

Inner-City Concentrated Poverty and Neighborhood Distress: 1970 to 1990

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Abstract

Tract-level data from the 1970, 1980, and 1990 censuses of population are used to identify poverty neighborhoods, extreme poverty neighborhoods, distressed neighborhoods, and severely distressed neighborhoods within the nation's 100 largest central cities. Changes in demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of these neighborhoods are documented, including racial/ethnic composition; poverty population concentration; school dropout rates; and rates of joblessness, single-parent households, and welfare receipt.

Results show that despite some encouraging individual city turnarounds in the Northeast (especially in New York, Newark, and Philadelphia), urban poverty concentration and neighborhood distress worsened nationwide between 1980 and 1990. The greatest deterioration occurred in midwestern cities, particularly in Detroit. Southern cities, whose neighborhoods and cities typically improved during the 1970s, slipped during the 1980s; conditions in western cities also deteriorated. Blacks fared worse than whites and Hispanics during the 1980s in terms of increased concentration of poor in poverty tracts and distressed urban neighborhoods.

Introduction

Developing effective policies for distressed urban neighborhoods requires current information on the number, size, and composition of these neighborhoods as well as an understanding of how they are changing. Fundamental questions need to be answered. Did the growth of concentrated poverty areas and deterioration of neighborhood social conditions, so well documented in our cities during the 1970s, continue between 1980 and 1990? Did the regional locus of urban neighborhood distress, which was disproportionately found in old, large cities in the Northeast and Midwest in 1980, diffuse to major cities in the South and West by 1990? How did the racial/ethnic and socioeconomic composition of the poorest urban neighborhoods change during the 1980s? Which cities exhibited the greatest neighborhood deterioration during the 1980s, and which cities exhibited encouraging turnarounds?

This article will answer such questions. The purpose here is not to attempt to explain these trends and patterns, but rather to establish the descriptive framework for further analysis. The discussion begins with the units of analysis and basic measures used to categorize poverty areas and distressed neighborhoods in the nation's 100 largest metropolitan central cities. Next, shifts during the 1970s and 1980s in the number of poverty areas and distressed neighborhoods are described nationwide, regionally, and for individual cities. The changing demographic and socio-economic characteristics of these subareas are then discussed, including number of residents; racial/ethnic composition; poverty population concentration; school dropout rates; and rates of joblessness, single-parent households, and public assistance receipt. Finally, the article ranks the nation's 100 largest central cities in terms of population and poor persons residing in poverty areas, extreme poverty areas, distressed neighborhoods, and severely distressed neighborhoods in 1990, as well as by changes in these factors between 1970 and 1980 and between 1980 and 1990.

This baseline information can serve as a barometer to measure the changing demographic and socioeconomic status of our nation's inner cities. It can also help urban policy makers designate specific cities for targeted assistance programs based on the extent and change of concentrated poverty and neighborhood distress and provide local officials with an idea of the scale of problems their cities face. The results presented herein raise numerous questions for future research on the causes and consequences of concentrated urban poverty and neighborhood distress.

Measuring urban neighborhood distress

Defining an urban neighborhood for analytical purposes is no easy task. The closest measurable unit to an urban neighborhood is the census tract, which the Bureau of the Census defines as "a relatively homogenous area with respect to population characteristics, economic status, and living conditions with an average population of 4,000." The cities selected for cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis of neighborhood conditions and change between 1970 and 1990 are the 100 largest central cities as of 1980. Data in the appendix reveal that these cities provide an excellent representation across regional and city size categories.

Research based on 1970 and 1980 census tract data shows that most of the nation's concentrated poverty areas and socially

distressed tracts are found in the 100 largest central cities (Bane and Jargowsky 1988; Jargowsky and Bane 1991; Kasarda et al. 1992; Reischauer 1987; Ricketts and Sawhill 1988). These cities housed 80 percent of the nation's underclass-area population in 1980 (as defined by Ricketts and Sawhill 1988) and contained three-quarters of all metropolitan-area poor living in extreme poverty areas (ghetto poor), as defined by Jargowsky and Bane (1991). They accounted for even greater percentages of the metropolitan-area growth of concentrated poverty and underclass-area populations between 1970 and 1980 (Jargowsky and Bane 1991; Kasarda et al. 1992; Mincy, Sawhill, and Wolf 1990). Thus, despite omitting certain suburbs that have high degrees of concentrated poverty and neighborhood distress (e.g., Camden, NJ; Compton, CA; East St. Louis, IL; and Gary, IN), the 100 largest central cities not only capture most of the nation's ghetto poor but, given the size of their ghettos, represent the greatest challenges to urban policy.

Economic and social characteristics of the approximately 13,000 census tracts in the 100 cities in 1970, 1980, and 1990 were derived to obtain various indicators of urban neighborhood distress. The most common measures focus on census tract poverty rates and poverty population concentration within and across tracts of individual cities or metropolitan areas. Thus, *poverty tracts* are typically considered to be those with at least 20 percent of their residents falling below the poverty level. *Extreme poverty tracts* are those in which at least 40 percent of the residents are in poverty (Bureau of the Census 1992; Danziger and Gottschalk 1987; Jargowsky and Bane 1991; Nathan 1987).¹ Both indicators will be used to assess growth, concentration, and compositional shifts of poverty areas in the 100 cities over time.

Indicators other than poverty rates are also used to measure neighborhood distress. For example, Ricketts and Sawhill (1988) classify urban underclass tracts as those with disproportionately high rates of joblessness, female-headed families, teenage school dropout, and welfare receipt. Likewise, Hughes (1989) labels tracts with concurrently high levels of adult male joblessness, mother-only families, and welfare receipt as "deprivation neighborhoods."

This study combines census tract measures of poverty, underclass, and deprivation neighborhoods to create two baseline

¹Throughout this article, references will be made to poverty status of tracts in 1970, 1980, and 1990. However, it should be noted that tract poverty status is actually based on incomes for the years 1969, 1979, and 1989.

indicators that will herein be noted as *distressed neighborhoods* and *severely distressed neighborhoods*. Distressed neighborhoods are census tracts that simultaneously exhibit disproportionately high levels of poverty, joblessness, female-headed families, and welfare receipt. Severely distressed neighborhoods are those tracts that have all the characteristics of distressed tracts plus exceptionally high teenage school dropout rates. (The rationale for this differentiation will be noted shortly.)

In terms of precise measurement, severely distressed tracts are those tracts that simultaneously fall at least one standard deviation above the 1980 national tract mean on the following five measures:

1. *Poverty*—proportion of the resident population below the poverty line
2. *Joblessness*—proportion of out-of-school males aged 16 and older who worked less than 26 weeks a year
3. *Female-headed families*—proportion of families with children under age 18 that are headed by a woman (spouse absent)
4. *Welfare receipt*—proportion of families receiving public assistance income
5. *Teenage school dropout*—proportion of persons aged 16 to 19 not enrolled in school and not high school graduates

Readers familiar with the literature on the urban underclass will recognize that the definition of severely distressed tracts combines high rates of poverty with the full set of underclass tract measures described by Ricketts and Sawhill (1988). The 1980 tract standard deviation cutoffs were used to classify distressed and severely distressed tracts in 1970, 1980, and 1990 as a constant benchmark to compare intercensal (1970 to 1980 and 1980 to 1990) changes during the past 20 years in each of the 100 cities.²

² Since 1980 is the midpoint of the 20-year analytical period, census tract social indicator cut points in 1980 are used to benchmark and compare changes over the prior 10 years (1970 to 1980) with changes over the following 10 years (1980 to 1990). The 1980 national tract social indicator cut points (the mean plus one standard deviation) are (a) female-headed families with children: cutoff = 0.368; (b) male joblessness: cutoff = 0.454; (c) teenage school dropout: cutoff = 0.272; (d) welfare receipt: cutoff = 0.176; and (e) poverty: cutoff = 0.332, the tract mean plus one standard deviation for 100 cities.

Teenage school dropout is singled out as a differentiating measure of severely distressed tracts for two reasons. First, completing high school is critically important for work in our economically transforming urban centers (Bluestone, Stevenson, and Tilly 1991; Kasarda 1990; Moss and Tilly 1991). Second, by 1990 a much larger proportion of the nation's youth (aged 16 to 19) were either in school or received their high school degree than was the case in 1980. Thus, a city census tract that in 1990 was one standard deviation above the 1980 national tract teenage school dropout rate would be especially disadvantaged.³

The sections that follow provide baseline information on the number, size, growth, and composition of poverty, extreme poverty, distressed, and severely distressed urban neighborhoods from 1970 to 1990. Covered as well are trends in social conditions in these neighborhoods. Regional patterns and individual city data will be discussed as appropriate.

Growth and change in poverty tracts and distressed neighborhoods

Table 1 presents an overview of the number and proportion of tracts meeting the earlier described criteria for poverty or neighborhood distress status at the three time intervals. The sharp rise in the number and percentage of poverty and extreme poverty tracts during the 1980s can be clearly observed. By 1990 approximately two in five urban tracts had at least 20 percent of their population living in poverty, and nearly one in seven urban tracts had at least 40 percent of their population living in poverty. The net addition of extreme poverty tracts in the 100 cities between 1980 and 1990 (624) was actually greater than that between 1970 and 1980 (579).

Both the number of distressed and severely distressed tracts increased between 1980 and 1990. Yet such growth was modest for distressed tracts and marginal for severely distressed tracts,

³ Mincy, Sawhill, and Wolf (1990) also discuss the unique attribute of change in teenage school dropouts between 1970 and 1980 compared with their other behavior measures of underclass attributes. They note that based on the 33,191 tracts used in the Urban Institute analysis of growth of the underclass from 1970 to 1980, the proportion of families headed by females increased by 62 percent, the proportion of adult males not employed grew by 25 percent, and the proportion of households receiving public assistance expanded by 85 percent. On the other hand, the proportion of 16- to 19-year-olds who were

Table 1. Number of Census Tracts by Poverty and Distress Status for the 100 Largest Central Cities, 1970–1990

Census Tracts	1970	1980	1990
Total number of tracts	12,584	13,777	14,214
Percent of city total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Poverty tracts	3,430	4,713	5,596
Percent of city total	27.3	34.2	39.4
Extreme poverty tracts	751	1,330	1,954
Percent of city total	6.0	9.7	13.7
Distressed tracts	296	1,513	1,850
Percent of city total	2.4	11.0	13.0
Severely distressed tracts	166	562	566
Percent of city total	1.3	4.1	4.0

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.

particularly compared with the huge increases between 1970 and 1980. Indeed, there was a marginal decline in the percent of severely distressed tracts in the 100 cities in 1990 compared with 1980 (4.0 percent versus 4.1 percent). The difference in the growth of distressed tracts versus severely distressed tracts between 1980 and 1990 highlights the critical distinguishing importance of teenage school dropout rates in measuring neighborhood distress.

