

Worlds Away in Suburbia: The Changing Geography of High-Poverty Neighborhoods in the Washington, DC Metro

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Poverty stinks, but concentrated poverty really stinks



Camden, New Jersey

njspotlight.com



Detroit, Michigan

zfein.com

Suburban poverty stinks too, maybe even more than inner-city poverty

When: Started in 1980, took off after 1990

Where: Postwar, inner-ring suburbs, especially Rustbelt cities in the Midwest, South and West

Why: Immigration, recession, gentrification, aging inner suburban housing stock

So What?: Harder to see & confront with tools of public policy and social services



Dundalk, MD
Source: Baltimore Sun

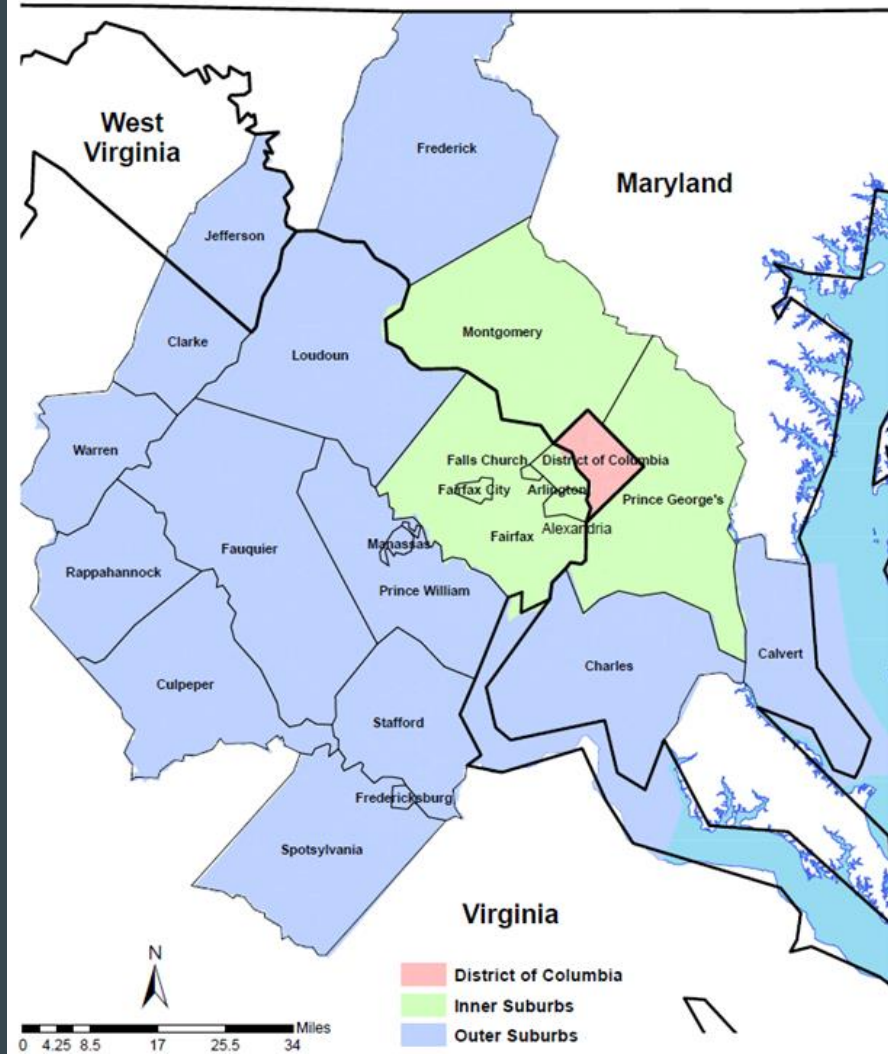
But what about high-poverty suburban neighborhoods?

