

Spatial Patterns of Poverty, Hardship & Nonprofit Safety Net Provision in the U.S.

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Abstract

This article explores the spatial distribution of poverty and hardship across urban, suburban, and rural geographic areas of the United States. Analyses document the changing geography of poverty in the U.S., including the suburbanization of poverty amidst persistently high rates of poverty in cities and rural areas. We show how the COVID-19 pandemic recession produced acute hardship in all types of communities and assess how these impacts have varied by local geography. Community-based nonprofit organizations (e.g., community health centers, housing and employment services, and food assistance providers) play key roles in the provision of critical services and resources to low-income households during economic downturns in the U.S., yet little scholarly attention is given to how the presence of such programs varies by geography. Thus, we explore trends in nonprofit human service provision over time and across different types of local geography. While poverty problems are present in all types of places across the U.S., analyses suggest that suburban and rural areas dramatically lag urban areas in nonprofit program capacity. We conclude with implications for poverty research and anti-poverty policy moving forward.

Keywords: Poverty, unemployment, food security, nonprofit organizations, COVID-19

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I Introduction

Poverty problems in the U.S., as in Japan and other high-income countries across the globe, became more acute in urban, suburban, and rural communities in the wake of the Great Recession. Roughly 4 million more poor people lived in the suburbs outside American cities than within the cities themselves when the Great Recession ended in 2009 and the suburban poor outnumbered the rural poor population by almost two to one (Allard 2017, 2019). Poverty rates in the U.S. remain much higher in urban and rural places than suburbs, but

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the percentage of suburban residents living in poverty has held steady at historic highs. While the Great Recession accelerated the rise of suburban poverty in America, the number of poor people living in suburban communities was increasing consistently for more than thirty years prior (Allard 2017). The changing geography of poverty in the U.S. - the suburbanization of poverty amidst persistently high rates of poverty in cities and rural areas - stands out as one of the most important economic and demographic shifts to have occurred in recent decades. It is too early to have an accurate sense of how the COVID-19 pandemic recession may affect the prevalence of poverty in the U.S., but early signs suggest the challenges of poverty, unemployment, and hardship following the COVID-19 pandemic recession will confront all types of communities - urban, suburban, and rural - for years to come.

Even though poverty problems and trends in the U.S. mirror those elsewhere around the globe, the anti-poverty safety net in the U.S. is composed very differently than in other high-income countries (Allard and Paisner 2016). Apart from a core set of federal public cash and in-kind assistance programs, many key programs of support for low-income Americans - emergency food assistance, employment services, behavioral health services, and programs for children - are commonly delivered through community-based nonprofit or nongovernmental human service organizations. Nonprofit human service programs for low-income households receive roughly \$100 billion in public and private charitable support each year, comparable to annual spending on key federal programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) providing food assistance to low-income families or the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) directing cash benefits to workers in lower wage jobs (Allard 2009, 2019). Unlike SNAP and the EITC, however, nonprofit human service programs vary widely from place to place, which dramatically affects how well communities respond to rising need and hardship (Allard 2017). Nowhere has the reality of a fragmented and spatially varied nonprofit human service safety net been more apparent than in the U.S. response to the COVID-19 pandemic, where different geographic locations have experienced substantially different responses to the need and hardship resulting from the public health crisis (Building Movement Project 2020; Finchum-Mason et al 2020; U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency 2020).

Yet, much poverty research in the U.S. - and in many high-income countries - has not given adequate attention to the spatial challenges of poverty problems, or to how the presence and delivery of many core anti-poverty policy tools vary by geographic location. In the case of the U.S., much of the focus is on national trends in poverty and expansion of federal cash or near-cash programs. Complementing this national focus with analyses of spatial variation in poverty and nonprofit human service programs is essential if policy research in the U.S. is to accurately convey trends in need and mitigation. Local-level analyses of poverty and safety net provision also may generate ideas for new research approaches among scholars and policymakers in Japan, where there is limited data tracing poverty across different population sub-groups or geographies and where national social assistance programs are changing (Abe 2003; Noda 2015).

A central focus of this article, therefore, is to explore how poverty and hardship in the U.S. exists across urban, suburban, and rural geographic areas today. We first define key measures, terms, and geographic designations. Next, the article will use data from the Census Bureau to trace poverty rates and poverty populations across urban, suburban, and rural areas since 1990. Additional analyses will pay particular attention to unemployment trends and food hardship just before and during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because poverty and hardship present challenges to the nonprofit antipoverty safety net across the urban, suburban, and rural landscape, a final set of descriptive analyses examine how the presence of

nonprofit human service programs varies across local geography in the United States. A concluding section discusses implications of these findings for future research and policy.

II Key Definitions and Terms

To properly understand the spatial distribution of poverty and hardship in the United States, it is essential to clearly define core terms and concepts. Thus, we take opportunity at the outset of this article to detail measures used to reflect poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity problems, as well as how we make distinctions between urban, suburban, and rural places. This section closes with a brief discussion of nonprofit human service provision in America and how we measure nonprofit service capacity in this article.

Defining Poverty, Unemployment, Food Insecurity. When examining geographic variation in poverty, it is common for U.S. researchers to use the official federal poverty measure (OPM), which defines households and people within households as being poor if they have income below a federal poverty line or threshold (FPL) adjusted for household size and composition. In 2019, the federal poverty threshold for a family of three with two children was \$20,598 (Semega et al 2020). The OPM is gathered consistently across time and local geography, which make it well-suited for examining spatial trends in poverty.¹⁾

In this article we will use the OPM to calculate different poverty measures. First, we are concerned with the number of poor people in a community and changes in the number of poor people over time. Increases in the number of poor people within a given place can create significant demand for additional services from local schools, transportation agencies, public health agencies, and safety net programs. Similarly, increases in the number of poor people may outpace the availability of job opportunities in the surrounding community, creating sudden pockets of unemployment or underemployment. In addition, we will focus on poverty rates, the percentage or share of residents in a particular place who are poor. Poverty rates provide information about the prevalence or severity of poverty within the population of a given place. Of particular concern for researchers in the U.S. are places with high rates of poverty or concentrated poverty - commonly defined as places with poverty rates over 20 percent. Living in a community with a high rate of poverty, particularly for prolonged periods in youth, has been shown to have deleterious effects on employment and well-being throughout the life course (Chetty and Hendren 2018; Keels et al 2005; Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2000; Weber 2018). In addition to considering trends in poverty rates below, we also will examine how concentrated poverty has evolved over the past several decades.

We will focus on two additional measures of need or hardship in this article. First, food insecurity captures the extent to which households have limited or uncertain access to adequate food. The classification of a household as food insecure is based on survey questions developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The questions ask how frequently households experience different types of food hardship, including worrying food will run out, being unable to afford balanced meals, and skipping meals or eating less due to financial

¹⁾ The OPM, however, does not capture many sources of income and antipoverty program benefits. It is common in the U.S. for scholars to draw upon other indicators of poverty when seeking to understand trends in need and hardship. For example, Brooks and Pearce (2000) outline family self-sufficiency measures that can be calculated to reflect the cost of work, child care, housing, and health insurance in different local areas. In recent years, the federal government has begun to report a Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), which accounts for a wider array of income sources and program benefits, as well as adjusts for regional cost of living and household out-of-pocket expenses for work or medical care, (Fox 2020).

constraints. Households reporting three or more of these conditions, indicating that they were at least sometimes unable to acquire adequate food due to insufficient resources, are classified as food insecure (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2021). Next, we examine county-level unemployment rates published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to capture the share of the labor force that is not employed at a given point in time. To be counted in the unemployment rate, an unemployed individual must be actively searching for work and currently available to start work. This metric does not include individuals who are not actively seeking work - for example, retirees, children, or non-working parents; these individuals are not considered to be part of the labor force (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021b).²⁾

Defining Urban, Suburban, and Rural Geography. Our findings below focus on the county as the primary unit of analysis for several reasons. First, counties are the key administrative unit for many public assistance programs and are the organizing geographic unit around most nonprofit human service programs. Institutional charitable philanthropy supporting nonprofit human services often is bounded within a given county or set of counties in a region. County governments also are regional entities often responsible for transportation, utility, and public housing programs. More practically, it is difficult to get information about safety net program provision or economic data during the COVID pandemic at levels of geography below the county, such as at the municipal or neighborhood level.