A fundamental conclusion to be drawn from the data in table 1 is that poverty neighborhoods became a more prominent feature of urban space in 1990. Yet while poverty and extreme poverty tracts increased in number and proportion of city totals, internal social disadvantages that constitute neighborhood distress did not increase substantially out of line with 1980 national tract averages. Later, changes in these tract social characteristics will be documented.

Regional patterns

One of the primary findings on the growth of poverty and underclass areas during the 1970s was that this growth was concentrated in large cities in the Northeast and Midwest, with much less growth in the South and West. For example, Jargowsky and Bane (1991) reported that five northern cities alone (New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Newark, and Detroit) accounted for

two-thirds of the increase in poor people living in extreme poverty tracts between 1970 and 1980.

Table 2 shows the number of poverty, extreme poverty, distressed, and severely distressed census tracts in the central cities, by region, for 1970, 1980, and 1990.⁴ The proportion of city tracts falling in each distress category is also described.

Table 2. Census Tracts by Poverty and Distress Status and by Region for the 100 Largest Central Cities, 1970–1990

Central Cities	1970	1980	1990
Midwest (N=23)			
Total number of tracts	3,377	3,465	3,424
Percent of city total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Poverty tracts	915	1,314	1,633
Percent of city total	27.1	37.9	47.7
Extreme poverty tracts	168	374	678
Percent of city total	5.0	10.8	19.8
Distressed tracts	91	485	722
Percent of city total	2.6	14.0	21.1
Severely distressed tracts	53	183	209
Percent of city total	1.6	5.3	6.1
Northeast (N=12)			
Total number of tracts	3,365	3,426	3,409
Percent of city total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Poverty tracts	828	1,334	1,311
Percent of city total	24.6	38.9	38.5
Extreme poverty tracts	133	465	466
Percent of city total	4.0	13.6	13.7
Distressed tracts	66	547	496
Percent of city total	1.9	16.0	14.5
Severely distressed tracts	44	190	155
Percent of city total	1.3	5.5	4.5

high school dropouts actually declined marginally between 1970 and 1980.

⁴The regions to which cities are assigned refer to the four conventional regions defined by the Bureau of the Census. The Northeast includes all of New England and the Middle Atlantic states; the South includes all states below the Mason-Dixon line from the East Coast through Texas. The Midwest includes states west of Pennsylvania and New York to the eastern borders of Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana; and the West includes all states west of

Table 2. Census Tracts by Poverty and Distress Status and by Region for the 100 Largest Central Cities, 1970-1990 (continued)

Central Cities	1970	1980	1990
South (N=40)			
Total number of tracts	3,257	3,970	4,284
Percent of city total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Poverty tracts	1,139	1,378	1,782
Percent of city total	35.0	34.7	41.6
Extreme poverty tracts	362	391	629
Percent of city total	11.1	9.8	14.7
Distressed tracts	89	372	517
Percent of city total	2.2	9.4	12.1
Severely distressed tracts	50	145	162
Percent of city total	1.5	3.7	3.8
West (N=25)			
Total number of tracts	2,585	2,916	3,097
Percent of city total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Poverty tracts	548	687	870
Percent of city total	21.2	23.6	28.1
Extreme poverty tracts	88	100	181
Percent of city total	3.4	3.4	5.8
Distressed tracts	50	109	115
Percent of city total	1.9	3.7	3.7
Severely distressed tracts	19	44	40
Percent of city total	0.7	1.5	1.3

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.

Most striking is the fact that the number and proportion of tracts in all poverty and distress neighborhood categories increased in midwestern cities throughout the 1980s. By 1990 nearly one of every two central-city tracts in the Midwest had at least 20 percent of its population living below poverty, and nearly one of five tracts had at least 40 percent of its residents living below poverty. Indeed, the number of extreme poverty tracts in midwestern cities nearly doubled between 1980 and 1990. The number of distressed neighborhoods increased by almost as much, with one in five central-city tracts in the Midwest meeting neighborhood distress criteria in 1990, compared with only one of 40 in 1970. In absolute terms, distressed tracts in Midwest cities increased from 91 in 1970 to 722 in

1990. Severely distressed tracts increased from 53 in 1970 to 209 in 1990, with all but 26 of these severely distressed tracts appearing between 1970 and 1980. By 1990 midwestern cities surpassed those in the Northeast, making the Midwest the nation's leading region in terms of the proportion of urban neighborhoods characterized by poverty, extreme poverty, distress, and severe distress.

A list of individual cities (see appendix) reveals that Detroit led the Midwest in growth of poverty and distressed tracts. In 1970 only 29 percent of Detroit's tracts were classified as poverty tracts (i.e., 20 percent or more of residents living below the poverty line). Detroit's poverty tracts rose to 48 percent of the city's total in 1980 and to 75 percent of the city's total in 1990. The number of extreme poverty tracts in Detroit rose from 4 in 1970 to 45 in 1980 and to 133 in 1990, representing an increase from under 4 percent of the city's tracts in 1970 to 37 percent in 1990. Detroit's severely distressed tracts climbed from 4 in 1970 to 39 in 1980 and to 53 in 1990, or from 1.4 percent of the city's total in 1970 to 9.6 percent in 1980 and 15.3 percent in 1990.

The pattern in the Northeast, where a number of the region's large cities exhibited economic recovery during much of the 1980s, was considerably more favorable than that of the Midwest. The number of poverty tracts in northeastern cities actually declined slightly, and the aggregate number of extreme poverty tracts increased by only one between 1980 and 1990. This change compares with a growth of 506 poverty tracts and 332 extreme poverty tracts in northeastern cities between 1970 and 1980. Both distressed and severely distressed census tracts declined substantially in the Northeast during the 1980s, in contradistinction to dramatic growth in these distressed urban neighborhoods during the 1970s.

Leading the turnaround in the Northeast was New York City, with declines in all categories of poverty and distressed tracts between 1980 and 1990. For example, while extreme poverty tracts in New York City rose from 73 in 1970 to 311 in 1980, they declined to 276 (or 13 percent of the city total) in 1990 (table A.1). Likewise, severely distressed tracts, which expanded from 22 in 1970 to 126 in 1980, dropped to 81 (3.6 percent of the city's total tracts) in 1990. Newark, NJ, also exhibited a major turnaround.

Southern cities experienced moderate increases in their poverty, extreme poverty, and distressed tracts during the 1980s and marginal increases in the number of their severely distressed

tracts. No single city stood out in the South as a major contributor to increases in poverty or distressed tracts during the 1980s.

It is notable that the percent of all central-city tracts in the South that were classified as poverty and extreme poverty grew between 1980 and 1990 in contrast to declines in southern cities between 1970 and 1980. In general, trends in the proportion of city tracts exceeding poverty and neighborhood distress thresholds in southern cities during each of the past two decades were nearly opposite the trends in northeastern cities. That is, while urban neighborhood conditions deteriorated considerably during the 1970s in the Northeast, they deteriorated much less in the South. During the 1980s, while conditions stabilized or improved for much of the Northeast, they deteriorated for southern cities as a whole.

The lowest percentages of poverty and distressed tracts are found in larger cities in the West. In 1990, only 5.8 percent of central-city tracts in the West met extreme poverty criteria, and only 1.3 percent met severely distressed criteria. Note, as well, that the percent of both distressed and severely distressed tracts in western cities declined between 1980 and 1990, with an absolute drop in the number of severely distressed tracts, while the percent of poverty tracts and extreme poverty tracts increased slightly. Thus, while the number of poor neighborhoods expanded, the number with serious social disadvantages (e.g., mother-only households) did not.

Conditions in Los Angeles, which has received so much attention since the 1992 riot, did get somewhat worse. L.A.'s extreme poverty tracts, which expanded from 25 in 1970 to only 30 in 1980, increased to 45 (6.6 percent of the city's total tracts) in 1990 (table A.1). Likewise, the number of severely distressed tracts in Los Angeles rose from 10 in 1970 to 13 in 1980 and 17 (2.6 percent of the city tract total) in 1990 (table A.1). However, even in 1990 these are relatively small numbers and percents—well under those found in major urban centers of the Northeast and Midwest.

Population characteristics

The preceding information describes the growth or decline in the number of poverty and socially distressed tracts between 1970 and 1990. What happened to the size and racial/ethnic composition of the population residing in these tracts during each of the past two decades? Panel A of table 3 answers this question in

Table 3. Population Size and Composition of Extreme Poverty and Distressed Tracts, 100 Largest Central Cities, 1970-1990

Panel A: Extreme Poverty Tracts			
Population	1970	1980	1990
Total population in extreme poverty tracts	2,690,970	3,833,288	5,495,852
Percent of city total	5.2	7.9	10.7
Non-Hispanic white	501,129	559,772	850,078
Percent of all non-Hispanic whites	1.4	2.0	3.2
Non-Hispanic black	1,743,828	2,469,776	3,147,239
Percent of all non-Hispanic blacks	15.7	19.9	24.2
Hispanic	408,072	740,156	1,306,977
Percent of all Hispanics	9.8	12.3	15.4
Racial compositions of extreme poverty tracts (%)			
Non-Hispanic white	18.6	14.6	15.5
Non-Hispanic black	64.8	64.4	57.3
Hispanic	15.2	19.3	23.8
Panel B: Distressed Tracts			
Population	1970	1980	1990
Total population in distressed tracts	1,022,479	4,893,371	5,704,094
Percent of city total	1.7	10.0	11.1
Non-Hispanic white	150,992	492,769	591,411
Percent of all non-Hispanic whites	0.4	1.7	2.2
Non-Hispanic black	783,390	3,542,614	3,861,023
Percent of all non-Hispanic blacks	6.6	28.6	29.7
Hispanic	72,215	793,964	1,117,299
Percent of all Hispanics	1.6	13.2	13.2
Racial composition of distressed tracts (%)			
Non-Hispanic white	14.8	10.1	10.4
Non-Hispanic black	76.6	72.4	67.7
Hispanic	7.1	16.2	19.6

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.

terms of extreme poverty tracts and panel B of table 3 answers it in terms of distressed tracts. Recall that an extreme poverty tract had 40 percent or more of its residents living below the poverty line at the time of the census (1970, 1980, or 1990). Distressed tracts pertain to census tracts in 1970, 1980, and 1990 that are *simultaneously* one standard deviation above the 1980 national-tract mean in proportions of poverty residents, joblessness, mother-only families, and welfare receipt. The 1980 values here serve as a constant benchmark to compare backward and forward changes over 10-year periods.

