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POVERTY ESTIMATES FOR PLACES IN THE UNITED STATES

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper first describes some historical poverty trends, overall and for demographic groups and broad locations within the U.S. from an ongoing household survey, and then presents some specific information on poverty for localities by size, from the most recent decennial census (2000). Rural poverty exceeded urban poverty in 1969 and 1979, but urban poverty in 1999 was higher than rural poverty. Non-metropolitan area poverty exceeded metropolitan area poverty in each of the four censuses, but within each of those areas, rural poverty is now less than urban poverty. Within metropolitan areas, poverty is highest for those in central cities. For urbanized areas (50,000 or more population), the poverty rate is lower as the area gets larger, with the exception of the very largest-sized areas. This higher poverty for the largest places is accounted for entirely by the higher poverty rate for the central city or cities in those urban agglomerations, as the poverty rates for the parts of the urbanized areas not in the central place continue to fall as the area itself gets larger. Some of the critical relationships affecting the poverty rate of places appear to be the location of certain types of people – female householders, non-citizens, people of color, and college graduates.

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POVERTY ESTIMATES FOR PLACES IN THE UNITED STATES

In the United States, economic well-being is measured, to a great extent, by a single social indicator: “poverty”. Poverty is defined as an in-or-out state: families with incomes above a specified threshold, and all their constituent individuals, are out of poverty; those below are in poverty.¹ Despite its wide use as a measure of well-being, numerous commentators have identified flaws in the construction of the official measure of poverty (see for example, Citro and Michael 1995; Ruggles 1990; Weinberg 2004). While the U.S. Census Bureau (and others) have presented numerous alternatives designed to address some of these flaws (see, for example, Short et al. 1997), none have been officially adopted; thus this paper will focus on the official measure.

There is a long-standing argument about whether it is characteristics of a place that determine its economic well-being, or whether it is the characteristics of its residents. For example, in a recent review of the literature on rural poverty, Weber and Jensen (2004) contrast the “structuralist” and the “individualist” views; they also note, as Cotter (2003) argues and with which I agree, that both contribute. For example, a large number of low-skilled recent immigrants can increase measured poverty, while the presence of substantial economic development can decrease poverty (see, for example, Partridge and Rickman 2005).

This paper will present evidence on both the structuralist and individualist perspectives. It first describes some historical poverty trends, overall and for demographic groups and broad locations

¹ The official measure of poverty is defined for the United States by its Office of Management and Budget, based on work by Orshansky (1963), updated for inflation using the official Consumer Price Index. The incomes of unrelated individuals are compared to the specified threshold for a single person. Unrelated individuals are residents of a household (housing unit) who are unrelated to the householder (the person in whose name the unit is rented or owned). The official thresholds make a distinction between those 65 and older and those younger as single individuals or as householders in two-person families. Families are those in a household related by blood, marriage, or adoption.

within the U.S., and then presents some specific information on poverty for localities by size, from the most recent decennial census (2000). It does not focus on any of the recent literature on the subject, nor carry out empirical testing of causation given the methodological challenges (cf. Weber and Jensen 2004 pp. 22ff). Indeed, it is very difficult to disentangle the structuralist and individualist perspectives. Places with structural economic problems may attract those with individual problems because housing (rental) prices are lower; while the reverse might also be true, if areas with low-skilled individuals fail to attract businesses. Accordingly, my focus is specifically and exclusively data-oriented.

Historical Trends in U.S. Poverty

Official measurement of poverty in the U.S. began in the mid-1960s; some historical estimates were made for years back to 1959 as well. Official poverty is calculated using the Current Population Survey (CPS) Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC), now carried out in February through April each year, asking about the previous calendar year's income. The CPS is basically a monthly labor force survey whose primary purpose is to estimate the Nation's unemployment rate.

Figure 1 presents the overall poverty rate for the 1959-2003 period.² From a high of 22.4 percent in 1959 (the earliest measurement date), the poverty rate dropped more-or-less continuously to a low of 11.1 percent in 1973. Since that time, the rate has fluctuated in a narrower range – roughly 11 to 15 percent – with the highs coming as a result of recessions (15.0-15.2 percent in 1982-1983 and 14.8-15.1 percent in 1992-1993, statistically the same range) and the lows as a

² Estimates for 2004 will be released on August 30, 2005. The author will attempt to update the estimates in this paper after that date. Historical poverty tables based on the CPS can be found at <<http://www.census.gov/hhes/income/histinc/histpovtb.html>>.

result of recoveries. The overall poverty rate in 2000 – 11.3 percent – statistically matched the 1973 rate and has risen since then as a result of the 2001 U.S. recession (to 12.5 percent in 2003).

Figure 2 presents the regional distribution of poverty for the 1959-2003 period. The South region has historically had the highest poverty rate (except for a period in the 1990s, when it was statistically the same as the rate for the West region) – 14.1 percent in 2003, compared to 11.3 percent for the Northeast, 10.7 percent for the Midwest, and 12.6 percent for the West.³ The South had a poverty rate of 35.4 percent in 1959 (the rates for the other regions are not available), but that had fallen to 17.9 percent by 1969, the first year for which comparable data are available for the other regions.

There are two different geographic classification schemes currently in use in the U.S. The first divides the country into core based statistical areas (CBSAs) and outside core based statistical areas, replacing the previous standards designating areas as metropolitan or non-metropolitan. According to the Census Bureau's Internet site, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines CBSAs (including both metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas) according to published standards that are applied to Census Bureau data.⁴ (See Box 1 for a detailed explanation of geographic terms and Figure 3 for a generic illustration.)

The general concept of a metropolitan or micropolitan statistical area is that of a core area containing a substantial population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration with that core. ... The 2000 standards provide that each CBSA must contain at least one urban area of 10,000 or more population.

³ The 2003 estimate for the Northeast was not statistically different from that for the Midwest.

⁴ See <<http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/aboutmetro.html>> and <<http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/metrodef.html>>.

Each metropolitan statistical area must have at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more inhabitants. Each micropolitan statistical area must have at least one urban cluster of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 population. ... Counties or equivalent entities form the geographic "building blocks" for metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas throughout the United States.

As of February 22, 2005, in the U.S. (excluding Puerto Rico) there were 361 metropolitan statistical areas consisting of 1,090 counties and 575 micropolitan statistical areas consisting of 692 counties (of a total 3,141 counties). Of the total U.S. population as of November 2004, 83 percent lived in metropolitan statistical areas, 10 percent lived in micropolitan statistical areas, and the remaining 7 percent lived outside core based statistical areas.⁵ The Appendix contains a map of the U.S. metropolitan areas.⁶

The second geographic classification scheme in use divides the country into "urban" and "rural" areas. An urban area is all territory, population, and housing units in urbanized areas and in places of more than 2,500 persons outside of urbanized areas; population density in urbanized areas must be at least 1,000 people per square mile. A rural area is all territory, population, and housing units not classified as urban. The Appendix also contains a map of all the urbanized areas of the U.S.

⁵ Prior to the geographic reclassification associated with Census 2000, the 847 metropolitan counties in 1999 had about 80 percent of the U.S. population; the areas classified (for the first time) as metropolitan in 1963 had about 65 percent of the 1960 population (see Nucci 2004, Nucci and Long 1995). The increase is largely accounted for by new metropolitan areas added since 1963, not by growth in the original 1963 areas, though that is where foreign-born immigrants are concentrated.

⁶ Census Bureau reference maps (including those showing micropolitan areas) can be found at <http://www.census.gov/geo/www/maps/CP_MapProducts.htm>.

Thus, the metropolitan and micropolitan statistical area standards do not equate to an urban-rural classification; many counties included in metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas, and many other counties, contain both urban and rural territory and populations.⁷

The micropolitan area designation will not be made effective for the CPS until 2005 and therefore the first official poverty statistics for CBSAs and their components will not be released until 2006. Accordingly, Figure 4 presents the historical trend in poverty only for metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, with the former subdivided into poverty in central cities and poverty not in central cities (often referred to as suburbs).⁸ In 2003, the poverty rate for residents of central cities, at 17.5 percent, exceeded poverty for those in metropolitan areas but not in central cities (9.1 percent) and for those not in metropolitan areas (14.2 percent). While this relationship has been true for most of the past three decades, prior to 1973 the poverty rate for those not in metropolitan areas exceeded the rate for those in central cities. The first measured comparison was for 1959, when the poverty rate for those in non-metropolitan areas was 33.2 percent, compared with 18.3 percent for those in central cities (and 12.2 percent for those in not in central cities).

The most significant demographic characteristics affecting poverty levels are race and Hispanic origin, immigrant status, age, and family structure. Figure 5 presents trends in poverty for race

⁷ See <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/bulletins/fy05/b05-02.html>>. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, publishes an extensive analysis of non-metropolitan and rural poverty, at <<http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/IncomePovertyWelfare/ruralpoverty/>>.

⁸ The classification currently used in the CPS is based on the June 30, 1993 definitions of metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, based on application of the 1990 metropolitan area standards to 1990 census data; see <<http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/pastmetro.html>> and <<http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/mastand.html>>. The term “central city” has been replaced by “principal city” in the new standards.

and Hispanic groups.⁹ The highest poverty rates are for Blacks and Hispanics, with substantially lower rates for Asians and Whites.¹⁰ The 1990s were a period of substantial reduction in poverty for Blacks and Hispanics, from 30 percent and more in the early 1990s, to 24.4 percent and 22.5 percent, respectively, in 2003. Despite this reduction, places with disproportionately more Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians will likely have higher poverty rates.