DC MSA, 1970 to 2006 - 2010 ACS

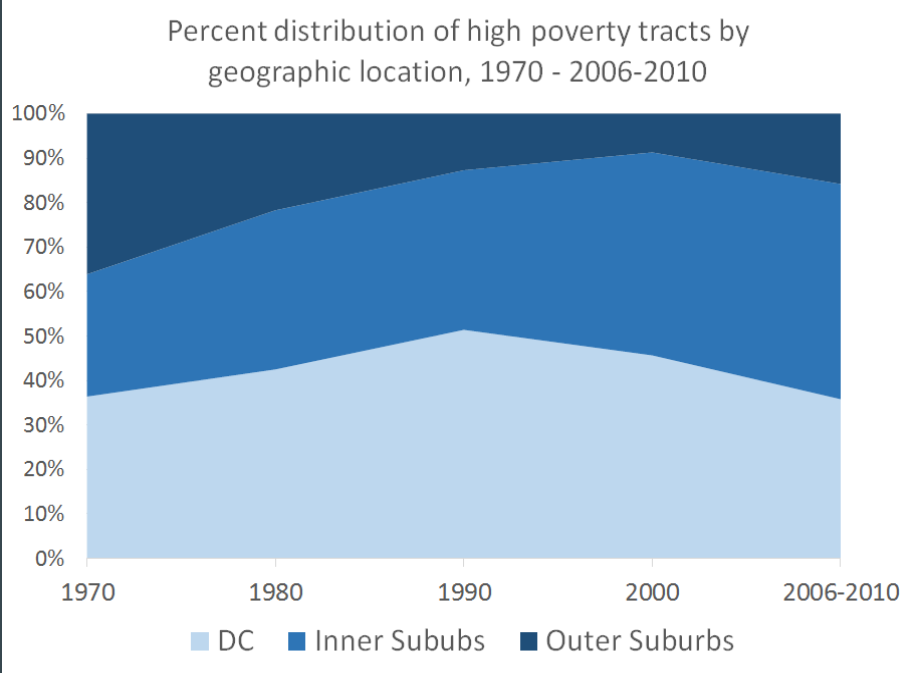
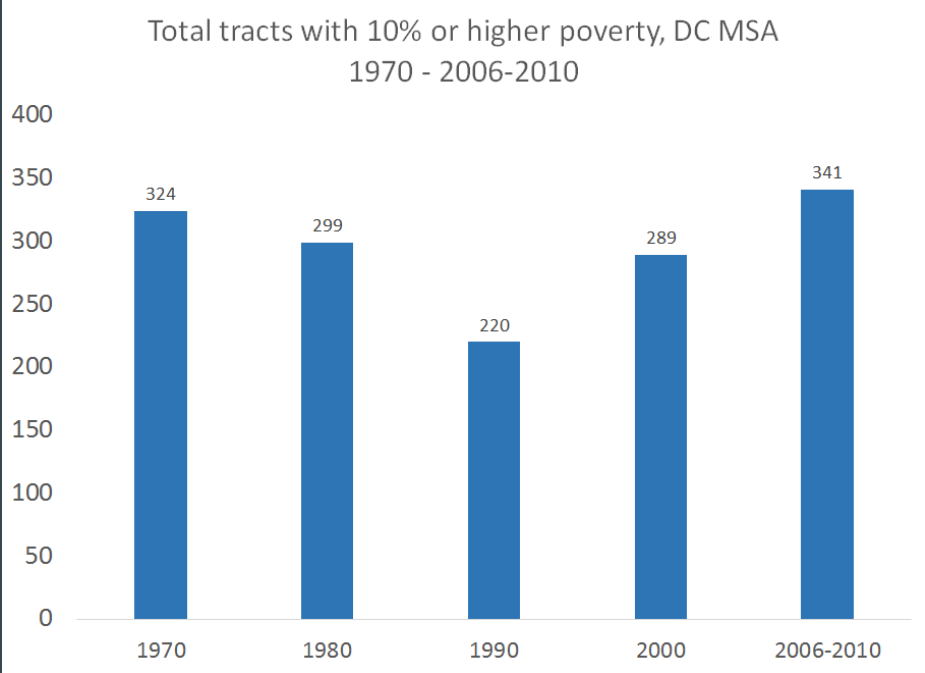
Census tracts in DC, inner suburbs, outer suburbs

Four “high-poverty” ranges:

