# “Suburban Sprawl, Urban Decline and Racial/Ethnic Segregation: Shifting Dimensions of Inequality in a U.S. Metro Area”

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From their earliest history, cities have relied upon movement of goods and people. Productive capacity was critical, but it was also necessary to efficiently connect the sites of supply and/or production of goods to residential locations. A key breakthrough was the invention of agriculture; further innovations in agriculture and industrialization vastly raised the thresholds of urban growth (Bairoch 1988).

In northeastern United States at the beginning of the twentieth century the form of population concentration in cities was a result of "steam-powered manufacturing, a strategic position in the national rail network, the absence of trucking and automobiles, [and] the immaturity of distance-shortening technologies" (Rae 2003: 421). These factors are now long gone. Taking their place were conditions promoting a wider dispersion of the locations of employment and a reduced need for these locations to be in close proximity to employee residences. The suburbs burgeoned, often at the expense of central cities.

As was true elsewhere, urbanization in the United States during most of the twentieth century was a concomitant of industrial development. By 1960 the US was almost two-thirds urban; it reached almost four-fifths urban by 1970. Since the 1940s, however, the urban population was less concentrated in cities of 100,000 or more. "This paradoxical change was due to the massive movement of population out of the central metropolitan areas – the so-called core centers or central cities – and into new white middle and working class suburban areas in what had been farmlands" (Klein 2004: 191).

White suburbanization was in part a response to the changed racial composition of the city. The sharp curtailment of international immigration in the 1920s contributed to heightened demand for semiskilled and unskilled labor. Culminating with the Great Migration of the1940s to1960s, the flow of blacks out of the South was critical in meeting this demand, especially in the industrial cities of the north. This Southern outmigration continued even with the waning of that labor demand. By 1980 blacks were 85% urban, but, unlike whites, they were predominantly concentrated in the central cities. African Americans were initially excluded from the "suburban revolution" (Klein 2004: 190-193).

Since 1980 employment opportunities have continued to sprawl further from the central city and population continued to move in the same direction (Berube and Forman 2003). Important, however, has been change in suburban population composition. Wiese (2004: 255) found that "during the last two decades of the twentieth century, as many African Americans moved to the suburbs as in the preceding seventy years. The black suburban population leaped from a record 6.1 million to just under 12 million, and suburbanites expanded in proportion from one-quarter to one-third of the black population."[1] A study of the 102 largest metropolitan areas[2] revealed that minorities had increased from 19 to 27 percent of the suburban population between 1990 and 2000 (Frey 2003: 158-62).

Deteriorating conditions in many central city have provided a strong further incentive to take to the suburbs. African Americans are benefitting from the elimination of many of the overtly discriminatory practices in the housing market. There is also an enormous growth in Asian and Hispanic immigration since the 1970s. These new immigrant groups generally faced fewer obstacles to entering the suburbs than did blacks. Foreign migration, however, has been heavily into cities. This influx to cities has combined with the continued strong suburbanization of the native born. The result has been that in the course of the 1990s central cities "became

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[1]Similarly, Logan (2003: 248) notes that "America's suburbs have always had considerable diversity behind their white, middle-class image. Now they are being radically transformed."

[2]Hartford was not among these.

majority 'minority' for the first time in American history" (Katz and Lang 2003: 7). This study concerns the patterns and consequences of change in city/suburban population composition by a study of metro area of Hartford, Connecticut based on census data from 1980, 1990 and 2000.

The Hartford Metro area is not among the 50 largest metro areas of the United States and has not received the same type of intensive study devoted to such huge metro areas as Los Angeles, Detroit, New York and Chicago. Hartford, however, may be a significant bellwether of change to come, given the extremity of social and demographic conditions in the central city and the contrast between the city and its suburbs.

## HARTFORD AS A CASE STUDY

The city of Hartford has been shrinking nearly every decade since its population peak of 177.4 thousand in 1950. Between 1990 and 2000 – a period when the US population as a whole grew by 13 percent – Hartford declined by 13 percent (from 139.7 to 121.5 thousand). Among the 195 U.S. cities that exceeded 100,000 population in 1990, Hartford had the largest percentage decline in population between 1990 and 2000.[3] Although Connecticut has the highest per capita income in the United States, Hartford has among the highest poverty rates in the nation. In a ranking the economic well being of the central cities of 311 metro areas of the United States in 2000, Hartford was at the very bottom of the list. In terms of the level of disparity in economic well being between city and suburbs, the Hartford metro area ranked at 308.[4] By 2000 four of every five city residents were minority group members – far higher than in any other city in New England.[5]

These characteristics make the case of Hartford especially important for understanding the radiating impact of an atrophying city core. In sheer demographic terms, the suburban growth of the Hartford Metro area more than compensated for the urban decline. The population of the metro area as a whole was 1,577,585 in 1990, increasing 51,702 or just over 2 percent by the year 2000. The suburbs, however, were changing in important ways as a consequence the suburbanization of minorities, the geographic redistribution of the poor and shifting boundaries of racial/ethnic segregation. Past inequality and racial/ethnic differences between suburbs and city have been giving way to equally deleterious separations between suburban communities. The paper focuses particularly on Hispanic suburbanization. Hispanic impact is of ever-increasing importance due to the group's explosive growth and rapid geographic dispersion in the region and the nation.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

By 1860 Hartford had become a vital manufacturing center, and this would last for the next century. "Employing more people than insurance companies, [factory workers] had been turning out such varied products as horseshoe nails, counters, organs, pay telephones,

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[3]The 195 cities had a median growth of 8.7 percent, although cities in the Northeast, on average, declined in size (Glaeser and Shapiro 2003: 18-19).

[4]The ranking of the suburbs of the Hartford Metro area in 2000 was 47, down from 19 in 1990. The city/suburban disparity in 1990 ranked nearly as low as in 2000: 293. These data were downloaded on September 8, 2004 from: http://mumford1.dyndns.org/cen2000/CityProfiles/Profiles/3280msaProfile.htm.

[5]Unless otherwise noted, figures in this paper are drawn from the 1980, 1990 and 2000 censuses.

machine tools, screw machine products, electric switches, Colt guns and Maxim silencers, and glass-blowing machinery" (Strong and Grant 1986: 52). Hartford was the largest producer of airplane engines. It was thus especially well positioned to benefit tremendously from the defense production during World War II and the Korean War (Ibid.: 52-3).