Distinctions between urban, suburban, and rural counties are based upon the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) definitions of metropolitan and non-metropolitan area boundaries.³⁾ Urban counties are defined as those containing the primary urban center of a given metropolitan area and suburban counties are those counties that are defined as part of the same metropolitan area, but do not contain the metro's primary city. Rural counties are defined as non-metropolitan counties. Among urban counties, we distinguish between "large" urban counties located within the largest 100 metropolitan areas and "small" urban counties located in metropolitan areas outside the largest 100 metros. Small urban counties outside the largest 100 metropolitan areas have fewer than 500,000 residents generally and small suburban populations, whereas large urban counties within the largest 100 metropolitan areas contain about three-quarters of the U.S. population and include the vast majority of suburban residents.

We complement county-level analyses with analyses of census tract-level data from the largest 100 metropolitan areas. Census tracts often are used as proxies for neighborhoods by U.S. researchers and tract-level data allow us to determine the share of the county population living in urban versus suburban municipalities across the largest 100 metropolitan areas. We then use these tract-level data to sort large urban counties into three categories: less than one-third of county population in suburban municipalities; one-third to two-thirds of county population in suburban municipalities; or more than two-thirds of county population in suburban municipalities. Tract-level data also allow us to identify urban and suburban populations living in high-poverty neighborhoods or places where the poverty rate exceeds 20 percent.⁴⁾

Nonprofit Human Service Provision in the United States. Nonprofit human service organizations

²⁾ Income poverty in Japan is commonly defined as those in households with income below 50 percent of the median household income. See Abe (2010) and Noda (2015) for a discussion of poverty and hardship measures gathered in a Japanese research context.

³⁾ OMB formally defines metropolitan areas, or metropolitan statistical areas, as those areas containing an urbanized population center with 50,000 or more inhabitants and adjacent communities that have a high degree of economic and social integration with that urban center.

⁴⁾ See Allard (2017, 2019) for more details about geographic definitions and corresponding census data.

are a critical source of support for low-income populations and a key component of the American antipoverty safety net. We define nonprofit human service organizations broadly to be legally-incorporated, tax-exempt entities providing assistance through employment services, food and housing assistance, adult education, mental health and substance abuse services, child and youth programs, or assistance to help other marginalized groups or communities. Often nonprofit human services complement public cash or in-kind programs of assistance, such as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or SNAP, by filling needs those programs do not cover. Human service programs also reach low-income populations not eligible for public benefits, such as many immigrant households or those without children. The vast majority of nonprofit human service organizations receive some public funding for operations and many are highly reliant on those public sources of revenue. Government funding for human services often comes through competitive grants and contracts or voucher payments, but can also be accessed through other tools such as tax credits (see Allard 2009; Smith 2012). The public-private arrangements surrounding nonprofit human service provision benefit both government and the nonprofit organizations themselves. Public funding allows governmental agencies to support a more robust set of services than would be possible if communities were reliant on direct public provision. Nonprofit organizations benefit from having access to stable revenue streams and opportunities to advance their core organizational missions. With total public and private human service expenditures exceeding \$100 billion annually, the American safety net is more highly dependent on a publicly financed, privately administered nonprofit human service sector than scholars of social welfare policy commonly understand (Allard 2009).

Unlike provision of large public cash and in-kind assistance programs such as SNAP or the EITC, provision of human service programs is highly dependent on local organizations. As a result, the types and capacity of nonprofit human services varies quite a bit from local place to local place. Some of this variation is because local nonprofit human service organizations come in many different organizational forms and sizes. Large local nonprofit service organizations often are part of regional or national networks and maintain operating budgets well over \$20 to \$30 million dollars annually with hundreds of staff positions. Many other nonprofit service organizations operate on much smaller budgets and with fewer staff. Moreover, while most human service assistance is delivered through secular nonprofit organizations with no formal religious affiliations, many nonprofit providers maintain affiliations with local religious organizations, administrative or financial connections to religious congregations, and/or embrace a faith-related mission (Allard 2009a; Smith and Sosin 2001). Local variation in nonprofit human service programming also reflects local political and social context, local attitudes about race and immigration, the capacity of the local nonprofit service infrastructure, and the strength of local philanthropy, all of which vary widely across urban, suburban, and rural geography in the U.S. (see Allard 2017). Low-income households experiencing unemployment or hardship, therefore, will have access to different bundles of nonprofit services and assistance depending on where they live.

III Data and Methods

To examine trends in poverty, hardship, and nonprofit human service provision, this article assembles several different data resources. Analyses of spatial trends in poverty across the urban, suburban, and rural landscape from 1990 to 2017 use data from the 1990 and 2000 decennial census, as well as five-year tract-level data from the American Community Survey (currently available through 2015-19). We use county-level

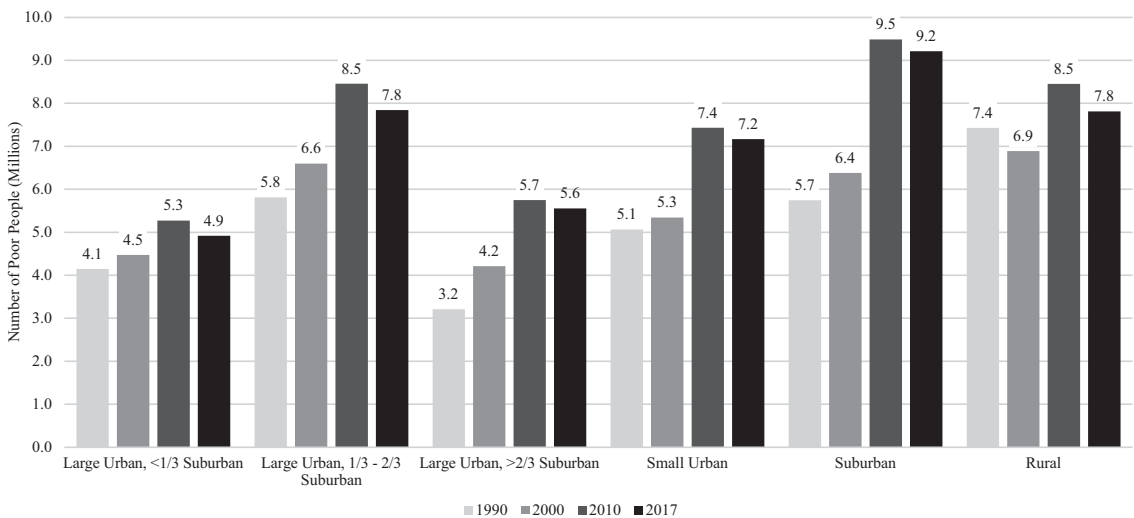
estimates of food insecurity developed by Feeding America, which combine state-level food insecurity data with county-level data to impute annual food insecurity metrics at the county level (Gundersen et al, 2012, 2021). We use local area unemployment statistics reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which incorporate national survey data and state administrative data to produce county-level estimates of the unemployment rate (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021b). Finally, we use data from the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS) to examine county-level aggregate nonprofit human service expenditures for the years 2000 to 2017 for organizations that primarily provide one or more of the following types of services: mental health and substance abuse treatment; domestic violence shelters; care for the disabled; employment and job training; food assistance; housing and shelter assistance; adult education and literacy; youth education and development; child and family services; and community development. These data are based on the IRS 990 forms that nonprofit organizations submit to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to report basic organizational and fiscal information as part of an organization's tax-exempt status.⁵⁾ In some instances, county-level aggregated data may be distorted by the presence of extremely large national or regional administrative headquarters, whose work extends well beyond the county or state in which the tax-filing address is located. To minimize these distortions and isolate nonprofit organizations operating primarily within the local county, we also run separate analyses for organizations with annual revenues at or below \$10 million in annual revenue.

