The Brookings Institution
Washington, DC

Center on Urban & Metropolitan Policy

A Decade of Mixed Blessings: Urban and Suburban Poverty in Census 2000

Alan Berube, Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy and
William H. Frey, University of Michigan Population Studies Center and Milken Institute

"The slight overall poverty decline in the 1990s camouflaged sharper increases and decreases in certain parts of the nation."

Findings

An analysis of poverty rates in the 102 most populous metropolitan areas in 1990 and 2000 indicates that:

- **In 2000, the poverty rate in central cities (18.4 percent) was more than twice that in the suburbs (8.3 percent).** The poverty rate "gap" between cities and suburbs was widest in metros in the Northeast and Midwest, and narrowest in metros in the Southeast and West.
- **The overall poverty rate in central cities dropped slightly in the 1990s, while the rate in suburbs edged up, narrowing the poverty "gap" by half a percentage point.** Most cities saw their poverty rates decline, while more suburbs experienced increases.
- **Forty-nine percent of all poor people resided in the suburbs in 2000, up from 46 percent in 1990.** This shift resulted mostly from faster population growth in suburbs, and poverty rate increases in a number of large suburbs.
- **Poverty rates declined most in midwestern and southern cities, while poverty increased in cities and suburbs throughout New England, New York, and southern California.** In cities where poverty declined in the 1990s, child poverty rates decreased significantly faster than overall poverty rates.
- **No clear relationship existed between population change and poverty rate change in cities during the 1990s.** In half of all cities that lost population in the 1990s, poverty rates declined. Conversely, more than one-third of all cities that gained population saw their poverty rates increase.

I. Introduction

The 1990s were a decade of unprecedented economic growth in the United States. Real GDP grew at a blistering 4.3 percent annual pace from 1992 to 2000. The unemployment rate at the time of Census 2000 was 3.9 percent, the lowest in a generation. In the late 1990s, the strong economy helped move millions of individuals from welfare to work, and lifted employment and earnings among such

traditionally disadvantaged groups as high school dropouts.[1]

Nationally, the percentage of people living below the federal poverty line declined from 13.1 percent to 12.4 percent between 1990 and 2000. While the trend was positive, it was surprisingly small in light of the nearly decade-long economic expansion.[2] As always, though, the aggregate national trend obscured important variations in poverty changes across U.S. regions, metropolitan areas, cities and suburbs.

This report is the first to examine new data from Census 2000 on poverty for the nation's largest cities and their suburbs. It concludes that the outcomes were decidedly mixed in a decade widely regarded as one of the nation's most prosperous. Overall central-city and suburban poverty rates converged slowly, and half of central cities saw their poverty rates decline. Some of the largest decreases occurred in cities that had very high poverty rates initially. At the same time, though, the overall metropolitan poverty rate was unchanged in the 1990s. By decade's end, there were 2.5 million more people living in poverty in the nation's largest metros than in 1990.

The slight overall poverty decline in the 1990s camouflaged sharper increases and decreases in certain parts of the nation. The region of the country in which a particular city or suburb was located appeared to be the best predictor of its poverty rate trend in the 1990s; rates dropped markedly in cities throughout the Midwest and South, while cities and suburbs in southern California and the Northeast experienced increases. The report also presents evidence that population change was not a good predictor of poverty change in the last decade—many cities that lost considerable population in the 1990s saw declines in their poverty rates.

II. Methodology

Metropolitan Area Definitions

This study evaluates population and household changes during the 1990s for the country's 102 largest metropolitan areas—namely, those metros with 500,000 or more inhabitants as reported in Census 2000. The metropolitan areas analyzed are those defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) and Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas (PMSAs), and defined in the New England states as New England County Metropolitan Areas (NECMAs).

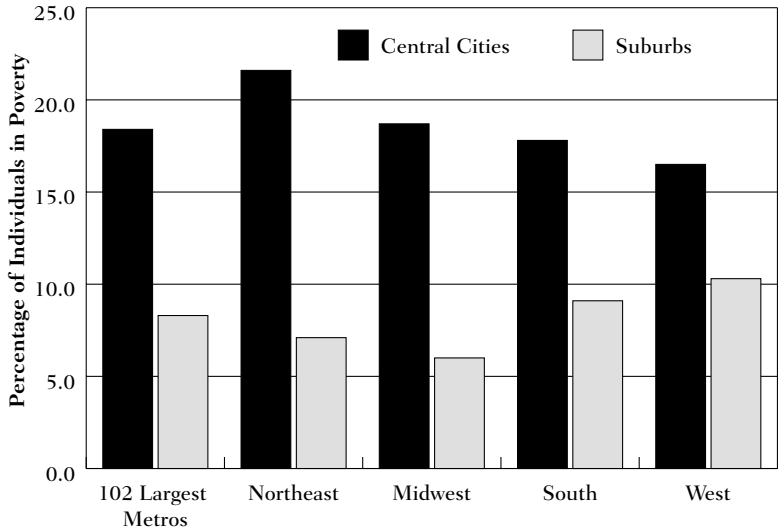
Definition of Central City and Suburbs

The present analysis defines central cities and their suburbs (the portion of the metropolitan area located outside of the central city) largely in accordance with OMB definitions in effect for Census 2000. These definitions are applied consistently to both 1990 and 2000 census data. OMB standards sometimes combine multiple cities to form the official "central city" for a given metropolitan area.[3] These standards were modified slightly for purposes of this analysis, in that the largest or best-known city/cities in most large metropolitan areas have been designated as the "central city." We generally treat as central cities the place or places listed in the official OMB metropolitan area name. In the "Detroit, MI PMSA," for example, OMB recognizes the cities of Detroit, Dearborn, Pontiac, and Port Huron as the combined "central city." Our analysis includes only Detroit as the "central city" and the remainder of the Detroit PMSA is treated as suburbs. We have in this manner modified the official definition of "central city" for 56 of the 102 metropolitan areas in this study, identifying a total of 137 central cities in these metros.[4]

Poverty Rates

This study presents poverty rates for individuals in the 102 largest metropolitan areas, their central cities, and suburbs. The individual poverty rate is defined as the share of all family members and unrelated individuals in a particular place with incomes below the federal poverty threshold.

Figure 1. Poverty Rates for Central Cities and Suburbs, 2000 Metro Areas with Population Over 500,000



Thresholds vary by family unit size, number of related children present, and the age of the householder. In 1999, the year for which income information was collected on the Census 2000 long form, the poverty threshold for a parent with one child under 18 years old was just $11,483. For four people, including two children, the threshold was $16,895.[5]

The Census Bureau does not collect income information, nor make poverty calculations, for all persons. Institutionalized people, people in military group quarters, people living in college dormitories, and children under 15 years old not living with relatives are excluded from the poverty rates presented here. In this study, the term "population" connotes those persons for whom poverty status is determined.

One other note: The poverty rate, while often used to assess the economic fortunes of a particular place, remains an admittedly imperfect tool for measuring the level of need among different urban populations. Although costs of living vary dramatically from place to place, poverty rates are determined by a single set of thresholds that do not incorporate geographic differences.[6] For instance, Boston, MA, and Greenville, SC, had the same 19.5 percent poverty rate in 2000, but the HUD Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment in 2001 was $539 in the Greenville area, and $979 in the Boston area.[7] The first part of this survey examines where poverty was highest and lowest in 2000, and thus does not control for the impact of these cost-of-living differences. The bulk of our analysis, however, focuses on how *changes* in poverty rates over the decade differed from place to place.[8]