Census data show that between 1940 and 1950 Hartford's population rose from 166 to 177 thousand – the peak level for the city during the twentieth century. By 1960, however, the population fell to 162 and was down to 158 thousand by 1970.[6] During this period there were significant shifts in population composition. Southern blacks and Jamaicans were coming to the city to meet growing labor demand in agriculture and industry during World War II. In these same years there was some initial Puerto Rican settlement in the city. By 1957 Puerto Ricans numbered about 3,000, rising to 6,000 before the end of the decade. The number of blacks increased from 13,000 to 25,000 during the 1950s. As the city's minority population grew during the 1950s and 1960s, whites were exiting to racially homogenous suburbs. Segregation was also growing within the city: "[T]he lowest-income families were concentrated in the largely black North End, while more affluent families were in the western portion of the city near the West Hartford line" (Weaver 1982: 137; Cruz 1998: 22, 48-49).

In 1958 planning was in place for "one of the largest programs of urban redevelopment ever undertaken by an American municipality" (Weaver 1982:128). Designed to serve the interest of Hartford's business community, the construction during the 1960s destroyed a great deal of low-rent housing in the city center. Black residents were compelled to relocate to affordable areas primarily on the northern periphery, where housing was old and increasingly substandard. "There they confronted an influx of Puerto Ricans coming from the island, from tobacco camps in Windsor, and from other states" (Cruz 1998: 25). The major project of the 1960s, Constitution Plaza, contained no residential units. In the 1970s little public housing was built, while "about 10,000 of the city's 56,000 housing units were demolished" (Glasser 1997: 135). This has had a persisting legacy: In 2000 only 24.5 percent of Hartford residents owned homes. Newark was the only major city with a lower ownership rate (Zielbauer, 2002: B4).

Federal policy had contributed to the decay of poor and minority neighborhoods of the inner-city. Disinvestment led to spiraling decline. Racial restrictions on mortgages were permitted by The Federal Housing Administration until the 1960s. Government policy was also an important factor promoting rapid suburban expansion: "Beginning in the 1950s, the suburbanization of the middle class was ... facilitated by federal transportation and highway policy, including the building of freeway networks through the hearts of many cities, mortgages for veterans, mortgage-interest tax exemptions, and the quick, cheap production of massive amounts of tract housing" (Wilson 1996: 46).

As was the case in other cities, the "disappearance of work" in low skill jobs had a heavy impact on Hartford's minorities (Wilson 1996). As Hartford was losing manufacturing jobs, white collar jobs were increasingly filled by suburban residents. In 1965 Hartford had more than 23 thousand jobs in manufacturing; these were cut in half over the next decade. Manufacturing jobs rose slightly by 1980, but were below 7 thousand by 1990 (Cruz 1998: 29).

In 1960 Hartford employed 116 thousand people; about half lived in the city. By 1980 the number of jobs had grown to 143 thousand, but less than a quarter of the employees were city residents (Strong and Grant 1986: 52). The fate of the city in the 1970s was tellingly revealed by the sharp overall population decline during the decade from 158 thousand to 136 thousand. Although there was some recovery by the end of the 1990s, economic erosion had now reached Hartford's "bedrock asset, its insurance industry": "25,000 well-paid, high-skill jobs

[6]These figures were downloaded on July 23, 2003 from an official state of Connecticut website: http://www.sots.state.ct.us.

were cut, consolidated or conveyed out of town" (Zielbauer 2002: B4).

Puerto Rican migrants were initially concentrated in agriculture. The most important companies growing tobacco in Connecticut previously had manufacturing and processing plants in Puerto Rico. Ties to Puerto Rico were, of course, particularly deep. Having been granted U.S. citizenship in 1917, Puerto Ricans long benefitted from easy entry to the United States, increased demand for low skilled labor due to restricted European immigration after 1921, and very direct governmental and employer recruitment efforts (Cruz 1998: 3, 22). Migrants to Connecticut were often former workers at tobacco facilities in Puerto Rico. "Ironically, they came to the mainland to try to get a living wage from the very same employers" (Glasser 1997: 55). In a pattern familiar across the globe, this was a migration stream built upon social, economic and political ties between areas of origin and destination. Beginning with laborers alone, the stream expanded rapidly and overtime produced ethnic enclaves in the country of destination (see Castles and Miller 1998; Sassen 1999). The "Great Migration" between 1946 and 1964 brought nearly two-fifths of the residents of Puerto Rico to East coast cities. This amounted to 151 thousand in the 1940s, 470,000 in the 1950s and 214,000 in the 1960s (Davis 2000: 103; Klein 2003: 201).

Although many would return to Puerto Rico when their seasonal labor ended, in the 1950s others sought continuing employment through jobs in Hartford (Cruz 1998: 47). Abysmal work conditions and low wages on the farms made the workers receptive to the appeals of factory agents and the urging of fellow urban countrymen. Beginning in the 1960s agricultural decline was another factor fostering change. The number of farms in the state were rapidly shrinking, as it became profitable to sell land for alternative uses. One large firm, Consolidated Cigar, shifted to Brazil production that had been on 700 acres in Connecticut (Glasser 1997: 75). An important factor sustaining the flow of Puerto Rican labor to the United States, however, was "a jobs catastrophe back home" beginning in the early 1970s. Even in 1990 70 percent of those age 25 and under in Puerto Rico were in poverty (Davis 2000: 104).

Intensified black militancy in the 1960s contributed further to white exit from the city. In 1967 riots occurred in a number of Connecticut cities, but they were most severe in Hartford. It was a sharply divided city: "As 95 percent of Hartford blacks lived in the North End, the city was operating virtually two separate school systems–one for whites and another for blacks." At the request of the Hartford Board of Education, Harvard University Graduate School of Education produced a plan to promote integration "by building several new middle schools on the fringe between white and black sections and, as Hartford's white population was declining so rapidly, busing black children to predominantly white suburban schools." Opposition was intense. The recommendations were ignored and segregation remained (Weaver 1982: 129).

In 1989 lawyers for the families who filed the Sheff vs. O'Neill lawsuit argued that inequities among schools in the Hartford area violated the state constitution. The solution they proposed was to breakdown the urban/suburban divide with the creation of regional school districts – again, a plan that engendered fierce resistance and little change resulted. Hartford Public High School, for example, had 96 percent minority enrolment in 1999-2000, up from 94.6 percent in 1994-95 (Connecticut State Department of Education, n.d.: 2). Magnet schools in Hartford and programs bringing city children to the suburbs have resulted in about 10 percent of the children being taught in an integrated setting. In the latest development, a settlement in January 2003 required that this be raised to 30 percent through expanded use of magnet schools. Participation in the program is voluntary and funding appears far from assured (cite Hartford Courant and New York Times articles).