While these data provide important insights into the changing geography of poverty, work, and safety net provision, results should be interpreted with several important caveats in mind. First, we rely on the federal poverty measure in the analyses that follow, even though there are compelling arguments to think about alternative definitions that consider program income and out-of-pocket work or medical costs, control for spatial differences in cost of living, focus on consumption, or relate to hardship and material need. Most alternative poverty measures aren't gathered consistently over time in different places, nor with accuracy or depth at small-scale geographic units such as census tracts. Second, despite the advantages of the official federal poverty measure for examining trends over geography and time, the most recent data available only reaches the years just before the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar data limitations around local-level food insecurity lead us to use imputations of county-level food insecurity rates just before and after the COVID-19 pandemic that have been developed and validated over time (see Gundersen 2021). Third, nonprofit expenditure data from the NCCS also have several limitations. Most important for this article, NCCS data only contain location information about an organization's administrative headquarters and not separate offices where services may be delivered. These data, therefore, may improperly classify the geographic location of funding in the case of large human service nonprofits that operate programs in rural regions or suburban communities, but maintain headquarters in a central city or rural population center.⁶⁾ Limitations aside, we believe that the findings discussed here present valuable conceptual and practical insights into the realities confronting local safety nets in urban, suburban, and rural America.

⁵⁾ The number of registered human service nonprofits increases over the time period. Our data contain information on 43,041 nonprofit organizations in 2000 and 64,614 in 2017. NCCS data classify nonprofits according to the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE), which helps sort nonprofits human service organizations into areas of primary focus. Specifically, we include nonprofit organizations that self-classify as one of the following NTEE codes: A50, A51, A52, A54, A56, A57, B20, B21, B24, B25, B28, B29, B70, B90, B92, B94, F20, F22, F30, J20, J21, J22, J30, J32, J33, K30, K31, K34, K35, K36, L21, L40, L41, N30, N31, N32, O, O01, O02, O03, O05, O11, O12, O19, O20, O21, O22, O23, O30, O31, O40, O41, O42, O43, O50, O51, O52, O53, O54, O55, O99, P30, P31, P32, P33, P40, P42, P43, P44, P45, P46, P47.

IV Spatial Trends in Poverty 1990 to 2017

Poverty problems in the U.S. surged to historic highs in the early part of the 21st Century largely because of two economic downturns: the recession of 2001 and the Great Recession. From 1990 to 2017, the number of poor people in the U.S. rose from 31.4 million to 42.5 million. Within these broad national trends is evidence that poverty problems remained stubbornly persistent in rural America, while becoming more acute in the suburbs and cities of U.S. metropolitan areas. Figure 1 presents changes in the number of poor people across urban, suburban, and rural counties over the past three decades. The number of poor people in metropolitan areas - urban and suburban places combined - grew from 24 million in 1990 to nearly 35 million in 2017 - almost a 50 percent increase. Poverty problems were persistent in rural (or non-metropolitan) counties during this period, as the number of poor people in rural communities increased by about 5 percent from 1990 to 2017 (7.4 million to 7.8 million). As can be seen in Figure 1, much of the increase in the number of poor people across all geographies occurred in the first decade of the 2000s, following the recessions ending in 2001



Note: Poverty status is defined as household income at or below the federal poverty threshold. Figures for 2010 and 2017 reflect five-year ACS data.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 1990, 2000; American Community Survey, 2008-12, 2015-19.

Figure 1 Comparing Urban, Suburban, and Rural Poverty

⁶⁾ Excluded from these data are nonprofits with budgets under \$25,000 and small church-based programs that are not required to file tax-exempt status. Data on expenditures and revenues are reported in broad categories without connection to specific services, programs, or sources. The categorizations of nonprofit human service organizations are based on the primary substantive focus of programs and do not reflect the many other service or program areas in which a nonprofit might operate. Allard (2009) and Grønbjerg and Smith (2001) discuss the limitations of IRS data when developing estimates of the size and scope of the nonprofit service sector. Finally, there is evidence that for-profit firms have become more prominent in the delivery of local human services (see Smith 2012). Although Allard (2009) estimates the share of services provided to poor working age adults by for-profit firms to be relatively modest in size, these for-profit firms do not submit 990 forms and are not captured by these data.

and 2009.

Sustained economic recovery since the end of the Great Recession did reduce the number of people in poverty in the years just preceding the COVID-19 pandemic and those reductions can be seen across all geographic areas. For example, the number of poor people living in metropolitan areas peaked at about 39.1 million in 2013, since falling to 34.7 million in 2017. Similarly, the number of people in poverty in rural America has fallen from a Great Recession-era peak of 8.7 million in 2012 to 7.8 million in 2017 (not shown in Figure 1).⁷⁾ Despite this progress, there are more poor people in urban, suburban, and rural America today than was the case in 1990 or 2000.

Figure 1 reveals several important insights about the shifting geography of poverty within metropolitan areas. First, both large and small urban counties show similar trends in poverty building steadily from 1990 to 2000, then increasing after the Great Recession in 2010. The impact of the economic recovery beginning in 2009 can be seen in the levelling off of the poverty population in both larger urban counties in the largest 100 metropolitan areas and in small urban counties outside the largest 100 metropolitan areas. Second, the most severe increases in the number of poor people occurred across suburban counties and the most highly suburbanized large urban counties. For example, suburban counties experienced a 49 percent increase in the number of poor people from 2000 to 2010 (6.4 million to 9.5 million). Highly suburbanized urban counties - those where more than two-thirds of the population lived in suburban municipalities - experienced a 36 percent increase in the number of poor people during that same time. Third, although county-level data obscure urban and suburban distinctions somewhat, we see the gradual trend in greater numbers of poor people living in the most suburbanized large urban counties and in suburban counties than in smaller urban and less suburbanized urban counties.⁸⁾ Municipal-level data (not shown here) support the conclusion that there are now many more poor people living in suburban versus urban areas. By 2017, there were 4 million more poor people living in suburbs of the largest 100 metro areas than in the cities of those metros (15.1 million versus 11.1 million).⁹⁾