Figure 6 presents recent (1993-2003) data on poverty by nativity. Those foreign born who are not citizens have the highest poverty rates: 28.7 percent in 1993, declining to 19.2 percent in 2000, and then rising to 21.7 percent in 2003. In 2003, 88.1 percent were natives, 4.6 percent were foreign-born naturalized citizens, and 7.3 percent were foreign-born noncitizens. The poverty rate for naturalized citizens in 2003, 10.0 percent, was below that for natives, 11.8 percent. Places with disproportionately more non-citizens will likely have higher poverty rates.

Figure 7 shows poverty rates by age. Seniors (those 65 years and older) historically had very high poverty rates, but by the 1980s, their rates had dropped below that for children (those under 18 years). Currently, the poverty rate for those 18 and over (10.7 percent) is below that for children (17.6 percent in 2003, up from 16.2 percent in 2000).

Poverty rates also differ by household and family type. Figure 8 shows the family poverty rates for four types of families – married couples with and without children, and male and female

⁹ The 2003 and 2004 CPS ASECs asked respondents to choose one or more races; prior to that, respondents were asked to choose only one race. The estimates presented in the text and Figure 5 are for those choosing just one race. Hispanics may be of any race.

¹⁰ The three-year average (2001-2003) poverty rate for American Indians and Alaska Natives choosing a single race (23.2 percent) was not different from the three-year average rate for single-race Blacks or Hispanics. The three-year average poverty rate for Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders is not yet available.

householders, with children but no spouse present – and for unrelated individuals.¹¹ The highest poverty rates are for female-householder families with children – 59.9 percent in 1959 and 40 percent or more through 1997, with the rate dropping to 33.0 percent in 2000 (and 35.5 percent in 2003). Rates for unrelated individuals (people not in families) are high as well – 46.1 percent in 1959, dropping to 24.1 percent in 1974, and then remaining in the 19-25 percent range through 2003 (20.4 percent). In contrast, the poverty rates for male householder families with children trends upward (though with some variation probably due in part to their relatively small sample sizes) from the 14-18 percent range in the 1974-1981 period to a high of 22.5 percent in the 1992-1994 period, dropping somewhat lower since then (19.1 percent in 2003). The rates for married-couple families are much lower (below 8 percent for the entire period), though they are slightly higher for married-couple families with children (in the 6-10 percent range for the 1973-2003 period; 7.0 percent in 2003).

Figure 9 looks more closely at individuals in female householder no husband present families, by race and Hispanic origin. Poverty rates for Blacks in this type of family were as high as 70.6 percent in 1965, and remained above of near 50 percent until 1994, reaching a low of 37.4 percent in 2001 (and 39.0 percent in 2003). Poverty rates for Hispanics in this family type were as high as for Blacks for even longer (50.9 percent in 1997), but have dropped as well, to 36.4 percent in 2002 (and 38.4 percent in 2003).¹²

Thus, places with disproportionately more female householder families, especially those with children and those with a Black or Hispanic householder, and places with a large proportion of

¹¹ A family consists of all individuals in a household related by blood, marriage, or adoption. A householder is the person in whose name the housing unit is rented or owned.

¹² The poverty rates for Blacks and Hispanics in female householder families in 2003 were not statistically different.

unrelated individuals (such as recent immigrants rooming together) will likely have higher poverty rates.

Poverty by Size of Place

The Census Bureau has published a number of “Geographic Comparison Tables” from Census 2000, available through the “American FactFinder”, at <<http://factfinder.census.gov>>.

Unfortunately, Census 2000 data have not been tabulated for core based statistical areas by size and therefore those poverty estimates will not be presented here.

Compared to a 1999 U.S. overall poverty rate of 12.4 percent, as measured by Census 2000, urban areas had a slightly higher rate, 12.7 percent, and rural areas a lower rate, 11.0 percent (see Table 1).¹³ Of the total population in 1999, 79.0 percent was urban and 80.3 percent was metropolitan. Of the metropolitan population, 11.4 percent was rural; of the non-metropolitan population, 59.1 percent was rural. The 1999 comparison (urban poverty higher than rural poverty) contrasts with historical experience in the U.S. As shown in Table 2, rural poverty exceeded urban poverty in 1969 and 1979.

Estimates of poverty by size of place are shown in Table 3. As shown there, the metropolitan rural population had a poverty rate of 8.2 percent, while the remaining rural population had a poverty rate of 13.3 percent. Non-metropolitan poverty exceeded metropolitan poverty in each of

¹³ The poverty rate estimated for 1999 by the CPS was 11.9 percent; that estimate differs from the Census 2000 estimate because of different survey instruments and methods. For more information on how to compare poverty estimates from different sources, see <<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/newguidance.html>>. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions used in Census 2000, see <<http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/datanotes/expsf3.htm>>. Since both the CPS and the decennial census ask about income for the previous calendar year, Census 2000 poverty rates pertain to 1999, and the March 2000 CPS was used to estimate official poverty rates for 1999.

the four censuses, but within each of those areas, rural poverty is now less than urban poverty. Within metropolitan areas, poverty is highest for those in central cities.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service (ERS), creates a nine-category “Rural-Urban Continuum Code” that classifies counties from the most urban to the most remote rural.¹⁴ The classification is based on the official definition of metropolitan areas, so the codes are available only at the county level, but tabulated decennial census data that use that classification are not easily available. ERS finds that the poverty rate was the highest in the completely rural counties not adjacent to metropolitan counties, with 16.8 percent of the population in poverty in 1999, and it was the lowest in the largest metropolitan areas, with 11.5 percent of the population in poverty.¹⁵

ERS has also analyzed the persistence of poverty in counties. They defined counties as “persistently poor” if 20 percent or more of their population was in poverty as measured by the 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 decennial censuses. Using that definition, there are 386 (of 3,142) counties in the U.S. that can be classified as persistently poor (containing 4 percent of the U.S. population); 340 of these 386 counties are non-metropolitan. There are no persistently poor counties in the Northeast while 280 of the 340 non-metropolitan counties are in the South (containing 25 percent of the Southern non-metropolitan population). They also note that nearly 28 percent of people in completely rural counties are in persistently poor counties, while only 7.5

¹⁴ See <<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/Rurality/>>.

¹⁵ See <<http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/IncomePovertyWelfare/ruralpoverty/>>.

percent of the people living in most urban non-metropolitan counties are in persistently poor counties.¹⁶

Another interesting geographic perspective is provided in Bishaw (2005). In that special report on Census 2000 poverty, census tracts (areas of roughly 1,500 housing units) are classified by their poverty rates into four categories: below the national rate (12.4 percent), 12.40-19.99 percent, 20.00-39.99 percent, and 40.00 percent and above. In 2000, 81.5 percent of the population lived in census tracts whose 1999 poverty rates were under 20 percent (an increase from 1990 when 78.2 percent lived in such 1989 tracts). Individuals in areas of concentrated poverty (the highest two categories) were disproportionately children, other than non-Hispanic White, with less than a high school diploma, never married (such as female householders, no spouse present, with children), unemployed, and renting their housing unit.

Figure 10 presents estimates of the poverty rate by size of urban place, showing both urbanized areas and urban clusters, and distinguishing the population in central places from those not in the central place of the urban area. Poverty rates are computed for all people in areas of a particular size and are not the average for areas in the size grouping. Note the skewed distribution of areas, from 1,328 in the smallest category (population 2,500-5,000) to only 4 in the largest category (5,000,000 population or more).

Poverty rates are roughly the same for urban clusters of all sizes (up to 49,999 population) – 15.7 percent overall; see Table 3. For urbanized areas, the poverty rate falls as the area gets larger,

¹⁶ See <<http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/IncomePovertyWelfare/ruralpoverty/>>. Weinberg (1987) found that there are rural “pockets of poverty” – a county’s proximity to a county with a high poverty rate makes it more prone to having a high poverty rate itself.

with the exception of the very largest-sized urbanized areas (5,000,000 or more population). This higher poverty for the largest places is accounted for entirely by the higher poverty rate for the central city or cities in that urban agglomeration, as the poverty rates for the parts of the urbanized areas not in central places continue to fall as the area itself gets larger.

As suggested by the previous discussion of poverty rates by demographic characteristic, the poverty rates described above may well be related to the geographic distribution of the population, as well as its economic characteristics. Table 4 presents these estimates, which are summarized in several figures.

Figure 11 presents the percentage of all family households that are female householder, no husband present. There is only a modest relationship of that statistic to poverty. For larger urban areas (0.5 million or more), poverty falls and rises as the size increases, in parallel with the percentage of female householders, but this is true only for central places. There is no apparent relationship for those not in central places.

Figure 12 presents the percentage of the population that is other than Non-Hispanic White. This statistic shows modest parallel behavior with poverty rates as the size of the urban area increases. The relationship is not close, as the pattern diverges at points and the magnitude of differences across area sizes is much larger for the group than for poverty, but there seems to be some connection to the rates for the population both in central places and not in central places.

The percentage of the area's population that is non-citizen is shown in Figure 13. There is little relationship here over most of the range, but the percentage non-citizen jumps up sharply for people in central cities in the largest areas (2.5-5.0 million and 5.0 million or more) and matches closely with the percentage in poverty; the percentages not in central cities for these large areas also tracks with poverty rates.

Thus, from the demographic perspective, there is suggestive evidence of a relationship, but more so for the largest areas. Poverty rates may also relate to the economic characteristics of the individuals in that location. The next set of figures examines educational attainment and employment.

Figure 14 examines the percentage of teenagers 16 to 19 years old not enrolled in school and not a high school graduate (the "dropout" rate), as it relates to the size of the urban area. This characteristic shows the opposite relationship from what one might expect for those in central places – the dropout rate falls, then rises, then falls, as the size of the urban area increases, while the poverty rises, then falls, and then rises for the largest area – almost a perfect negative correlation in direction. On the other hand, for those in not central places, there is a bit more of a closer correlation between the two rates, falling together over most of the range.