## HISPANIC POPULATION GROWTH IN HARTFORD

In Hartford the shift toward minority predominance came especially early. By 1970 the

Hartford school system was 45 percent black. The city elected the first black mayor in New England, Thirman L. Milner, in 1981 (Grant and Grant 1986: 78). The share of whites[1] in Hartford in 1980 (44 percent) was equal to the overall figure for the largest cities of the United States in 2000. In 1980 the city was comprised of 61 thousand whites, 45 thousand blacks and 28 thousand Hispanics. By 1990 whites were outnumbered by both blacks and Hispanics. There were still more blacks than Hispanics, but the gap narrowed to only about 6000. During the 1990s there was a net loss of both whites and blacks; the number of Hispanics, however, continued to grow. A complete reversal of the 1980 group hierarchy occurred by 2000, when the city included 21.6 thousand whites, 46 thousand blacks and 49 thousand Hispanics. Compared with 1980, by 2000 Hartford was a smaller city (total population declined from 136,392 to 121,578) and much more Hispanic. It was not surprising that in 2001 Hartford elected Eddie Perez, its first Hispanic mayor. Perez was born in Puerto Rico and came to Hartford in 1969.

What also makes Hartford distinctive is the preponderance of Puerto Ricans among Hispanics of the Hartford region. In the year 2000, Mexicans comprised nearly two-thirds (65.3 percent) of Hispanics in the United States but only 5 percent of Hispanics in the Hartford Metro Area. Puerto Ricans were the second largest Hispanic group in the United States, comprising 10.3 percent of Hispanics; in the Hartford region they comprised three-quarters of Hispanics. Only three other metropolitan areas (Jamestown, NY, Waterbury, CT and Lancaster, PA) out of 331 had a higher percentage Puerto Rican among the Hispanics than did the Hartford region. In each of these three the number of Puerto Ricans was below 20,000 (Lewis Mumford Center 2003). The Hartford region stands out in having both a relatively large Puerto Rican population and Puerto Rican predominance among Hispanics in the metropolitan area.

## SUBURBANIZATION[2]

In contrast with the overwhelmingly minority population of the city of Hartford, the Hartford metro area was about 77 percent white in 2000, down from 88 percent in 1990. Between 1980 and 1990 the total white population grew from 952 thousand to 967 thousand, but by 2000 it had fallen by 5 percent. Between 1990 and 2000 – a time when the city of Hartford had a population decline of 18 thousand – it was solely the growth of the minority suburban population that kept the total population of the metropolitan area growing slightly (an increase of 52 thousand). In the suburbs during the 1990s the number of blacks grew by 26 percent and Hispanics increased 42 percent; whites were down 5 percent.[3] Hispanics have steadily increased their share of the minority population of both city and suburbs. By 2000 they comprised half of Hartford's minority population and 38 percent of the minority population in the suburbs.

In 1990 most blacks and Hispanics in the region (55 percent) were still concentrated in

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[1] To avoid unnecessary repetition in the text, "whites" hereafter refers to non-Hispanic whites and "blacks" refers to non-Hispanic blacks.

[2]The census classifies both Hartford and Middletown as "central cities" of the Hartford metropolitan area. In the paper, however, the term "suburb" refers to all towns except Hartford . In 2000 Middletown, with a population of 43 thousand, was smaller than many of the other towns in the region and was 77 percent white. Compared with Hartford, it seemed far more suburban than urban.

[3]Data on the total suburban population (defined as those living outside the central cities) within the 331 metropolitan areas of the United States shows that during the 1990s the white population rose 5 percent, the black population increase was 38 percent, the Hispanic rise was 72 percent and Asian increase was 84 percent (Logan 2003: 248).

Hartford. By 2000 the majority of both groups had shifted to the suburbs (40 percent of blacks and 43 percent of Hispanics were in Hartford). Even in 1980 only 14 percent of Asians in the Hartford metro area were in Hartford, as were just 6 percent of whites. By 2000 these figures fell to 2 percent for whites and 8 percent for Asians.

RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION

As blacks and Hispanics have shifted out of the city, has this resulted in less residential segregation from whites? Based on a study of 331 metropolitan areas of United States, Logan (2003: 253) concludes: "The persistence of residential segregation for minority groups means that newly suburban group members tended to move into the same array of neighborhoods in which co-ethnics were already living in 1990. Given the rapid growth of each group, this implies that suburban racial and ethnic enclaves may have emerged or grown substantially in many metro areas, especially in those areas in which the group is well represented." Greater numbers of blacks or greater numbers of Hispanics were associated with greater segregation of each from whites.

The index of dissimilarity is commonly used to measure segregation. The index represents the percentage of one group that would need to change location in order be distributed across tracts in exactly the same way as the group to which it was being compared. The general picture that emerges is as follows: The index comparing whites to Hispanics varied between 64 and 66, with little if any change between 1980 and 2000. Black-white segregation was several points higher than the Hispanic-white index in 1980 and this small difference appears to have remained by 2000.

The closeness between Hispanic-white and black-white segregation is unusual. According to Logan (2003: 238-9) the average black-white index for all metropolitan areas in 1980 was 73.8. This compared with an Hispanic-white index averaging 50.7. By 2000 these numbers came closer due to a slight increase in Hispanic-white segregation and a decline of nearly 9 points in the average black-white index. Logan (2003: 239) concludes that "blacks remain far more segregated from whites than are Hispanics." Why the Hartford metro area deviates from this trend is unclear, although it could be related to the composition of the Hispanic population. It is interesting to note that the Hispanic-white and black-white segregation are also very close in Springfield, Massachusetts metro area – another area with a relatively large Hispanic population that was predominantly Puerto Rican.

A high level of segregation of Hispanics and blacks from whites has been sustained despite the considerable dispersion of minorities across the suburbs. This was due not only to the greater movement of minorities into some locations rather than others but also to very significant change in location by whites. It is important go beyond the aggregate measures and look more closely at ethnic differences across specific types of suburbs.

