The Changing Shape of the City

Rail-Volution
Chicago, IL
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The Changing Shape of the City

I. What is the context for the discussion about cities and older suburbs?

II. What are the major demographic trends affecting metropolitan areas?

III. What is in store for the future?
Profound demographic, economic, social, and cultural forces are reshaping the nation.

Demographically, the country is growing, aging, and diversifying.

Economically, the nation is being transformed by globalization, deindustrialization, and technological innovation.

Culturally, the nation is changing its attitude towards cities and urban living.
The result: Cities and first suburbs have an opportunity to attract and retain young professionals, childless couples, baby boomers, new immigrants and the assets of the knowledge economy.
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What is the context for the discussion about cities and older suburbs?

What are the major demographic trends affecting metropolitan areas?

What is in store for the future?
What are the major demographic trends affecting metropolitan areas?

1. City resurgence
2. Uneven growth
3. Racial diversity
4. Geography of poverty
Recent demographic and market changes have already led to a surge of population in urban areas …..

Population growth in 50 largest cities, 1970-2005

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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And have also contributed to the downtown revitalization in cities


Total population, 45 U.S. downtowns, 1970-2000
During the 1990s, the growth in some downtowns – like Chicago - was substantial.

Source: Birch, 2005
The majority of downtowners in 2000 lived alone; the next largest group contained young couples and “empty nesters.”

Downtown households by type, 2000

Source: Birch, 2005
Younger workers (age 25-44) form the largest number of downtowners, but older workers (age 45-64) are catching up.
II What are the major demographic trends affecting metropolitan areas?

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Population is continuing to decentralize in nearly every U.S. metropolitan area.

Selected cities and suburbs, population growth 1990-2000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Every household type grew at faster rates in the suburbs than in cities.


If not for immigration, several of the nation’s largest cities would not have grown during the 1990s.

Population growth with and without foreign-born, 1990-2000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
At the same time, over half of all jobs in large metropolitan areas are located more than 10 miles outside of downtowns.

Share of jobs within 3-, 10-, and greater-than-10-mile radius of center, 2002

- **Inside 3 miles**: 17%
- **Between 3 and 10 miles**: 31%
- **Outside 10 miles**: 52%

Source: Alan Berube, Brookings
Nearly 17 million Americans live in a “weak market” city

Source: Wolman and Furdell, George Washington University

Weak market cities rank in the bottom 3rd across a range of economic indicators (ex. unemployment, poverty, income)
II What are the major demographic trends affecting metropolitan areas?

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In aggregate, the racial makeup of the 100 largest cities has shifted. The top hundred cities are now majority minority.

Share of population by race and ethnicity, 2000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Many downtowns are racially and ethnically diverse. More so than 20 years ago.

Source: Birch, 2005
In many metro areas, the locus of immigration is shifting from the central city to the suburbs.

Context

Trends: Diversity

Conclusion

In the U.S. 48% of all immigrants live in suburbs.

Percent of foreign-born population in suburbs, 2000

The percent of each racial/ethnic group living in the suburbs increased substantially

Share of population by race and ethnicity, 1990

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
What are the major demographic trends affecting metropolitan areas?

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More of America’s poor live in large metropolitan suburbs than live in big cities.

Below-poverty population by location, 2005*

Source: American Community Survey

* Estimates are roughly +/- 0.5 % pts.
But residents of large cities are still almost twice as likely to be poor as residents of suburbs.
Poverty rates in central cities declined from 1990 to 2002, while poverty rates in the suburbs have increased slightly.

Poverty rates for central cities and suburbs, 1990-2001

During the 1990s, the number of high-poverty neighborhoods in central cities dropped significantly.

In Chicago, the number of high poverty tracts fell from 187 to 114.
While the number of high-poverty areas is dropping sharply in cities, it is increasing at an alarming rate in first suburbs.


Finally, the percent of city neighborhoods that were middle income fell by half from 1970-2000.
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Five key takeaways for the changing shape of the city

In 2030, about half of the buildings in which Americans live, work, and shop will have been built after 2000.

Household formation will have profoundly important impacts. Childless married-couple and single-person households will grow rapidly.

Older, inner-ring “first” suburbs will figure prominently in conversations about metropolitan growth and development.

The nation will continue to get much more diverse and multi-cultural. Suburbs especially will have to adapt.

Demographics are not the only determinant of our urban future: economic restructuring, globalization, energy, education, governance.