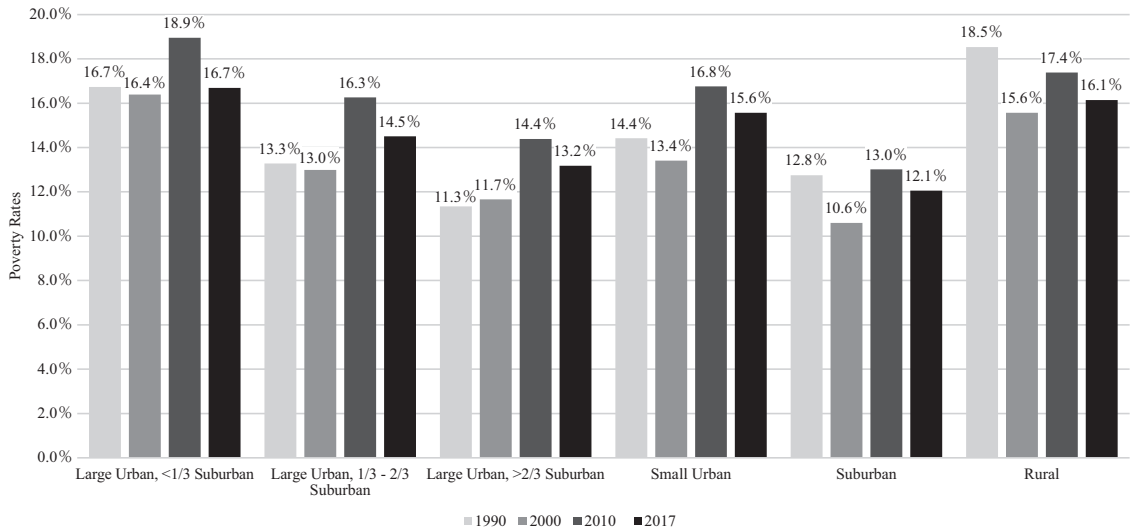
While it is commonly presumed that poverty problems in suburbs are recent developments, poverty has been present in suburban America for some time (Baldassare 1986; Berube and Kneebone 2013; Murphy 2007, 2010). Allard (2017) finds that suburbs in the largest 100 metropolitan areas were home to nearly as many poor people in 1990 as cities in those same metros - 8.6 million versus 9.5 million. By 2012, the number of poor people nearly doubled in suburban census tracts (8.6 million to 16.9 million), compared to an increase from 9.5 million to 12.7 million in urban tracts.¹⁰⁾ Rising suburban poverty has not been isolated to a handful of older suburbs or to those suburbs located outside of older industrial cities. The number of people in poverty increased substantially from 1990 to 2015 across older and newer suburbs. In fact, the oldest suburbs - those built before 1950 - experienced smaller increases in those living below the poverty line compared to suburbs built after 1950. Consistent with national trends, there is evidence that the economic recovery following the Great Recession led to slight decreases in poverty across all types of suburbs just before the COVID-19

⁷⁾ Authors' calculations for 2012 are from the 2010-2014 American Community Survey. Calculations for 2013 are from the 2011-2015 American Community Survey. Calculations for 2017 are from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey. Recent decreases in poverty population are more readily apparent in single-year estimates (see Semega, Kollar, Shrider, and Creamer 2020), but are beginning to be captured by five-year ACS data.

⁸⁾ See also Allard (2017) and Berube and Kneebone (2013).

⁹⁾ Authors' calculations from the 2015-19 American Community Survey.

¹⁰⁾ Calculations reported in Allard (2017) reflect data from the 2010-14 American Community Survey.



Note: Poverty status is defined as household income at or below the federal poverty threshold. Figures for 2010 and 2017 reflect five-year ACS data. Percentages reflect averages of county-level statistics.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 1990, 2000; American Community Survey, 2008-2012, 2015-19.

Figure 2 Comparing Urban, Suburban, and Rural Poverty Rates

pandemic began (Allard 2017, 2019).

To understand the prevalence or concentration of poverty in the U.S., Figure 2 charts trends in poverty rates across urban, suburban, and rural counties since 1990. Three key patterns emerge when looking at poverty rates across geography in the last thirty years. First, consistent with post-war history, poverty rates remain higher on average in urban and rural counties than suburban counties. Mean poverty rates among urban counties from the largest 100 metro areas were highest in the least suburbanized areas (16.7 percent in 2017) and lowest among those most heavily suburbanized (13.2 percent in 2017). Similarly, average poverty rates were about 16 percent in small urban and rural counties respectively in 2017, compared to 12.1 percent in the average suburban county. Second, the economic expansion following the Great Recession finally began to push poverty rates downward by 2017. Falling poverty rates can be seen in urban, suburban, and rural areas. For example, mean poverty rates in smaller urban counties fell from 16.8 percent to 15.6 percent from 2010 to 2017. Similarly, average poverty rates in suburban counties fell by almost 1 percentage point from 2010 to 2017. Finally, despite gains made after many years of economic recovery, poverty rates remained higher in 2017 than in 2000 across all types of geography.

One fact about poverty in the U.S. has not changed in the last twenty years: poverty rates remain much higher among racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. than non-Hispanic Whites - regardless of geographic location (see Table 1).¹¹⁾ The mean poverty rate for Black and Hispanic Americans is consistently much higher than for non-Hispanic Whites or Asians in urban, suburban, and rural areas. For example, the average poverty rate for Black Americans in urban counties that were less than one-third suburban was 24.0 percent in

¹¹⁾ Poverty figures from the U.S. Census Bureau prior to 2000 cannot be separated for non-Hispanic Whites and Whites who identify as Hispanic, which make it difficult to compare current racial and ethnic differences in poverty with trends prior to 2000.

2017, compared to 22.1 percent for Hispanics, 15.7 percent for Asians, and 9.9 percent for non-Hispanic Whites (see top panel in Table 1). Race and ethnic differences in poverty rates persist across different types of urban counties - large and small, as well as those with larger or smaller suburban populations. Similarly, the mean poverty rate in 2017 for Black and Hispanic Americans in suburban counties (22.6 percent versus 20.2 percent respectively) is almost double the mean poverty rate for non-Hispanic Whites or Asians (9.9 percent versus 11.0 percent respectively). These patterns persist in rural counties as well, where the average poverty rate among Blacks and Hispanics is roughly twice as high as the average poverty rates for non-Hispanic Whites and Asians (see bottom panel of Table 1).

Although poverty rates started to fall across all racial and ethnic groups following the Great Recession, poverty remained as prevalent in 2017 across most groups and geographic locations as in 2000. For example, the average poverty rate among Black Americans in urban counties where less than one-third of the population lived in suburbs was roughly the same in 2017 as in 2000 - around 24 percent. The average poverty rate for Hispanics in small urban counties was nearly the same in 2017 as in 2000 (23.7 percent versus 23.3 percent respectively). In most geographic settings, poverty rates among non-Hispanic Whites were slightly higher in 2017 than in 2000. The fourth and fifth panels of Table 1 show that the average poverty rate among non-Hispanic Whites in small urban and suburban counties was nearly two percentage points higher in 2017

Table 1 Poverty Rate by Race, Ethnicity and Place 2000-17

	Poverty Rate			
	Non-Hispanic White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Large Urban Counties, < 1/3 Suburban				
2000	8.9%	24.3%	23.0%	17.0%
2010	11.1%	27.1%	26.9%	17.4%
2017	9.9%	24.0%	22.1%	15.7%
Large Urban Counties, 1/3 - 2/3 Suburban				
2000	7.3%	25.5%	22.3%	14.5%
2010	9.6%	28.5%	27.5%	15.2%
2017	9.0%	24.8%	22.4%	13.3%
Large Urban Counties, > 2/3 Suburban				
2000	7.0%	24.7%	23.9%	13.3%
2010	8.9%	27.2%	26.7%	13.4%
2017	8.4%	23.1%	22.3%	12.6%
Small Urban Counties				
2000	9.9%	27.9%	23.3%	16.1%
2010	12.5%	32.5%	27.6%	16.5%
2017	11.7%	27.9%	23.7%	15.8%
Suburban Counties				
2000	8.3%	22.2%	19.2%	11.5%
2010	10.4%	26.4%	23.9%	12.3%
2017	9.9%	22.6%	20.2%	11.0%
Rural Counties				
2000	12.4%	27.7%	25.8%	13.7%
2010	13.7%	35.7%	29.4%	16.8%
2017	13.1%	30.4%	24.6%	15.2%

Note: Poverty status is defined as household income at or below the federal poverty threshold. Figures for 2010 and 2017 reflect five-year ACS data. Percentages reflect averages of county-level statistics.