Figure 2a. Central Cities with Highest and Lowest Poverty Rates, 2000

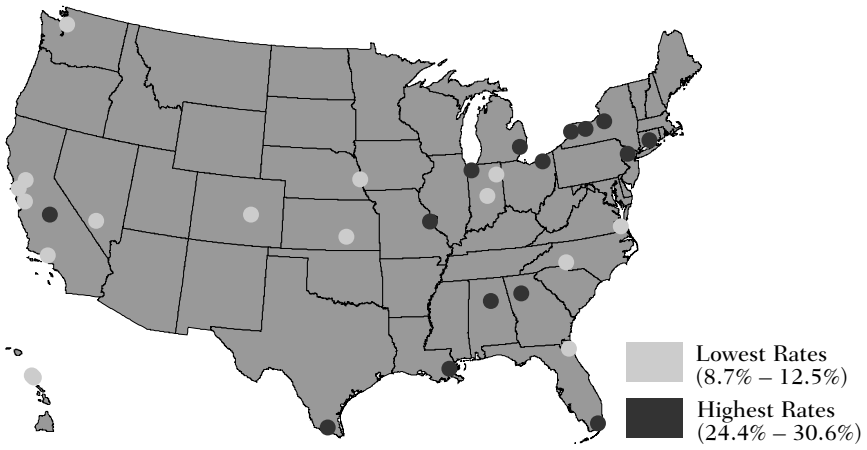
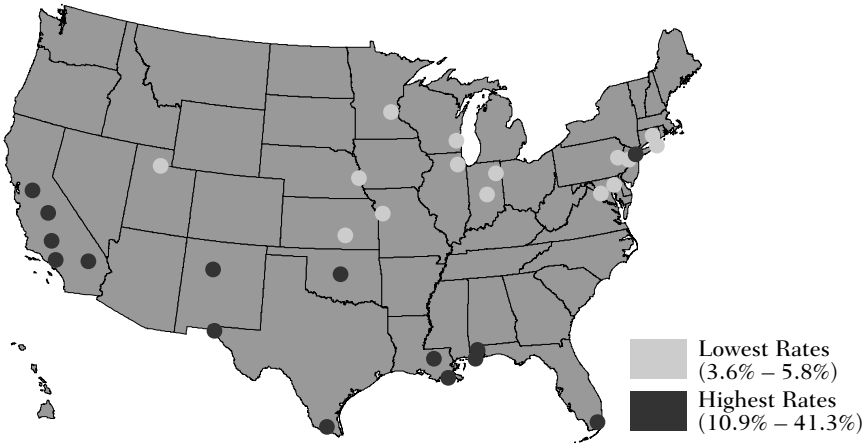


Figure 2b. Suburbs with Highest and Lowest Poverty Rates, 2000



III. Findings

A. In 2000, the poverty rate in central cities (18.4 percent) was more than twice that in the suburbs (8.3 percent).

Census 2000 reveals that there persist across the nation's largest metropolitan areas considerable disparities between cities and their suburbs in the share of individuals living in poverty. In central cities within the 102 largest metropolitan areas, nearly one in five individuals (18.4 percent) had incomes below poverty in 2000. By contrast, in the suburbs of these metro areas, only one in twelve (8.3 percent) people did. Overall, the proportion of people living below poverty in cities was more than twice as high as in suburbs in 2000.

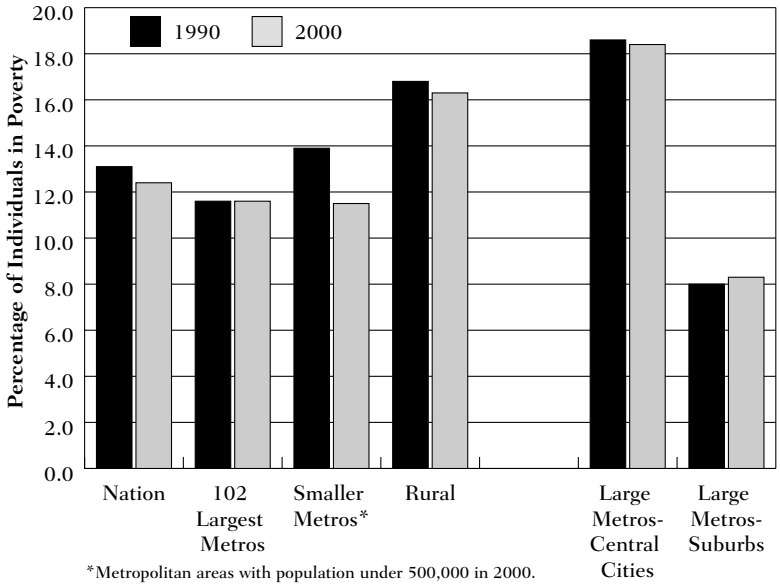
The city-suburb poverty rate

disparity varied greatly among metropolitan areas, however, and strong regional patterns were evident (Figure 1). In the Northeast and Midwest, poverty rates in cities more than tripled those in the suburbs. In the South and West, the "gap" between cities and suburbs was much smaller—central city poverty rates were less than twice suburban rates.

These regional differences, moreover, disguise the fact that high city poverty rates could be found in every part of the country. Figures 2a and 2b show the location of the 15 central cities and suburbs with the highest and lowest poverty rates in 2000. Cities with the highest poverty rates could be found in the "Rust Belt" extending from upstate New York through Ohio (Cleveland), Indiana (Gary) and Michigan (Detroit). High-poverty cities were also located in the deep South and in central California. Cities with the lowest poverty rates could be found in the Southeast, Great Plains, and Northern California, but also in Indiana (Indianapolis and Fort Wayne), located near Midwestern cities of very high poverty.

Suburban poverty, on the other hand, exhibited more distinct regional patterns in 2000. Fourteen of the 15 suburbs with the highest poverty rates were located in either the South or the West (see Figure 2b). Some of these suburbs were in metros that are home to historically high levels of immigration and Hispanic population, such as Los Angeles, El Paso, Miami and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission. In these metros, minority populations are more evenly distributed between cities and suburbs than in the rest of the U.S.[9] High-poverty suburbs were also found in Southern metros with large black populations, such as Mobile, New Orleans and Baton Rouge. In contrast, the majority of low-poverty suburbs were located in the Northeast, Midwest and Mid-Atlantic (Baltimore and Washington, D.C.) regions, where socioeconomic differences between cities and suburbs have historically been quite large.

Figure 3. Poverty Rates for U.S. Large Metropolitan Areas (Including Central Cities and Suburbs), Smaller Metros, and Rural Areas, 1990 and 2000



*Metropolitan areas with population under 500,000 in 2000.

Even though the city-suburb poverty gap varied widely across different parts of the nation in 2000, poverty remained far more of a city phenomenon than a suburban one. Fully 95 percent of large metropolitan areas retained higher poverty rates in their cities than their suburbs. Changes in the distribution of poverty between cities and suburbs in the last decade should thus be viewed with this larger context in mind.

B. The overall poverty rate in central cities dropped slightly in the 1990s, while the rate in suburbs edged up, narrowing the poverty "gap" by half a percentage point.

Census 2000 reveals that despite the decade's strong economic performance, the share of individuals living below poverty in America's largest metropolitan areas did not change between 1990 and 2000, holding steady at 11.6 percent (see Figure 3). Several factors may account for the static overall poverty rate in large metros, including, among other trends, international immigration and internal migration patterns; the effects of the early 1990s recession, particularly in California; and differences in birth rates and mortality rates between poor populations in metropolitan areas and elsewhere.

The stagnant poverty rate for large metros nationally, however, masks subtle changes in this measure in central cities and suburbs over the decade. There was actually a small decline in the poverty rate among central cities of the 102 largest metropolitan areas between 1990 and 2000, from 18.6 percent to 18.4 percent (Figure 3). By contrast, the share of individuals in suburbs living below the poverty line increased slightly during the same period—from 8.0 percent to 8.3 percent. Notably, suburbs of large metros were the only geographical category of those shown in Figure 3 to see poverty increases over the decade; poverty rates fell not only in large central cities, but also in smaller metropolitan areas and rural areas.

These changes to aggregate city and suburban poverty rates in the 1990s

were largely driven by the fact that poverty fell in a greater share of central cities than suburbs. A majority—51 percent (50 out of 98)—of central cities saw poverty decline over the decade. In contrast, a slim minority of suburbs—46 percent (47 out of 102)—experienced a drop in their poverty rates. A slightly greater share of suburbs (42 percent) than central cities (39 percent) saw increases in poverty in the 1990s.[10] Thus, the poverty rate trends for cities and suburbs in the aggregate were not dictated by the experiences of a few large metro areas, but reflected poverty changes across the entire city-suburb spectrum.

The fact that poverty declined in the majority of cities in the 1990s represents a remarkable reversal of the trend in the 1980s.[11] During that decade, poverty rates went up in three-fourths of central cities (74 out of 98) versus only 39 percent of central cities in the 1990s (Figure 4). In part, this pattern merely reflected the differing economic trends across the two decades—the national poverty rate rose from 12.5 percent to 13.1 percent between the 1980 and 1990 censuses, and then fell to 12.4 percent during Census 2000. Nonetheless, the 1990s were clearly a better decade in many cities for those at the bottom of the economic ladder than the 1980s.

The slight narrowing of the overall "poverty rate gap" between cities and suburbs, and the fact that more cities than suburbs experienced poverty declines, together suggest that city and suburban poverty may have converged in most individual metros during the 1990s. Surprisingly, this was not the case. In fact, the gap narrowed in only a third of the 102 metropolitan areas; in more than half, it widened. As Table 1 shows, this was attributable to the fact that in regions where poverty was on the rise, cities experienced faster poverty rate increases, but where it was on the decline, cities and suburbs shared equally in the trend. For instance, in Los Angeles, the poverty rate was up 3.6 percent in the city and 2.3 percent in the suburbs, but in Kansas City, poverty rates dropped by 1.0 percent in both city and suburbs.

