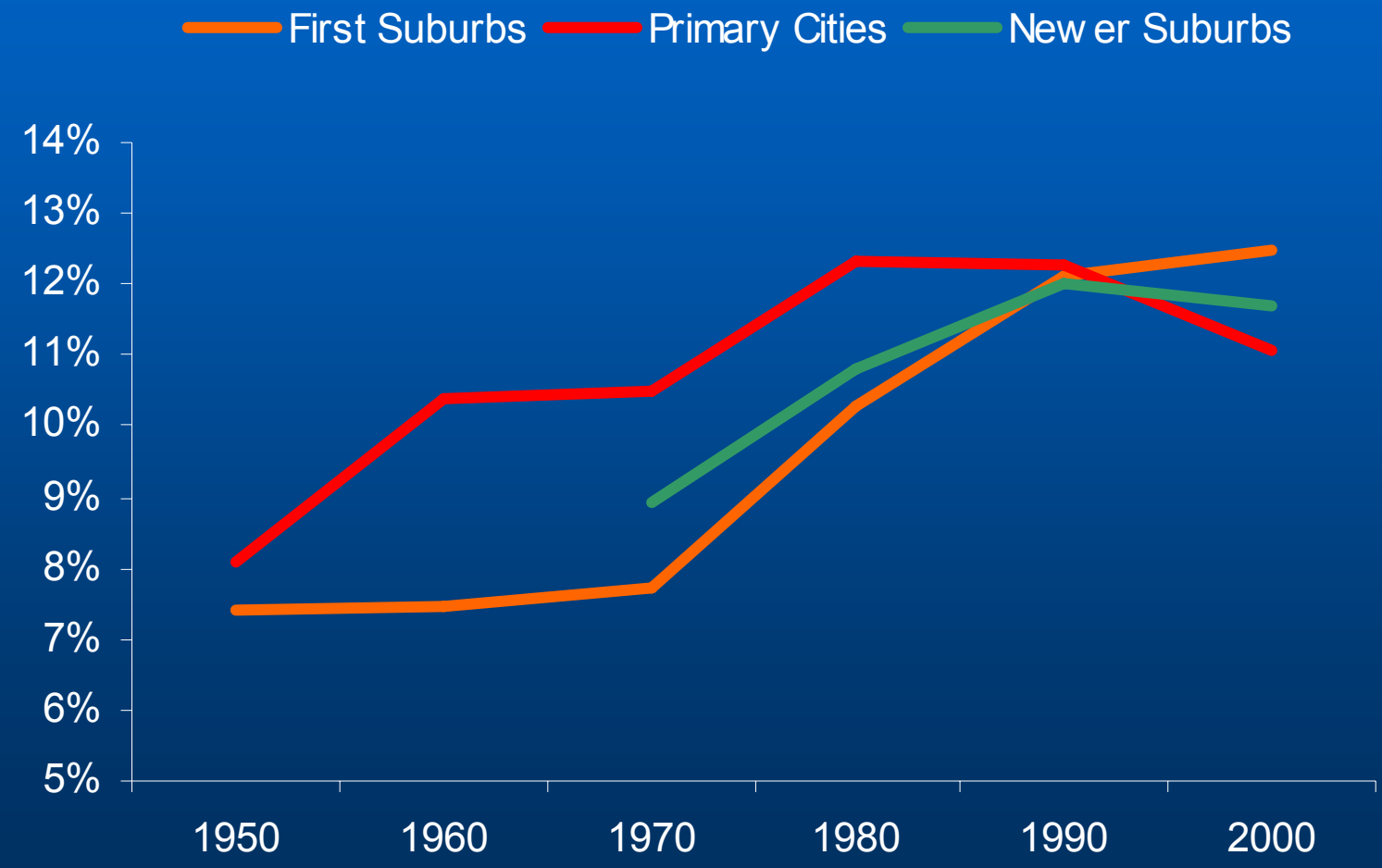
Foreign-born population, 1970-2000

By 2000, over 17 percent of first suburban residents were foreign-born, compared to 11 percent nationally

Rank	First Suburb	Percent Foreign-Born
1	Dade County, FL	49.3%
2	Hudson County, NJ	41.5%
3	Los Angeles County, CA	33.6%
4	San Mateo County, CA	32.3%
5	Orange County, CA	29.9%
61	St. Clair County, IL	2.1%
62	Trumbull County, OH	1.8%
63	Lackawanna County, PA	1.8%
64	Stark County, OH	1.8%
65	Madison County, IL	1.3%
	All First Suburbs	**17.1%**
	All Primary Cities	**23.8%**
	All Newer Suburbs	**16.7%**
	United States	**11.1%**