The percents shown below the absolute numbers in the upper half of each panel are the percents of each racial/ethnic group in the cities residing in either extreme poverty or distressed tracts. For example, in 1990, 24.2 percent of non-Hispanic blacks resided in extreme poverty tracts and 29.7 percent of non-Hispanic blacks (in the 100 cities) resided in distressed tracts. This percent measures the concentration of the racial/ethnic group in either extreme poverty tracts or distressed tracts at each point in time.

The percents in the bottom portion of each panel refer to the racial/ethnic composition of the tracts themselves. Thus, in 1990 blacks made up 57.3 percent of the population in extreme poverty tracts, Hispanics made up 23.8 percent, and non-Hispanic whites 15.5 percent. The small residual that would make the percents equal 100 are non-Hispanics of other races (mostly Asians and Pacific Islanders).

Reflecting growth in the number and proportion of city tracts that were classified as extreme poverty or distressed (see table 1), table 3 reveals that the number of city residents and proportion of city residents living in such tracts increased during the 1980s. As shown in the upper portion of panel A, both the number and concentration of all racial/ethnic groups in extreme poverty tracts rose fairly steadily throughout the 1970s and 1980s. This was not the case for distressed tracts. As shown in the upper portion of panel B, growth and concentration of the overall city population and of each racial/ethnic group residing in distressed tracts were substantially greater in the 1970s than in the 1980s. This situation was especially true for Hispanics who, despite their considerable absolute increase, experienced virtually no change in concentration in distressed tracts.

In terms of the racial/ethnic mix of the tracts themselves, the bottom half of each panel shows that non-Hispanic whites marginally increased their proportions between 1980 and 1990 in

both extreme poverty and distressed tracts, following sharp drops during the 1970s. The proportions of blacks declined, largely because of substantial increases in the absolute number of Hispanics in extreme poverty and distressed tracts. Nonetheless, in 1990 non-Hispanic blacks still accounted for more than two-thirds of persons residing in distressed tracts in the 100 cities and 57 percent of those residing in extreme poverty tracts.

Poverty populations

Let us now focus on the poorest segment of our urban citizens—those in poverty—describe their growth and spatial concentrations within our cities during the past decade (1980 to 1990), and compare these most recent trends with trends during the 1970s.

Table 4 reveals trends in total poverty population for the 100 cities, the percent of city population in poverty, and the degree to which the poverty population is concentrated in poverty tracts and distressed neighborhoods. The trends show that as the number of poor in our cities continued to rise during the

Table 4. Size and Concentration of Poverty Population by Census Tract Poverty and Distress Status, 100 Largest Central Cities, 1970–1990

Total Poverty Population	1970	1980	1990
All 100 cities	7,542,479	8,113,277	9,392,953
Percent of total city population	14.5	16.7	18.3
In poverty tracts	4,156,543	5,178,509	6,466,097
Percent of total poverty population	55.1	63.8	68.8
In extreme poverty tracts	1,240,855	1,828,576	2,650,142
Percent of total poverty population	16.5	22.5	28.2
In distressed tracts	496,430	2,187,867	2,640,454
Percent of total poverty population	6.6	27.0	28.1
In severely distressed tracts	322,906	772,452	810,678
Percent of total poverty population	4.3	9.5	8.6

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.

1980s, so did their percent of the city total. By 1990 nearly one in five city residents was living below the poverty line.

As the poverty population grew, it also became more concentrated in poor neighborhoods. For example, the third row shows that of the 7,542,479 city residents living in poverty in 1970, 1,240,855 (or 16.5 percent) resided in extreme poverty tracts. Poverty population in extreme poverty tracts expanded to 1,828,576 in 1980 and to 2,650,142 in 1990. By the latter date, 28.2 percent of the poverty population resided in extreme poverty tracts.

Similarly, the percent of poverty population concentrated in distressed tracts rose from 6.6 percent in 1970 to 27.0 percent in 1980 and to 28.1 percent in 1990. While the absolute number of poor persons residing in severely distressed tracts increased between 1980 and 1990 (from 772,452 to 810,678), their concentration in these tracts declined slightly. The data in table 4 again highlight the fact that although poverty neighborhoods experienced consistent growth in the number of poor residents and their concentration between 1970 and 1990, the vast majority of the growth and concentration of poor persons in distressed and severely distressed neighborhoods took place during the 1970s.

See table 5 for the concentration of the black and Hispanic poverty population over time. The top portion reveals that there was not only a greater growth in the number of black poor in the cities during the 1980s than the 1970s, but also a growth in the percentage of blacks who were poor during the 1980s, in contrast to the 1970s. The top panel further shows that the concentration of poor blacks in extreme poverty tracts increased considerably between 1980 and 1990—from 33.8 percent to 41.6 percent. Thus, by 1990 more than two of five poor blacks in the 100 central cities resided in extreme poverty tracts. At the same time, more than one of two poor blacks resided in distressed tracts. The concentration of poor blacks in severely distressed tracts also increased slightly—from 13.1 percent of the cities' total black poverty population in 1980 to 13.7 percent in 1990.

The bottom portion of table 5 reveals that the number of poor Hispanic residents in the 100 cities climbed from 966,413 in 1970 to 1,575,569 in 1980 to 2,394,890 in 1990. Yet the number of Hispanics who were not poor expanded even faster in the cities during the 1980s, which caused the percent of city Hispanics who were poor to decline significantly—from 26.2 percent to 21.7 percent.

Table 5. Black and Hispanic Poverty Population Size and Concentration by Census Tract Poverty and Distress Status, 100 Largest Central Cities, 1970–1990

Poverty Population	1970	1980	1990
Black poverty population			
All 100 cities	3,182,881	3,428,593	4,002,094
Percent of city black total	27.7	27.2	29.9
In poverty tracts	2,567,429	2,827,386	3,328,625
Percent of total black poverty population	80.7	82.5	83.2
In extreme poverty tracts	895,920	1,157,537	1,664,872
Percent of total black poverty population	28.1	33.8	41.6
In distressed tracts	408,450	1,507,520	1,894,868
Percent of total black poverty population	12.8	44.0	47.3
In severely distressed tracts	262,904	450,568	547,273
Percent of total black poverty population	8.3	13.1	13.7
Hispanic poverty population			
All 100 cities	966,413	1,575,569	2,394,890
Percent of city Hispanic total	23.2	26.2	21.7
In poverty tracts	664,735	1,162,367	1,842,990
Percent of total Hispanic poverty population	68.8	73.8	77.0
In extreme poverty tracts	196,202	378,832	650,747
Percent of total Hispanic poverty population	20.3	24.0	27.2
In distressed tracts	35,189	394,226	547,854
Percent of total Hispanic poverty population	3.6	25.0	22.9
In severely distressed tracts	28,183	190,640	177,083
Percent of total Hispanic poverty population	2.9	12.1	7.4

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file. *Note:* The race/ethnicity category is for whites, blacks, and Hispanics, where Hispanics may be of any race. Unlike earlier tables, the census data did not allow a breakdown by race and ethnicity simultaneously.

Despite these declining proportions, the concentration of poor Hispanics in poverty tracts and extreme poverty tracts increased. The number and percent of poor Hispanics concentrated in severely distressed tracts, which climbed dramatically

in the 1970s, actually declined during the 1980s. Thus, by 1990 only 7.4 percent of poor Hispanics, compared with 13.7 percent of poor blacks, were concentrated in severely distressed tracts. Poor Hispanics also were considerably less concentrated than poor blacks in extreme poverty tracts and distressed tracts.

What about regional differences in the growth and concentration of urban poverty populations? The data in table 6 show that the greatest increases in poverty population concentration took place in midwestern cities. The concentration of poor persons in extreme poverty tracts in these cities rose from 12.8 percent in 1970 to 36.2 percent in 1990. Absolute numbers of poor in extreme poverty tracts in midwestern cities climbed from 222,722 in 1970 to 439,550 in 1980 to 789,778 in 1990—a nearly fourfold increase over the 20-year period.

The Midwest is the only region in which the concentration of poor in severely distressed inner-city tracts actually increased between 1980 and 1990. By the latter date, 12.4 percent of the poverty population of Midwest central cities resided in severely distressed tracts. As will be seen later, Detroit alone accounted for over one-third of the increase in poverty population residing in extreme poverty tracts and severely distressed tracts in midwestern cities.

Larger northeastern cities actually experienced a marginal decline in overall poverty population during the 1980s, in contrast to a considerable increase during the 1970s. The number of poor persons living in extreme poverty tracts and severely distressed tracts also declined between 1980 and 1990, with virtually no increase in concentration in extreme poverty tracts and substantial declines in poverty population concentration in severely distressed tracts. As we shall see later, New York City, Newark, and Philadelphia led the Northeast's turnaround during the 1980s.

Southern cities, which exhibited an absolute decline in poverty population during the 1970s and a decrease in the size and concentration of their poverty populations in extreme poverty tracts, reversed this trend in the 1980s. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of poor residing in southern cities increased by nearly a half-million. The number of poor residents of extreme poverty tracts in southern cities rose from 583,945 to 886,341 between 1980 and 1990. The concentration of poor in these tracts rose from 23.7 percent to 30.3 percent.