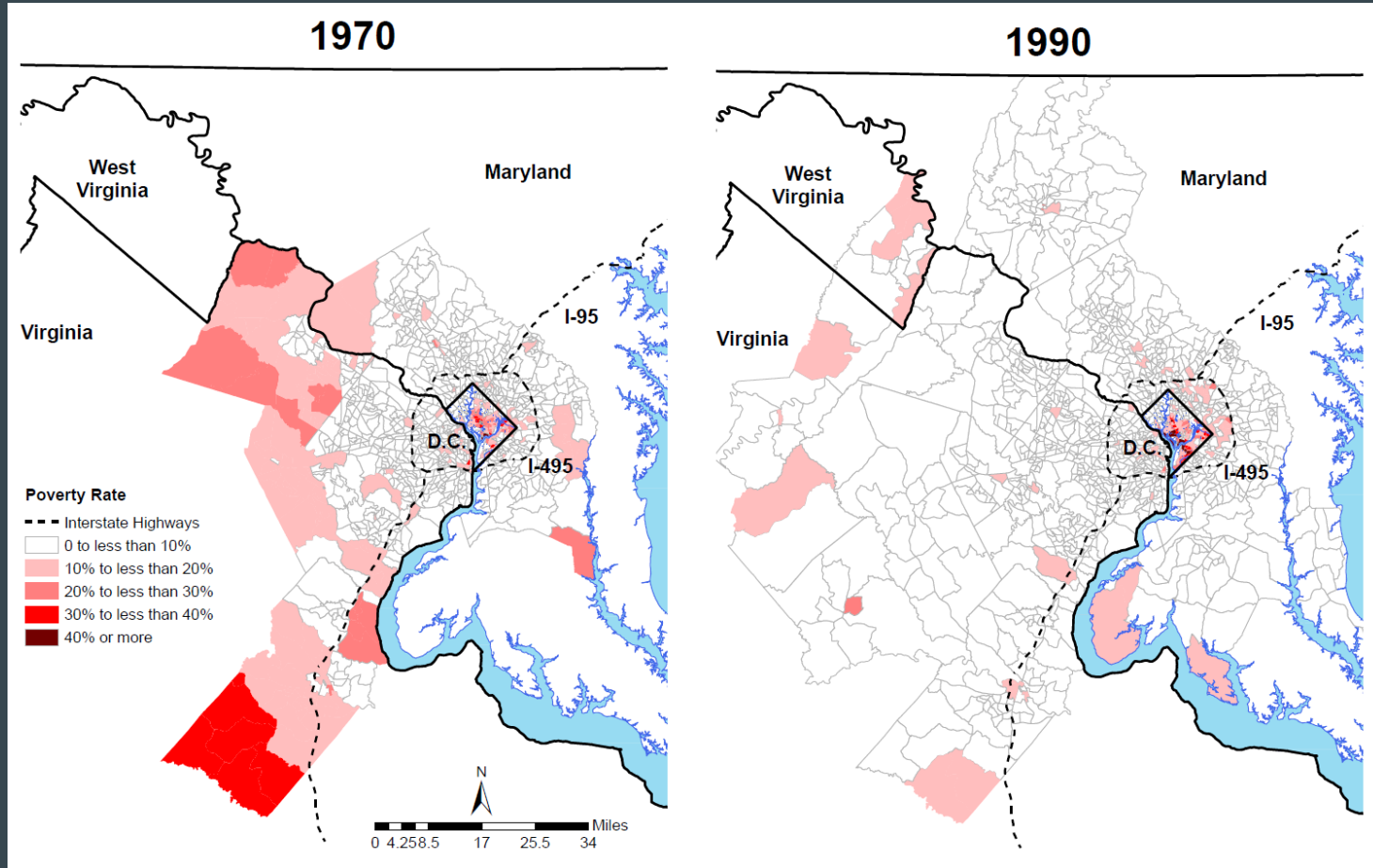
- 10 - <20%
- 20 - <30%
- 30 - <40%
- 40% +