Foreign-born population, 2000

The percent of elderly in first suburbs is increasing very fast and is now higher than primary cities and newer suburbs



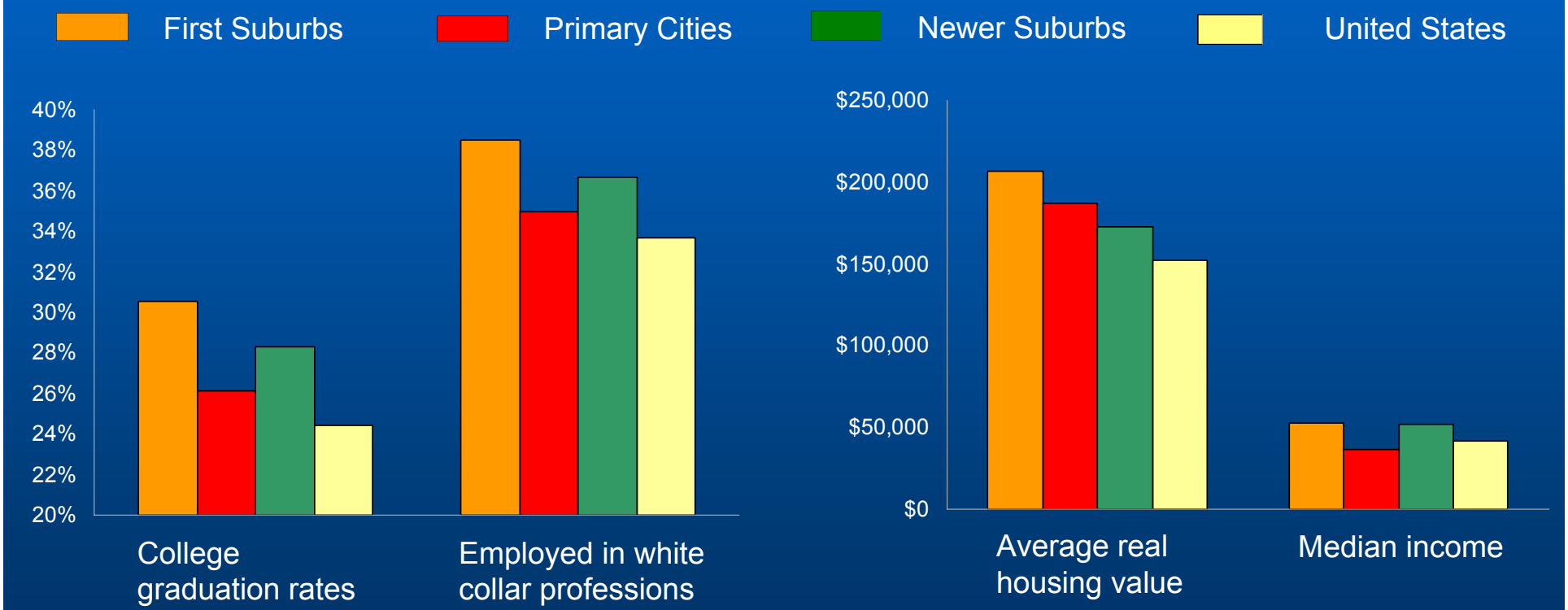
Percent of the population age 65 and over, 1950-2000

Since 1970, the total number of children barely grew – yet households are still large in first suburbs

- However, the population of children under 15 is growing very slowly. There are only 190,000 more children in first suburbs than there were 30 years ago
- Yet households are still larger in first suburbs than elsewhere
- Many first suburbs – Dallas, Nassau, King – still have a much higher percentage of their households that are married-with-children than the national average
- Yet the largest increase in household type was female-headed households with children. And the number of so-called “non-families” is greater than any household type