Table 6. Poverty Population Size and Concentration by Census Tract Distress Status and Region, 1970-1990

Region	1970	1980	1990
Midwest			
Total poverty population	1,736,284	1,881,635	2,179,774
Percent of city total	13.2	16.8	20.3
In extreme poverty tracts	222,722	439,550	789,778
Percent of poverty population	12.8	23.4	36.2
In severely distressed tracts	98,872	211,961	271,174
Percent of poverty population	5.7	11.3	12.4
Northeast			
Total poverty population	1,957,449	2,280,389	2,245,702
Percent of city total	14.9	19.8	19.4
In extreme poverty tracts	226,686	699,224	693,260
Percent of poverty population	11.6	30.7	30.9
In severely distressed tracts	82,325	284,443	230,249
Percent of poverty population	4.2	12.5	10.3
South			
Total poverty population	2,520,793	2,463,537	2,925,198
Percent of city total	16.9	16.8	18.9
In extreme poverty tracts	683,783	583,945	886,341
Percent of poverty population	27.1	23.7	30.3
In severely distressed tracts	113,096	214,403	228,990
Percent of poverty population	4.5	8.7	7.8
West			
Total poverty population	1,327,953	1,487,716	2,042,279
Percent of city total	12.2	13.2	15.2
In extreme poverty tracts	107,664	105,857	280,763
Percent of poverty population	8.1	7.1	13.7
In severely distressed tracts	28,613	61,645	80,265
Percent of poverty population	2.2	4.1	3.9

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.

A quite different pattern may be observed for the growth and concentration of poor in severely distressed tracts during the past two decades in southern cities. After expanding considerably during the 1970s, the poverty population residing in severely distressed tracts slowed in the 1980s while its concentration in these tracts declined from 8.7 percent to 7.8 percent.

This decline occurred despite a slight increase in the number of severely distressed tracts in southern cities (see table 2).

Western cities followed the trends of southern cities, with declines in the number and concentration of poor residing in extreme poverty tracts during the 1970s and sharp rises in the 1980s. This increase reflects the 80 percent growth in the number of extreme poverty tracts in western cities between 1980 and 1990 (table 2).

The size and concentration of the poverty population in severely distressed tracts in western cities rose considerably during the 1970s. Absolute increases moderated during the 1980s and the concentration of the poverty population in severely distressed tracts declined slightly between 1980 and 1990, again reflecting the decline in severely distressed tracts. It is important to note that in 1990 the poverty population concentration in extreme poverty tracts and severely distressed tracts was much lower in the West than in other regions of the nation.

Social characteristics

This discussion has operated on the assumption that distressed and severely distressed urban neighborhoods imply more than high proportions of poor people. These neighborhoods are also posited to exhibit social disadvantages, such as high rates of school dropout, out-of-wedlock births, persistent joblessness, and welfare dependency, that reinforce poverty and limit upward mobility. This section examines the basic trends in these urban social indicators. The focus will be on female-headed families with children, poorly educated adult residents, teenage school dropouts, unemployment, and welfare receipt.

Table 7 contains data on how family fragmentation has disproportionately afflicted black residents of large cities. In 1970 34.5 percent of black families with children under age 18 were headed by females. By 1980 this number had risen to 48.1 percent and by 1990 to 54.7 percent. The 1990 black female-headed household rate was twice that of Hispanics and three times that of whites in the 100 largest cities. Note, as well, that the proportion of female-headed white and Hispanic households with children stayed essentially constant between 1980 and 1990.

Looking at trends within extreme poverty areas, one again observes continuous increases in black female-headed

Table 7. Female-Headed Households with Children under Age 18 in 100 Largest Central Cities and Their Extreme Poverty Areas, by Race/Ethnicity, 1970–1990

Total City Area			
Female-Headed with Children	1970*	1980	1990
Total households	1,158,408	1,662,480	1,781,540
Percent of households with children	17.2	27.8	30.1
White households	593,857	608,172	602,256
Percent of white households with children	11.9	18.1	18.8
Black households	544,346	818,030	943,796
Percent of black households with children	34.5	48.1	54.7
Hispanic households	118,557	246,717	330,088
Percent of Hispanic households with children	18.0	26.8	27.9
Extreme Poverty Areas			
Female-Headed with Children	1970	1980	1990
Total households	151,437	317,630	420,372
Percent of households with children	45.4	61.1	61.6
White households	27,017	31,116	48,563
Percent of white households with children	30.7	40.8	40.4
Black households	122,830	222,603	312,755
Percent of black households with children	51.1	67.6	73.0
Hispanic households	19,400	59,299	85,607
Percent of Hispanic households with children	31.2	48.8	45.7

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.

Note: The race/ethnicity category is for whites, blacks, and Hispanics. Hispanics here may be white or black and are therefore included in these racial categories.

**1970 data refer to families headed by a female with children under 18. Comparable data for households are not available.*

households with children during the past two decades, whereas the proportion of female-headed white and Hispanic households with children showed no increase between 1980 and 1990. In fact, among Hispanics there was a proportional decline in this social indicator. By 1990 a total of 73.0 percent of black

households with children who resided in extreme poverty tracts were headed by females compared with 40.4 percent of white households and 45.7 percent of Hispanic households.

Educational attainment is consistently among the strongest correlates of work force attachment and social mobility in our economically transforming cities (Moss and Tilly 1991). Those without a high school degree have become especially disadvantaged (Bluestone, Stevenson, and Tilly 1991; Kasarda 1990). The data in the top panel of table 8 reflect the steadily reduced proportions of all urban racial/ethnic groups who have not completed high school. As late as 1990, 36.2 percent of the urban black population aged 25 and over and 54 percent of urban Hispanics aged 25 and over had not completed high school. The 21.9 percent of white urban adults who had not completed high school is based on census tract data that did not permit separation of Hispanic whites from the total white population.

Despite steady declines in the number and proportion of adult white and black city residents with less than 12 years of education, the bottom panel of table 8 shows increases in all racial/ethnic groups residing in extreme poverty tracts in this education category. These data imply a greater concentration of the least educated in these neighborhoods. In 1970 only 1 in 16 adults with less than a high school education resided in extreme poverty areas. By 1990, one in six of the cities' least-educated adults resided in extreme poverty areas (1,518,452 of 9,095,288). For whites in 1990 the ratio was 1 in 13; for blacks, 1 in 3; and for Hispanics, 1 in 5.

Note that as late as 1990, 52.7 percent of all adult residents of extreme poverty tracts had not completed high school. When broken down by race/ethnicity, 49.4 percent of adult white residents and 50.8 percent of adult black residents had not completed high school along with 69.8 percent of adult Hispanic residents.

The above data refer to education completed by adults. What about the educational attainment of youth, so important to the future of cities? Table 9, panel A, shows school dropout trends among persons aged 16 to 19 in the 100 largest central cities and within poverty and distressed census tracts. The bottom half of the panel shows the employment consequences of dropping out of school for youth in these areas.

While nationwide figures reveal steady reductions in the school dropout rate between 1970 and 1990, the data in panel A of

Table 8. Population Aged 25 and Over with Less Than High School Education in the 100 Largest Central Cities and Their Extreme Poverty Areas, by Race/Ethnicity, 1970–1990

Total City Area			
Less Than High School Education	1970	1980	1990
Total population	14,155,232	10,227,130	9,095,288
Percent of total population 25 and over	48.9	35.4	27.9
White population	10,463,277	5,956,316	4,601,844
Percent of white population 25 and over	45.7	30.6	21.9
Black population	3,445,272	2,776,739	2,774,040
Percent of black population 25 and over	63.5	45.3	36.2
Hispanic population	1,189,636	1,661,918	2,385,305
Percent of Hispanic population 25 and over	66.4	58.8	54.0
Extreme Poverty Areas			
Less Than High School Education	1970	1980	1990
Total population	901,357	1,149,148	1,518,452
Percent of total population 25 and over	76.7	62.8	52.7
White population	291,311	246,398	363,455
Percent of white population 25 and over	75.1	61.0	49.4
Black population	599,996	672,578	869,579
Percent of black population 25 and over	77.7	61.4	50.8
Hispanic population	139,136	243,469	447,168
Percent of Hispanic population 25 and over	86.9	76.0	69.8

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.
Note: The race/ethnicity category is for whites, blacks, and Hispanics. Hispanics here may be white or black and are therefore included in these racial categories.

table 9 offer little encouragement that youth dropout conditions in our larger central cities have improved much. For these cities as a whole, youth dropout rates declined from 16.8 percent in 1970 to 14.6 percent in 1990. Similarly, only small declines in

Table 9. High School Dropout Status among Persons Aged 16–19

Panel A: Percent of Persons Aged 16–19 Who Are High School Dropouts, by Distress Status, 100 Largest Central Cities

Tracts	1970	1980	1990
City total	16.8	16.3	14.6
In poverty tracts	24.6	21.4	18.9
In extreme poverty tracts	24.2	21.9	19.4
In distressed tracts	26.7	23.1	21.4
In severely distressed tracts	36.0	36.2	35.5

Panel B: Percent Not Working among Young High School Dropouts, by Distress Status, 100 Largest Central Cities

Tracts	1970	1980	1990
City total	56.8	63.6	65.0
In poverty tracts	61.9	72.0	70.4
In extreme poverty tracts	64.4	80.7	79.2
In distressed tracts	71.3	81.0	81.0
In severely distressed tracts	71.7	80.0	81.7

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.

the dropout rate characterized poverty tracts and distressed tracts during the 1980s.

With regard to joblessness, the data in panel B of table 9 show that 65 percent of city residents aged 16 to 19 who had dropped out of high school were not working in 1990. Joblessness among younger high school dropouts residing in the cities' poverty tracts was 70.4 percent, 79.2 percent in extreme poverty tracts, 81.0 percent in distressed tracts, and 81.7 percent in severely distressed tracts.

Public assistance receipt, which rose sharply during the 1970s, leveled off during the 1980s. Data in table 10 reveal that, while the absolute number of households receiving public assistance in the 100 largest central cities rose marginally between 1980 and 1990, the proportion actually declined slightly. These proportional declines characterize all but the severely distressed

Table 10. Households Receiving Public Assistance in the 100 Largest Central Cities, 1970-1990

Total Public Assistance Households	1970*	1980	1990
All 100 cities	971,870	2,107,190	2,149,132
Percent of city households	7.5	11.4	11.0
In poverty tracts	545,549	1,321,582	1,432,575
Percent of households in these tracts	18.8	23.2	21.5
In extreme poverty tracts	151,890	467,105	597,090
Percent of households in these tracts	28.1	36.4	32.8
In distressed tracts	75,024	609,104	665,596
Percent of households in these tracts	36.2	36.4	34.6
In severely distressed tracts	49,065	211,267	205,896
Percent of households in these tracts	36.7	36.7	37.6

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.
 * 1970 data refer to families because comparable data for households are not available.

subareas of the cities. It is worth noting that, contrary to popular opinion, even in extreme poverty tracts, two-thirds of the households do not receive public assistance and 62 percent do not receive public assistance in the cities' severely distressed neighborhoods.