Figure 15 shows what happens at the other end of the educational attainment distribution – the percentage of young adults (25 to 34 years old) with a Bachelor's degree – by size of urban area. As the rate of college graduates increases, one would expect the poverty rate to fall. This is

generally the case, both for people in central places and those not in central places. Note particularly the relationship for the largest areas.

Finally, Figure 16 looks at the unemployment rate by size of place.¹⁷ Unemployment and poverty do not appear to co-vary across size of urban place.

Concluding Comment

This paper has given the reader only the basic facts and correlates about the relationship of poverty to place, but not the causes. Some of the critical relationships affecting the poverty rate of places appear to be the location of certain types of people – female householders, non-citizens, people of color, and college graduates. Models are needed to take account of all these factors.

Rural poverty exceeded urban poverty in 1969 and 1979, but urban poverty in 1999 was higher than rural poverty. Non-metropolitan area poverty exceeded metropolitan area poverty in each of the four censuses, but within each of those areas, rural poverty is now less than urban poverty.

Yet, according to the Economic Research Service, the most persistently poor areas are rural.

Within metropolitan areas, poverty is highest for those in central cities. Poverty rates are roughly the same for urban clusters of any size (up to 49,999 population). For urbanized areas (50,000 or more population), the poverty rate is lower as the area gets larger, with the exception of the very largest-sized areas. This higher poverty for the largest places is accounted for entirely by the higher poverty rate for the central city or cities in those urban agglomerations, as the poverty

¹⁷ In the U.S., all civilians 16 years old and over are classified as unemployed if they (1) were neither "at work" nor "with a job but not at work" during the reference week, and (2) were actively looking for work during the last four weeks, and (3) were available to accept a job. Also included as unemployed are civilians who did not work at all during the reference week, were waiting to be called back to a job from which they had been laid off, and were available for work except for temporary illness.

rates for the parts of the urbanized areas not in the central place continue to fall as the area itself gets larger.

To help answer some of the causation questions, researchers in the U.S. can look forward to the promise of annual data on most localities from the American Community Survey (ACS), designed to replace the decennial census long form. Over any five-year period, the ACS will sample roughly one in every eight housing units. By aggregating the data over multiple time periods, the ACS will provide tabulations for all levels of Census geography, down to the census tract level. While interpretation of this accumulation data might pose some issues, the ACS will be invaluable to researchers who use small area data.

By providing some data for every location every year, the ACS will also help eliminate demographic surprises, such as the Census 2000 discovery of the relocation of many Hispanics to previously unrecognized locations, often far from their previous population concentrations. If the 1990s rate of immigration to the U.S. continues throughout this decade, then the movement of low-skilled non-citizens to new locations may well lead to new concerns about poverty. As Borjas (2005) notes, change in the geographic distribution of low-skilled workers, especially the growth in the number of Mexican immigrants who are high school dropouts, has important implications for the poverty rates of geographic areas that host these immigrants (see also Borjas, 1999).

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Box 1: Geographic Identifiers Used by the U.S. Census Bureau

Central city

In the 1990 metropolitan area standards, the largest city of a Metropolitan Area (MA). Central cities are a basis for establishment of an MA. Additional cities that meet specific criteria also are identified as central cities. In a number of instances, only part of a city qualifies as central, because another part of the city extends beyond the MA boundary.

Central place

The core incorporated place(s) or a census designated place of an urban area, usually consisting of the most populous place(s) in the urban area plus additional places that qualify under Census Bureau criteria.

County and equivalent entity

The primary legal subdivision of most states. In Louisiana, these subdivisions are known as parishes. In Alaska, which has no counties, the county equivalents are boroughs, a legal subdivision, and census areas, a statistical subdivision. In four states (Maryland, Missouri, Nevada and Virginia), there are one or more cities that are independent of any county and thus constitute primary subdivisions of their states. The District of Columbia has no primary divisions, and the entire area is considered equivalent to a county for statistical purposes. In Puerto Rico, municipios are treated as county equivalents.

Metropolitan area (MA)

In the 1990 standards, a collective term, established by the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB), to refer to metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), consolidated metropolitan statistical areas (CMSAs), and primary metropolitan statistical areas (PMSAs). These entities are defined for use by federal statistical agencies, based on the concept of a core area with a large population nucleus, plus adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration with that core. Qualification of an MSA requires the presence of a city with 50,000 or more inhabitants, or the presence of an Urbanized Area (UA) and a total population of at least 100,000 (75,000 in New England). The county or counties containing the largest city and surrounding densely settled territory are central counties of the MSA. Additional outlying counties qualify to be included in the MSA by meeting certain other criteria of metropolitan character, such as a specified minimum population density or percentage of the population that is urban. MSAs in New England are defined in terms of minor civil divisions, following rules concerning commuting and population density. An area becomes a **consolidated metropolitan statistical area** if it meets the requirements to qualify as a metropolitan statistical area, has a population of 1,000,000 or more, if component parts are recognized as primary metropolitan statistical areas, and local opinion favors the designation. A **primary metropolitan statistical area** consists of one or more counties (county subdivisions in New England) that have substantial commuting interchange.

Place

A concentration of population either legally bounded as an incorporated place, or identified as a Census Designated Place (CDP) including comunidades and zonas urbanas in Puerto Rico. Incorporated places have legal descriptions of borough (except in Alaska and New York), city, town (except in New England, New York, and Wisconsin), or village.

Rural

Territory, population and housing units not classified as urban. The "rural" classification cuts across other hierarchies and can be in metropolitan or non-metropolitan areas.

State and equivalent entity

The primary legal subdivision of the United States. The District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Island Areas (the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands) are each treated as the statistical equivalent of a state for census purposes.

Urban

All territory, population and housing units in urbanized areas and in places of more than 2,500 persons outside of urbanized areas. "Urban" classification cuts across other hierarchies and can be in metropolitan or non-metropolitan areas.

Urban Area

Collective term referring to all areas that are urban. For Census 2000, there are two types of urban areas: urban clusters and urbanized areas. An **urban cluster** is densely settled territory that has at least 2,500 people but fewer than 50,000. An **urbanized area** (UA) is an area consisting of a central place(s) and adjacent territory with a general population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile of land area that together have a minimum residential population of at least 50,000 people. The Census Bureau uses published criteria to determine the qualification and boundaries of UAs.

Table 1: Percentage of People in Poverty, by Urban-Rural: 1999

UNITED STATES	12.4
URBAN	12.7
In urbanized area	12.3
In central place	15.7
Not in central place	7.8
In urban cluster	15.7
In central place	16.6
Not in central place	12.7
RURAL	11.0
Place of 2,500 or more	9.5
Place of 1,000 to 2,499	14.3
Place of less than 1,000	14.7
Not in a place	10.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (sample data).

Table 2. Percentage of People in Poverty for the Urban-Rural and Metropolitan-Non-metropolitan Population: 1969-1999

	United States	Metropolitan	Non-Metropolitan
1969	13.7	11.2	19.2
Urban	12.0	11.2	16.1
In central place	14.8	14.9	xx
Not in central place	6.8	7.3	xx
Rural	18.2	11.3	21.5
1979	12.4	11.4	15.4
Urban	12.1	11.7	14.8
In central place	16.5	16.5	xx
Not in central place	7.4	7.6	xx
Rural	13.2	9.3	15.8
1989	13.1	12.1	16.8
Urban	13.2	12.6	18.4
In central place	17.9	18.0	xx
Not in central place	7.3	8.1	xx
Rural	13.0	8.9	16.0
1999	12.4	11.8	14.6
Urban	12.7	12.3	16.6
In central place	15.9	17.6	xx
Not in central place	8.2	8.4	xx
Rural	11.0	8.2	13.3

xx = not applicable

Sources: Decennial Census, U.S. Summary volumes

1970 (estimates for 1969): Tables 106, 117 1980 (estimates for 1979): Tables 108, 119

1990 (estimates for 1989): Tables 24, 38 2000 (estimates for 1999): Internet Tables GCT-P14, P-87

Table 3: Percentage of People in Poverty, by Size of Place: 1999

UNITED STATES	12.4	IN URBANIZED AREAS (UAs)	12.3
In metropolitan area	11.8	In central place	15.7
In central city	17.6	Not in central place	7.8
Not in central city	8.4	UAs of 5,000,000 or more	13.8
Urban	8.4	In central place	18.6
In urbanized area	8.0	Not in central place	6.5
In urban cluster	12.8	UAs of 2,500,000 to 4,999,999	11.1
Rural	8.2	In central place	13.7
Not in metropolitan area	14.6	Not in central place	7.5
Urban	16.6	UAs of 1,000,000 to 2,499,999	11.0
In urbanized area	13.9	In central place	14.1
In urban cluster	17.0	Not in central place	7.4
Rural	13.3	UAs of 500,000 to 999,999	12.0
		In central place	15.5
INSIDE METROPOLITAN AREAS (MAs)	11.8	Not in central place	8.0
MAs of 5,000,000 or more	11.7	UAs of 250,000 to 499,999	12.5
In central city	18.9	In central place	16.1
Not in central city	7.4	Not in central place	9.0
MAs of 2,500,000 to 4,999,999	10.9	UAs of 100,000 to 249,999	12.9
In central city	17.0	In central place	15.6
Not in central city	8.2	Not in central place	9.3
MAs of 1,000,000 to 2,499,999	10.9	UAs of 50,000 to 99,999	13.8
In central city	15.9	In central place	16.0
Not in central city	7.8	Not in central place	10.0
MAs of 500,000 to 999,999	13.3		
In central city	18.2	IN URBAN CLUSTERS (UCs)	15.7
Not in central city	10.2	In central place	16.6
MAs of 250,000 to 499,999	12.6	Not in central place	12.7
In central city	16.5	UCs of 25,000 to 49,999	15.5
Not in central city	10.0	In central place	17.1
MAs of 100,000 to 249,999	13.8	Not in central place	11.9
In central city	17.6	UCs of 10,000 to 24,999	15.8
Not in central city	10.9	In central place	16.7
MAs of 50,000 to 99,999	12.7	Not in central place	12.9
In central city	15.2	UCs of 5,000 to 9,999	15.6
Not in central city	8.7	In central place	16.2
		Not in central place	12.9
		UCs of 2,500 to 4,999	15.7
		In central place	15.8
		Not in central place	14.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (sample data).