As these examples indicate, even though aggregate city and suburban poverty rates moved in opposite directions in the 1990s, poverty rates moved in tandem within most metros. In 80 percent of metros (79 of 98), poverty rates moved in either a positive or negative direction in both the central city and the suburbs.[12] There were a few notable exceptions, however. Seven cities saw their poverty rates decline even as poverty increased in their suburbs. These included high-end cities like Chicago, Miami, San Jose, and Seattle, as well as Harrisburg, Jersey City, and Milwaukee. The first four cities may have seen poor

Figure 4. Poverty Rate Changes, 1990s versus 1980s
Central Cities of Metro Areas with Population Over 500,000

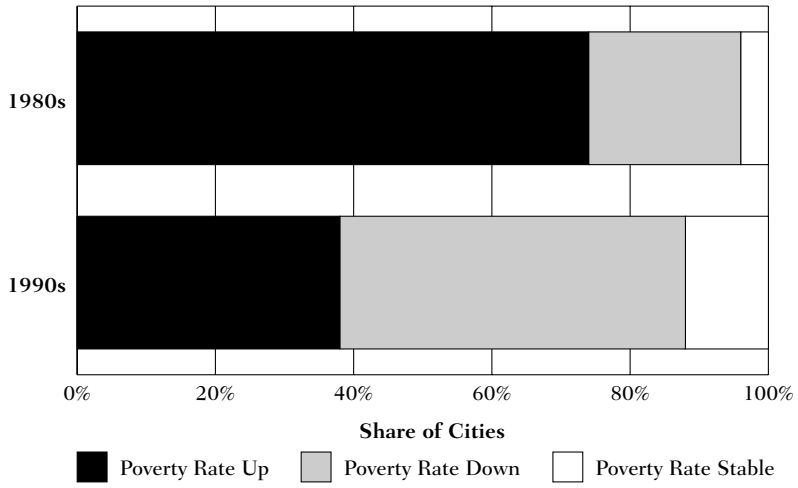


Table 1. Poverty Rate Changes, Central Cities and Suburbs, 1990–2000
Metro Areas with Population Over 500,000

	Central Cities		Suburbs	
	Increasing Poverty	Decreasing Poverty	Increasing Poverty	Decreasing Poverty
Number*	38	50	43	47
Average Change (% pts)	2.2	-1.9	1.1	-1.8
Average Population	717,682	518,721	1,519,511	863,231

** Poverty rates were largely unchanged in an additional 10 central cities and 12 suburbs.*

Source: Analysis of decennial census data

Table 2: Central Cities with Greatest Declines and Greatest Increases in Poverty Rates, 1990–2000 Metro Areas with Population Over 500,000

		Poverty Rate—All Ages		Poverty Rate—Under 18	
			Change		Change
		2000	1990-2000	2000	1990-2000
Central Cities with Greatest Poverty Rate Declines					
1	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX MSA	25.8	-8.1	34.0	-9.9
2	Detroit, MI PMSA	26.1	-6.3	34.8	-11.8
3	San Antonio, TX MSA	17.3	-5.4	24.6	-7.9
4	Dayton-Springfield, OH MSA	21.2	-3.7	30.1	-8.3
5	New Orleans, LA MSA	27.9	-3.7	40.5	-5.8
6	Gary, IN PMSA	25.8	-3.6	38.2	-4.7
7	Austin-San Marcos, TX MSA	14.4	-3.5	17.0	-4.4
8	Youngstown-Warren, OH MSA	22.8	-3.1	34.9	-6.1
9	El Paso, TX MSA	22.2	-3.1	30.1	-4.4
10	Akron, OH PMSA	17.5	-3.0	26.0	-5.2
11	Atlanta, GA MSA	24.4	-2.9	39.3	-3.6
12	Denver, CO PMSA	14.3	-2.8	20.8	-6.6
13	Miami, FL PMSA	28.5	-2.7	38.5	-5.5
14	Columbus, OH MSA	14.8	-2.4	19.0	-5.3
15	Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN PMSA	21.9	-2.4	32.5	-4.9
16	Memphis, TN-AR-MS MSA	20.6	-2.4	30.4	-4.5
17	Cleveland-Lorain-Elyria, OH PMSA	26.3	-2.4	38.0	-5.0
18	Baton Rouge, LA MSA	24.0	-2.2	31.7	-3.9
19	Colorado Springs, CO MSA	8.7	-2.2	11.3	-4.0
20	Chicago, IL PMSA	19.6	-2.0	28.5	-5.3
Central Cities with Greatest Poverty Rate Increases					
1	Providence-Fall River-Warwick, RI-MA NECMA	20.1	5.1	29.4	6.0
2	Syracuse, NY MSA	27.3	4.6	35.4	2.2
3	Riverside-San Bernardino, CA PMSA	20.7	4.2	27.2	3.6
4	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA MSA	17.1	4.2	26.7	5.5
5	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY MSA	20.8	3.8	29.0	4.3
6	Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA PMSA	22.2	3.6	30.9	3.2
7	Honolulu, HI MSA	11.8	3.4	15.1	3.5
8	Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV PMSA	20.2	3.3	31.7	6.2
9	Wilmington-Newark, DE-MD PMSA	21.3	3.3	30.7	3.4
10	Hartford, CT NECMA	30.6	3.1	41.3	-2.5
11	Bakersfield, CA MSA	18.0	3.0	24.8	2.8
12	Stockton-Lodi, CA MSA	22.5	2.8	31.5	0.9
13	Sacramento, CA PMSA	20.0	2.8	29.9	1.3
14	Philadelphia, PA-NJ PMSA	22.9	2.6	31.6	1.3
15	Orange County, CA PMSA	15.6	2.4	19.9	3.1
16	Rochester, NY MSA	25.9	2.4	37.9	-0.5
17	Ventura, CA PMSA	9.0	2.3	12.7	2.6
18	Fresno, CA MSA	26.2	2.1	36.8	-0.1
19	Sarasota-Bradenton, FL MSA	15.2	2.1	26.0	3.9
20	Newark, NJ PMSA	28.4	2.1	36.9	-0.7

Source: Analysis of decennial census data

families migrate to the suburbs, or new lower-income arrivals to those regions may have settled in the suburbs, due to skyrocketing rents in the city. What might have accounted for the trend in the other three cities remains unclear. There was even less of a regional or economic pattern evident in the three metros where city poverty rates rose while suburban rates fell—Ann Arbor, Phoenix, and Oklahoma City. Nevertheless, the broader trends of increasing and decreasing metropolitan poverty reflect important regional variations that we explore later.

C. Forty-nine percent of all poor people resided in the suburbs in 2000, up from 46 percent in 1990. The slight rise in the suburban poverty rate from 8.0 percent to 8.3 percent occurred during a decade in which the U.S. population decentralized at a considerable pace. One important implication of these trends is that a greater share of poor persons in metropolitan areas now lives in suburbs than a decade ago.

Cities and suburbs differed markedly in their overall population growth in the 1990s. Total population in the suburbs of the 102 largest metropolitan areas grew by 17 percent, compared to only 9 percent in the central cities. The city-suburb growth gap widened, moreover, when it came to poor populations. While the absolute number of people living below the poverty line increased by 8 percent in cities, the number of poor in suburbs grew by nearly 21 percent. As a result, over the decade, the share of all poor individuals in large metropolitan areas that lived in the suburbs rose from 46 percent in 1990 to almost half (49 percent) in 2000.

It is worth emphasizing that this shift in the location of the poor occurred in the midst of overall growth in the number of poor people in both cities and suburbs. By decade's end, there were more than 20 million people living in poverty in the 102 largest metropolitan areas—2.5 million more than in 1990. Over the 1990s, cities gained 770,000 net new poor residents, and suburbs gained nearly 1.7 million.

By 2000, a greater share of metropolitan poor people lived in the suburbs despite the fact that increases in suburban poverty rates were generally modest. In large part, this subtle suburbanization of the poor population owed to size differences between two types of suburbs. Among the 43 suburbs in which poverty rates increased in the 1990s, the average uptick was a little over one percentage point (see Table 1). In suburbs where the rate declined, meanwhile, the average decrease approached two percentage points. However, the suburbs in which poverty rates increased were nearly twice as large on average as their decreasing-poverty counterparts. Many of these poverty-increasing locales were large, multiethnic metros in the West; others were metros in the Northeast with very large suburban populations. In this fashion, smaller poverty-rate increases in big suburbs outweighed larger declines in smaller suburbs, leading to a small increase in the overall suburban poverty rate, and a shift of the poor towards suburbs.