Before briefly describing trends for individual cities, it is useful to provide a comparative summary of demographic, social, and economic indicators juxtaposing these conditions in extreme poverty and severely distressed tracts with nonpoverty tracts and the city as a whole (see table 11). For the most part, the data presented speak for themselves. I will highlight only certain points.

- While the number of city tracts steadily went up between 1970 and 1990, the number of nonpoverty tracts (those with less than 20 percent of residents living below poverty) went steadily down. In 1970 three of four city residents resided in nonpoverty tracts; by 1990 more than one-third of the population in the 100 cities resided in poverty tracts.
- Two of three households with children living in severely distressed tracts were headed by females in 1990, compared with fewer than one in five households with children in nonpoverty tracts.
- The high school completion rates of nonpoverty tract residents improved markedly between 1970 and 1990, with more

Table 11. Population Characteristics by Tract Distress Status, 100 Largest Central Cities, 1970-1990

Characteristic by Year	City Total	Nonpoverty*	Extreme Poverty	Severely Distressed
Number of tracts, 1970	12,584	9,154	751	166
Number of tracts, 1980	13,777	9,064	1,330	562
Number of tracts, 1990	14,214	8,618	1,954	566
Percent of population, 1970	100.0	74.5	5.2	1.2
Percent of population, 1980	100.0	67.2	7.9	3.4
Percent of population, 1990	100.0	62.7	10.7	3.2
Percent of female-headed households with children, 1970	17.2	12.0	45.4	55.5
Percent of female-headed households with children, 1980	27.8	18.8	61.1	59.8
Percent of female-headed households with children, 1990	30.1	19.8	61.6	65.4
Percent of persons with less than high school education, 1970	48.9	43.3	76.7	78.6
Percent of persons with less than high school education, 1980	35.4	28.1	62.8	63.9
Percent of persons with less than high school education, 1990	27.9	19.8	52.7	54.6
Percent of males with no work in previous year, 1970	18.1	15.6	30.9	38.9
Percent of males with no work in previous year, 1980	23.8	19.5	42.8	44.2
Percent of males with no work in previous year, 1990	23.8	19.3	40.4	44.6
Percent of high school dropouts not working, 1970	56.8	52.9	64.4	71.7
Percent of high school dropouts not working, 1980	63.6	54.9	80.7	80.0
Percent of high school dropouts not working, 1990	65.0	57.0	79.2	81.7
Percent of youths who are high school dropouts, 1970	16.8	13.4	24.2	36.0
Percent of youths who are high school dropouts, 1980	16.3	13.1	21.9	36.2
Percent of youths who are high school dropouts, 1990	14.6	10.9	19.4	35.5
Total employed per 100 not working, 1970	127.1	139.1	72.5	60.4
Total employed per 100 not working, 1980	131.5	158.5	57.8	58.9
Total employed per 100 not working, 1990	145.6	182.3	65.5	58.1

Table 11. Population Characteristics by Tract Distress Status, 100 Largest Central Cities, 1970-1990 (continued)

Characteristic by Year	City Total	Nonpoverty*	Extreme Poverty	Severely Distressed
Percent of population foreign born, 1970	8.1	8.8	3.3	2.6
Percent of population foreign born, 1980	11.4	10.9	7.4	8.2
Percent of population foreign born, 1990	14.9	13.6	11.8	9.0
Percent of black households without a vehicle, 1970	47.0	32.2	64.2	73.0
Percent of black households without a vehicle, 1980	40.2	22.3	64.7	62.2
Percent of black households without a vehicle, 1990	39.5	23.9	59.0	62.9

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.

* Nonpoverty tracts are defined as those with fewer than 20 percent of their residents below the poverty level at each census year.

than four of five adult residents of these tracts having a high school degree compared with fewer than half the residents of extreme poverty and severely distressed tracts.

- More than 40 percent of out-of-school males aged 16 to 64 in extreme poverty tracts and severely distressed tracts had not worked at all in 1989, compared with less than one in five males of the same age group in nonpoverty tracts.
- Four of five younger males in extreme poverty tracts who had dropped out of school were not working in 1990. Even in nonpoverty areas of a city, school dropouts are likely to be unemployed.
- In 1990 only 10.9 percent of younger people in nonpoverty tracts dropped out of high school, compared with 35.5 percent in severely distressed tracts.
- Whereas the number of persons employed per 100 not working went up considerably within nonpoverty tracts between 1970 and 1990, it went down in extreme poverty tracts and severely distressed neighborhoods. In 1990 the ratio of employed to unemployed was three times greater in nonpoverty tracts than in either extreme poverty tracts or severely distressed tracts.
- The percent of the population that is foreign born steadily went up in the cities between 1970 and 1990 but increased the fastest in extreme poverty and severely distressed tracts. By 1990, 11.8 percent of extreme poverty tracts were composed of foreign-born residents, compared with 3.3 percent in 1970. Nine percent of the severely distressed tracts were composed of foreign-born residents in 1990, compared with 2.6 percent in 1970.
- Fifty-nine percent of the black households in extreme poverty tracts and severely distressed neighborhoods did not own a private vehicle in 1990, compared with 23.9 percent in nonpoverty areas.

Individual city patterns

The aggregate trends just described blur important differences and crosscurrents among individual cities. Some cities added substantial numbers of poor during the 1970s but reversed this

trend during the 1980s, while in other cities, the levels of neighborhood distress continued to spiral downward.

It is not feasible to discuss the multitude of individual city patterns of concentrated poverty and neighborhood distress, so the appendix ranks the cities according to these indicators. See tables A.1 and A.2 for the 1990 ranking of all 100 cities in terms of the number of tracts and population residing in these tracts for each of the four concentrated poverty and neighborhood distress measures. Next, the top 10 cities are listed according to change in the number of tracts (table A.3), population (table A.4), and poverty population (table A.5) within poverty tracts and distressed neighborhoods between 1970 and 1980 and between 1980 and 1990. The appendix also lists the top 10 cities in terms of number of poor, non-Hispanic black poor, and Hispanic poor residing in concentrated poverty and distressed neighborhoods in 1990 (tables A.6 and A.7). The 10 cities that experienced the greatest declines in population residing in extreme poverty tracts from 1970 to 1980 and from 1980 to 1990 are also provided (table A.8) along with the change in the number of poor persons residing in these cities' extreme poverty tracts.

Comparing across these tables reveals some remarkable reversals during the most recent decade. For example, New York City, Newark, and Philadelphia were three of the top four cities in terms of increase in population in extreme poverty tracts and increase in poverty population in these tracts during the 1970s (see tables A.4 and A.5, top panels). Between 1980 and 1990 these three cities led the nation in *decline* in population and poverty population residing in extreme poverty tracts (see table A.8, bottom panel).

New York City exhibited the most striking reversal. During the 1970s, this city added 238 extreme poverty tracts, 334 poverty tracts, 333 distressed tracts, and 104 severely distressed tracts (table A.3). During the 1980s, New York's extreme poverty tracts declined by 35 (table A.8), its poverty tracts by 59, its distressed tracts by 61, and its severely distressed tracts by 45. In contrast to an increase of 697,693 persons in extreme poverty tracts and an increase of 312,116 persons in severely distressed tracts between 1970 and 1980 (table A.4), New York City experienced a decline of 45,170 persons in extreme poverty tracts (table A.8) and 130,102 persons in severely distressed tracts between 1980 and 1990. New York's poor who resided in extreme poverty tracts expanded by 342,267 during the 1970s (table A.5), but declined by 21,253 during the 1980s (table A.6). Despite this favorable shift, New York City still leads the nation

by a wide margin in the number of extreme poverty and severely distressed tracts and, correspondingly, in the number of people living in these tracts (tables A.1 and A.2).

On the other hand, Chicago, which experienced the second-largest gain in extreme poverty and severely distressed neighborhoods between 1970 and 1980, was again the second-largest gainer in the nation between 1980 and 1990 (table A.3). Thus, by 1990 Chicago had begun to close the huge lead in concentrated poverty areas and distressed neighborhoods that New York City held in 1980.

Detroit, which also was among the nation's leaders between 1970 and 1980 in growth of concentrated poverty and severely distressed neighborhoods, fared the worst of all cities in the 1980s. The data in the bottom panels of tables A.3, A.4, and A.5 show that between 1980 and 1990, Detroit added the most extreme poverty tracts (88), severely distressed tracts (14), population in extreme poverty tracts (261,323), population in severely distressed tracts (41,953), poverty population in extreme poverty tracts (127,411), and poverty population in severely distressed tracts (28,816). Second to Detroit in growth of population and poor persons in extreme poverty tracts and severely distressed neighborhoods was Los Angeles, a city that exhibited limited growth on these indicators during the 1970s. By 1990 Los Angeles ranked fourth in the nation in population and number of poor persons living in extreme poverty tracts and fifth in population and number of poor persons living in severely distressed tracts (tables A.2 and A.6). Whereas Los Angeles ranked second in the nation in number of Hispanics residing in extreme poverty tracts, this city was not even in the top 10 in 1990 in terms of number of blacks residing in extreme poverty tracts (table A.7).

One modestly encouraging sign comes from comparing the data in the bottom panels of tables A.3, A.4, and A.5 with the data in their top panels. Growth in the number and population sizes of concentrated poverty and severely distressed neighborhoods was much lower among the leading growth centers during the 1980s than during the 1970s.

Looking at those cities that fared the best during each of the past two decades, the data in table A.8 reveal an interesting regional shift. Nine of the 10 cities that experienced the greatest declines in number of residents in extreme poverty tracts during the 1970s were in the South. An expanded listing showed that of the 40 cities that experienced declines in population in extreme

poverty tracts during the 1970s, 26 were in the South, 10 in the West, 3 in the Midwest, and only 1 in the Northeast.