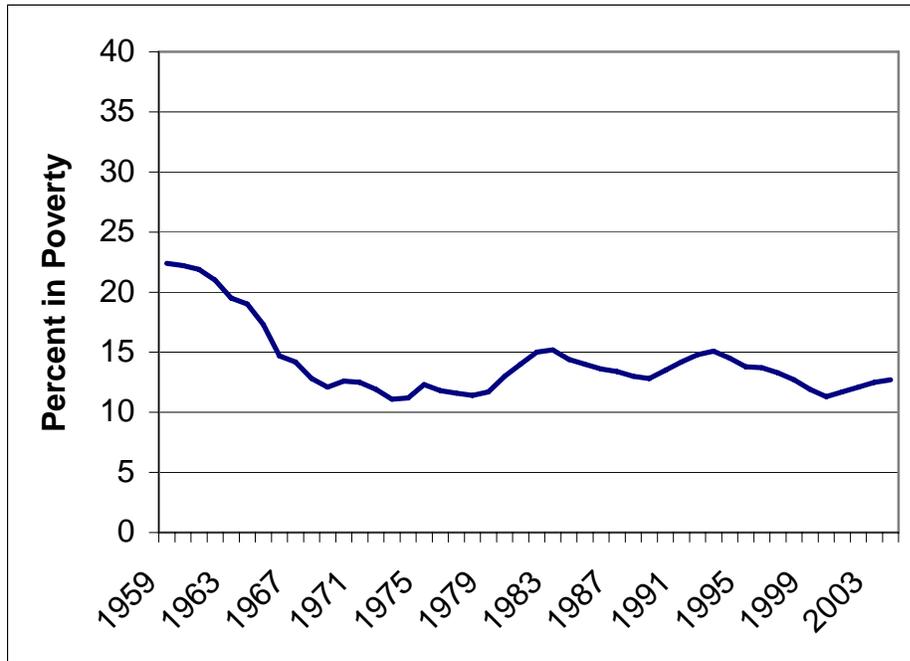
Table 4. Selected Demographic Characteristics, by Size of Urban Area: 1999

	Percent of all family households with female householder, no husband present	Percent of total population White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	Percent of total population noncitizen	Percent of population 16 to 19 years not enrolled in school and not a high school graduate	Percent of population 25 to 34 years with bachelor's degree or higher	Percent of civilian labor force unemployed
UNITED STATES	12.2	69.1	6.6	9.8	27.5	5.8
IN URBANIZED AREAS						
In central place	14.9	52.8	10.9	11.4	30.5	7.0
Not in central place	10.9	75.8	5.6	7.8	33.0	4.5
5,000,000 or more						
In central place	17.2	35.6	18.8	12.1	30.1	8.7
Not in central place	10.7	71.8	8.1	6.2	37.7	4.5
2,500,000 to 4,999,999						
In central place	13.5	50.2	13.9	12.6	34.9	6.1
Not in central place	11.6	65.4	9.0	8.8	35.0	4.4
1,000,000 to 2,499,999						
In central place	14.9	56.7	7.7	12.0	30.6	6.2
Not in central place	11.0	80.4	3.7	7.6	34.3	4.2
500,000 to 999,999						
In central place	15.4	55.9	6.8	11.8	30.4	6.5
Not in central place	10.5	78.0	4.3	7.3	33.9	4.2
250,000 to 499,999						
In central place	15.0	60.8	5.9	10.7	28.0	7.1
Not in central place	11.0	81.9	3.2	8.2	29.0	4.7
100,000 to 249,999						
In central place	13.7	65.7	5.8	10.0	26.3	6.9
Not in central place	10.5	82.2	3.5	8.4	25.8	4.8
50,000 to 99,999						
In central place	13.0	72.6	4.5	8.7	26.4	6.7
Not in central place	11.0	82.8	3.1	8.6	23.5	5.2
IN URBAN CLUSTERS						
In central place	13.4	74.9	3.7	10.2	18.4	7.1
Not in central place	11.4	78.2	3.0	11.0	16.4	6.3
25,000 to 49,999						
In central place	13.3	71.3	4.4	9.3	20.8	7.5
Not in central place	11.2	80.0	2.9	9.3	19.3	6.2
10,000 to 24,999						
In central place	13.4	74.8	4.0	10.3	18.6	7.3
Not in central place	11.5	78.4	3.2	11.2	16.9	6.0
5,000 to 9,999						
	13.1	76.5	3.3	10.8	16.4	6.8

In central place	13.5	76.4	3.4	10.5	17.3	6.8
Not in central place	11.3	76.7	3.1	11.9	13.7	6.7
2,500 to 4,999	13.0	78.0	2.5	11.6	14.7	6.7
In central place	13.2	78.9	2.5	11.0	15.6	6.6
Not in central place	12.0	74.0	2.6	14.6	11.5	7.1

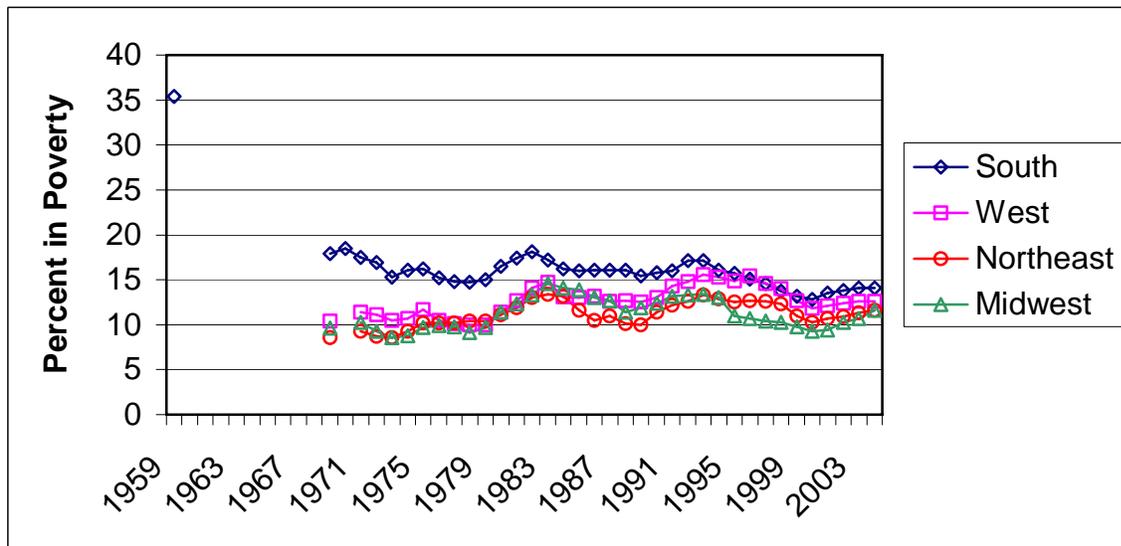
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (sample data).

Figure 1. Percentage of People in Poverty: 1959-2004



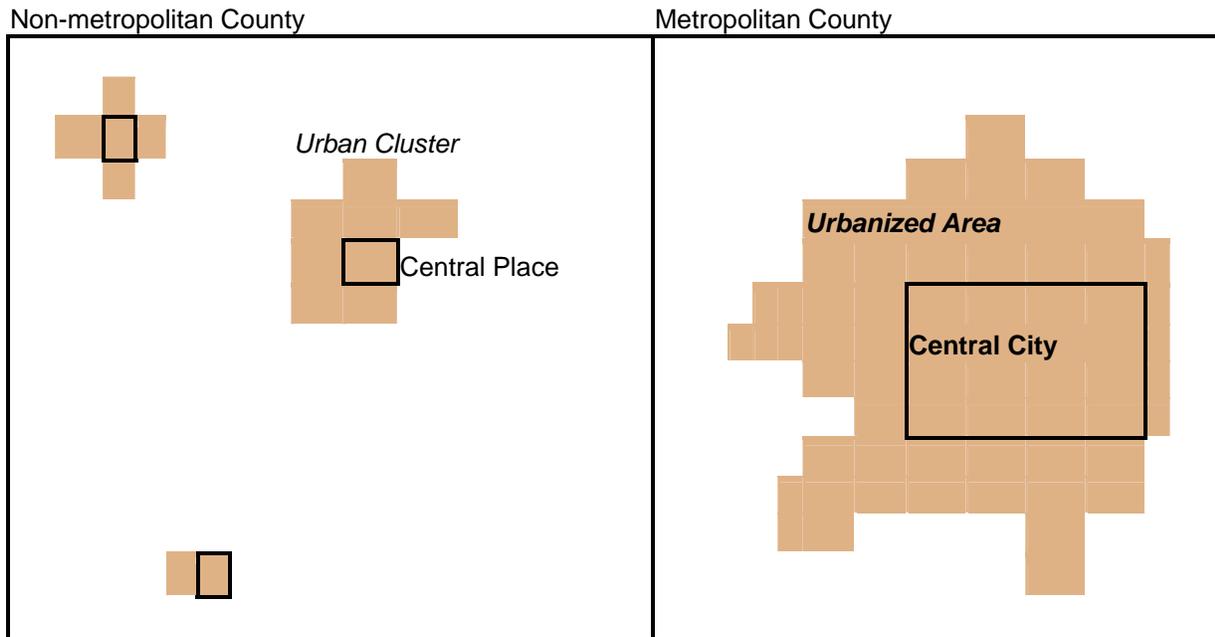
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