Education, Income, and Employment

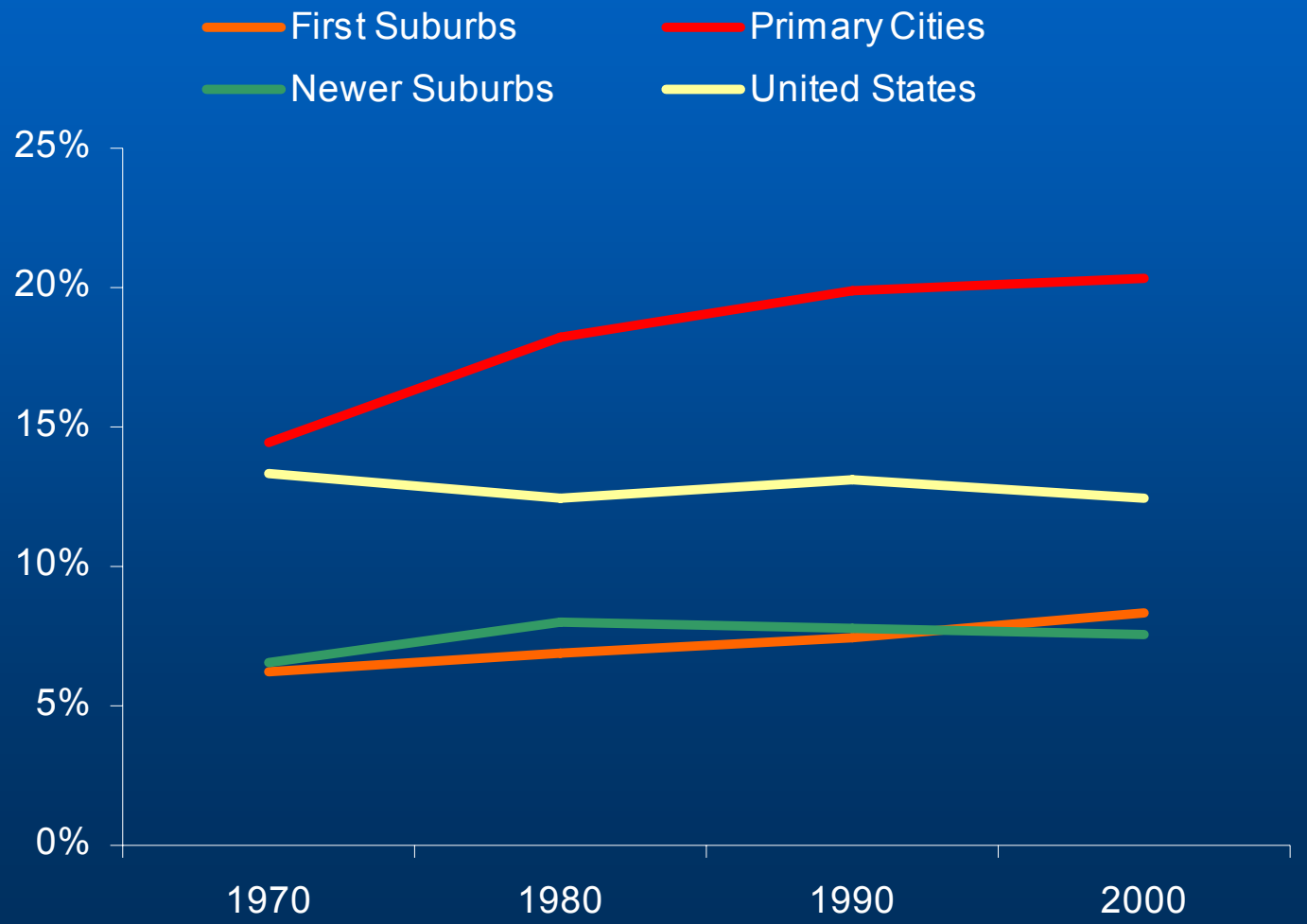
First suburbs as a whole have largely retained their position as home to some of the most highly educated and wealthy residents, those with white collar jobs, and highest housing values