During the 1980s two northeastern cities (New York and Newark) dominated declines in extreme poverty tracts, with a net reduction of 51 such tracts between them (table A.8). Among all 100 cities, only 7 experienced declines in their extreme poverty tracts, with only St. Petersburg and Louisville (along with New York and Newark) declining by more than one extreme poverty tract. The fact that some cities such as Philadelphia added extreme poverty tracts during the 1980s but declined considerably in total population and poverty population in their extreme poverty tracts implies that substantial thinning of the population occurred in some of their extreme poverty tracts between 1980 and 1990. Such population thinning in extreme poverty areas is consistent with models of urban neighborhood decline and residential abandonment (Bradbury, Downs, and Small 1982; Taub, Taylor, and Dunham 1984; White 1987).

Summary and implications

This analysis has shown that while there have been some striking individual city turnarounds, poverty concentration and neighborhood distress continued to worsen in our major cities between 1980 and 1990. Despite the prolonged national economic expansion of the 1980s, the number and proportion of city residents living in poverty, the number and proportion of city residents living in extreme poverty tracts, and the number and proportion of poor city residents living in extreme poverty areas all increased substantially. The greatest deterioration occurred in large cities in the Midwest, especially in Detroit, where by 1990 nearly two in every five census tracts in the city were classified as extreme poverty areas. Indeed, by 1990 four of the top five cities ranked in terms of number of extreme poverty tracts were located in the Midwest (Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and Milwaukee), with Detroit, Chicago, and Milwaukee leading the nation in increase in the number of extreme poverty tracts between 1980 and 1990.

Conversely, northeastern cities, which dominated the nation in growth of extreme poverty neighborhoods during the 1970s, exhibited a significant turnaround during the 1980s. The three cities with the greatest growth in population in extreme poverty tracts and poverty concentration during the 1970s (New York, Newark, and Philadelphia) actually led the nation in decline in these indicators during the 1980s. These findings are consistent

with those of Jargowsky (forthcoming), who, studying growth of census tracts with 40 percent or more of black residents living in poverty, found that metropolitan areas in the coastal Northeast fared the best between 1980 and 1990, whereas old, industrial cities in the Midwest fared the worst.

Factors that caused the turnaround in the Northeast while neighborhood conditions continued to deteriorate in midwestern cities will no doubt be subject to much speculation and future research. One hypothesis that will surely be tested will focus on urban labor markets and the continuing overall employment decline in most midwestern cities during the 1980s in contrast to the economic revival that some northeastern coastal cities experienced (Holzer and Vroman 1992; Johnson and Oliver 1992; Kasarda 1976, 1993; Peterson and Vroman 1992; Wilson 1987). Yet nearly all of the job growth in northeastern cities during the 1980s resulted from employment expansion in the white-collar service sector while manufacturing employment and most other blue-collar jobs continued to decline. New York City, for instance, gained 333,209 jobs from 1980 to 1990—a 10 percent overall city increase—but lost 162,739 jobs in its manufacturing sector—a 32 percent drop. Likewise, the city of Boston added 40,715 jobs during the 1980s, while losing 21,365 manufacturing jobs—a 38 percent decline in this sector (Bureau of Economic Analysis 1992).

How the expansion of white-collar service jobs that typically require education beyond high school would reduce the numbers of ghetto poor is puzzling. It is possible that declines in poverty population and poverty concentration in the northeastern coastal cities had something to do with the large number of immigrants who arrived there during the 1980s or, more likely, with residential abandonment and out-migration of poor and nonpoor from the most distressed neighborhoods. Or perhaps the largest northeastern cities just “bottomed out” after their rapid tumble during the 1970s, and we are witnessing a type of urban cross-regional “regression toward the mean.” Of course, measurement issues—such as indicator cutpoints, tract boundary changes within cities, or 1990 census undercounts of the urban poor—also could have artificially affected some results presented herein.

Similar questions will be posed about the contrasting turnaround in growth and concentration of the poverty population in southern cities, from significant declines during the 1970s to substantial poverty population growth and neighborhood deterioration during the 1980s. In all cases, disaggregated city-by-city

(and, in some cases, tract-by-tract) analysis will be required to shed light on the determinants of neighborhood change and whether one city or several in each region (or any categorical aggregation of cities) are responsible for observed trends (Galster and Mincy 1993; Jargowsky, forthcoming).

Patterns and trends for western cities in terms of absolute numbers of extreme poverty and severely distressed neighborhoods, as well as the limited concentration of poor in these neighborhoods, lead one to ask, Why did Los Angeles erupt while other cities with far greater poverty concentrations did not? For example, even with its seemingly improving neighborhood conditions, New York City had more than twice the severely distressed neighborhoods in 1990 as all 25 major western cities combined in this analysis. In 1990 New York City had five times as many severely distressed urban neighborhoods as Los Angeles, while Chicago had four times as many, and Detroit three times as many. Black poverty concentration is not nearly as extensive in Los Angeles as in these cities. Clearly, something more than census-defined neighborhood distress and poverty population concentration (or even economic restructuring) established the volatile conditions in Los Angeles that were sparked by the Rodney King verdict. These conditions are multifaceted, complex, and still not completely understood.

The results of this analysis show some disturbing trends regarding race. Concentration of poor blacks in high poverty and distressed neighborhoods is increasing. During the 1980s the number and percent of poor blacks concentrated in poverty tracts, extreme poverty tracts, distressed tracts, and severely distressed tracts increased. Likewise, black family fragmentation increased substantially during the 1980s while it decreased or remained relatively stable among whites and Hispanics. The increase was most apparent in extreme poverty areas, where by 1990 three-quarters of all black households with children under age 18 were headed by females. With new evidence emerging about the detrimental effects of single-parent households on intergenerational poverty transmission, child emotional and behavioral problems, and school dropout rates, Moynihan's (1965, 1986) hypothesis that family fragmentation is the single greatest impediment to black economic and social progress will no doubt receive greater research attention in the years ahead.⁵

Texas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and the Dakotas.

⁵ For a review of the consequences of mother-only families for the well-being of children, see Magnet (1993), McLanahan and Booth (1989), McLanahan and Garfinkel (1986), and Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1989).

Spatial and skill mismatch hypotheses are supported (though not necessarily confirmed) by data showing shockingly high jobless rates among inner-city youth who have dropped out of school (the jobless rate for young school dropouts exceeds 80 percent in distressed urban neighborhoods) and by the high percent of black households in these neighborhoods that do not have access to a private vehicle, which is essential to obtaining and holding a job in today's suburbanizing economy (Kasarda 1989). Likewise, the sharp rise in the proportion of foreign-born residents living in extreme poverty and severely distressed neighborhoods raises such debatable issues as the social overhead costs of immigrants and immigrant displacement of lower-skilled black employees.

The largest growth of immigrants in our inner cities has occurred among Hispanics. Data from 1990 showed that this group has the smallest percent of adults completing high school, with fewer than half completing 12 years of education. Worse, according to the 1990 data, fewer than one-third of Hispanic adults who reside in extreme poverty tracts had completed high school. As our central cities increasingly transform from centers of goods processing to centers of information processing, with new urban growth industries typically requiring some education beyond high school, worrisome questions arise. One can only speculate about the entrepreneurial and other adaptive mechanisms that poorly educated Hispanic immigrants might utilize to keep from slipping down the socioeconomic ladder as traditional urban industries requiring lower-skilled workers continue to decline.

As a final point, it is useful to mention the influence of measurement on findings, interpretations, and conclusions in studies such as this one. Comparing the increase in distressed and severely distressed tracts during the 1980s with the increase that occurred in the 1970s highlights this problem.

While the numeric growth nationwide in poverty tracts and extreme poverty tracts in the 1980s was similar to that in the 1970s, growth in distressed and, especially, severely distressed tracts slackened considerably in the 1980s. The more limited expansion of distressed and severely distressed central-city tracts in the 1980s at the national level may reflect a real slowdown between 1980 and 1990 in the growth of socially disadvantaged urban residents and in their spatial concentration.

The definition and measurement of neighborhood distress also clearly matter, however. For example, the striking contrast from 1980 to 1990 between the marked growth in the number of city

residents living in poverty (more than 1.2 million people, table 4) and the relative stagnation in the number of city households receiving public assistance (fewer than 50,000 incremental households, table 10) raises the question of whether neighborhood distress indicators, which incorporate the proportion of households receiving public assistance, are good measures of need or actually reflect the level of public response to that need. Moreover, using 1980 national tract standard deviation cutpoints to benchmark and compare changes in neighborhood distress during the 1970s with those during the 1980s could have a major temporal effect on the distress indicators, as was shown to be the case for the school dropout indicator. (See trends in numbers of distressed and severely distressed tracts in table 1.) Since the number of homeless and transient persons—populations that are difficult to count—likely grew in most cities in the 1980s, undercounts of these groups in the 1990 census could also bias results. Future researchers will be challenged to disentangle real substantive changes in neighborhood distress from such measurement problems and to develop better composite indicators of neighborhood distress.