Figure 2. Percentage of People in Poverty, by Region: 1959-2004



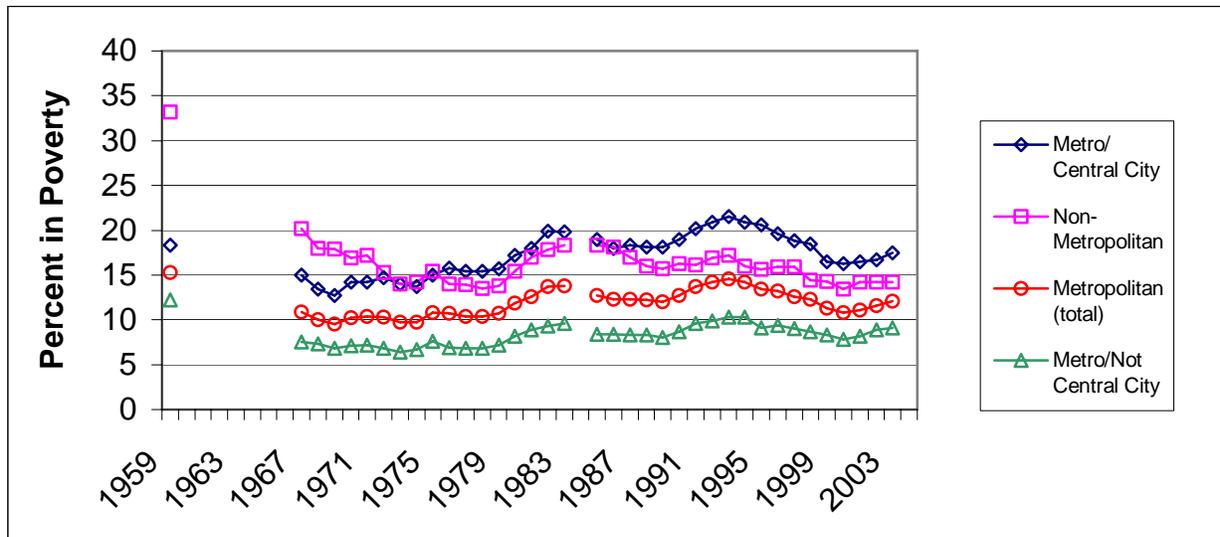
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

Figure 3. Illustration of U.S. Census Bureau Geographic Concepts



Key:  Urban; areas not marked urban are rural

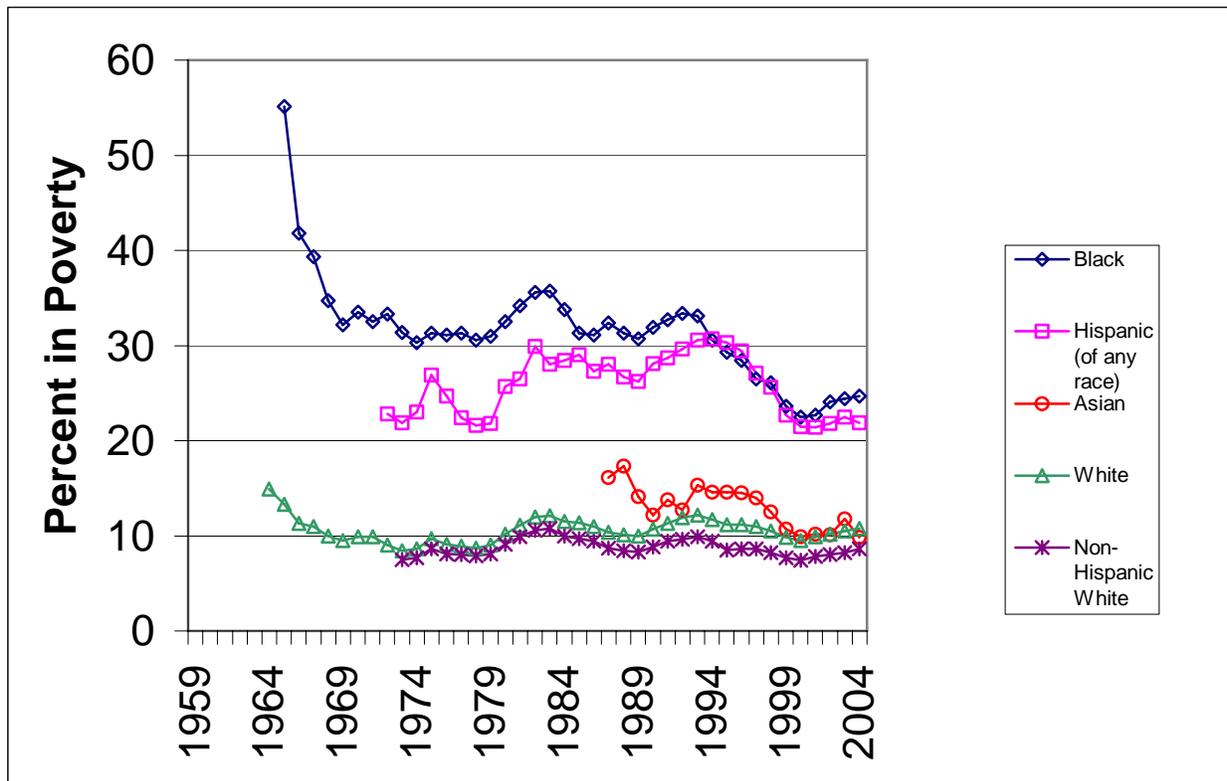
Figure 4. Percentage of People in Poverty, by Metropolitan Residence: 1959-2003



Note: Metropolitan residence includes those in central cities and those not in central cities. Data not computed for 1960-1966, 1984, 2004.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

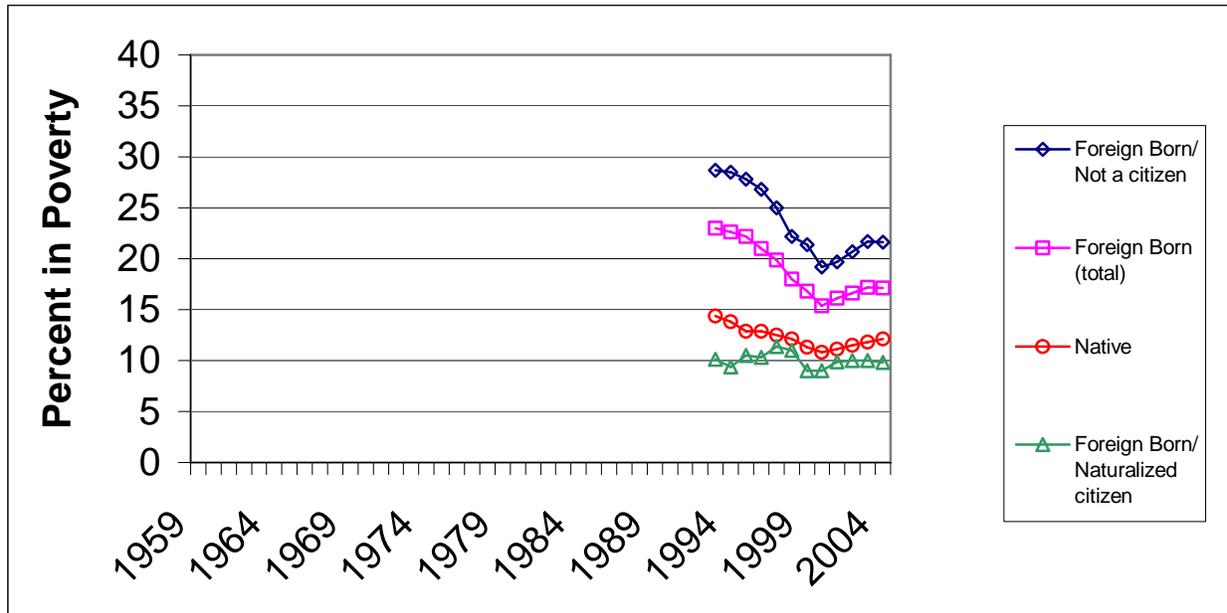
Figure 5. Percentage of People in Poverty, by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1964-2004



Notes: Post-2001 estimates include only those selecting a single race; estimates for Asians prior to 2002 include Pacific Islanders; estimates for Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, and for American Indians and Alaska Natives, are not shown due to their small sample sizes; Hispanics may be of any race.