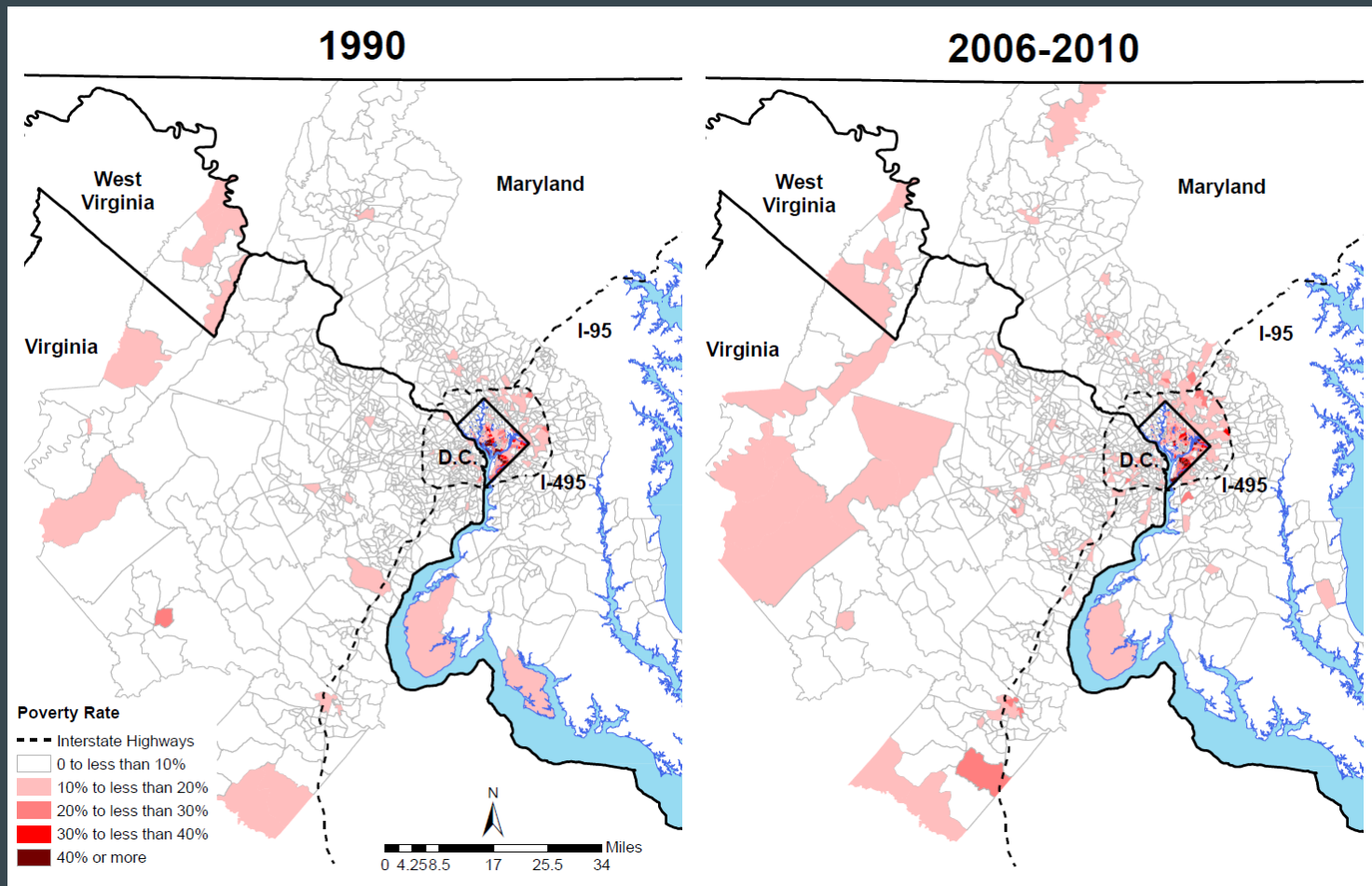
Regional distribution of high poverty neighborhoods