Sources: Census 2000; American Community Survey, 2008-12, 2015-19.

than in 2000.

Problems of concentrated poverty - places where poverty rates exceed 20 percent - show similar trends across geography. Table 2 examines exposure to high-poverty places across urban and suburban census tracts in the largest 100 metropolitan areas, and across all rural counties. The first column of Table 2 presents the total number of people living in high-poverty places in 2000 and 2017. Just as the number of poor people in the U.S. has steadily increased in recent decades across the geographic landscape, the number of people living in high-poverty places has increased significantly since 2000. Concentrated poverty problems also remain more severe in cities than in suburbs or rural areas. In 2017, more residents of urban places in the largest metro areas live in high-poverty tracts than suburban or rural residents (23.6 million versus 18.0 million and 11.4 million respectively). The number of suburban residents living in high poverty census tracts has increased at a much faster pace than is observed in urban or rural areas. From 2000 to 2017, the number of people living in high-poverty suburban census tracts in the largest 100 metro areas increased by nearly 75 percent, compared to an increase of 7 percent in urban census tracts and 35 percent in rural counties.

Not only are poverty rates higher within communities of color in the U.S., but racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately more likely to live in high-poverty areas compared to non-Hispanic White Americans. More than seventy percent of all people - poor and not poor - living in high-poverty urban tracts in 2017 were Black (34.7 percent) or Hispanic (36.0 percent). Non-Hispanic Whites composed about 20 percent of all people in high-poverty urban neighborhoods in 2017. The picture in suburban areas follows a similar pattern. Roughly 2 of every 3 individuals living in high-poverty suburban tracts are people of color and about one-third of those living in high-poverty suburban tracts are non-Hispanic Whites. While Black and Hispanic residents of cities and suburbs were much more likely to live in census tracts with poverty rates over 20 percent than non-Hispanic whites, most people living in high-poverty rural counties are non-Hispanic White (see the bottom panel of Table 2). It is important to note, however, that the steady growth in the number of people living in high-poverty urban, suburban, and rural places from 2000 to 2017 did not substantially alter the racial or ethnic distribution of the population living in high-poverty areas.

Rising poverty is driven in large part by a common set of factors across urban, suburban, and rural areas. Of

Table 2 Number of People Living in High Poverty Areas by Race, Ethnicity and Place 2000-17

	Total Number of People Living in High-Poverty Places (1,000,000s)	Percentage of People in High-Poverty Places			
		Non-Hispanic White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Largest 100 Metropolitan Areas					
Urban Tracts					
2000	22.1	20.6%	39.7%	32.5%	5.2%
2017	23.6	21.7%	34.7%	36.0%	5.9%
Suburban Tracts					
2000	10.4	31.2%	22.8%	39.5%	3.5%
2017	18.0	34.6%	21.3%	37.3%	3.9%
Rural Counties					
2000	8.4	60.2%	23.3%	9.7%	0.5%
2017	11.4	62.3%	20.1%	10.4%	0.8%

Note: High poverty places are defined as those with poverty rates over 20 percent. Urban and suburban census tract data reflect largest 100 metro areas only. Figures for 2017 reflect five-year ACS data. Percentages reflect averages of county-level statistics.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2000; American Community Survey, 2015-2019.

particular importance are a set of structural economic realities that have led to larger numbers of poor people and higher poverty rates in all places. Earnings and wages for most U.S. workers, particularly those in low-skill jobs, have stayed flat over the past four decades when controlling for inflation (Desilver 2018; Mishel, Gould, and Bivens 2015). Flat real-dollar wage rates and earnings also reflect the fact that the federal minimum wage rate has failed to keep up with the pace of inflation for many years (Romich and Hill 2018). Changes in household composition in the U.S. have led to an increase in the number of single-parent households over the past thirty years. Single parents tend to be lower paid than other types of household heads and are often the first to experience cuts in hours or layoffs when labor markets begin to contract, which makes those households much more likely to experience poverty than other household types (Cancian and Haskins 2014). Finally, increases in poverty and persistently higher poverty rates within communities of color are a direct legacy of several centuries of structural racism and discrimination in the U.S. that has systematically limited the mobility and opportunity available to people of color (see Lin and Harris 2008).

Structural economic change, recession, and racial inequality have been the primary factors behind the dramatic increases in suburban poverty (Berube and Kneebone 2013), but other factors have mattered as well. Increases in suburban poverty also are driven in part by suburban population growth. We should expect there to be more poor people in suburbs simply because the U.S. is a majority suburban nation. Some of the increase in number of poor people in suburbs is due to the continuation of historic migration patterns from cities to suburbs, as families seek employment opportunities, affordable housing, better schools, and access to recreational space (Allard 2017). Federal policy to dismantle central city public housing developments and to shift provision of housing assistance to housing choice vouchers also has allowed many low-income families to move outside of cities to the suburbs (Berube and Kneebone 2013; see Aratani in this volume). Additionally, immigrant settlement patterns have changed remarkably in recent decades. Today, many working poor immigrants are now first settling in suburbs, rather than in cities or rural places. Immigrant settlement in suburbs reflects the same pursuit of economic, housing, and educational opportunities that have guided city-to-suburb flows since World War II (Singer, Suro, and Wilson 2011). Increases in the number of poor people in suburban America have occurred at more than twice the rate of population growth since 1990, however, which strongly suggests that much of the rise in suburban poverty appears to be explained by structural economic change and the downward mobility of suburban residents due to factors such as job loss or earnings decline, rather than just simple population flows (Allard 2017; Berube and Kneebone 2013).

V Unemployment and Food Hardship Following COVID-19

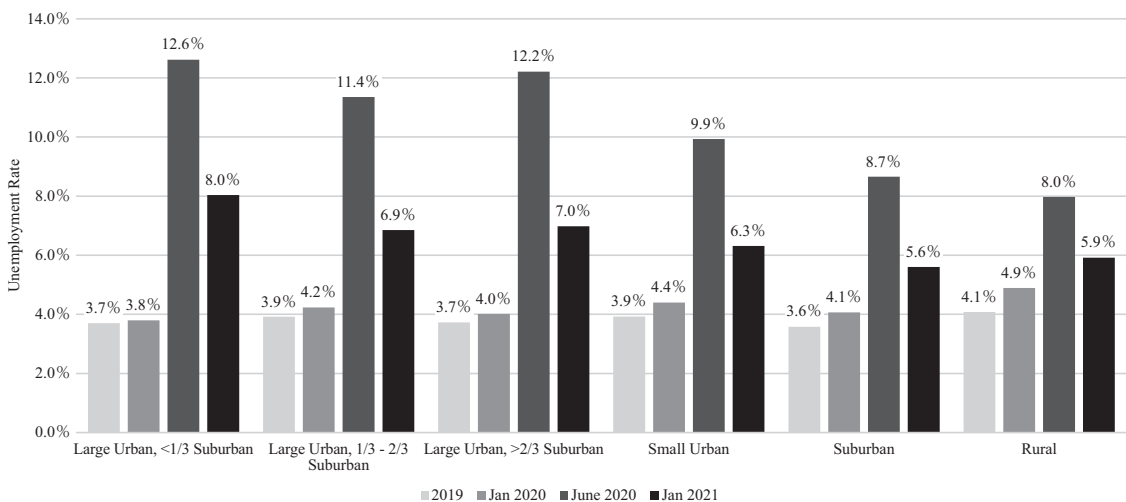
At the time of this article, data were not available to assess the impact of COVID-19 on poverty trends across different types of geography. To generate initial insight into how the COVID-19 pandemic and recession might have affected different communities, therefore, we draw upon county-level unemployment and food insecurity data gathered just before and during the pandemic. Such data point to the impact of the pandemic recession on different geographic areas and underscore the challenges facing the anti-poverty safety net in America, even as economic recovery has begun.