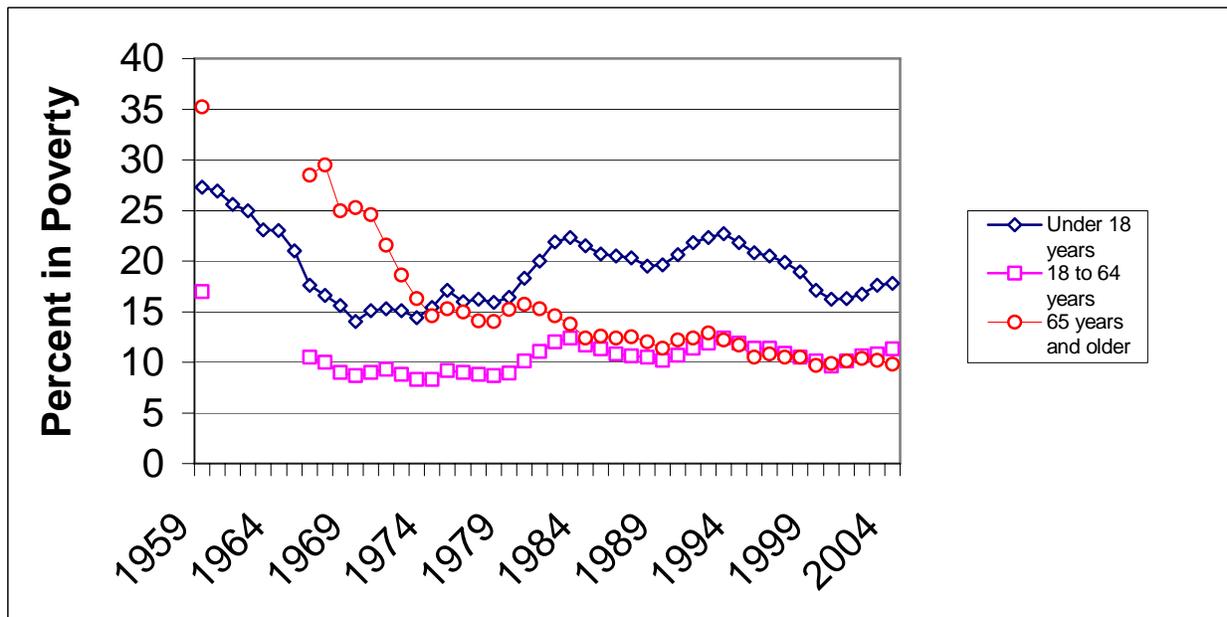
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

Figure 6. Percentage of People in Poverty, by Nativity: 1993-2004



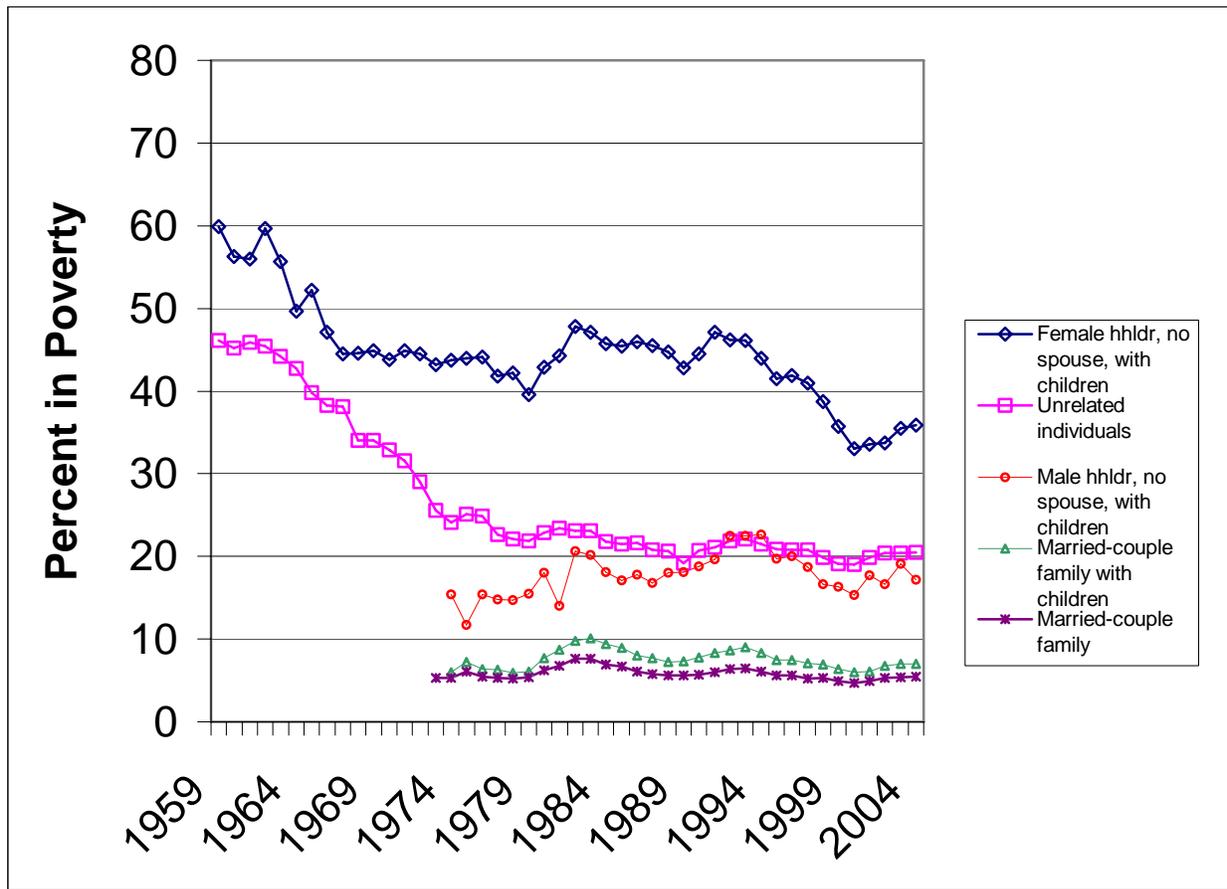
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

Figure 7. Percentage of People in Poverty, by Age: 1959-2004



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

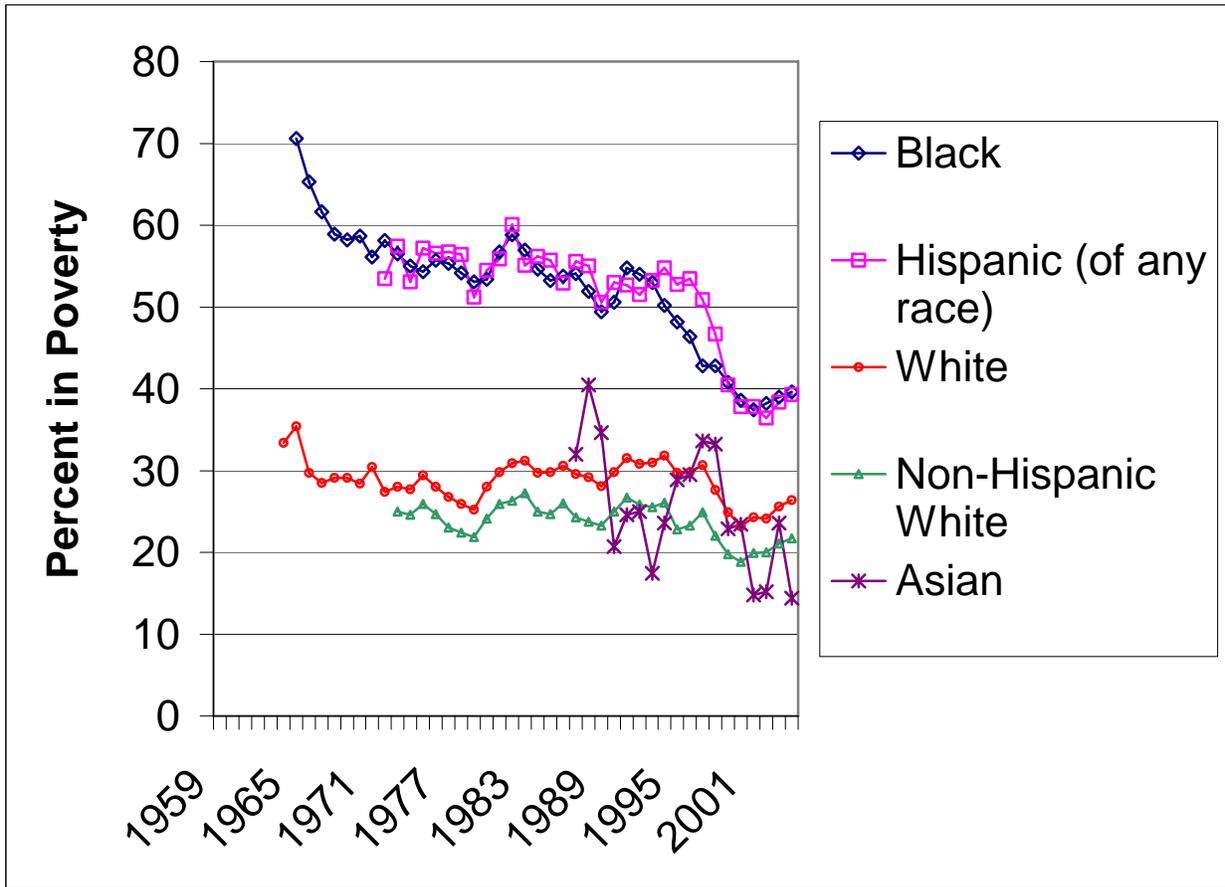
Figure 8. Percentage of Families and Unrelated Individuals in Poverty, by Family Structure: 1959-2004



Note: hhldr = householder

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

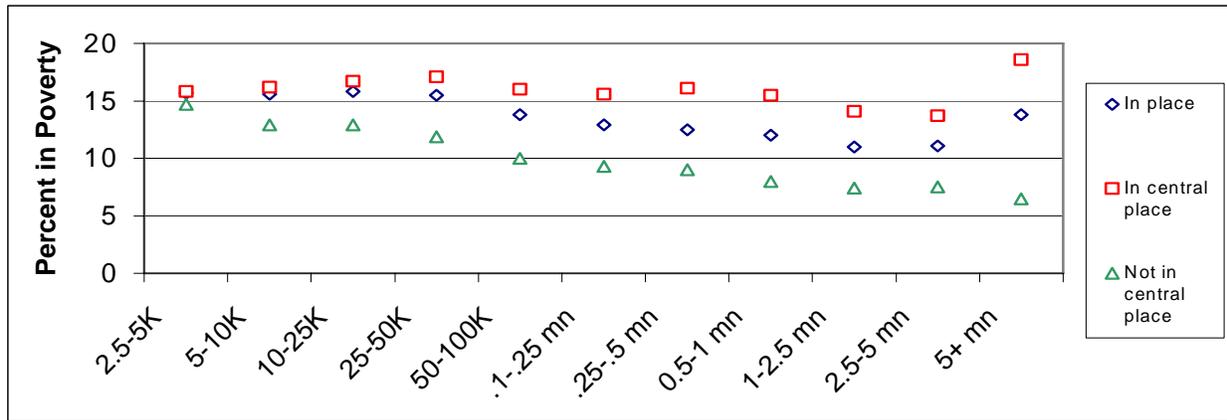
Figure 9. Percentage of People in Female Householder Families in Poverty, by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1964-2004