Still, when viewed against the backdrop of other demographic trends, this shift in the location of the poverty population is not enormous. The percentage of racial and ethnic minorities in large metros that live in the suburbs, for instance, jumped from 19 percent to 27 percent over the decade—a considerably larger shift than that for individuals in poverty.[13] Nonetheless, the fact that a growing share of the nation's poor lives in the suburbs underscores the increasing range of incomes in the suburbs, as well as the growing racial/ethnic, household, and age diversity to be found there.

D. Poverty rates declined most in midwestern and southern cities, while poverty increased in cities and suburbs throughout New England, New York, and southern California. As with most demographic trends, national numbers on city-suburban poverty mask important geographical variation.

To begin with, the cities that enjoyed the largest declines in poverty rates in the 1990s were in general situated in two very different regions: the "Rust Belt," and southern Texas. The top panel of Table 2 shows that among the 10 cities with the largest poverty rate declines, five—Austin, El Paso, McAllen, New Orleans and San Antonio—are located in the Deep South/Southwest. Another five—Akron, Dayton, Detroit, Gary and Youngstown—are located in the industrial Midwest. The next ten form a similar group, with three additional cities in Ohio, and Atlanta, Memphis and Baton Rouge in the South.

How did these contrasting sets of cities come to share the distinction of having the steepest poverty rate declines? A full answer demands more information from census long form data. Nevertheless, it can be observed here that these cities struggled with poverty rates much higher than the central city average at the beginning of the decade. Since they had perhaps "nowhere to go but up," the strong national economy and federal/state policies to promote work may have reduced poverty in these cities by raising labor force participation and wages at the bottom of the labor pool. For example, Detroit, which had one of the highest poverty rates in the nation in 1990 (32.4 percent), registered one of the largest declines in the 1990s—6.3 percentage points. Like Detroit, though, most of these cities are still home to high poverty—14 had poverty rates above the central city average of 18.4 percent in 2000.

The top panel of Table 2 offers additional promising news for the cities that experienced the fastest

Table 3: Suburbs with Greatest Declines and Greatest Increases in Poverty Rates, 1990–2000 Metro Areas with Population Over 500,000

		Poverty Rate—All Ages		Poverty Rate—Under 18	
			Change		Change
		2000	1990-2000	2000	1990-2000
Suburbs with Greatest Poverty Rate Declines					
1	Austin-San Marcos, TX MSA	7.4	-6.1	8.0	-7.7
2	El Paso, TX MSA	32.0	-5.5	38.6	-6.9
3	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX MSA	41.3	-5.2	51.1	-6.1
4	Mobile, AL MSA	13.6	-4.6	18.6	-7.0
5	Memphis, TN-AR-MS MSA	8.5	-3.1	11.3	-4.2
6	Phoenix-Mesa, AZ MSA	9.5	-3.1	12.8	-5.1
7	Tucson, AZ MSA	9.7	-3.0	14.2	-5.0
8	Albuquerque, NM MSA	14.2	-2.8	19.3	-3.1
9	Colorado Springs, CO MSA	6.5	-2.6	8.7	-3.7
10	San Antonio, TX MSA	9.4	-2.5	13.4	-2.8
11	Tulsa, OK MSA	8.8	-2.4	11.0	-2.7
12	Knoxville, TN MSA	9.2	-2.1	11.8	-3.0
13	Baton Rouge, LA MSA	11.7	-2.1	14.4	-2.7
14	Youngstown-Warren, OH MSA	8.5	-2.0	12.3	-2.8
15	Ann Arbor, MI PMSA	6.3	-1.9	7.0	-3.3
16	New Orleans, LA MSA	13.1	-1.9	18.1	-2.5
17	Little Rock-North Little Rock, AR MSA	10.1	-1.8	12.8	-1.7
18	Salt Lake City-Ogden, UT MSA	5.8	-1.8	7.2	-2.2
19	Nashville, TN MSA	7.7	-1.7	9.0	-1.6
20	Charleston-North Charleston, SC MSA	10.9	-1.7	14.5	-1.8
Suburbs with Greatest Poverty Rate Increases					
1	Bakersfield, CA MSA	22.5	4.7	30.2	4.2
2	Riverside-San Bernardino, CA PMSA	14.2	2.8	19.0	3.2
3	Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA PMSA	14.6	2.3	20.0	2.3
4	New York, NY PMSA	8.6	2.1	11.6	2.3
5	Ventura, CA PMSA	9.3	1.9	12.0	1.8
6	Honolulu, HI MSA	8.5	1.7	11.7	1.9
7	Fort Lauderdale, FL PMSA	10.9	1.6	14.5	1.5
8	Orange County, CA PMSA	8.2	1.6	10.6	1.7
9	Jersey City, NJ PMSA	13.5	1.5	18.5	-0.3
10	Bergen-Passaic, NJ PMSA	7.6	1.5	9.9	0.9
11	Hartford, CT NECMA	5.6	1.4	6.6	0.9
12	Syracuse, NY MSA	8.5	1.4	10.9	2.1
13	Nassau-Suffolk, NY PMSA	5.6	1.4	6.6	1.1
14	Fresno, CA MSA	19.6	1.3	27.0	0.2
15	Stockton-Lodi, CA MSA	12.2	1.3	15.4	0.7
16	Providence-Fall River-Warwick, RI-MA NECMA	8.3	1.3	10.8	1.8
17	Bridgeport, CT NECMA	7.2	1.2	9.3	0.3
18	Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ PMSA	5.4	1.2	6.0	0.8
19	Monmouth-Ocean, NJ PMSA	6.6	1.2	8.8	1.3
20	San Diego, CA MSA	10.8	1.1	14.7	1.1

Source:Analysis of decennial census data

poverty declines in the 1990s. Child poverty rates in these cities actually dropped faster than overall poverty rates, by an average of 2.5 percentage points. The trend was especially pronounced in Midwestern cities such as Cincinnati, Dayton, Detroit, and Youngstown, where child poverty was particularly high in 1990.

Many of the cities that topped the list for poverty declines had suburbs that also experienced some of the fastest declines (see the top panel of Table 3). Suburbs in a number of Texas metros, as well as those around southern cities like Memphis, Nashville, New Orleans, and Baton Rouge saw poverty decline substantially in the 1990s. The suburbs of the Midwestern cities in Table 3 that had large poverty declines, however, did not follow their cities' trend. Poverty rates dropped by small amounts in most Midwestern suburbs, and were generally low enough at the outset that substantial declines were unlikely. By contrast, 19 out of 20 suburbs where poverty declined fastest had poverty rates above the national suburban average in 1990. It is also possible that some of the below-poverty city population in midwestern metros relocated to the suburbs in the 1990s, or to other regions of the U.S. Data forthcoming from Census 2000 could confirm whether intra-metropolitan migration patterns contributed to these poverty trends.

On the other end of the spectrum, cities with the greatest increases in poverty rates were the geographical mirror image of their poverty-declining counterparts. As the bottom panel of Table 2 shows, they were largely located in the Northeast (nine of the top 20 cities, if one includes Wilmington) and the West (also nine cities, eight in California). Cities from more than half of the northeastern metros, and more than half of the California metros, make the list. Only seven of the 20 had above-average poverty rates in 1990, but now 14 do—notably, the same number as among the top poverty decliners. In these places, child poverty rates increased as well, though generally by smaller amounts than did overall poverty rates.

The evidence for the suburbs with the largest poverty changes is broadly consistent with the regional patterns that emerge for central cities. The suburbs with the largest poverty increases in the 1990s were also located in New England, the New York metro area, and California (see the bottom panel of Table 3). The suburbs of New York and Jersey City, as well as all four of the entirely suburban New York/New Jersey metros, experienced sizeable poverty rate increases. Most of their poverty rates, however, remain below the national suburban average of 8.3 percent.

All of which begs the question: What occurred in the Northeast and southern California in the 1990s that caused poverty to go up?

Again, further analysis is needed to determine the demographic and economic factors behind these increases. Significantly, though, these cities are in regions of the country where the early 1990s recession hit especially hard. Southern California and some parts of New England underwent considerable economic restructuring in response to massive defense industry layoffs early in the decade. Many of the cities on this list returned to their pre-recession unemployment rates only in the late 1990s.[14] As a result, the economic gains that these cities made in the last part of the decade may not have been large enough to make up for the increases in poverty they experienced earlier in the decade. Notably, though, in half of these cities, child poverty did not increase as fast as overall poverty, or actually declined even as overall poverty rose.

Demographic shifts may also have contributed to rising poverty in these regions. In the Northeast, for instance, recent research revealed that, during the 1990s, a net outflow of 2.7 million residents to other parts of the U.S. occurred, and that a large share of those residents were young and educated. During the same period, the Northeast added 3.1 million foreign-born residents.[15] In California, the share of the population that is foreign-born grew from 21.7 percent in 1990 to 26.1 percent in 2000. California immigrants—particularly those that arrived in the last two decades—were more likely to be represented at the bottom of the income distribution than U.S.-born individuals.[16] The increasing presence of recent immigrants in these metro areas could be another factor contributing to their poverty increases.