The white population has been sprawling outward. The larger the size of the town, the smaller was the growth in the white population. This relationship was very strong: The correlation between total town population in 1980 and the 1980-1990 growth in white population was minus 0.77; the correlation of 1990-2000 growth with the total population in 1990 was minus 0.86. For Hispanics the relationship was exactly opposite: The larger the town, the greater was their population growth. The correlations exceeded a positive .8 for both decades.[4]

Nearly 90 percent of the rise in the number of Hispanics and blacks was concentrated in the 21 towns of the metropolitan area where whites showed losses of at least 100 (see Table

[4]The correlation between the growth of the Hispanic population between 1980-90 and the total town population in 1980 was 0.83. The correlation between the growth of Hispanics from 1990-2000 and total population in 1990 was 0.81.

1). In the other 37 towns of the area, the total growth of whites between 1990 and 2000 was 31 thousand.[5] This gain was insufficient to offset the white loss in the 21 towns, resulting in a net loss to the metropolitan area of nearly 52 thousand whites (-5.3 percent). Minority group growth had a geography quite distinct from that of whites.

AGE STRUCTURE OF THE HISPANIC POPULATION

There was a very significant age dimension to population group shifts. Hispanics had an especially youthful age structure compared with the white population. This was product of the predominance of young adults among migrants, the young children these migrants brought with them and the relatively high fertility of Hispanics living in the United States (Yaukey and Anderton 2001: 290-91; del Pinal and Singer 1997: 26). In 2000 Hispanics comprised 9.6 percent of the total population of the Hartford region but 16.3 percent of those under age 5.

Due to the selective out-migration of whites, differences in age structure between Hispanics and whites were especially great in towns with a very large concentration of Hispanics. These changes can be seen by looking at the combined population of East Hartford, Bristol and Manchester. All three showed significant Hispanic growth and, with populations ranging from about 50 to 60 thousand, were among the largest towns in the Hartford regions. Their combined total population grew from 162,710 to 164,377 between 1990 and 2000. The aggregate Hispanic population in the three towns was fairly large and rapidly growing: 5.9 thousand in 1990, rising to 14.3 thousand in 2000.

Figure 1 compares the age structure in 1990 with that in 2000 for the whites of East Hartford, Bristol and Manchester combined. In 1990 population peaks were at ages 25 to 34 and for children under age five. This shows that couples with young children were clearly an important component of the population. Ten years later this large adult cohort was age 35 to 44. It was dramatically reduced in size as was the cohort of children (aged 0-4 in 1990 and 10-14 in 2000). Migration from these towns appeared heavily concentrated among these couples with children.

There were far fewer children under age 5 in 2000 than there had been in 1990. Indeed, in 2000 the only five-year age group smaller than those 0 to 4 were over age 60. The aging and out-migration of adults had caused a plummeting in births to whites. The total white population was 147 thousand in 1990; it dropped nearly 20 thousand by 2000. The number under age 40 fell by 22 thousand; those age 40 and over increased by 2 thousand. The percentage of the population under age 15 dropped from 17 to 16 percent.

Figure 2 shows a very contrasting picture for the Hispanic population of these three towns. The nearly 2.5 fold increase in Hispanics between 1990 and 2000 was concentrated in more youthful age groups. The number under age 40 grew by 6.8 thousand, as compared with an increase of 1.6 thousand among those 40 and over. The percentage of the population under age 15 increased from 29 to 34 percent. By far the peak age groups in 2000 were those under age 10 – greatly exceeding the number of adults age 25-34. Families with large numbers of children were the key component of the substantial population growth between 1990 and 2000. This surge of population had to be the result of substantial in-migration. The high fertility and youthful age structure in 2000, however, will clearly lead to substantial future growth simply as a result natural increase.

Among children under age 5, the percentage white fell from 84 percent to 63 percent

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[5]In 1990 the white population of these 21 towns was 594,646, of which 552,032 were outside Hartford. In 2000 the respective figures were 511,703 and 490,026. These 21 towns encompassed 61.5 percent of the whites in the Hartford metropolitan area; this fell to 55.9 percent by 2000.

between 1990 and 2000. Changes in the ethnic composition of the population were particularly apparent, therefore, in the educational system and white families appeared to be responding by flight elsewhere. This reflects a national pattern of sharply increased segregation of Hispanic students from whites (Winter 2003).

SUBURBAN AREAS WITH A GROWING WHITE POPULATION

Towns with a growing white population present a very contrasting picture. The pattern here can be seen by examining the aggregate population in the ten towns with the highest white population growth between 1990 and 2000.[6] These towns were all at least 90 percent white in 2000. Their total population rose from 142 thousand in 1990 and to 167 thousand in 2000. Note that the combined population of East Hartford, Manchester and Bristol in 2000 was 164 thousand.

Figure 3 shows the population in these 10 towns by age for 1990 and 2000. In 1990 the largest categories were between 30 and 44 years of age. Born between 1945 and 1959, these were the cohorts of baby boomers then at a stage of life when most were married with their own children. By 2000 the peak age group 1990 was now aged 40 to 54, and their number had increased. These suburbs were attracting more of these aging baby boomers and their children. Since these adults were moving to the end of their childbearing years, it is not surprising that between 1990 and 2000 the growth of children was far more among those over age 5 than among those 0 to 4. It is interesting to note, however, that the cohorts of children were much below the size of the largest of the parental five-year age cohorts. This indicates a fertility level that was far lower than among Hispanics, where the five-year groups of children far exceeded those of the adults. In the ten towns between 1990 and 2000 the increase to the population under age 40 was 4.9 thousand – less than three-quarters of the same figure for the Hispanics alone in East Hartford, Bristol and Manchester. In the ten towns growth was overwhelmingly to those over age 40, where the increase amounted to 20 thousand.

Migration can be more precisely assessed by comparing the projected population based on the 1990 census with the actual population revealed by the 2000 census. This can be done separately for each age group. The projection shows change that would occur solely as a result of likely deaths.[7] Differences between the projected and the actual size of the age group can then be attributed to net population movement into or out of the area.

Figure 4 shows the results for the 10 towns with the largest white growth. The first cohort was 10 to14, as this was the youngest group that would have been alive in 1990 (aged 0 to 4). In the cohorts over age 50, the projected and actual populations were not very different. The projected population slightly exceeded the actual population among those aged 55 to 69 – an indication of net out-migration. These are years of retirement and likely downsizing as nests are emptying. With larger cohorts entering these age groups in the decade ahead, the number retiring and moving away will grow. The actual population exceeded the projected population among those 75 to 84, and this may reflect an increase in assisted living developments and other housing catering to the needs of older persons. Such residences may encourage parents of baby boomers to move to the area in order to be in closer proximity to their children.