The economic fallout of COVID-19 is evident in Figure 3, which documents how average county unemployment rates rose dramatically across all types of counties between January and June of 2020. As public health restrictions began to ease slightly, consumer demand increased, and businesses began to re-open,

unemployment rates fell significantly in the second half of 2020, but had yet to return to pre-pandemic levels as of January 2021. Unemployment figures suggest that larger metropolitan areas were harder-hit by the pandemic recession than smaller urban or rural areas, with the unemployment impact of the pandemic most severe in large urban counties where less than one-third of the population lived in suburbs. In these types of urban counties, the average unemployment rate rose dramatically from 3.7 percent in 2019 to 12.6 percent in June 2020. Similarly, the average unemployment rate in suburban counties within the largest 100 metropolitan areas increased from 3.6 percent to 8.7 percent during the same period. Mean unemployment rates hovered near 12 percent in June 2020 among urban counties where more than one-third of the population lived in suburbs, well above pre-pandemic rates of about 4 percent. Rural America also saw a sharp increase in unemployment during the pandemic (4.9 percent in January 2020 to 8.0 percent in June 2020), but rates did not increase as much on average in rural counties during the pandemic as they did in metropolitan areas. Future research will provide a clearer understanding of how the pandemic recession affected certain aspects of the labor market, but initial evidence indicates that the acute unemployment effects in urban areas are likely due to a variety of factors, including more reliance on hospitality, service, and retail industries that were hard-hit by the pandemic (Dalton 2020; Klein and Smith 2021).

Although unemployment rates spiked between January 2020 and June 2020, the economy began to recover by January 2021. Unemployment rates remain higher, however, than before the pandemic. Geographic disparities in COVID-19's impact also appear to have persisted into 2021, with higher average unemployment rates among urban counties than rural or suburban counties. For example, on average about 7 percent of the labor force remained unemployed in large urban counties in January 2021, compared to 6.3 percent in smaller urban counties and 5.6 percent in suburban counties. Unemployment also remained elevated in rural areas in January 2021, where the average unemployment rate was 5.9 percent in January 2021.

County-level unemployment trend data allow us to examine differences across geography, but these data



Note: The unemployment rate is the share of the labor force that is unemployed. Individuals who are not actively seeking work are not considered to be in the labor force. Percentages reflect averages of county-level statistics.

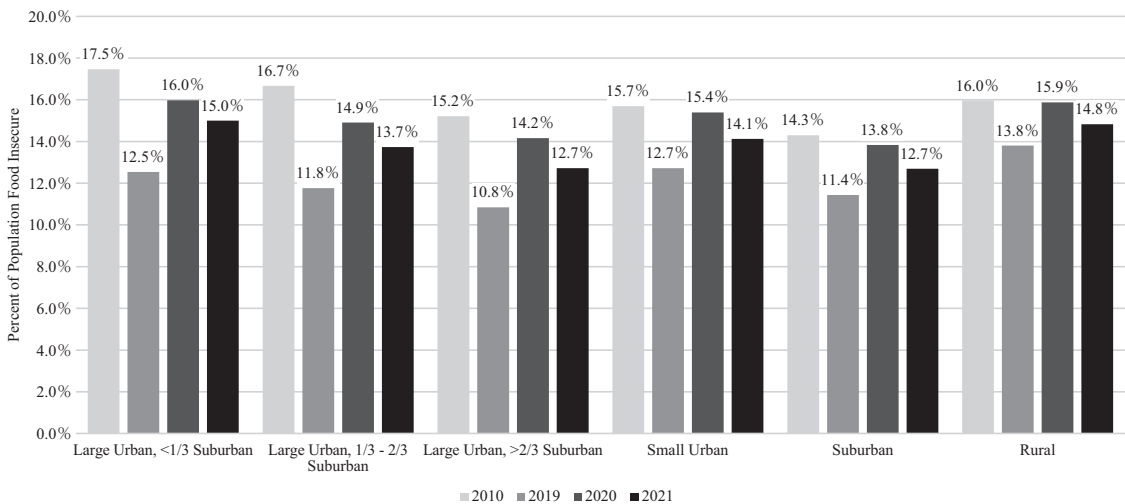
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

Figure 3 Comparing Urban, Suburban, and Rural Unemployment Rates before and after COVID-19

also mask important heterogeneity in employment outcomes - including, importantly, variation by race and ethnicity. For example, Couch et. al. (2020) find Hispanic workers experienced disproportionately large increases in unemployment during the pandemic and had the highest unemployment rate among all racial/ ethnic groups in April 2020. Other studies have found that Black and White workers experienced similar increases in unemployment during the first few months of the pandemic. There is evidence that the Black-White unemployment gap has widened as more white Americans have returned to work, however, while the unemployment rate for Black workers has remained persistently high (Couch et al 2020; Williams 2020; Lee et al 2021).

It also is worth noting that unemployment figures do not tell the full story of how COVID-19 has affected the U.S. labor force. Unemployment rates are calculated as a share of individuals *in the labor force* - that is, people who are actively working or looking for work. In addition to increasing the number of people who are looking for work but unable to find it, the pandemic has also pushed many Americans to leave the labor force entirely due to caregiving obligations or pandemic-related safety concerns. The labor force participation rate fell three percentage points, from 63 percent to 60 percent, between February and April 2020, and has not returned to pre-pandemic levels (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021a). This phenomenon likely varies across county geography, but is not reflected in our county-level unemployment data.

Data limitations have led scholars to seek other indicators of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on levels of household hardship. Many useful new data sources, such as the Census Household Pulse Surveys that track the impact of the pandemic recession on families, cannot be disaggregated to local county geography (U.S. Census Bureau 2021). In Figure 4, however, we present county-level estimates of food insecurity - a common measure of food hardship used in the United States. County-level food insecurity estimates over the last decade indicate that a significant share of individuals across the U.S. struggled to purchase or consume



Note: Percentages reflect averages of county-level statistics.

Source: Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap 2012 (for 2010 data); Feeding America, Local Food Insecurity Projections (for 2019, 2020, and 2021 data).

Figure 4 Comparing Urban, Suburban, and Rural Food Insecurity Rates before and after COVID-19

adequate food or meals in the wake of both the Great Recession and the COVID-19 pandemic. Across urban, suburban, and rural counties, food insecurity was elevated in the wake of the Great Recession, then fell significantly between 2010 and 2019 as the economy slowly recovered. Despite a full decade of economic recovery, roughly one in nine Americans struggled to purchase adequate food in 2019 (Feeding America 2021). Food insecurity rates spiked again in 2020 in response to the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, then fell in 2021. As is the case with unemployment figures, the most recent county-level estimates of food insecurity available suggest that rates of food insecurity remain above pre-pandemic levels.