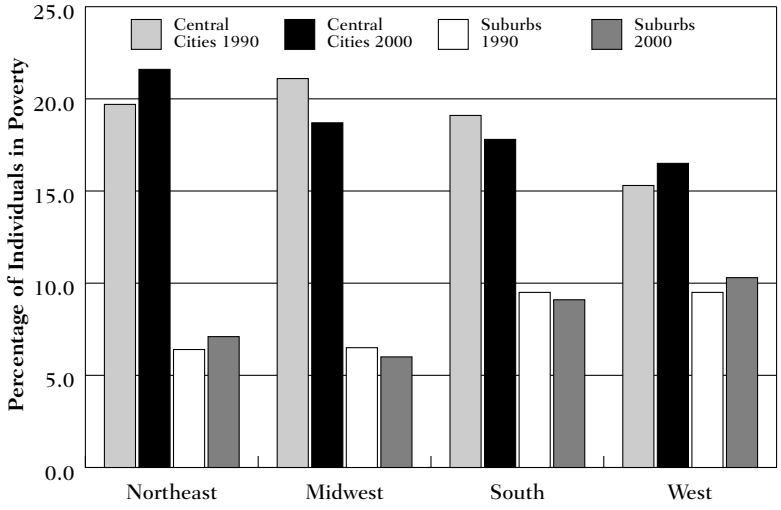
Figure 5 shows how poverty rate increases and decreases differed by U.S. region:

- In the **Northeast**, poverty rose significantly in cities, and to a lesser extent, in suburbs. Poverty rate increases were widespread, occurring in 13 of 17 central cities, and 18 of 21 suburbs. By decade's end, the poverty rate in northeastern cities exceeded that in midwestern cities by 3 percentage points. The cities with the largest jumps in poverty included Providence, a city widely thought to be in better shape than it was 10 years before, as well as long-struggling, older industrial places like Syracuse and Allentown-Bethlehem. The suburbs of New York City, and suburbs in other New York-area metros, saw poverty rates rise from 1 to 2 percent in the 1990s. The severity of the early 1990s recession, immigration, and the continued shift away from manufacturing to a lower-wage service economy in those metros may all have contributed to the upward poverty trend in the Northeast.

- In the **Midwest**, by contrast, poverty rates in cities fell by an even larger degree than they rose in northeastern cities—by 2.4 percentage points overall. Poverty was off in

Midwest suburbs by half a percentage point. As in the Northeast, the poverty trend was consistent across the Midwest—in the 20 metros, 17 cities and 16 suburbs saw their poverty rates decrease. Unemployment rates throughout the Midwest were very low in the 1990s, thanks in large part to a resurgence of manufacturing, particularly in the auto industry.[17] Across the region, the largest poverty declines occurred in the places that had the highest poverty rates in 1990 (see the Detroit example above). Similarly, Youngstown had the region's highest suburban poverty rate in 1990, and had the region's largest suburban poverty decline over the decade. Despite these improvements, though, the poverty-rate gap between Midwestern cities and suburbs remained very high in 2000; overall, the central-city poverty rate remained more than three times as high as the suburban rate.

Figure 5. Central-City and Suburban Poverty Changes by Region, 1990–2000
Metro Areas with Population Over 500,000



- Cities and suburbs in the **South** realized somewhat smaller poverty declines than their Midwestern counterparts in the 1990s; poverty rates there fell by 1.3 percentage points in central cities and just 0.4 percentage points in suburbs. Poverty reduction was also not as widespread, as rates fell in only 19 central cities and 23 suburbs across the 37 southern metros. Cities and suburbs in Texas fared quite well; the state was home to many of the cities and suburbs with the greatest poverty declines. On the other hand, cities closer to the Northeast—Baltimore, Wilmington, Washington, and Richmond—saw their poverty rates increase over the decade. Otherwise, no consistent geographic or demographic pattern described the places where poverty rose or poverty fell in the South, although many places seemed to "revert to the mean." Where poverty was high—Atlanta, Miami, New Orleans, the Mobile suburbs—it often fell. Where poverty was low—Greensboro, Sarasota, West Palm Beach—it often rose.

- Poverty changes in the **West** largely split between southern/central California and everywhere else. Poverty rates fell in most Western "New Sunbelt" cities and suburbs like Colorado Springs, Denver, Salt Lake City, and Tacoma. These places attracted large numbers of domestic in-migrants and jobs in the 1990s.[18] In contrast, poverty rates rose in all nine of the cities and suburbs located in southern and central California—by two percentage points in the suburbs, and three percentage points in the cities. Outside of the Northeast and Washington, D.C., all of the cities and suburbs with the greatest poverty rate increases were located in California and Hawaii.

Some have attributed poverty increases over the decade in large multiethnic cities like New York, Washington, and Los Angeles to immigration trends.[19] The patterns analyzed here, while still preliminary in nature, hint that while immigration contributed to the picture, regional economic conditions and economic restructuring in the 1990s may have played an even greater role. To be sure, poverty rates in the Northeast, New York region and southern California might not have increased as much as they did in the absence of new immigration and births to immigrant families. Yet the fact that poverty rates fell in many cities and suburbs with high immigrant concentrations—all large Texas cities, as well as "new Latino destination" metros like Atlanta, Charlotte, Nashville and Portland—suggests that more than simple demographic trends were at work.[20]

E. No clear relationship existed between population change and poverty rate change in cities during the 1990s.

To date, analysis of cities in Census 2000 has revolved around measuring urban health through simple indicators such as population growth. Population changes offer a look at

Table 4. Poverty Changes in Central Cities with Largest Population Losses and Gains, 1990–2000

	Total Population % Change	Number of People in Poverty % Change	Poverty Rate Change
Central Cities with Largest Population Losses			
Youngstown-Warren, OH MSA	-14.1	-24.5	-3.1
Baltimore, MD PMSA	-12.4	-8.2	1.1
Gary, IN PMSA	-12.2	-23.1	-3.6
St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	-12.2	-12.5	-0.1
Hartford, CT NECMA	-11.7	-1.8	3.1
Buffalo, NY MSA	-11.3	-7.9	1.0
Pittsburgh, PA MSA	-10.7	-15.0	-1.0
Dayton-Springfield, OH MSA	-10.0	-23.4	-3.7
Syracuse, NY MSA	-9.4	9.0	4.6
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN PMSA	-9.2	-18.3	-2.4
Central Cities with Largest Population Gains			
Las Vegas, NV-AZ MSA	85.7	92.7	0.4
Austin, TX MSA	42.4	14.5	-3.5
Bakersfield, CA MSA	41.8	69.8	3.0
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX MSA	40.8	7.0	-8.1
Portland-Vancouver, OR-WA PMSA	39.4	21.6	-1.9
Charlotte, NC-SC MSA	35.9	33.1	-0.2
Raleigh-Durham, NC MSA	35.7	34.0	-0.2
Phoenix-Mesa, AZ MSA	35.0	46.1	1.1
Colorado Springs, CO MSA	28.4	2.7	-2.2
Greensboro--Winston-Salem--High Point, NC MSA	25.1	29.3	0.4

Source: Analysis of decennial census data

where people choose to live, and that surely offers some insight into the well-being of a place. In general, high population growth in a particular place reflects high demand to live there, and is thus treated as a sign of a healthy place.

Sample data from the Census long form will offer a much broader array of variables with which to measure the social and economic condition of a city's population, including education levels, incomes, immigration, housing costs, and employment. In the meantime, though, this report focuses on poverty rates as one indicator of cities' well-being, and suggests a more enigmatic relationship between population trends and local economic health than previous Census 2000 analysis has indicated.

Comparing poverty changes to population changes highlights the "stock" and "flow" factors that influence many demographic trends. A city might experience a declining poverty rate due to factors affecting its existing population. Improving economic conditions could be raising people above poverty, or there could be an excess of deaths over births among families in poverty. Alternatively, the poverty rate could decline in response to shifts in the city's population. New arrivals could be disproportionately higher-income, more poor people might leave the city than enter, or the average size of poor families could decrease. In any given city, these stock and flow factors combine to influence poverty in complicated ways. Improving economic conditions, for instance, could serve to attract new higher-income residents, or to convince young lower-income women to postpone childbirth in favor of employment. In theory, then, a decline in poverty could occur in the midst of either increasing or decreasing population.