Appendix
Relative rankings of cities

Table A.1. Cities Ranked on Number of Tracts by Poverty and Distress Status, 1990

City	Extreme Poverty Tracts		Poverty Tracts		Distressed Tracts		Severely Distressed Tracts	
	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank
New York	276	1	732	1	295	1	81	1
Chicago	179	2	417	2	197	2	64	2
Detroit	133	3	244	4	165	3	53	3
Cleveland	68	4	159	6	83	4	24	6
Milwaukee	60	5	109	9	56	7	15	8
New Orleans	59	6	121	8	56	6	15	9
Philadelphia	53	7	152	7	57	5	24	5
Houston	51	8	191	5	37	11	7	18
Los Angeles	45	9	257	3	39	10	17	7
Memphis	44	10	76	15	42	9	12	11
Baltimore	35	11	97	11	43	8	25	4
Atlanta	35	12	73	16	35	12	9	13
San Antonio	35	13	98	10	23	18	6	21
Pittsburgh	34	14	80	13	29	15	7	20
Dallas	33	15	97	12	21	20	7	17
Cincinnati	30	16	66	19	26	16	8	16
Miami	26	17	59	24	13	37	5	31
Columbus, OH	23	18	60	23	22	19	10	12
Minneapolis	23	19	55	26	18	23	5	27
Newark	21	20	63	21	31	13	14	10
St. Louis	20	21	70	17	30	14	9	14
Dayton	20	22	35	46	16	25	4	35
Buffalo	20	23	53	29	26	17	5	30
Oklahoma City	19	24	63	22	13	36	9	15
Rochester	19	25	52	32	18	21	6	22

Table A.1. Cities Ranked on Number of Tracts by Poverty and Distress Status, 1990 (continued)

City	Extreme Poverty Tracts		Poverty Tracts		Distressed Tracts		Severely Distressed Tracts	
	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank
Phoenix	18	26	56	25	6	56	5	26
Kansas City	18	27	69	18	14	32	4	36
Mobile	18	28	39	40	12	39	2	48
Akron	18	29	35	47	17	24	2	50
El Paso	17	30	53	30	7	53	0	100
Toledo	16	31	48	35	18	22	4	33
Shreveport	15	32	30	57	16	27	4	32
Baton Rouge	15	33	36	45	14	33	3	42
Fresno	15	34	34	49	5	65	2	51
Birmingham	14	35	40	38	15	28	1	56
Boston	14	36	77	14	13	35	2	49
Tampa	14	37	36	42	12	40	7	19
Syracuse	14	38	26	63	11	41	6	24
Fort Worth	14	39	55	27	9	48	3	46
Flint	14	40	30	56	15	29	3	43
Norfolk	13	41	22	71	12	38	3	41
Jackson	13	42	32	53	16	26	6	25
Tulsa	13	43	40	39	3	76	0	100
Jacksonville	12	44	29	58	9	43	3	39
Nashville-Davidson	11	45	36	43	9	45	5	28
Columbus, GA	11	46	20	74	8	49	5	29
Portland	11	47	36	44	5	66	1	63
Louisville	10	48	48	34	14	31	3	37
Washington, DC	10	49	65	20	14	30	4	34
Denver	10	50	42	37	9	44	3	38
Montgomery	10	51	19	76	9	47	3	45
Indianapolis	10	52	54	28	9	46	0	100
San Diego	10	53	44	36	5	67	3	47
Tucson	10	54	35	48	1	88	0	100

Table A.1. Cities Ranked on Number of Tracts by Poverty and Distress Status, 1990 (continued)

City	Extreme Poverty Tracts		Poverty Tracts		Distressed Tracts		Severely Distressed Tracts	
	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank
Knoxville	9	55	28	59	6	57	3	44
Charlotte	9	56	24	67	3	74	1	59
St. Paul	9	57	34	51	6	59	0	100
Austin	8	58	51	33	5	68	1	67
Omaha	8	59	31	55	5	63	0	100
Richmond	8	60	31	54	7	51	3	40
Corpus Christi	8	61	22	72	6	62	1	68
Sacramento	8	62	36	41	8	50	1	64
Lubbock	8	63	27	62	4	71	1	75
Chattanooga	7	64	23	70	6	55	1	60
Springfield, MA	7	65	16	82	7	52	6	23
Seattle	7	66	28	60	3	72	0	100
Amarillo	7	67	26	64	1	89	0	100
Oakland	6	68	52	31	9	42	1	65
Gary	6	69	34	50	14	34	2	52
Spokane	6	70	24	68	6	58	1	69
Stockton	6	71	28	61	4	70	2	53
Wichita	6	72	17	79	6	60	0	100
Long Beach	5	73	19	77	4	69	1	62
Honolulu	5	74	10	92	1	87	0	100
Tacoma	5	75	16	83	6	61	2	55
Raleigh	5	76	13	86	2	79	1	66
St. Petersburg	4	77	15	84	3	73	1	58
San Francisco	4	78	33	52	2	77	0	100
Madison	4	79	12	91	0	100	0	100
Grand Rapids	4	80	20	75	3	75	1	71
Providence	4	81	23	69	5	64	1	57
Fort Wayne	4	82	13	89	1	84	1	70
Salt Lake City	3	83	21	73	0	100	0	100

Table A.1. Cities Ranked on Number of Tracts by Poverty and Distress Status, 1990 (continued)

City	Extreme Poverty Tracts		Poverty Tracts		Distressed Tracts		Severely Distressed Tracts	
	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank
Lexington-Fayette	3	84	13	87	2	80	1	61
Albuquerque	3	85	25	65	0	100	0	100
Des Moines	3	86	12	90	1	85	0	100
Fort Lauderdale	2	87	9	94	2	82	0	100
Little Rock	2	88	16	81	7	54	1	74
Lincoln	2	89	9	93	0	100	0	100
Jersey City	2	90	24	66	2	78	1	72
Colorado Springs	2	91	17	80	0	100	0	100
Worcester	2	92	13	88	2	81	2	54
Greensboro	2	93	8	95	1	86	0	100
Las Vegas	1	94	8	96	2	83	1	73
Anaheim	1	95	6	97	0	100	0	100
San Jose	0	100	15	85	0	100	0	100
Anchorage	0	100	4	99	0	100	0	100
Riverside	0	100	5	98	0	100	0	100
Santa Ana	0	100	19	78	0	100	0	100
Virginia Beach	0	100	1	100	0	100	0	100

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.

Table A.2. Cities Ranked on Population Size by Poverty and Distress Status, 1990

City	Extreme Poverty		Poverty		Distressed		Severely	
	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank
New York	952,484	1	2,733,603	1	1,168,932	1	262,061	1
Chicago	381,866	2	1,179,229	3	472,790	3	159,532	2
Detroit	375,548	3	768,091	4	485,659	2	157,575	3
Los Angeles	230,338	4	1,415,445	2	205,936	5	92,061	5
Philadelphia	191,515	5	657,484	6	248,521	4	103,593	4
Houston	156,223	6	766,715	5	108,627	11	19,422	18
San Antonio	152,420	7	452,666	7	106,817	13	24,222	14
New Orleans	151,624	8	316,500	11	142,376	7	42,263	8
Milwaukee	140,831	9	273,471	14	136,445	9	35,329	10
Memphis	126,866	10	274,893	13	133,352	10	38,434	9
Baltimore	104,212	11	330,847	9	138,251	8	76,798	6
Cleveland	100,422	12	326,120	10	157,083	6	45,766	7
Atlanta	91,944	13	234,219	18	91,770	15	17,642	20
Miami	90,644	14	257,437	15	58,505	19	22,750	15
El Paso	82,197	15	309,440	12	31,553	39	0	100
Fresno	81,765	16	182,606	24	25,592	49	15,087	24
Dallas	80,383	17	348,738	8	53,194	23	10,197	38
Columbus, OH	74,889	18	192,214	22	67,363	17	26,256	13
Cincinnati	68,376	19	172,359	27	65,736	18	14,430	26
Buffalo	61,277	20	187,002	23	107,413	12	14,277	25
Minneapolis	61,054	21	139,946	36	42,760	29	11,284	32
St. Louis	60,842	22	249,338	17	100,868	14	30,834	12
Baton Rouge	59,040	23	131,264	42	53,190	24	6,546	50
Pittsburgh	56,985	24	140,795	35	53,307	22	12,608	28
Phoenix	56,036	25	228,239	19	17,894	58	15,519	23
Dayton	49,496	26	106,380	50	44,611	27	11,755	30
Shreveport	49,447	27	103,445	53	53,513	20	6,361	51
Newark	49,189	28	167,186	29	78,232	16	32,898	11

Table A.2. Cities Ranked on Population Size by Poverty and Distress Status, 1990 (continued)

City	Extreme Poverty Tracts		Poverty Tracts		Distressed Tracts		Severely Distressed Tracts	
	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank
Flint	46,076	29	104,860	52	53,488	21	10,837	35
Birmingham	45,505	30	149,759	32	51,576	25	4,154	59
Tucson	38,965	31	171,172	28	1,238	88	0	100
San Diego	38,739	32	219,000	20	30,820	42	13,983	27
Syracuse	38,150	33	70,651	70	36,893	32	16,532	21
Norfolk	36,749	34	61,029	76	33,303	36	8,831	41
Toledo	36,041	35	139,416	37	42,624	30	8,594	43
Rochester	33,232	36	108,515	49	32,237	38	11,028	34
Nashville-Davidson	32,834	37	109,127	47	31,112	41	15,969	22
Akron	32,566	38	84,995	61	32,298	37	2,984	62
Mobile	32,219	39	81,938	63	27,933	46	1,118	75
Montgomery	32,002	40	72,593	69	29,083	45	8,104	47
Jackson	31,748	41	108,604	48	45,373	26	11,599	31
Louisville	31,646	42	122,425	43	41,224	31	8,593	44
Tampa	31,426	43	100,667	54	31,527	40	18,491	19
Fort Worth	31,202	44	164,855	31	23,894	51	7,711	48
Springfield, MA	30,281	45	65,716	74	26,053	48	20,950	17
Boston	28,738	46	252,109	16	34,640	33	2,946	63
Tulsa	27,808	47	96,831	56	5,982	82	0	100
Madison	27,744	48	59,954	77	0	100	0	100
Oklahoma City	27,623	49	133,973	41	29,867	43	21,514	16
Jacksonville	27,005	50	115,229	45	33,639	35	9,665	39
Austin	26,998	51	172,544	26	16,956	62	2,762	65
Corpus Christi	26,222	52	95,989	57	20,987	55	1,925	72
Knoxville	25,355	53	69,671	72	14,699	66	6,880	49
Columbus, GA	25,113	54	49,009	84	17,166	60	11,858	29
Charlotte	24,756	55	62,968	75	7,805	77	2,884	64
Kansas City	24,049	56	136,349	39	23,805	52	8,769	42

Table A.2. Cities Ranked on Population Size by Poverty and Distress Status, 1990 (continued)