Although trends in food insecurity are largely consistent across urban, suburban, and rural geography, a few important differences stand out in Figure 4. First, large urban counties where less than one-third of the population lived in suburbs saw the highest rates of food insecurity in the immediate aftermath of the Great Recession (17.5 percent). More heavily suburbanized large urban counties and smaller urban areas are estimated to have slightly lower rates of food insecurity at this time - ranging from 15.2 percent to 16.7 percent on average in 2010. Suburban counties had the lowest rates of food insecurity in 2010, with 14.3 percent of residents identified as experiencing food insecurity. On average, 16 percent of rural county residents experienced food insecurity in 2010. Second, even though estimated rates of food insecurity fell in the years following the Great Recession, there is some evidence that decreases in food hardship varied by county geography. For example, large urban counties saw projected food insecurity rates fall between 4 and 5 percentage points between 2010 and 2019. In contrast, in rural counties, food insecurity rates appear to have declined less sharply in that period - falling by only 2 percentage points on average. Third, consistent with unemployment indicators, the COVID-19 pandemic led to increases in food insecurity across all geographic areas - although projected food insecurity rates for 2020 are below peak levels in 2010. Urban counties appear to have seen the largest increases in food insecurity over the COVID-19 pandemic, aligning with evidence that urban counties also experienced the largest spikes in unemployment. Finally, Figure 4 reveals that food insecurity rates began to decline across all geographic areas as the U.S. economy began to recover in late-2020 and 2021. Food insecurity, however, remains elevated relative to pre-pandemic levels across urban, suburban, and rural geography.

Again, it is important to point out that county-level aggregate data smooth over important variation in food insecurity rates. Wolfson and Leung (2020) found food insecurity to be significantly higher among low-income households in June and July 2020, with 43 percent of individuals with household income less than 250 percent of the federal poverty line experiencing food insecurity. Stark racial and ethnic disparities in food insecurity also have been evident in the COVID-19 pandemic. Estimates based on the Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey suggest that food insecurity rates for Black and Hispanic households in November 2020 were more than twice the rate for White households (Feng et al 2020).

VI Nonprofit Human Service Provision

To consider how local nonprofit service sectors may be responding to the changing geography of poverty and persistent hardship in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, our analysis next turns to examining county-level variation in nonprofit human service expenditures. Signaling the importance of the nonprofit human service sector to the American anti-poverty safety net, nonprofit human service expenditures doubled in real dollars across all counties from 2000 to 2017 (\$78 billion to \$158 billion, in \$2020). Despite rising poverty in

suburbs and persistent poverty problems in rural America, more than two-thirds of all nonprofit human service expenditures nationally in 2017 are reported in urban counties (\$118 billion of \$158 billion total expenditures).¹²⁾ Moreover, even though suburban and rural areas are home to a majority of the poor people in the U.S., less than one-third of all nonprofit human service expenditures occur in suburban and rural America.

Growth in nonprofit human service expenditures over the past twenty years has reinforced these geographic inequalities. From 2000 to 2017 growth in nonprofit human service expenditures was most dramatic in urban counties, where total expenditures increased by 114 percent (\$55 billion to \$118 billion), compared to 76 percent in suburban counties (\$17 billion to \$30 billion) and 58 percent in rural counties (\$7 billion to \$10 billion). Increases in nonprofit human service funding and program spending are a welcome sign during a two-decade span that saw poverty increase dramatically, but there is evidence that nonprofit human service funding experienced slower rates of growth in the wake of the Great Recession than in the decade prior. For example, while total expenditures increased by about 65 percent in suburban counties from 2000 to 2010, expenditures in these counties only increased 7 percent from 2010 to 2017. Expenditure growth in rural counties also slowed significantly following the Great Recession, increasing by 48 percent from 2000 to 2010, but only by 7 percent between 2010 and 2017. These figures underscore the impact of the Great Recession on public and private funding of community-based nonprofit organizations (Allard and Roth 2010).

Table 3 reports nonprofit human service expenditures per person (in \$2020) with income at or below the federal poverty line by geography from 2000 to 2017. Figures in Table 3 indicate that communities spend large amounts of money on nonprofit human services, but these expenditures reflect money spent across many different program areas where services often are resource-intensive and expensive to deliver. Unfortunately, there are no conclusive measures or indicators at this time of what constitutes adequate levels of human service provision (Allard 2017), but Table 3 does reveal many important insights about spatial inequality in provision of nonprofit human service programs. First, there is evidence that suburban and rural counties on average lag well behind urban counties in per capita nonprofit human service expenditures levels. For example, in the wake of the Great Recession, the average large urban county where less than one-third of the population lives in suburbs spent \$5,660 per poor person in 2010, compared to \$1,845 in suburban counties and \$1,346 in rural counties, respectively. Suburban and rural counties also deviate widely around these lower means - suggesting the presence of wider variation in human service provision outside of cities than within cities. These stark geographic differences in nonprofit human service capacity persist in 2017 between urban, suburban, and rural counties.

To focus on organizations most likely to be working locally to address poverty and hardship, the bottom panel of Table 3 presents per capita expenditures for “smaller” nonprofits with annual budgets under \$10 million. Smaller nonprofits account for roughly one-third of all nonprofit human service expenditures. Echoing findings in the top panel of Table 3, we see evidence that a higher degree of urbanization is associated with larger per capita expenditures even amongst these smaller nonprofit human service organizations. On average, large urban counties where less than one-third of the population lived in suburbs spent \$1,916 per poor person in 2017, compared to \$1,588 in large urban counties where more than two-thirds of the population lives in suburbs. Gaps are even larger when looking at suburban and rural counties at the right edge of Table 3, where per capita spending averaged \$1,008 in suburban counties in 2017 and \$1,022 in rural counties. Again,

¹²⁾ All figures reported in inflation-adjusted 2020 dollars.

Table 3 Trends in Nonprofit Human Service Expenditures Per Poor Person across Urban, Suburban, Rural Counties, 2000-2017

Mean Nonprofit Human Service Expenditures per Low-income Person (in \$2020)	Large Urban Counties			Small Urban County	Suburban County	All Rural Counties
	< 1/3 Suburban	1/3 to 2/3 Suburban	> 2/3 Suburban			
All Nonprofit Organizations						
2000	\$3,792.90 (\$3,010.07)	\$3,253.80 (\$2,871.18)	\$3,330.86 (\$2,608.40)	\$2,173.36 (\$2,854.79)	\$1,898.87 (\$3,795.93)	\$1,259.96 (\$2,850.13)
2010	\$5,659.64 (\$6,284.54)	\$3,588.31 (\$2,104.85)	\$4,280.70 (\$3,188.04)	\$2,498.64 (\$3,271.28)	\$1,844.93 (\$3,415.02)	\$1,345.58 (\$3,327.06)
2017	\$7,803.82 (\$8,299.20)	\$4,845.11 (\$3,001.42)	\$4,717.93 (\$4,507.39)	\$2,703.96 (\$2,508.23)	\$2,101.33 (\$4,167.33)	\$1,531.04 (\$3,807.35)
% Change 2000-2017	105.7%	48.9%	41.6%	24.4%	10.7%	21.5%
Nonprofit Organizations with Revenue < \$10 million Annually						
2000	\$1,285.60 (\$761.82)	\$1,333.68 (\$740.28)	\$1,458.46 (\$863.90)	\$1,282.24 (\$946.73)	\$1,058.57 (\$1,499.37)	\$920.94 (\$1,402.49)
2010	\$1,641.88 (\$1,076.83)	\$1,445.81 (\$717.71)	\$1,637.95 (\$927.10)	\$1,228.04 (\$821.83)	\$970.24 (\$1,489.01)	\$947.09 (\$1,567.43)
2017	\$1,916.05 (\$1,416.59)	\$1,678.78 (\$846.42)	\$1,588.32 (\$920.64)	\$1,309.21 (\$840.24)	\$1,007.60 (\$1,149.28)	\$1,022.30 (\$1,686.83)
% Change 2000-2017	49.0%	25.9%	8.9%	2.1%	-4.8%	11.0%

Notes: Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations. Per capita expenditures reflect averages of county-level statistics. All dollar amounts have been adjusted for inflation and are reported in 2020 USD.