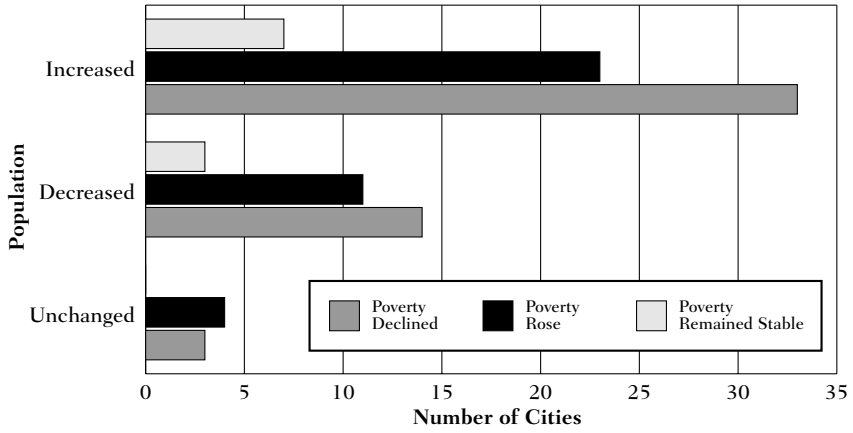
The evidence confirms that the relationship between population change and poverty change in the 1990s was not straightforward. Cities that lost population were nearly as likely to experience declining poverty rates as cities that gained population. Of the 28 cities that declined in population between 1990 and 2000, half displayed falling poverty rates (see Figure 6). Similarly, 33 of the 63 cities in which population increased experienced poverty rate declines. Just as falling population did not always signal increasing poverty, rising population was not always associated with poverty declines. About one-third of all cities that increased in population saw their poverty rates rise.

Cities with the largest population

gains and losses in the 1990s serve to illustrate these trends (see Table 4). Five of the 10 cities with the sharpest population decline also experienced declines in their poverty rates. In each of those cities, the number of people living below poverty dropped faster than total population. In Dayton-Springfield, for instance, the poverty population fell at more than twice the rate than did total population. All of the cities, with the exception of Syracuse, witnessed a drop in the size of their poverty populations. For some, however, that decline was not nearly as rapid as the decline in population generally. In Hartford, the poverty rate rose by more than three percentage points because the number of people living below poverty fell at only a fraction of the rate that total population did. Regional differences in poverty are evident here as well: cities that lost population in the Midwest had declining poverty rates, while those in the Northeast (plus Baltimore) had increasing poverty rates.

All ten of the fastest-growing cities had increases in the size of their poverty populations, but there were significant differences in how those gains compared to their overall population gains. In North Carolina, the central cities in the Charlotte, Raleigh-Durham, and Greensboro—Winston-Salem—High Point areas experienced comparable growth in their total populations and below-poverty populations. Migration magnets like Austin, Colorado Springs, and Portland-Vancouver grew rapidly in size without rapid increases in the number of poor residents. In Phoenix-Mesa and Bakersfield, though, the share of population below the poverty line actually increased in the midst of a population boom. In-migrants to these cities may have been poorer on average, or employment opportunities and pay in the lower end of the labor market may have shrunk.[21] Again: The relationship between population change and poverty change in the 1990s does not appear straightforward.

Figure 6. Poverty Rate Change by Population Change, 1990–2000
Central Cities of Metro Areas with Population Over 500,000



This is not to suggest that declining population can help a city's residents escape poverty, or that increasing population inevitably burdens a city with new poor residents. To the contrary: City population declines themselves can create a whole host of problems besides poverty—struggling local businesses, vacant housing, falling property values, and negative market perceptions, to name a few. Conversely, a city that has grown its resident population across the income spectrum may be able to tackle the added service challenges that accompany an increased poverty rate, and may create better opportunities in the future for its residents to lift themselves out of poverty. Rather, this comparison of city population and poverty changes reminds us that the determinants of poverty in place are numerous, and that the poverty rate is one of many tools that help us to understand a city's health and vitality.

IV. Conclusion

Viewed from a national perspective, then, changes in poverty during the 1990s were quite subtle. During a period of prolonged economic growth, the national poverty rate fell only slightly. Equally noteworthy were the relatively modest shifts in poverty rates for residents of the nation's largest metropolitan areas detailed here. These shifts caused the city-suburb poverty gap to narrow overall, but the rift remains wide, to the point that city residents remain more than twice as likely to be poor as their suburban counterparts. Likewise, the share of the poverty population residing in the suburbs increased during the 1990s, though even so, half of all poor people in our nation's largest metropolitan areas still live in central cities.

Below the national level, however, the story was more varied. Poverty was on the decline in the 1990s in a majority of cities, in contrast to the 1980s, when three-fourths of all central cities experienced poverty rate increases. Cities where poverty decreased in the 1990s included places that traditionally had among the highest poverty rates. In Rustbelt cities like Detroit and Gary, and Southern cities like New Orleans and Atlanta, poverty rates fell—by dramatic amounts, in many cases. In Texas, poverty rates fell across the board. Children benefited most from the trend, as child poverty rates

generally fell by greater amounts than overall poverty rates in these cities. At the same time, however, increases in poverty rates for many cities in California and the Northeast catapulted those places into the echelon of those with highest poverty levels. In many of these metros, suburban poverty rates also increased appreciably.

These "mixed blessings" raise questions about how the various macroeconomic, policy and demographic forces of the 1990s served as contributing factors. How much did the happenstance of a strong economy, coupled with welfare reform and other policies to promote work, contribute to the surprising declines in poverty rates in many Midwest inner cities? To what extent did demographic factors such as the selective migration from the Northeast to the Sunbelt, and new immigration to California and the eastern seaboard, contribute to the coastal gains in poverty rates? Most importantly, if the good economy of the mid-to-late 1990s was responsible for reversing much of the city poverty increase of the 1980s, what impact will the current economic downturn have on urban and suburban poverty in the next ten years?

Long form data from Census 2000 will allow researchers to explore many of these questions, as well as consider questions relating to other place-based measures of economic well-being: median income, per capita income, the size of the "middle-income" and "moderate-income" classes, and regional income inequality. For now, the evidence on city and suburban poverty in the 1990s reminds us that beneath the national trends on many of these indicators lie important regional differences that reveal the shifting socioeconomic landscape of our nation's metropolitan geography.

References

Blank, Rebecca. 2002. "Welfare Reform and the Economy" in I. Sawhill, K. Weaver, R. Haskins and A. Kane, eds., *Welfare Reform and Beyond: The Future of the Safety Net*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.

Daly, Mary C., Deborah Reed, and Heather N. Royer. 2001. "Population Mobility and Income Inequality in California." San Francisco: Public Policy Institute of California.

Frey, William. 2001. "Melting Pot Suburbs: A Census 2000 Study of Suburban Diversity." Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.

Frey, William. 2002. "Metro Magnets for Minorities and Whites: Melting Pots, the New Sunbelt, and the Heartland." Research Report No. 02-496, Population Studies Center, University of Michigan.

Frey, William and Elaine L. Fielding. 1995. "Changing Urban Populations: Regional Restructuring, Racial Polarization and Poverty Concentration." *Cityscape* 1, 2.

Suro, Roberto and Audrey Singer. 2002. "Latino Growth in Metropolitan America: Changing Patterns, New Locations." Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.

Sum, Andrew, Ishwar Khatiwada, Jacqui Motroni, and Nathan Pond. 2002. "Moving Out and Moving In: Out-Migration and Foreign Immigration in the Northeast Region and New England During the 1990s." Boston: Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University.

For More Information:

Alan Berube
Senior Research Analyst
Brookings Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy
Phone: (202) 797-6075
aberube@brookings.edu

William H. Frey
University of Michigan Population Studies Center and Milken Institute
Phone: (888) 257-7244
billf@umich.edu

Endnotes

1 Blank, 2002.

2 Peter T. Kilborn and Lynette Clemetson. 2002. "Gains of '90s Did Not Lift All, Census Shows." *The New York Times,* June 5, A1; Cindy Rodriguez and Bill Dedman. 2002. "Welfare Plunged in '90s While Poverty Persisted." *The Boston Globe,* June 5, A1.

3 OMB designates the city with the largest population in each metropolitan area as a central city. Additional cities qualify for this designation if specified requirements are met concerning population size, commuting patterns, and employment/residence ratios. These standards, implemented after the 1990 Census, can be viewed at **www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/mastand.html**.

4 For the present study, we have excluded some officially designated central cities (in metros with multiple central cities) to: (1) include only central cities that are named in the metropolitan area name (thus omitting officially designated smaller cities that were not named): (2) include only one central city in the following multiple central city metropolitan areas: Austin, TX; Buffalo, NY; Charlotte, NC: Cleveland, OH; Milwaukee, WI; Richmond, VA; Wilmington, DE; and Seattle, WA; and (3) designate only two central cities in the following metropolitan areas: Raleigh-Durham, NC; Allentown-Bethlehem, PA; and Scranton-Hazleton, PA. In four metro areas in the greater New York area, no central city is named in the metro area name, so these metros are considered entirely suburban. In the Orange County, CA PMSA, Anaheim, Santa Ana, and Irvine are treated as central cities.