Select statistics, 2000

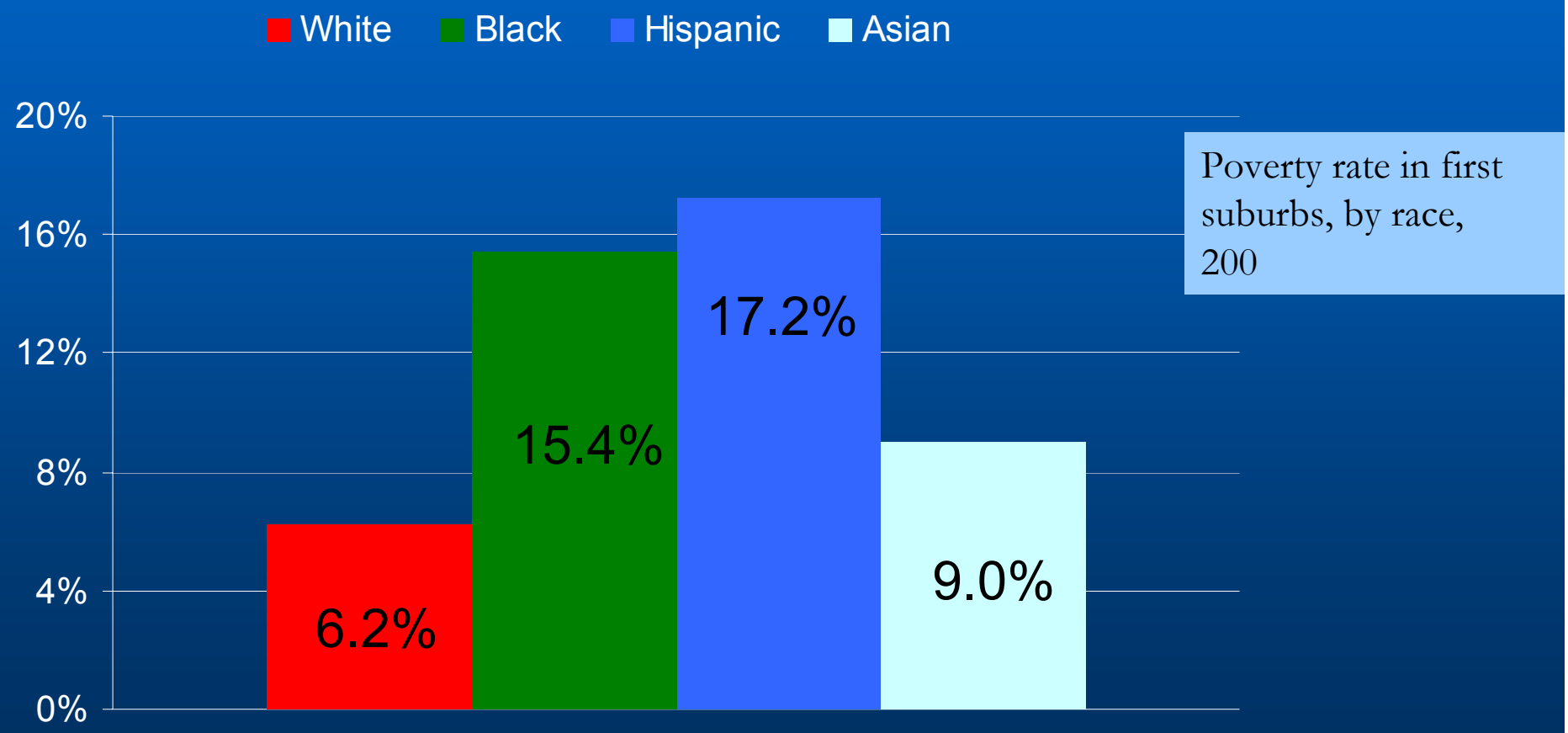
Poverty

Poverty rates in first suburbs have been steadily rising while the primary cities and the newer suburbs have leveled off or decreased their rates