Sources: National Center on Charitable Statistics, 2000, 2010, 2017. U.S. Census Bureau 2000; American Community Survey, 2008-12, 2015-19.

suburban and rural counties are shown to deviate widely around these lower means - suggesting the presence of wider variation in human service provision outside of cities.

Combined, findings reported in Table 3 indicate that the nonprofit or nonstate elements of the American anti-poverty safety net are not well-matched to the changing geography of poverty. Many suburban and rural communities may lack the necessary programs and resources to help families affected by job loss or reduced work earnings, as well as the resources to address the lingering public health consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. As suggested in Table 3, observed geographic disparities in nonprofit human service provision have been a prominent feature of the modern American anti-poverty safety net for some time. The roots of such inequality can be traced to the focus of federal human service program investments in urban centers in the 1960s and 70s, which limited the development of nonprofit organizational capacity in suburban and rural areas. Spatial inequality in human service provision also reflects limited economies of scale for service provision in suburban and rural areas, as well as the presence of competitive pressures and limited political will that discourage development of nonprofit human service capacity in many suburban and rural places (Allard 2017). In the end, the nonprofit human service organization capacity on which the American safety net relies is unevenly distributed across local geography. This evidence strongly suggests that anti-poverty policy investments also will have uneven impact across local geography.

Ⅶ Conclusion

Although researchers in the U.S. and other high-income countries commonly discuss national trends in

poverty and anti-poverty program participation, we argue it is important to consider the relationships between place, poverty, and social assistance. In this article, we show how poverty problems in the U.S. - whether defined by the number of poor people, poverty rates, or exposure to high-poverty places - have important spatial dimensions. Poverty remains particularly acute in central cities and rural communities, but we find clear evidence that suburban America now copes with poverty problems akin to their urban and rural neighbors. Regardless of urban or suburban geography, we see persistent evidence that communities of color experience poverty and concentrated poverty at much higher rates than non-Hispanic whites. Rising poverty in metropolitan and rural areas over the last several decades is directly related to economic structural change and people becoming poor in all types of places, although immigration and migration of low-income households from cities to suburbs likely matters as well (see Allard 2017; Berube and Kneebone 2013). More recently, we see the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic recession on exposure to job loss and food insecurity across all geographic areas.

While any reductions in poverty in the next several years would be a welcomed sign, poverty trend data reveal that even sustained periods of economic growth leave tens of millions of Americans in poverty. Moreover, persistent disproportionate exposure of communities of color to poverty and to living in high-poverty places will continue to exacerbate inequality in the near- and long-term. These sobering realities underscore the critical role of government and nongovernmental anti-poverty safety net programs, even when the U.S. economy is expanding, and unemployment rates are very low. Recent good news around pre-COVID poverty reduction and evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic recession may be short-lived, therefore, should be tempered by the fact that most places in the U.S. - urban, suburban, and rural - are still grappling with poverty problems and racial inequality as severe as several decades ago. It also seems unlikely that the social processes driving residential segregation, discrimination, and class-based sorting in the U.S. will change dramatically without significant shifts in public policy in the next decade.

Analyses presented here highlight the vast differences in human service provision by place and underscore how tepid the response of human service funding was to the Great Recession. Yet, community-based nonprofit service organizations are central to the functioning of our contemporary safety net, providing key sources of support to enhance the mobility and well-being of millions of Americans. The pathways to cultivating a more robust and spatially equitable nonprofit human service sector involve increasing the availability of program resources and investing in organizational capacity-building efforts. The American Family Rescue Plan Act signed into law by the Biden Administration will expand federal funding for child care, food assistance, and community health centers, providing critical resources to the nonprofit human service sector (National Association of Counties 2021; Parrott 2021). Similarly, there is hope that emergency pandemic funding to states and local places with the American Family Rescue Plan will extend additional resources to community-based organizations on the frontline of responding to economic displacement in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic recession (National Council of Nonprofits 2021). Charitable philanthropy also plays an essential role in capacity-building efforts within local nonprofit human service organizations. Apart from providing additional private program funding, advocating for greater public commitments, and helping local nonprofits strengthen their fundraising toolkits, it will be important for charitable philanthropy to build local community capacity to tackle poverty through intentional efforts to cultivate a new generation of local nonprofit leaders that reflect the racial, ethnic, and class diversity of suburban and rural America today. Finally, state and local government should work with community-based nonprofit organizations to develop anti-poverty planning and policy

development processes that reflect the voices and input of many different communities across the urban, suburban, and rural spectrum (see Dismantle Poverty in Washington 2021).

Several pressing research questions remain open as the U.S. emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic recession - research questions that should be of interest to researchers and policymakers in Japan and other settings across the globe. Of primary importance is generating new insight into the economic realities behind trends in larger numbers of poor people and higher rates of poverty across the geographic landscape. Much of our work on spatial mismatches and the geographic contours of job accessibility in the U.S. is dated and reflects assumptions that may no longer hold. Particularly critical is research that explores how shifts in low-skill and low-wage work opportunities outside of cities are related to trends in suburban poverty. Researchers also should think more about the consequences of living in high-poverty urban versus suburban or rural communities. Do high-poverty suburban communities demonstrate the same lack of community resources, amenities, and opportunities as is commonly found in high-poverty urban or rural areas? Similarly, given growing evidence that moves away from high-poverty areas early in life lead to better later-life outcomes, researchers need to better understand how places emerge to become and cease to function as places of opportunity. Discussion of mobility today at least implicitly presumes that there are high-opportunity, low-poverty neighborhoods in suburban communities (see Chetty and Hendren 2018). Yet, it may be that the opportunity zones of today are not the same as 20 to 30 years ago. Finally, given the safety net's reliance on local actors, more research should be done to understand the impact of rising or persistent poverty on local institutions and the political economy of local government.

In the end, the ability of any society to tackle the presence and persistence of poverty across the geographic landscape hinges on our ability to recognize the shared fate all communities have in the fight against poverty. Without a collective understanding that all communities have a responsibility to tackle poverty problems in all places - urban, suburban, or rural - we cannot expect to make progress in any one place.

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米国における貧困・困窮，非営利セイフティーネットの提供の空間的パターン

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抄 録

本論文では、米国の都市、郊外、および農村の各地域における貧困・困窮の空間的分布について論じる。分析からは、都市と農村の貧困率が持続的に高い中で、貧困の郊外化が進行し、米国の貧困の地理的分布の変化が明らかになった。また、COVID-19パンデミック不況が各地域でどのように急性の困窮を引き起こしたかを示し、これらの影響の地域的な差異についても検証した。

米国の景気後退時において、地域をベースとする非営利組織（例えばコミュニティヘルスセンター、住宅および雇用サービス、食品支援プロバイダーなど）は、低所得世帯に対し重要なサービスとリソースを提供する中心的役割を果たすが、このようなサービスの提供状況が地域により異なることについては、学術的にほとんど注目されていない。そこで、非営利サービス提供の地域差とその時点変化のトレンドについて分析した。貧困問題は米国中のあらゆる地域に存在するが、分析からは、非営利プログラムの提供能力の面でみると都市に比べて郊外と農村は大幅に後れていることがわかった。

最後に貧困研究と貧困対策の前進に向けた本研究の含意について論じて結びとした。

キーワード：貧困，失業，食事保障，非営利団体，COVID-19

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