5 Poverty rates also do not factor in the value of taxes and cash/in-kind government transfers, such as Food Stamps, subsidized health insurance, and the Earned Income Tax Credit.

6 In 1995, a panel from the National Academy of Sciences issued a report that recommended recalculating the poverty thresholds to reflect differences in need by family size and geography, and to reflect changes in consumption patterns, household composition, and labor force patterns since poverty thresholds were first developed 30 years ago. See National Academy of Sciences. 1996. *Measuring Poverty: A New Approach.* Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

7 186 *Federal Register* Vol. 66 (January 2, 2001).

8 For purposes of associating them with their corresponding decennial censuses, we refer to "1990" and "2000" poverty rates throughout this survey, though the income figures on which the rates are based are for the 1989 and 1999 calendar years. Where the poverty rate changed within +/- 0.2 percentage points, we consider it to have been "stable" over the period.

9 Frey, 2001.

10 In an additional ten central cities and 12 suburbs, poverty rates did not change by more than +/- 0.2 percentage points.

11 Frey and Fielding, 1995.

12 The overall correlation between city and suburb percentage point changes in poverty rates was significant—0.65.

13 Frey, 2001.

14 Honolulu's economy suffered throughout the 1990s due to its close coupling to the Japanese economy.

15 Sum et al., 2002.

16 Daly, Reed, and Royer, 2001.

17 See Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, *1996 Annual Report*.

18 Frey, 2002.

19 See Janny Scott. 2002. "Census Finds Rising Tide, And Many Who Missed Boat." *The New York Times,* June 17, B1; Peter V. Hong. 2002. "Data Reflect Southland's Highs, Lows; People: Poverty And Education Levels Reflect Immigration Patterns, Demographer Says." *Los Angeles Times,* June 5, Part 2, p.1.

20 Suro and Singer, 2002.

21 Notably, increases in the child poverty rate in these cities were no greater than overall poverty rate increases, but both cities experienced fairly significant declines in male labor force participation between 1990 and 2000.

APPENDIX A. Changes in Poverty Rate, and Poverty Population, 1990–2000
Metro Areas with Population Over 500,000

	Poverty Rates						Poverty Population		
	Metro Area		Central City		Suburbs		1990–2000 Change		
		Change		Change		Change	Metro	Central	
Metro Areas*	2000	1990–2000	2000	1990–2000	2000	1990–2000	Area	City	Suburbs
MIDWEST (20 metros)									
Akron, OH PMSA	9.8	-2.3	17.5	-3.0	6.3	-1.5	-14.2	-17.0	-10.4
Ann Arbor, MI PMSA	8.2	-1.7	16.6	0.5	6.3	-1.9	-1.3	8.3	-6.3
Chicago, IL PMSA	10.5	-0.8	19.6	-2.0	5.6	0.6	4.0	-6.0	29.7
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN PMSA	9.7	-1.9	21.9	-2.4	6.7	-1.0	-9.9	-18.3	-1.8
Cleveland, OH PMSA	10.8	-1.1	26.3	-2.4	6.7	-0.3	-7.8	-13.9	-0.4
Columbus, OH MSA	10.1	-1.8	14.8	-2.4	6.0	-1.2	-2.7	-2.6	-2.7
Dayton-Springfield, OH MSA	10.3	-1.6	21.2	-3.7	6.9	-0.4	-13.9	-23.4	-2.4
Detroit, MI PMSA	10.7	-2.4	26.1	-6.3	6.6	-0.5	-15.1	-26.0	0.8
Fort Wayne, IN MSA	8.2	0.5	12.5	1.0	5.2	-0.1	17.3	29.0	1.8
Gary, IN PMSA	10.8	-1.4	25.8	-3.6	7.8	-0.2	-7.8	-23.1	5.8
Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland, MI MSA	8.4	-1.2	15.7	-1.4	6.0	-0.8	1.4	-4.1	6.5
Indianapolis, IN MSA	8.6	-1.3	11.9	-0.7	5.5	-1.4	0.9	0.8	1.0
Kansas City, MO-KS MSA	8.5	-1.4	15.0	-1.0	5.2	-1.0	-3.1	-5.5	0.5
Milwaukee, WI PMSA	10.6	-1.0	21.3	-0.9	3.6	0.2	-4.0	-8.8	20.5
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI MSA	6.7	-1.4	16.4	-1.4	4.0	-0.9	-3.0	-3.9	-2.0
Omaha, NE-IA MSA	8.4	-1.1	11.3	-1.3	5.0	-1.1	-0.6	4.1	-11.3
St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	9.9	-0.8	24.6	-0.1	7.7	-0.5	-3.6	-12.5	1.4
Toledo, OH MSA	12.5	-1.4	17.9	-1.2	6.9	-0.7	-9.2	-12.1	-0.4
Wichita, KS MSA	9.1	-1.4	11.2	-1.3	5.5	-1.6	-2.3	1.9	-14.7
Youngstown-Warren, OH MSA	11.5	-2.7	22.8	-3.1	8.5	-2.0	-20.8	-24.5	-17.9
NORTHEAST (21 metros)									
Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY MSA	9.4	0.7	20.8	3.8	6.1	0.0	9.5	14.4	5.0
Allentown-Bethlehem, PA MSA	8.7	1.3	17.1	4.2	5.6	0.3	25.0	33.4	16.5
Bergen-Passaic, NJ PMSA	7.6	1.5	***	***	7.6	1.5	34.0	***	34.0
Boston, MA-NH NECMA	8.6	0.4	19.5	0.8	7.5	0.4	11.6	6.9	12.9
Bridgeport, CT NECMA	8.1	1.2	18.4	1.3	7.2	1.2	22.3	6.2	26.6
Buffalo, NY MSA	11.9	-0.1	26.6	1.0	7.0	0.2	-2.7	-7.9	4.9
Harrisburg-Lebanon-Carlisle, PA MSA	8.1	0.3	20.4	-0.3	6.0	0.7	9.7	-6.5	22.0
Hartford, CT NECMA	8.3	1.2	30.6	3.1	5.6	1.4	19.5	-1.8	38.8
Jersey City, NJ PMSA	15.5	0.7	18.6	-0.3	13.5	1.5	14.8	3.6	27.0
Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ PMSA	5.4	1.2	***	***	5.4	1.2	48.3	***	48.3
Monmouth-Ocean, NJ PMSA	6.6	1.2	***	***	6.6	1.2	38.5	***	38.5
Nassau-Suffolk, NY PMSA	5.6	1.4	***	***	5.6	1.4	39.8	***	39.8
New York, NY PMSA	19.5	2.0	21.2	2.0	8.6	2.1	21.6	20.5	41.3
Newark, NJ PMSA	9.7	0.9	28.4	2.1	6.8	1.0	16.6	5.0	25.3
Philadelphia, PA-NJ PMSA	11.1	0.7	22.9	2.6	6.2	0.4	10.4	7.3	15.8
Pittsburgh, PA MSA	10.8	-1.3	20.4	-1.0	9.3	-1.2	-12.3	-15.0	-11.3
Providence-Fall River-Warwick, RI-MA NECMA	12.4	2.6	20.1	5.1	8.3	1.3	32.6	39.3	25.0
Rochester, NY MSA	10.3	0.7	25.9	2.4	6.4	0.7	10.6	4.7	17.3
Scranton-Hazleton, PA MSA	11.1	0.1	15.0	-0.3	10.5	0.2	-1.7	-9.1	-0.1
Springfield, MA NECMA	13.5	1.0	20.4	2.0	8.3	0.6	9.3	7.8	12.1
Syracuse, NY MSA	12.1	1.7	27.3	4.6	8.5	1.4	15.8	9.0	21.7