Notes: Post-2001 estimates include only those selecting a single race; estimates for Asians prior to 2002 include Pacific Islanders; estimates for Asians, for Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, and for American Indians and Alaska Natives, are not shown due to their small sample sizes; Hispanics may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

Figure 10. Percentage of People in Poverty, by Size of Urban Area: 1999

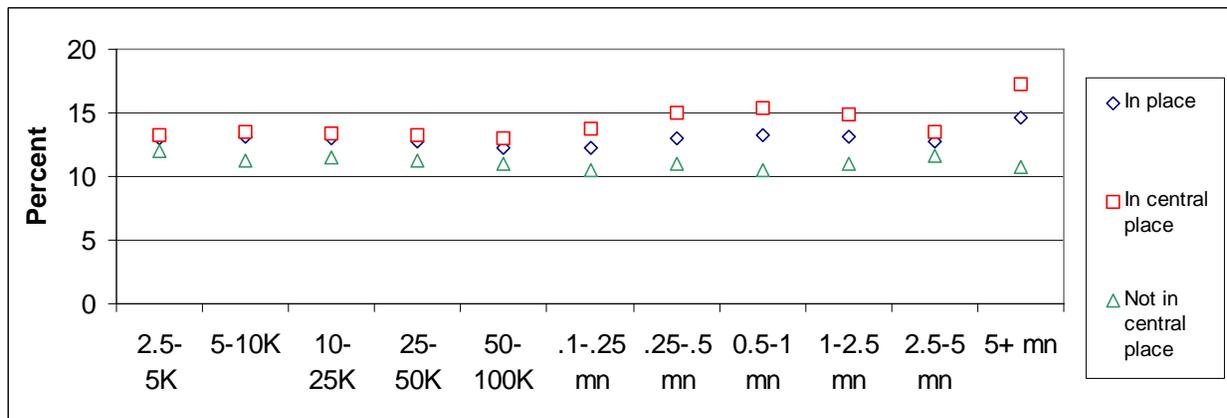


Number of areas: 1,328 910 683 245 198 137 56 34 18 16 4 =3,629 total

Note: Urban areas include urbanized areas (50,000 population or more) and urban clusters (2,500 to 49,999 population).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (sample data).

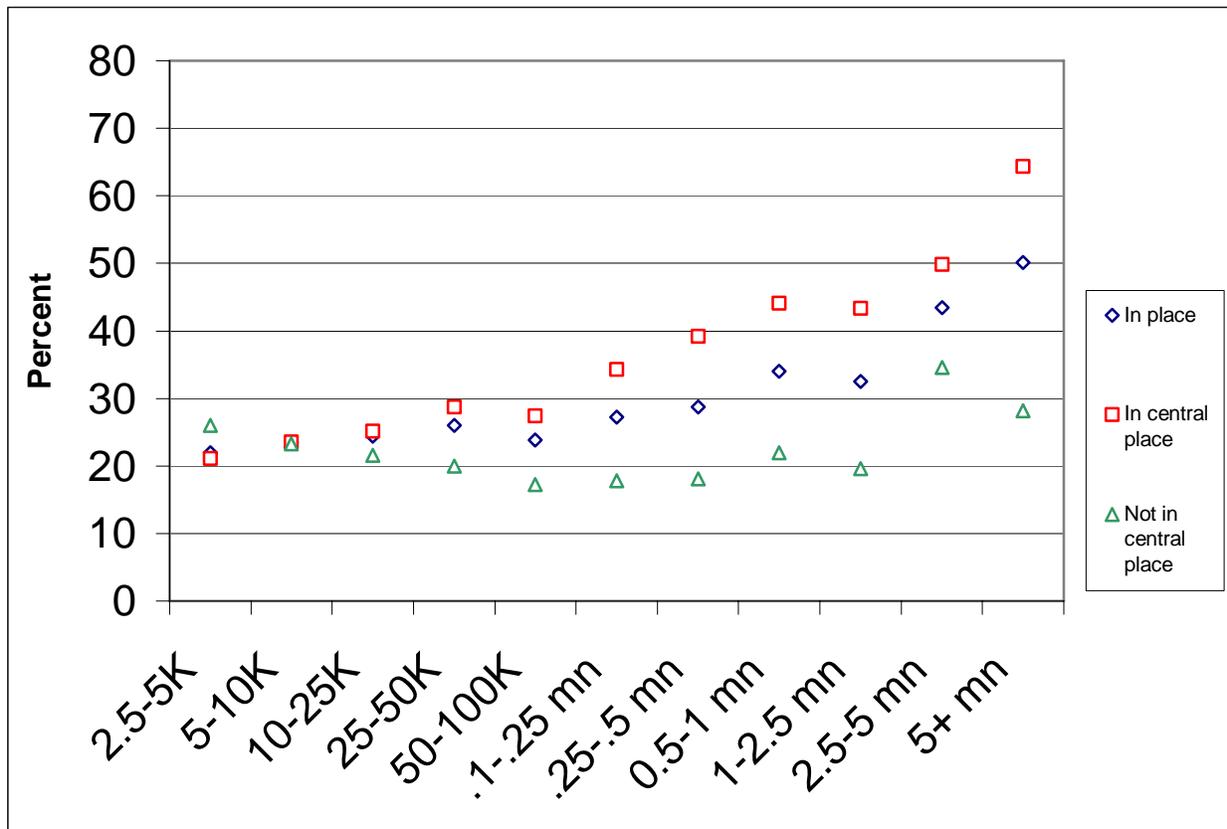
Figure 11. Female Householders, No Husband Present, as Percentage of All Family Households, by Size of Urban Area: 1999



Note: Urban areas include urbanized areas (50,000 population or more) and urban clusters (2,500 to 49,999 population).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 (100 percent data).

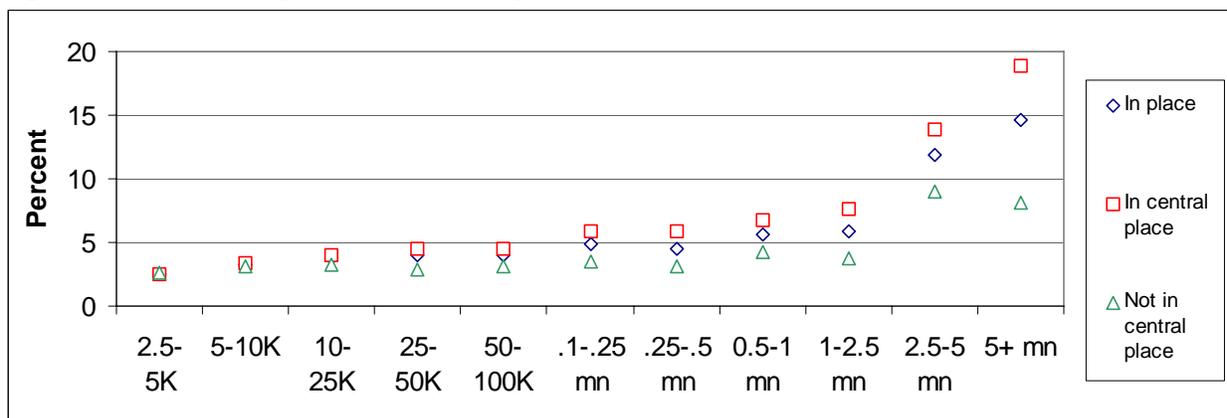
Figure 12. Percentage Other than Non-Hispanic White, by Size of Urban Area: 1999



Note: Urban areas include urbanized areas (50,000 population or more) and urban clusters (2,500 to 49,999 population).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 (100 percent data).

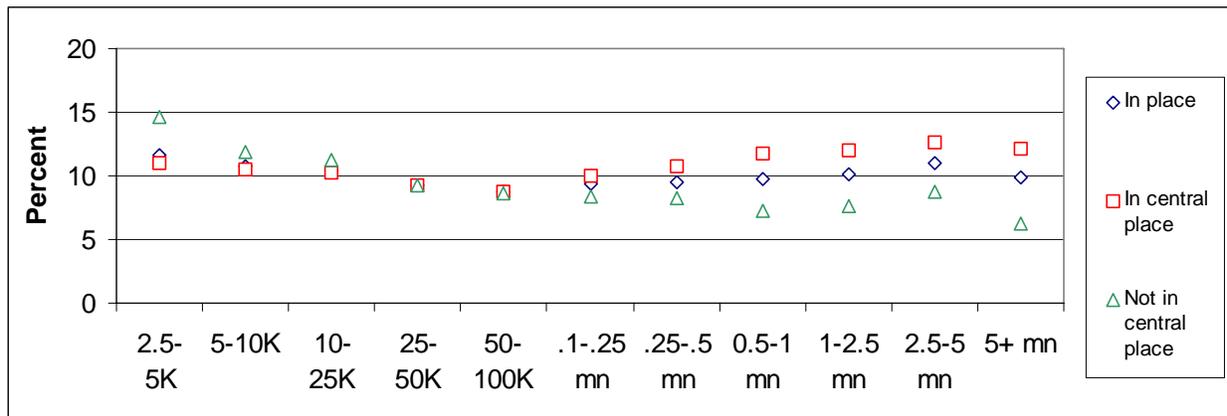
Figure 13. Percentage Non-citizen, by Size of Urban Area: 1999



Note: Urban areas include urbanized areas (50,000 population or more) and urban clusters (2,500 to 49,999 population).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (sample data).