Percent of people below poverty line, 1970-2000

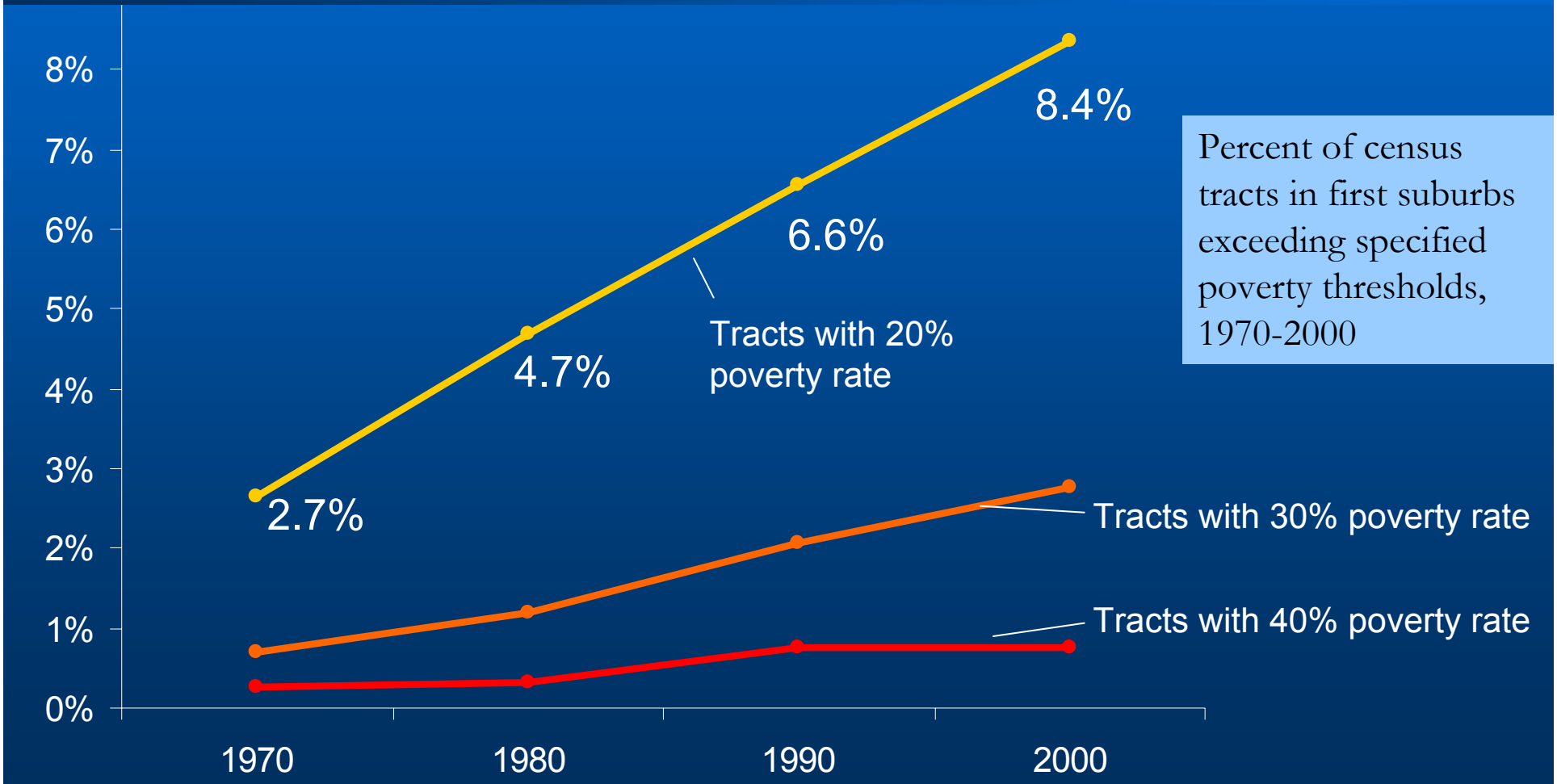
Poverty rates in first suburbs vary by race and ethnicity; blacks and Hispanics are two and three times more likely to be poor than whites



Poverty rate in first suburbs, by race, 200

Poverty

Equally disturbing is that while the number of high poverty neighborhoods is dropping sharply in urban areas throughout the country, it is increasing at an alarming rate in first suburbs



Percent of census tracts in first suburbs exceeding specified poverty thresholds, 1970-2000

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III What kind of policy implications arise as a result?

First suburbs posses many important assets

1. Home to a large share of the nation's population; likewise in many states
2. Residents are highly educated, wealthy, and employed
3. Convenience and central location
4. Established infrastructure: transportation, water, sewer, schools
5. Potential for collaboration

Middlesex County, MA

Alameda County, CA

But it is important to recognize and take seriously a number of critical challenges

1. Uneven population growth
2. Troubling poverty increases
3. Older housing stock
4. Increasing number of elderly and foreign-born populations
5. High level of fragmentation and the “policy blindspot”

Franklin County, OH

Bergen County, NJ

A policy framework for first suburbs

- **ADDRESS THE SPECIAL CHALLENGES OF AN ELDERLY POPULATION**: Requires a continuum of housing responses, as well as coordination between transportation, and health care sectors

- **MEET THE NEEDS OF THE RISING FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION**: Pursue a set of policies that focus on short term solutions such as language, workforce, and education barriers, but also longer term integration strategies

- **CREATE AND SUSTAIN ECONOMICALLY-INTEGRATED NEIGHBORHOODS**: Address the rise in concentrated poverty, develop inclusionary zoning programs; expand access to income supports

A policy framework for first suburbs (cont.)

- **REMAKE AND RENEW THE ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE**: Promote private reinvestment; and focus on bold plans that rethink attitudes toward density, urbanity and diversity

- **PROMOTE REGIONAL COHESION AND COLLABORATION**: Form coalitions to push for federal, state, and regional reforms. Collaborate, where possible, on redevelopment efforts

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