	Poverty Rates						Poverty Population		
	Metro Area		Central City		Suburbs		1990–2000 Change		
		Change		Change		Change	Metro	Central	
Metro Areas*	2000	1990–2000	2000	1990–2000	2000	1990–2000	Area	City	Suburbs
SOUTH (37 metros)									
Atlanta, GA MSA	9.4	-0.7	24.4	-2.9	7.8	0.2	28.8	-6.5	47.5
Austin, TX MSA	11.1	-4.8	14.4	-3.5	7.4	-6.1	3.6	14.5	-14.1
Baltimore, MD PMSA	9.8	-0.3	22.9	1.1	5.4	0.6	4.4	-8.2	29.9
Baton Rouge, LA MSA	16.2	-2.6	24.0	-2.2	11.7	-2.1	-1.8	-5.2	2.6
Birmingham, AL MSA	13.1	-2.0	24.7	-0.1	9.0	-1.6	-5.0	-9.7	0.1
Charleston-North Charleston, SC MSA	14.0	-1.0	21.0	-0.7	10.9	-1.7	1.3	18.4	-10.1
Charlotte, NC-SC MSA	9.3	-0.3	10.6	-0.2	8.6	-0.3	25.8	33.1	21.1
Columbia, SC MSA	11.7	0.1	22.1	0.9	9.4	-0.1	20.0	24.8	17.6
Dallas, TX PMSA	11.1	-1.2	17.8	-0.2	7.7	-1.1	19.1	16.7	22.0
El Paso, TX MSA	23.8	-3.0	22.2	-3.1	32.0	-5.5	2.2	-3.6	30.4
Fort Lauderdale, FL PMSA	11.5	1.3	17.7	0.6	10.9	1.6	46.1	5.5	56.1
Fort Worth-Arlington, TX PMSA	10.3	-0.7	13.6	-0.4	6.9	-0.9	16.8	19.2	12.3
Greensboro-Winston-Salem-High Point, NC MSA	10.4	0.5	13.5	0.4	8.4	0.5	26.0	29.3	22.9
Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson, SC MSA	11.8	0.2	19.5	-0.1	10.7	0.6	18.4	-5.9	26.5
Houston, TX PMSA	13.9	-1.2	19.2	-1.6	9.3	-0.4	15.8	10.8	25.9
Jacksonville, FL MSA	10.7	-1.2	12.2	-0.8	7.6	-1.6	10.0	9.6	11.2
Knoxville, TN MSA	12.0	-1.9	20.8	0.0	9.2	-2.1	1.7	5.7	-1.1
Little Rock-North Little Rock, AR MSA	12.1	-1.4	14.7	-0.6	10.1	-1.8	1.8	-0.9	4.7
Louisville, KY-IN MSA	10.9	-1.9	21.6	-1.0	7.4	-1.6	-8.0	-9.0	-7.0
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX MSA	35.9	-6.0	25.8	-8.1	41.3	-5.2	26.8	7.0	35.2
Memphis, TN-AR-MS MSA	15.3	-3.1	20.6	-2.4	8.5	-3.1	-5.6	-4.5	-9.0
Miami, FL PMSA	18.0	0.0	28.5	-2.7	16.0	1.0	16.3	-8.4	28.0
Mobile, AL MSA	16.3	-3.6	21.2	-1.3	13.6	-4.6	-7.2	-4.6	-9.4
Nashville, TN MSA	10.1	-1.2	13.3	-0.1	7.7	-1.7	11.7	10.8	12.9
New Orleans, LA MSA	18.4	-2.9	27.9	-3.7	13.1	-1.9	-10.3	-13.9	-5.5
Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News, VA-NC MSA	10.6	-0.8	11.5	-0.1	9.6	-1.6	1.7	2.9	0.0
Oklahoma City, OK MSA	13.5	-0.4	16.0	0.2	11.3	-0.9	9.6	14.5	4.1
Orlando, FL MSA	10.7	0.6	15.9	0.1	10.0	0.7	43.0	22.0	48.2
Raleigh-Durham, NC MSA	10.2	-0.4	12.9	-0.2	8.6	-0.4	35.2	34.0	36.4
Richmond, VA MSA	9.3	-0.5	21.4	0.5	6.3	-0.1	9.4	0.2	18.3
San Antonio, TX MSA	15.1	-4.4	17.3	-5.4	9.4	-2.5	-7.1	-6.5	-9.7
Sarasota-Bradenton, FL MSA	8.8	0.5	15.2	2.1	7.5	0.3	26.7	24.8	27.6
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL MSA	11.2	-0.2	15.3	-0.4	9.6	0.0	13.7	4.6	20.0
Tulsa, OK MSA	11.4	-1.8	14.1	-0.9	8.8	-2.4	-2.1	0.7	-5.9
Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV PMSA	7.4	0.9	20.2	3.3	5.8	0.9	32.6	13.7	43.1
West Palm Beach-Boca Raton, FL MSA	9.9	0.6	13.0	1.9	9.4	0.4	39.9	43.0	39.3
Wilmington, DE-MD PMSA	8.2	0.7	21.3	3.3	6.4	0.6	24.8	17.6	28.5

	Poverty Rates						Poverty Population		
	Metro Area		Central City		Suburbs		1990–2000 Change		
		Change		Change		Change	Metro	Central	
Metro Areas*	2000	1990–2000	2000	1990–2000	2000	1990–2000	Area	City	Suburbs
WEST (24 metros)									
Albuquerque, NM MSA	13.8	-1.2	13.5	-0.4	14.2	-2.8	11.1	12.7	8.6
Bakersfield, CA MSA	20.8	3.8	18.0	3.0	22.5	4.7	46.6	69.8	37.2
Colorado Springs, CO MSA	8.0	-2.3	8.7	-2.2	6.5	-2.6	2.0	2.7	0.0
Denver, CO PMSA	8.1	-1.6	14.3	-2.8	5.9	-0.9	8.2	-0.9	17.5
Fresno, CA MSA	22.7	1.7	26.2	2.1	19.6	1.3	30.8	32.0	29.5
Honolulu, HI MSA	9.9	2.4	11.8	3.4	8.5	1.7	39.7	43.0	36.4
Las Vegas, NV-AZ MSA	11.1	0.1	11.9	0.4	10.7	0.0	86.1	92.7	83.1
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA PMSA	17.9	2.8	22.2	3.6	14.6	2.3	28.0	26.8	29.5
Oakland, CA PMSA	9.7	0.4	19.4	0.6	7.7	0.5	20.3	11.2	25.4
Orange County, CA PMSA	10.3	1.9	15.6	2.4	8.2	1.6	44.1	42.1	45.6
Phoenix-Mesa, AZ MSA	12.0	-0.9	14.2	1.1	9.5	-3.1	35.3	46.1	20.3
Portland-Vancouver, OR-WA PMSA	9.5	-0.4	12.9	-1.9	7.6	0.0	21.3	21.6	21.0
Riverside-San Bernardino, CA PMSA	15.0	2.9	20.7	4.2	14.2	2.8	55.8	42.1	59.3
Sacramento, CA PMSA	12.2	0.9	20.0	2.8	9.6	0.5	31.5	28.1	33.8
Salt Lake City-Ogden, UT MSA	7.7	-1.8	15.7	-0.8	5.8	-1.8	1.1	9.9	-4.0
San Diego, CA MSA	12.4	1.1	14.6	1.2	10.8	1.1	24.7	21.2	28.6
San Francisco, CA PMSA	8.4	-0.6	11.3	-1.3	6.0	0.0	0.6	-3.8	8.4
San Jose, CA PMSA	7.5	0.0	8.8	-0.5	6.0	0.5	13.4	8.7	22.2
Seattle, WA PMSA	7.9	0.3	11.8	-0.6	6.8	0.8	24.1	3.9	37.9
Stockton-Lodi, CA MSA	17.7	2.0	22.5	2.8	12.2	1.3	32.7	31.6	35.2
Tacoma, WA PMSA	10.5	-0.9	15.9	-0.9	8.4	-0.6	11.3	4.4	16.9
Tucson, AZ MSA	14.7	-2.5	18.4	-1.7	9.7	-3.0	8.0	9.1	5.1
Vallejo-Fairfield-Napa, CA PMSA	8.3	0.9	9.5	1.6	6.7	0.2	30.3	38.0	18.5
Ventura, CA PMSA	9.2	2.0	9.0	2.3	9.3	1.9	43.6	48.0	42.9

**Pertains to MSAs, PMSAs, and (in New England) NECMAs, as defined in June, 2000 by OMB with modifications for central cities. See text*

****No OMB-defined central city exists for metro area.*

Source: Analysis of decennial census data

Acknowledgements:

The authors are grateful to senior project programmer Cathy Sun and other support staff at the University of Michigan Population Studies Center, to Mark Muro for editorial assistance, and to other staff at the Brookings Urban Center for their advice and contributions.

The Brookings Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy would like to thank Living Cities, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Fannie Mae Foundation for their support of its work on Census 2000.

About Living Cities:

Living Cities: The National Community Development Initiative is a partnership of leading foundations, financial institutions, nonprofit organizations and the federal government that is committed to improving the vitality of cities and urban communities. Living Cities funds the work of community development corporations in 23 cities and uses the lessons of that work to engage in national research and policy development.

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

1775 Massachusetts Avenue, NW • Washington D.C. 20036-2188
Tel: 202-797-6000 • Fax: 202-797-6004
www.brookings.edu

CENTER ON URBAN & METROPOLITAN POLICY
DIRECT: 202-797-6139 • FAX/DIRECT: 202-797-2965