Strong movement of population into these towns (actual population exceeding projected

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[6]In order of their total increase of whites, these towns were as follows: Colchester, Glastonbury, East Hampton, Farmington, Tolland, East Haddam, Ellington, Hebron, Avon and South Windsor.

[7]The deaths were derived from a life table for the United States as a whole in 1998 (National Center for Health Statistics 2001: 7-8). These appear plausible deaths rates for the 1990 to 2000 period, as Connecticut had lower death rates than the US as a whole.

population) was evident among those aged 30 to 44 and to a lesser degree among those 45 to 49. With the exception of the youngest of these groups (those aged 30 to 34, who were born between 1965 to1969), those moving in were adults of the baby boom cohort and their children (aged 10 to 19). The movement out among cohorts aged 20 to 29 was surely associated with college attendance and mobility common at early career stages. These suburbs were likely to be of limited attraction to those not starting their own families or having the interest and ability to become homeowners.

## EXIT THE BABY BOOM

The above analysis of suburban population shifts has some important implications for the future. The movement of the baby boom from one stage of life to the next has profoundly influenced nearly every aspect of our society, and this will continue for decades ahead. In his report for the Aspen Institute, Ellwood (2002) shows that the job entry of the baby boom generation between 1980 and 2000 provided a critical stimulus to the economy. These individuals were "just reaching their prime working years during the late 1970s. Replacing their less numerous, more poorly educated grandparents and parents, they swelled the labor force." There can be no doubt about the important role of economically successful baby boomers in the expansion of many of Hartford's suburbs. But the years ahead clearly augur sharp change. Between 1980 and 2000 the labor force of the United States increased in size by 50 percent. Projections suggest an increase of only 16 percent over the next 20 years. "None of the growth will be among 'prime age' (age 25-54), native-born workers"; half is likely to be Hispanic (Ellwood 2002).

Such changes will surely have a direct impact on many of Hartford suburban communities. Towns that have recently had relatively high growth of whites will be drawing upon the "baby bust generation." This cohort was born primarily during the 1970s, when there were 7 million fewer births in the United States than in the 1950s (Bouvier and De Vita, 1991: 9-10). By 2010 they will reach 30 to 39 years age, and the baby boom generation will moving more and more into retirement.

Areas that had appreciable Hispanic growth, by contrast, are likely to experience continued sharp Hispanic increase due to continued migration streams and, more importantly, a high rate of natural increase.

## SPREADING DECLINE AND SEGREGATION

There is strong evidence of the greater financial success and rapid acculturation of native born as compared with foreign born Hispanics. The wide dispersion of Hispanics across suburbs is likely to reflect upward mobility of many native born (Suro et al. 2002; Fulton et al. 2001: 11-12). Despite this evidence of optimism and success, economic constraints surely continue to shape the residential choices of most Hispanics and have contributed to their growing concentration in areas quite different from whites. In the Hartford Metropolitan Area in 2000, the median household income of Hispanics was $33,800 as compared with $58,144 among whites (Lewis Mumford Center 2003). White movement away from areas of Hispanic growth was toward higher income suburbs. The growth of whites by town between 1990 and 2000 showed a strong negative correlation (minus 0.76) with the percentage of the town or city that was living below the poverty line in 1999. The pattern for Hispanics was the reverse: There was a strong positive correlation (0.68) between their population growth by town and the percentage living below poverty in 1999.[8]

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[8]Similarly, the growth in the white population between 1990 and 2000 showed a correlation of 0.71 with the logarithm of median household income in 1999; for Hispanics the comparable

A growing presence in suburban locations may be an indicator of improvement for Hispanics while simultaneously contributing to an income decline in those same suburban locations. This is especially likely if higher-earning and better-educated baby boomers predominate among those moving out of these communities. There is the danger of promoting a cycle of decline, a spilling over of problems that have plagued Hartford. In their study of the 195 cities that had 100,000 or more population in 1990, Glaeser and Shapiro (2003: 24) see a clear pattern: "Skilled communities rise, and unskilled communities fall. This has been true every decade going back to the late nineteenth century. The relationship between human capital and growth became even stronger in the 1970s and 1980s than it had been in the 1950s and 1960s, and it appears to have been at least as strong in the 1990s as in earlier decades."

In his study of metropolitan areas in the United States, Orfield (2002: 37) finds an "all-or-nothing quality to suburban racial patterns. The numbers suggest that racial transition, rather than stable racial integration is the norm in suburban America." He describes a pattern of tilting in middle-class neighborhoods, when blacks and Hispanics reach a certain threshold in schools and communities. Such minority presence leads to a shift in white perception of the neighborhood, often well before there are any signs of social or economic decline. Whites begin moving away. Given the insufficient number of middle-class blacks and Hispanics, demand for housing slackens and "poorer individuals (whites, blacks and others) move into the homes vacated by the middle-class whites." As businesses and jobs also start to disappear, the "earlier perceptions become reality" – a process that can take less than a decade. "Moving outward, poverty increases hand in hand with increasing diversity" (Orfield 2002: 11, 13). In his view of white middle class exiting, Frey (2003: 167) places more importance on the draw to the amenities and economic conditions of the areas of destination and is cautious about using the label "white flight." Whether it is "push" or "pull" that is most important, the consequences of white middle-class departure appear to be the same.

## DIFFERENCES AMONG SUBURBAN HISPANICS

Changes in the ethnic/racial composition of the poor are important here. Between 1990 and 2000 nearly half of the total suburban growth of Hispanics (49 percent) and of the blacks (43%) was attributable to increase in persons who were poor or near poor (living in households with less than twice the poverty level).[9] Low income blacks and Hispanics of the region were far less concentrated in the city, while simultaneously the number of poor whites in the suburbs was falling. By 2000 there was a far closer correspondence between racial/ethnic status and poverty in the suburbs than there had been in 1990. In 1990 whites comprised 81 percent of suburban poor or near poor. This fell to 67 percent by 2000.

The poverty rate among suburban whites was 11 percent in 1990 and 12 percent in 2000. The poverty rate of Hispanics in Hartford's suburbs rose from 40 to 44 percent, and suburban blacks experienced a rise from 20 to 29 percent. These aggregate figures, however, fail to reveal important differences across towns in the level of minority poverty. What follows is a closer examination of the situation of suburban Hispanics.