Dramatic regional poverty decline, 1970 to 1990

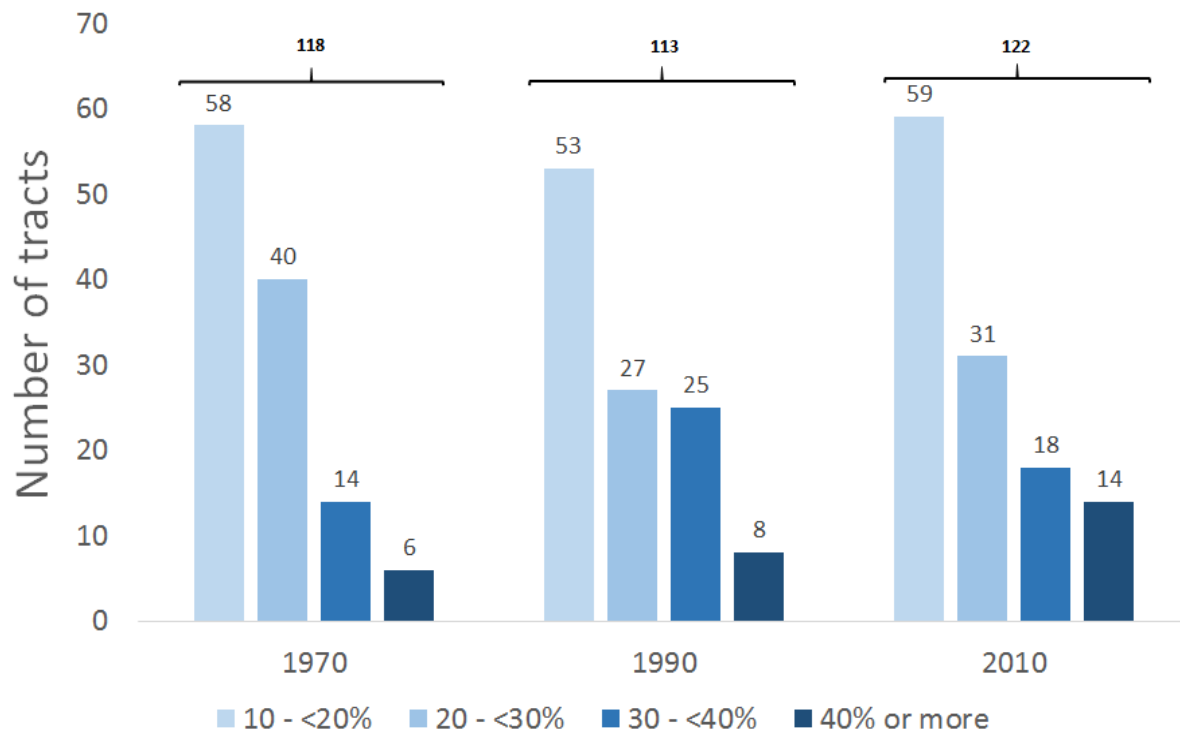


Increase in regional poverty, 1990 to 2006 - 2010

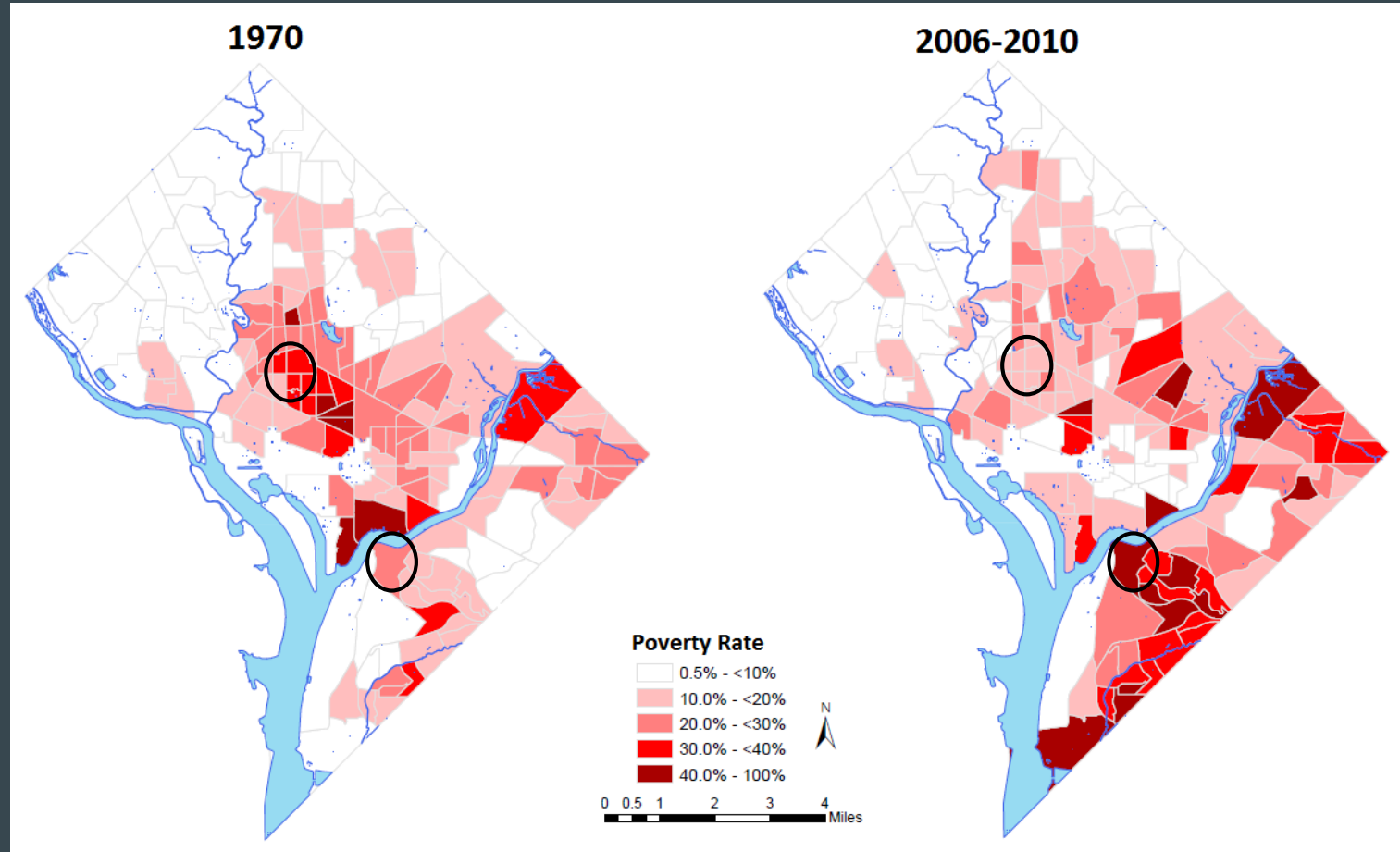


Poverty relatively consistent in DC

Poverty in DC census tracts, 1970, 1990 and 2006-2010



Poverty moving from the center to the margins



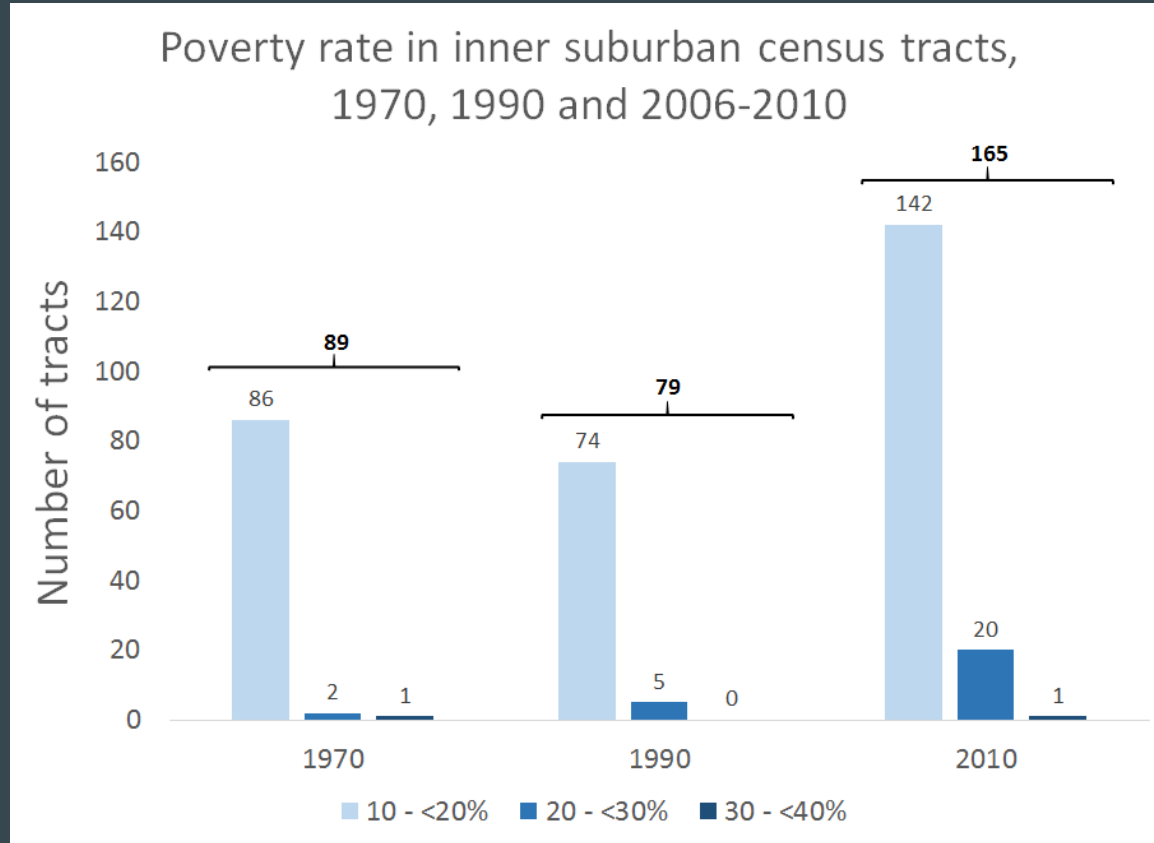


Barry Farm, SE DC

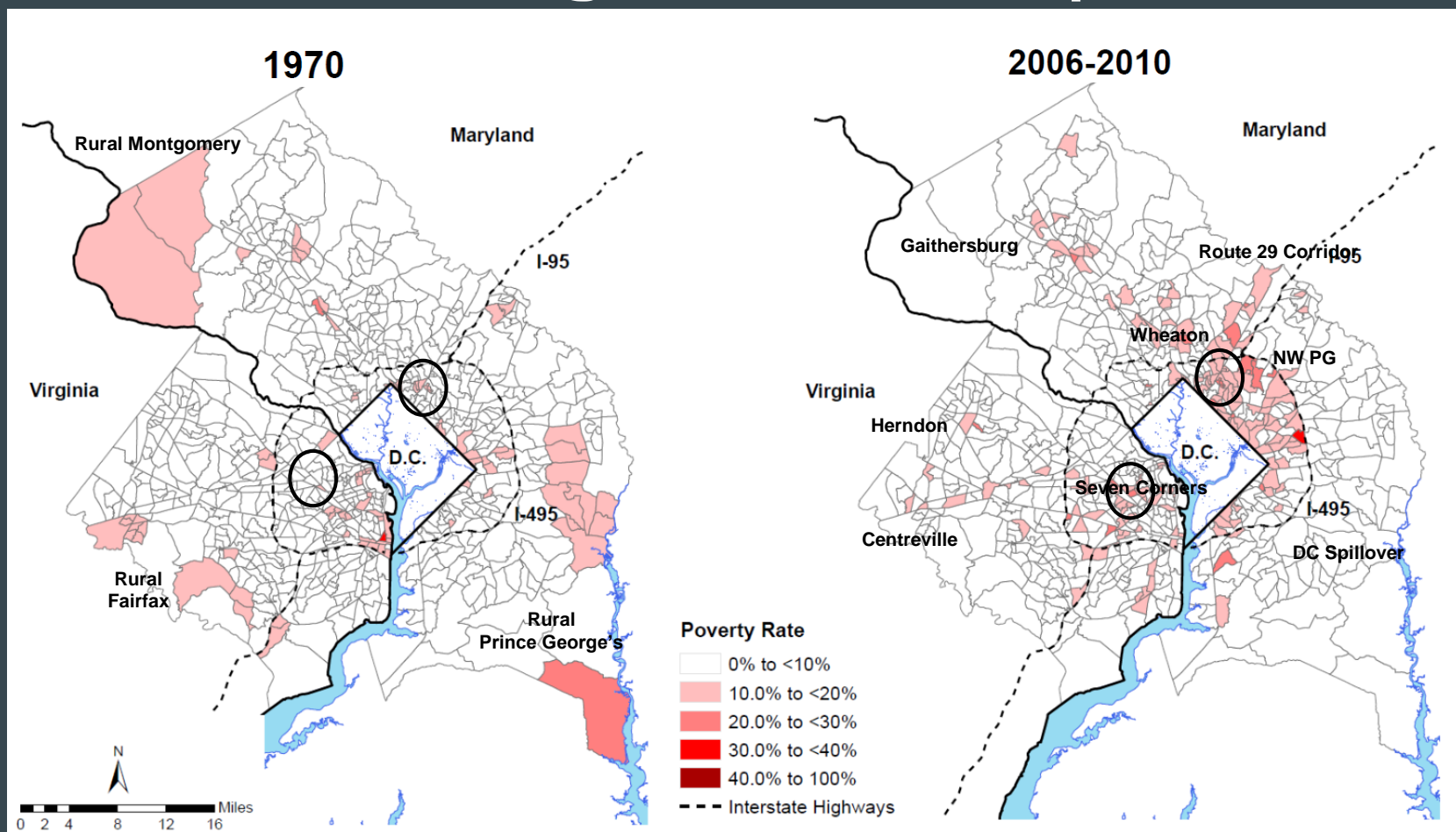