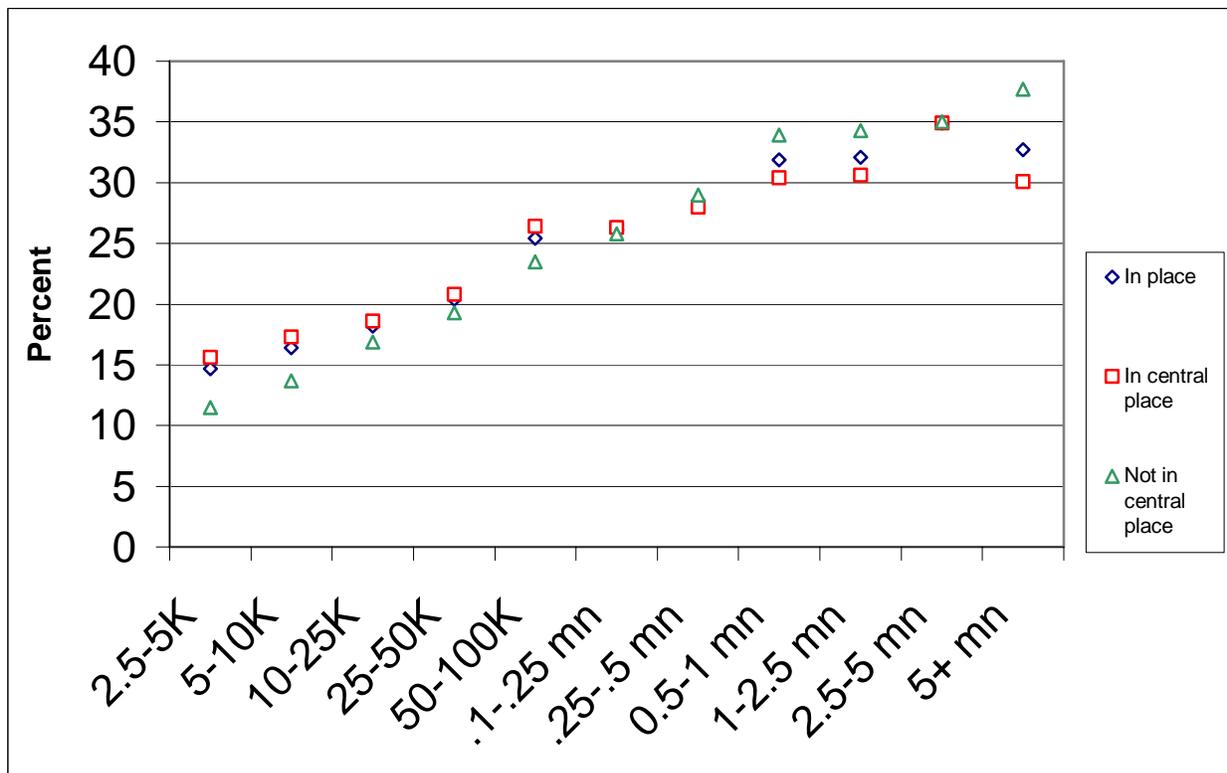
Figure 14. Percentage Not Enrolled in School and Not a High School Graduate, of the Population 16-19 Years Old, by Size of Urban Area: 1999



Note: Urban areas include urbanized areas (50,000 population or more) and urban clusters (2,500 to 49,999 population).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (sample data).

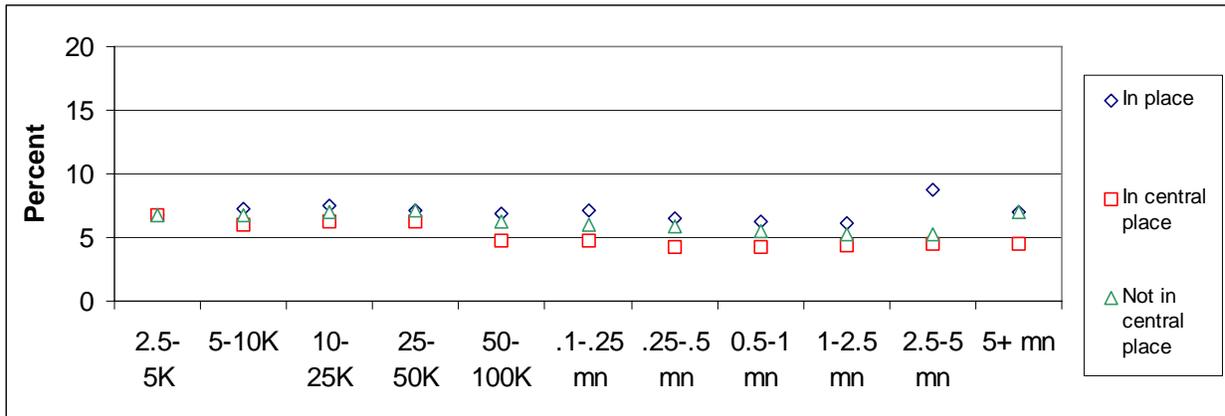
Figure 15. Percentage With a Bachelor's Degree, of the Population 25-34 Years Old, by Size of Urban Area: 1999



Note: Urban areas include urbanized areas (50,000 population or more) and urban clusters (2,500 to 49,999 population).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (sample data).

Figure 16. Percentage of the Civilian Labor Force Unemployed, by Size of Urban Area: 1999



Note: Urban areas include urbanized areas (50,000 population or more) and urban clusters (2,500 to 49,999 population).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (sample data).

APPENDIX: MAPS

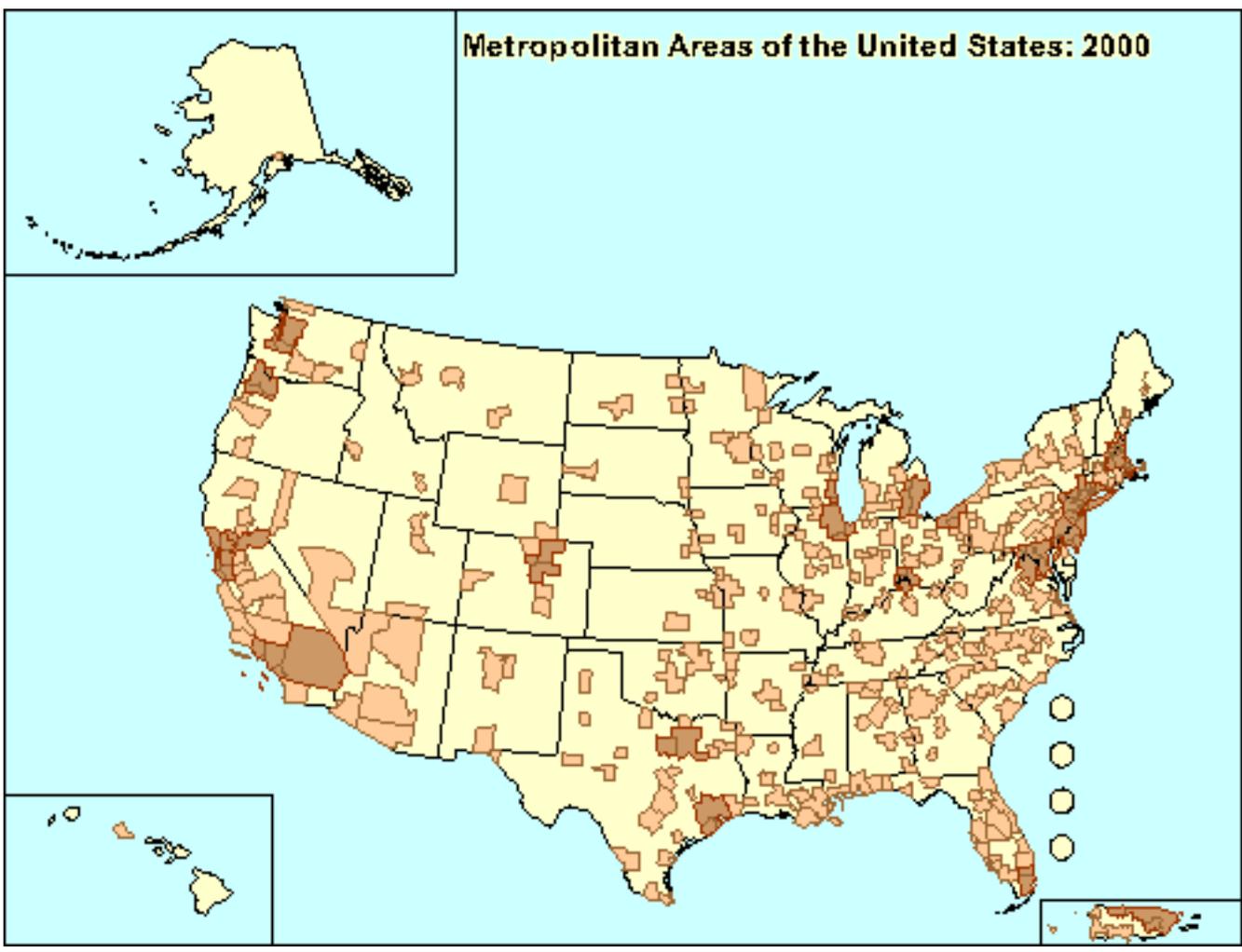
Metropolitan Areas of the United States: 2000

Urban Areas of the United States: 2000

Metropolitan Areas of the United States: 2000

Boundaries

- State
- '00 CMSA
- '00 MSA
- '00 MSA
- '00 PMSA
- '00 PMSA



Boundaries

- State
- '00 Urban Area

Urban Areas of the United States: 2000