In 1990 there were four towns that had a rate of Hispanic poverty that exceeded 40

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figure was minus 0.62.

[9]In what follows I use the term "poor" to refer to what is technically the "poor and near poor" as stated in this sentence – generally defined as those living in households with an income level below twice the poverty level as defined by the federal government. Given the high cost of living in the Hartford area as compared with the US as a whole, two times the levels seems a more appropriate measure of poverty in the metro area.

percent.[10] These four towns encompassed four-fifths of all poor Hispanics residing in Hartford's suburbs. The Hispanic poverty rate of the combined population of the four was 58 percent. By 2000 the poor had clearly shifted away from these four towns. During the 1990s the percentage of Hispanic poor concentrated in the four towns fell by 15 points. This shift appears to be a positive change, as Hispanic poor were increasingly in towns that contained far lower poverty rates. A similar consequence ensued from the shift of the Hispanic poor out of Hartford during this same period. Hartford had the highest Hispanic poverty rate in the region (over two-thirds in 1990) -- a rate that was unchanged between 1990 and 2000.

During this decade the combined Hispanic poverty rate in the four suburban towns also remained constant. The poverty level for the total population, however, worsened during the 1990s. In Hartford, poverty among the entire population rose from 46 percent to 55 percent; total poverty rose from 21 to 27 percent in the combined population of the four towns. Thus, the situation of Hispanic poor may have been made worse due to increasing isolation from nonpoor people (more about this below). There was also a racial/ethnic dimension to the isolation: In the combined four suburban towns the two-thirds of the poor were white; by 2000 this was down to half.[11]

A contrasting situation existed in the remaining suburban towns, i.e., those in which Hispanic poverty rates were below 40 percent in 1990. Only 17 percent of Hispanics in the combined population of these other towns lived in poverty in 1990. As noted above, these were the areas into which the Hispanic poor were shifting. While this shift may have been very positive for those escaping areas of very high poverty, it resulted in sharply raising the poverty rate of Hispanics in those areas they were arriving. By 2000 the Hispanic poverty rate in these initially low-poverty suburban towns had jumped to 30 percent.

These suburbs may have initially attracted upwardly mobile Hispanics. Towns or parts of towns may have taken on the characteristic of "ethnic communities" or "ethnic neighborhoods that are selected as living environments by those who have wider options based on their market resources" (Logan, Alba and Zhang 2002: 300). This is contrasts with "minority ghettos" of concentrated poverty that largely reflect constraints in residential choice due to absence of financial resources and/or discrimination. The recent influx of more impoverished Hispanics, may be transforming ethnic communities in a way that begins to blur their distinction from minority ghettos. Just as minority neighborhood concentration may not mean isolation from opportunity, a suburban location may be no guarantee of escape from negative features usual associated with urban ghettos.

Evidence on the segregation of the poor from the nonpoor points to the problems that some financially better off suburban Hispanics may be facing. Based on the 57 towns of in Hartford's suburbs, the measure of differentiation was 43 in 1990 when comparing Hispanic poor to Hispanic nonpoor. By 2000 this dropped to 28. The shift of Hispanic poor out of the four high poverty towns into which they were heavily concentrated in 1990 resulted in their being far less segregated from nonpoor Hispanics.

As poor and nonpoor Hispanics were being brought more closely together, white nonpoor were increasingly distancing themselves from Hispanic nonpoor: The measure of

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[10]These towns were New Britain, Windham, Bristol and Middletown. In l990 their Hispanic poverty rates were, respectively, 61, 60, 44, and 42 percent. The Hispanic suburban population in 1990, however, was overwhelming concentrated in New Britain (58 percent of all Hispanics) and Windham (15% of all Hispanics).

[11]In Hartford the percentage white among the poor also fell, but it was already at an extremely low level: 15 percent in 1990 down to 10 percent in 2000.

differentiation increased from 34 to 46 between 1900 and 2000.[12] Thus, nonpoor Hispanics who had moved into the suburbs prior to 1990 may be finding significant changes in the communities where they live. Growing poverty may be further driving segregation from whites.

Other research also points to possible negative consequences of the growth of minorities in areas where they previously had low levels of concentration. In a study comparing the largest metropolitan areas of the United States, Logan, Stults and Farley (2004) found that the metro areas that were gaining a larger share of Hispanics had lower levels of segregation from whites than areas that had a declining share. The lower segregation levels, however, were increasing as Hispanic presence grew. On a national level the segregation of whites from Hispanics remained almost unchanged between 1980 and 2000 (as was also true of Asians). The shift of Hispanics toward areas of lower segregation "was counterbalanced by increasing segregation within metropolitan areas that were gaining a larger share of Hispanics" (Ibid.: 11). The evidence in this paper suggests that it is important to distinguish the impact of rising numbers for nonpoor and poor separately.

## CONCLUSION

The threat of neighborhood decline and white outmigration has surely been enhanced in Connecticut by the town structure. As suburbanization grew, Hartford was unable to incorporate adjacent towns and to, thereby, sustain both its tax base and population heterogeneity. Suburban residency meant a separation from the problems of the city, even when many still were commuting to employment in Hartford. The suburbanization of employment would bring even more of a sense of detachment and more of a stake in keeping firm the town boundaries, as manifested by resistance to any plans requiring regional bussing of school children. The growing minority presence in the suburbs now means that school integration is no longer simply about the mixing of children from Hartford city with those from the suburbs.

The relatively wealthy suburbs to which families of adult baby boomers have sprawled may have a more fragile economic basis than the residents realize. This paper shows that the baby boom generation has been the source of growth in suburban communities with an increasing number of whites. Taking advantage of an obviously strong demand, developers have kept up a rapid pace of building large and expensive houses in some of the wealthiest expanding towns. As the baby boom ages, there is no comparable generation to take its place. A decade or more ahead may well bring a glut to the market of precisely the type of lavish housing that is so profitably being built today, but the developers will surely have read the demographic writing well before the homeowners and be investing elsewhere.

The early escape from Hartford to the suburbs was followed by increasing sprawl outward. Far from disappearing, inequality, poverty and racial/ethnic division have also increased their geographic spread. The link between the declining urban core and its suburbs cannot be ignored, and solutions that depend upon strengthening town boundaries appear ever more futile. There are lessens to be learned from looking carefully at the trends between 1980 and 2000, and Hartford, in important respects, is simply a more extreme case of what many other metropolitan areas are likely to face.