City	Extreme Poverty Tracts		Poverty Tracts		Distressed Tracts		Severely Distressed Tracts	
	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank
Stockton	23,492	57	114,266	46	22,265	54	10,773	36
Indianapolis	23,297	58	166,060	30	24,516	50	0	100
Denver	22,796	59	146,972	33	23,271	53	8,214	46
Seattle	22,283	60	105,055	51	11,816	70	0	100
Richmond	22,257	61	83,885	62	19,397	56	10,468	37
Washington, DC	20,609	62	202,759	21	44,006	28	11,159	33
Lubbock	19,428	63	78,189	66	9,568	72	1,247	73
Oakland	18,626	64	181,000	25	29,459	44	9,192	40
Sacramento	18,466	65	121,571	44	33,662	34	5,324	52
St. Paul	17,834	66	90,210	60	11,751	71	0	100
Long Beach	17,480	67	138,503	38	16,972	61	2,086	71
Omaha	16,825	68	74,798	68	8,506	74	0	100
Portland	15,764	69	91,346	59	12,499	68	2,603	67
Wichita	15,104	70	46,501	86	15,178	65	0	100
Raleigh	14,612	71	41,021	90	7,345	78	3,616	60
Chattanooga	13,963	72	54,154	81	16,699	64	5,306	53
Tacoma	12,688	73	42,913	88	17,286	59	4,829	55
San Francisco	12,127	74	143,905	34	11,932	69	0	100
Lexington-Fayette	10,836	75	52,529	82	7,188	79	3,281	61
St. Petersburg	10,274	76	46,750	85	8,838	73	2,395	70
Gary	9,569	77	100,151	55	26,312	47	4,565	57
Greensboro	9,552	78	27,563	96	4,439	84	0	100
Providence	9,406	79	81,341	64	16,815	63	2,586	68
Fort Lauderdale	8,731	80	44,763	87	6,526	81	0	100
Jersey City	8,445	81	79,778	65	8,445	75	4,658	56
Amarillo	8,093	82	54,872	80	368	89	0	100
Des Moines	7,943	83	38,794	92	3,787	85	0	100
Worcester	7,674	84	58,981	78	8,396	76	8,396	45

Table A.2. Cities Ranked on Population Size by Poverty and Distress Status, 1990 (continued)

City	Extreme Poverty Tracts		Poverty Tracts		Distressed Tracts		Severely Distressed Tracts	
	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank
Grand Rapids	7,042	85	67,854	73	5,296	83	2,435	69
Honolulu	6,911	86	21,197	98	2,390	87	0	100
Spokane	6,674	87	69,989	71	14,132	67	4,998	54
Albuquerque	6,478	88	91,601	58	0	100	0	100
Fort Wayne	5,080	89	25,263	97	2,612	86	2,612	66
Little Rock	4,960	90	42,730	89	19,312	57	1,244	74
Las Vegas	4,193	91	36,675	93	6,598	80	4,193	58
Lincoln	3,442	92	27,983	95	0	100	0	100
Colorado Springs	1,640	93	50,240	83	0	100	0	100
Salt Lake City	1,512	94	58,315	79	0	100	0	100
Anaheim	1,041	95	30,530	94	0	100	0	100
San Jose	0	100	76,962	67	0	100	0	100
Anchorage	0	100	14,033	99	0	100	0	100
Riverside	0	100	39,389	91	0	100	0	100
Santa Ana	0	100	134,517	40	0	100	0	100
Virginia Beach	0	100	6,322	100	0	100	0	100

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.

Table A.3. Cities Ranked on Growth of Tracts by Poverty and Distress Status

City	1970-1980			1980-1990		
	Extreme Poverty Tracts No.	Poverty Tracts No.	Distressed Tracts No.	Extreme Poverty Tracts No.	Poverty Tracts No.	Distressed Tracts No.
New York	238	334	333	88	65	77
Chicago	85	149	143	47	37	28
Newark	28	17	39	42	35	29
Philadelphia	28	45	51	38	114	29
Cleveland	22	46	34	30	21	28
Detroit	22	33	80	38	43	34
Atlanta	16	24	26	26	24	8
Columbus, OH	15	23	16	18	17	9
Baltimore	12	34	35	16	22	14
Buffalo	11	19	12	15	31	9

City	1970-1980			1980-1990		
	Extreme Poverty Tracts No.	Poverty Tracts No.	Distressed Tracts No.	Extreme Poverty Tracts No.	Poverty Tracts No.	Distressed Tracts No.
Detroit	88	65	77	88	65	77
Chicago	47	37	28	47	37	28
Milwaukee	42	35	29	42	35	29
Houston	38	114	29	38	114	29
New Orleans	30	21	28	30	21	28
Cleveland	26	43	34	26	43	34
Miami	18	24	8	18	24	8
Pittsburgh	16	17	9	16	17	9
San Antonio	16	22	14	16	22	14
Dallas	15	31	9	15	31	9

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.

Table A.4. Cities Ranked on Growth of Population by Poverty and Distress Status

City	1970-1980			1980-1990		
	Extreme Poverty Tracts No.	Poverty Tracts No.	Distressed Tracts No.	Extreme Poverty Tracts No.	Poverty Tracts No.	Distressed Tracts No.
New York	697,693	662,034	1,179,582	697,693	662,034	1,179,582
Chicago	211,626	360,449	422,200	211,626	360,449	422,200
Philadelphia	114,089	225,650	245,690	114,089	225,650	245,690
Newark	72,326	27,127	117,897	72,326	27,127	117,897
Detroit	58,974	144,089	228,119	58,974	144,089	228,119
Columbus, OH	33,719	33,956	46,964	33,719	33,956	46,964
Atlanta	32,158	74,717	73,993	32,158	74,717	73,993
Buffalo	27,298	47,193	37,839	27,298	47,193	37,839
Baltimore	25,409	90,172	116,008	25,409	90,172	116,008
Dayton	23,935	26,982	27,143	23,935	26,982	27,143

City	1970-1980			1980-1990		
	Extreme Poverty Tracts No.	Poverty Tracts No.	Distressed Tracts No.	Extreme Poverty Tracts No.	Poverty Tracts No.	Distressed Tracts No.
Detroit	261,323	185,775	227,912	261,323	185,775	227,912
Los Angeles	134,432	422,782	38,792	134,432	422,782	38,792
Houston	111,309	458,016	77,403	111,309	458,016	77,403
Milwaukee	109,927	106,239	82,130	109,927	106,239	82,130
Fresno	73,809	111,705	14,597	73,809	111,705	14,597
San Antonio	72,595	90,835	63,945	72,595	90,835	63,945
New Orleans	57,896	21,079	44,306	57,896	21,079	44,306
Miami	55,669	60,231	38,572	55,669	60,231	38,572
El Paso	51,915	77,446	20,668	51,915	77,446	20,668
Flint	42,581	45,768	43,615	42,581	45,768	43,615

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.

Table A.5. Cities Ranked on Growth of Poverty Population by Poverty and Distress Status

City	1970-1980						1980-1990							
	Extreme Poverty Tracts		Poverty Tracts		Distressed Tracts		Extreme Poverty Tracts		Poverty Tracts		Distressed Tracts			
	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank		
New York	342,267	1	331,951	1	527,662	1	148,758	1	108,222	3	116,789	1	28,816	1
Chicago	119,766	2	162,787	2	199,929	2	43,764	2	149,668	2	16,676	10	14,512	2
Philadelphia	57,723	3	88,462	4	107,874	3	15,782	3	55,240	4	46,430	2	11,990	6
Newark	37,006	4	28,421	7	54,375	5	25,657	4	151,748	1	36,293	3	5,737	12
Detroit	27,673	5	62,415	5	89,118	4	36,636	3	39,354	7	31,187	4	21,725	81
Columbus, OH	17,278	6	16,653	14	18,261	15	16,276	5	46,145	5	5,210	34	4,328	15
Atlanta	15,794	7	27,990	8	36,434	8	15,111	8	12,181	36	22,478	6	12,435	5
Baltimore	15,180	8	32,359	6	50,628	6	15,295	7	29,620	11	15,220	11	2,408	19
Buffalo	13,265	9	18,637	13	17,185	17	21,212	93	36,956	9	13,222	14	24,382	93
Dayton	10,870	10	10,011	21	11,991	24	3,578	31	45,443	6	7,006	27	24,976	94

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.

Table A.6. Cities Ranked on Poverty Population by Poverty and Distress Status

City	1980						1990					
	Extreme Poverty Tracts		Poverty Tracts		Distressed Tracts		Extreme Poverty Tracts		Poverty Tracts		Distressed Tracts	
	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank	No.	Rank
New York	476,161	1	984,917	1	562,592	1	183,029	1	959,390	1	520,323	1
Chicago	194,094	2	429,751	2	248,994	2	77,562	2	430,748	3	236,681	2
Philadelphia	104,660	3	248,802	4	143,072	3	43,946	4	296,508	4	219,300	3
Baltimore	60,912	4	140,295	6	78,838	5	34,259	5	89,761	2	84,131	5
New Orleans	55,378	5	119,789	7	56,187	9	12,084	14	439,605	6	113,894	4
Newark	52,003	6	94,988	10	60,412	8	28,668	6	131,970	8	78,665	7
Detroit	51,709	7	188,286	5	102,511	4	46,989	3	158,771	7	51,668	11
Memphis	48,318	8	106,662	9	68,982	6	6,280	28	241,964	5	50,383	12
Atlanta	46,709	9	93,151	12	47,553	10	22,413	8	106,548	13	67,881	9
Los Angeles	41,444	10	290,093	3	67,455	7	24,227	7	104,417	14	66,137	10

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.

**Table A.8. Cities Ranked by Decline in Population and Poverty
Population Residing in Extreme Poverty Tracts,
1970-1980 and 1980-1990**

Change 1970-1980			
Central City	Population	Number of Tracts	Poverty Population
San Antonio	-38,111	0	-17,852
Shreveport	-36,888	-5	-18,953
New Orleans	-29,223	0	-15,397
Mobile	-22,172	-5	-11,778
Memphis	-21,195	3	-9,455
Jackson	-20,816	-5	-12,022
Boston	-19,266	1	-5,930
Corpus Christi	-18,945	-3	-9,883
Baton Rouge	-18,855	-1	-5,693
Lubbock	-16,517	-4	-5,311
Change 1980-1990			
Central City	Population	Number of Tracts	Poverty Population
Newark	-57,182	-16	-30,154
New York	-45,170	-35	-21,253
Philadelphia	-27,609	2	-11,357
Baltimore	-16,778	-1	-9,186
Jacksonville	-12,194	1	-6,020
Nashville	-7,875	0	996
Ft. Lauderdale	-7,740	-1	-2,821
Washington, DC	-6,889	1	-3,247
Austin	-6,371	0	-2,286
Knoxville	-4,735	-1	-2,085

Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A; 1970 Census of Population, Fourth Count machine-readable file.

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