14th Street NW, DC

Poverty rising quickly in inner suburbs



From rural ring to inner beltway poverty



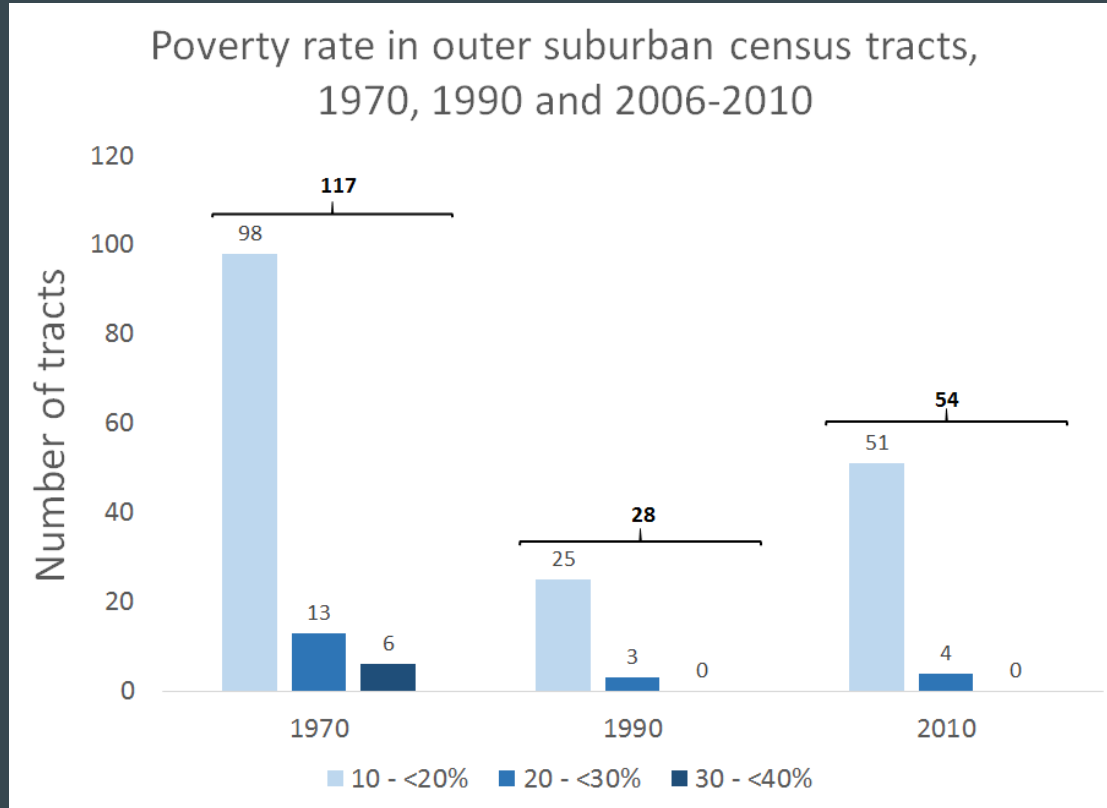


Seven Corners, Fairfax County, VA

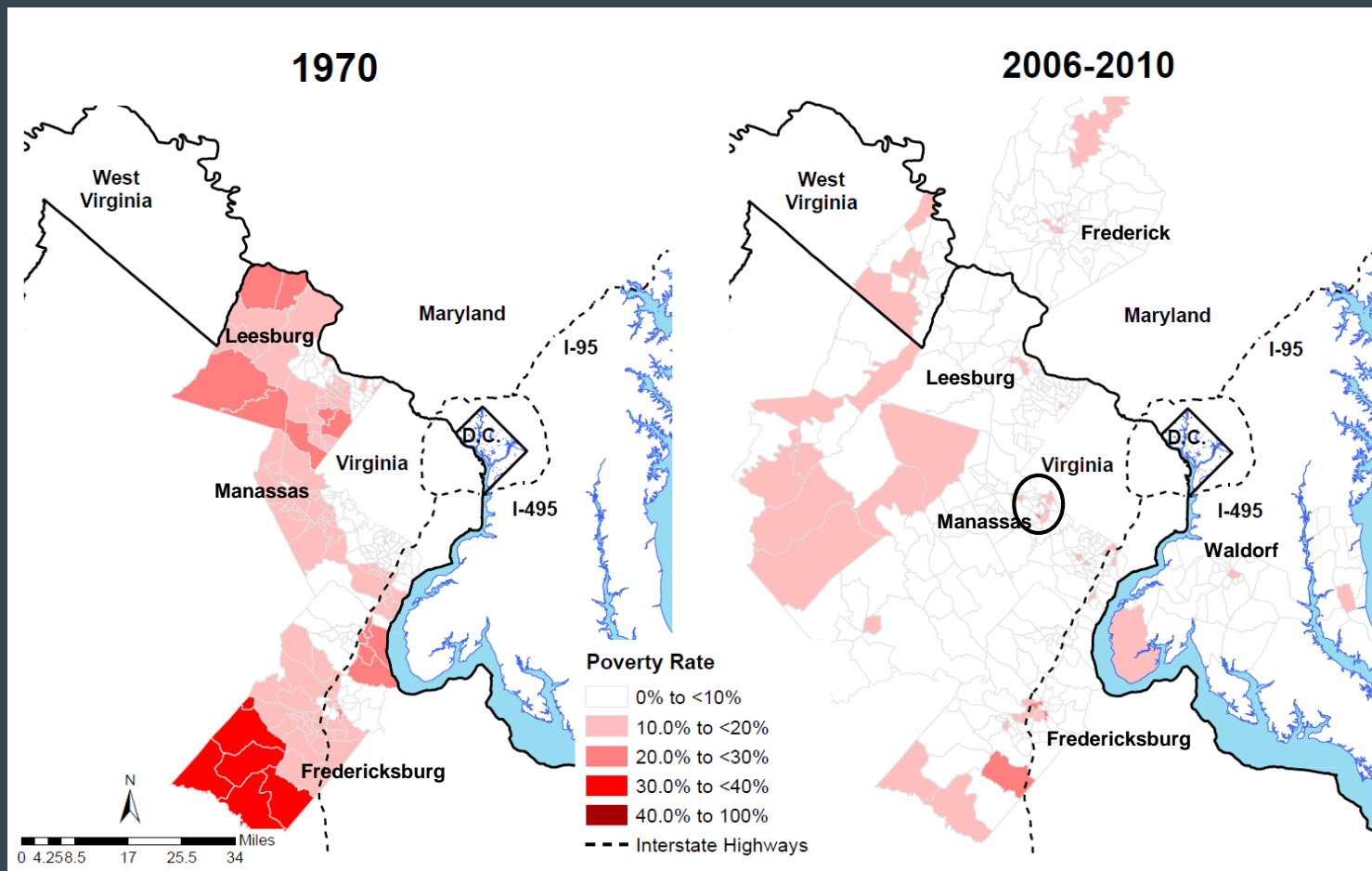


Langley Park, Prince George's County, MD

Poverty down, but creeping up in outer suburbs



High concentrated rural to dispersed ex-urban poverty





Manassas, Prince William County, VA

Conclusions and Implications

Trends

- Poverty shifted from urban core to edges
- Inner suburban poverty on the rise, but not yet “concentrated”
- Outer suburbs now part of metro poverty

Policy implications

- Aggressive poverty alleviation efforts still needed in DC
- New tools needed for struggling suburbs
 - Identifying existing resource and service gaps
 - Suburban neighborhoods as different than urban & solutions are different
 - Confronting the bias of policy and perceptions of poverty
- Get ahead of trends to prevent further concentration and exurbanization
- Metropolitan coordination critical & possible

Areas for future research

- More recent ACS data and mapping
- Demographics, conditions, and existing resources within high-poverty neighborhoods

Thank you!

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