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[12]Compared with the nonpoor, there was a higher level of segregation between poor Hispanics and poor whites, but this remained constant over this decade: 57 in 1990 and 55 in 2000.

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Table 1

## Population Change in Towns of the Hartford Metro Area That Lost 100 or more Whites between 1990 and 2000

| | Total population | | Change in Population 1990-2000 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1990 | 2000 | Total | Whites | Hispanics | Blacks | Asians |
| Hartford | 139,739 | 121,578 | -18,161 | **-20,937** | 5,123 | -4,140 | 82 |
| New Britain | 75,491 | 71,538 | -3,953 | **-14,322** | 6,854 | 2,320 | 382 |
| East Hartford | 50,452 | 49,575 | -877 | **-12,527** | 4,546 | 5,622 | 887 |
| Windsor | 27,817 | 28,237 | 420 | **-3,707** | 452 | 3,230 | 233 |
| Manchester | 51,618 | 54,740 | 3,122 | **-3,680** | 2,350 | 2,896 | 875 |
| Bristol | 60,640 | 60,062 | -578 | **-3,615** | 1,514 | 627 | 437 |
| Vernon | 29,841 | 28,063 | -1,778 | **-3,227** | 405 | 635 | 169 |
| Bloomfield | 19,483 | 19,587 | 104 | **-2,987** | 128 | 2,884 | -16 |
| Enfield | 45,532 | 45,212 | -320 | **-2,875** | 652 | 1,440 | 139 |
| Windham | 22,039 | 22,857 | 818 | **-2,851** | 2,815 | 545 | 102 |
| West Hartford | 60,110 | 63,589 | 3,479 | **-2,492** | 2,099 | 1,903 | 1,390 |
| Middletown | 42,762 | 43,167 | 405 | **-2,352** | 874 | 1,043 | 350 |
| Mansfield | 21,103 | 20,720 | -383 | **-1,575** | 320 | 414 | 211 |
| Winchester | 11,524 | 10,664 | -860 | **-1,306** | 195 | 89 | 64 |
| Newington | 29,208 | 29,306 | 98 | **-1,259** | 467 | 252 | 430 |
| Windsor Locks | 12,358 | 12,043 | -315 | **-786** | 104 | 182 | 95 |
| Wethersfield | 25,651 | 26,271 | 620 | **-762** | 679 | 322 | 222 |
| Plainville | 17,392 | 17,328 | -64 | **-571** | 247 | 33 | 129 |
| East Windsor | 10,081 | 9,818 | -263 | **-529** | 43 | 102 | 69 |
| Plymouth | 11,822 | 11,634 | -188 | **-387** | 36 | 69 | 3 |
| Willington | 5,979 | 5,959 | -20 | **-196** | 23 | 16 | 91 |
| Sum | 770,642 | 751,948 | -18,694 | **-82,943** | 29,926 | 20,484 | 6,344 |
| Sum excluding Hartford | 630,903 | 630,370 | -533 | -62,006 | 24,803 | 24,624 | 6,262 |
| Total Hartford MSA | 1,157,585 | 1,183,110 | 25,525 | -51,702 | 33,715 | 23,692 | 9,413 |
| Remaining 37 towns | 386,943 | 431,162 | 44,219 | 31,241 | 3,789 | 3,208 | 3,069 |

Figure 1

**Whites of East Hartford, Manchester and Bristol Combined by Age, 1990 and 2000**

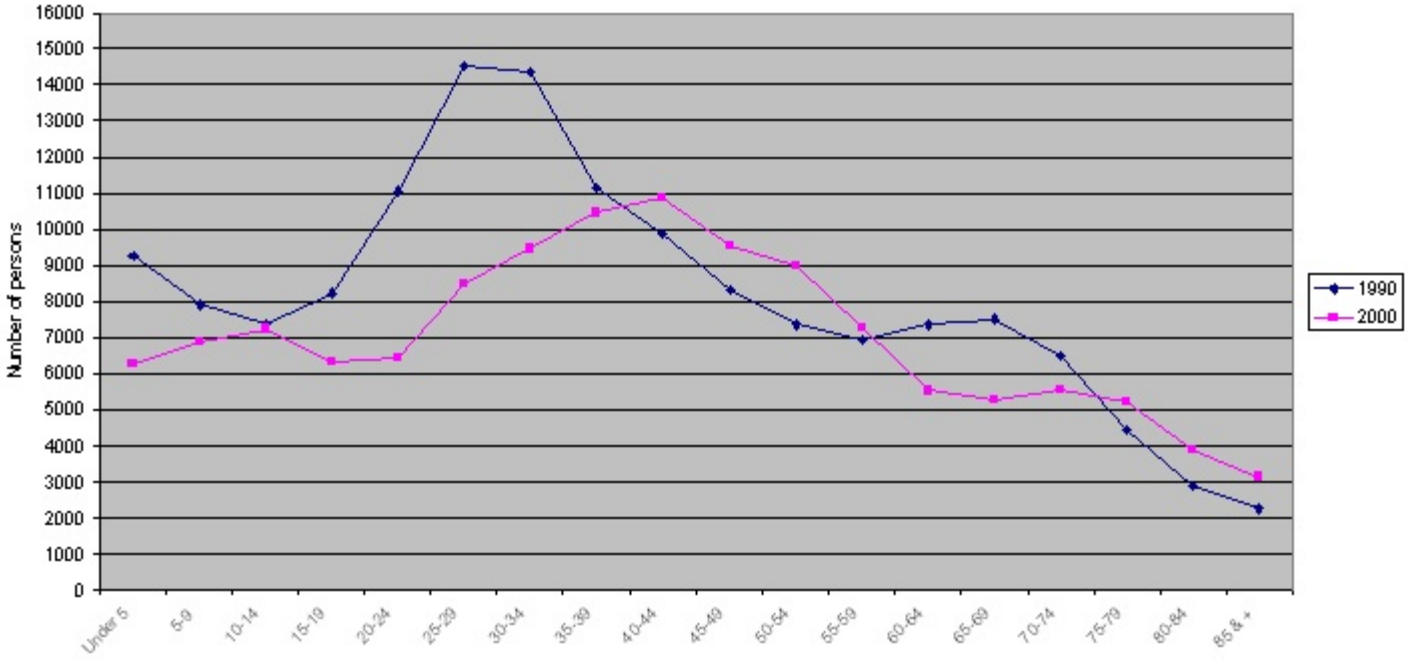

**Figure 2**
**Hispanics of East Hartford, Manchester and Bristol Combined by Age, 1990 and 2000**

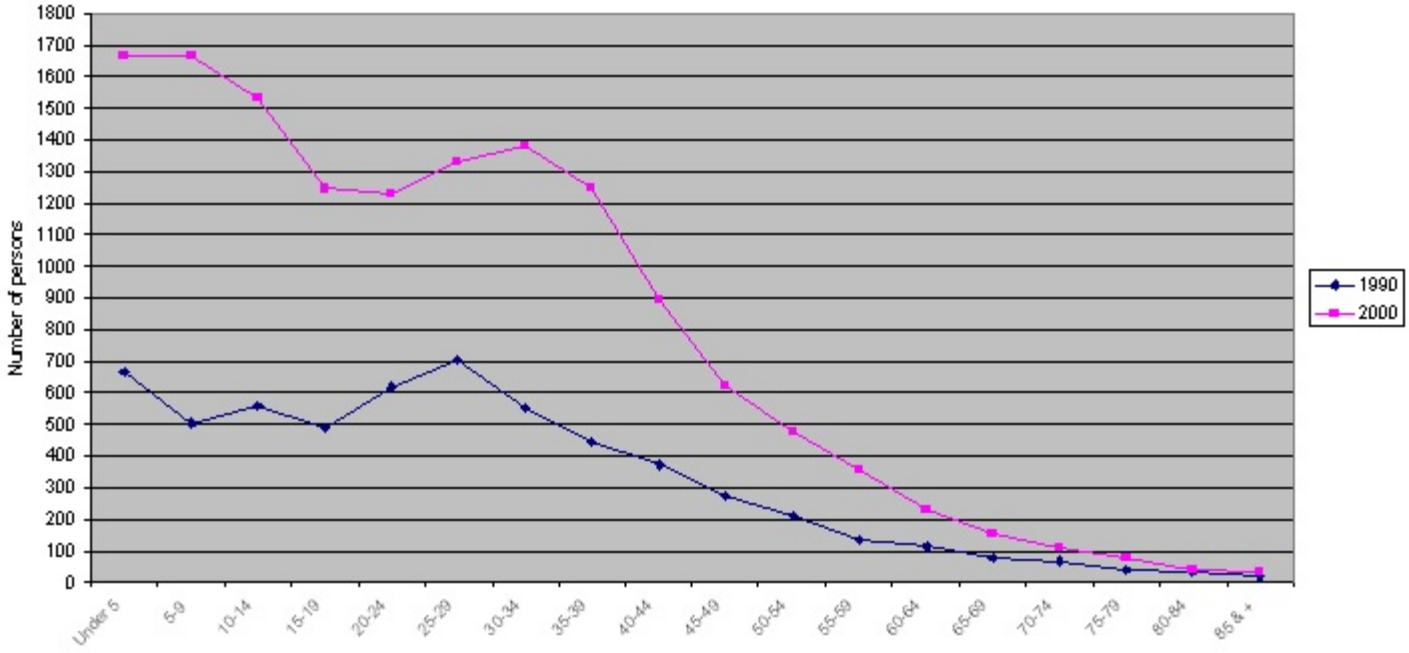

Figure 3
The Combined Population of TenTowns with the Largest Increase in Whites by Age, 1990 and 2000

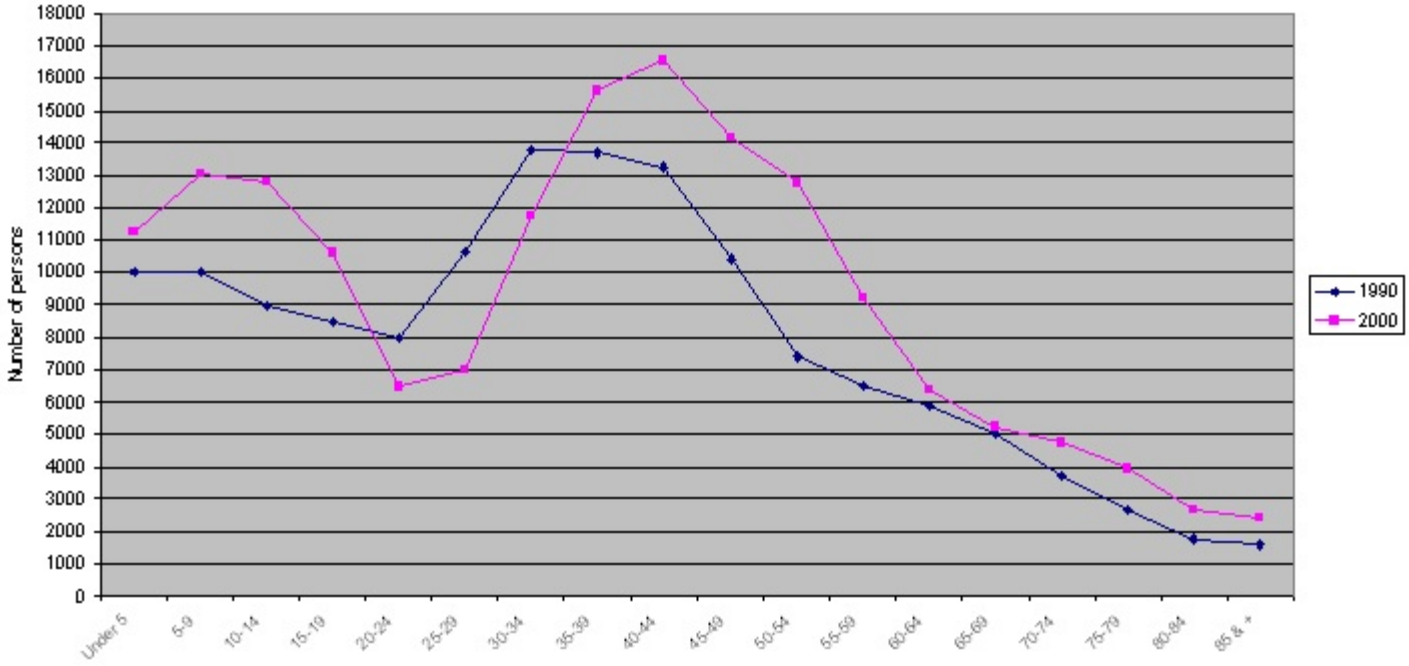

**Figure 4**
**The Projected and Actual Combined Population of 10 Towns With the Largest White Population Increase by Age, 2000**