



Chapter 10

Education

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Levels of school enrollment and educational attainment both reached all-time highs in data reported from Census 2000. Of the 182.2 million people aged 25 and older in 2000, 80 percent had a high school diploma or more education and 24 percent had completed at least a bachelor's degree. With respect to school enrollment, the 50 million students in the country's elementary and high schools represented the highest figure recorded in a decennial census.

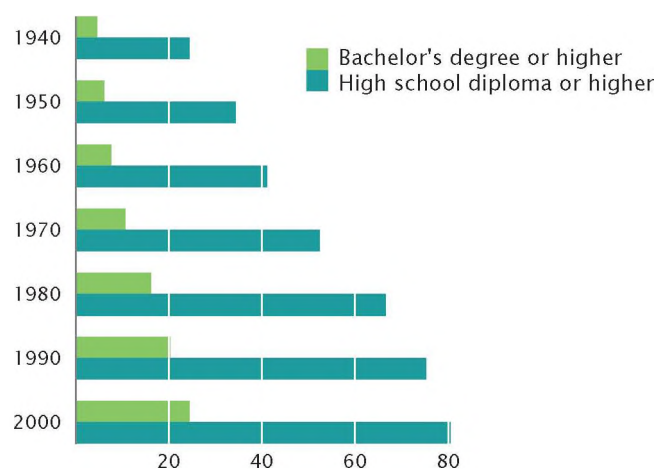
Historical Increases in Educational Attainment

Inquiry related to education has been included in the U.S. decennial census questionnaire since the 1840 census, when literacy rates were first determined for people aged 20 and older and revealed a nation whose people had limited education. Census questions on literacy continued through the 1930 census. Beginning in 1940, the census inquired about educational attainment as measured in years of schooling completed. In 1990, the question on educational attainment was changed to ask for the highest level completed. School attendance has been included in the decennial census questionnaire for all censuses from 1850 to 2000.

As recently as 1950, 34 percent of the population 25 and older had completed 4 years of high school or more (Figure 10-1 and map 10-01). Steady increases in educational attainment have taken place since then, with the result that by 2000, a record 80 percent of the population 25 and older had a high school diploma or more education (map 10-02). During a span of 50 years, completion of high school went from being the mark of the educated minority of the population to the minimum education level attained by 4 out of 5 adults.

The share of the adult population with a bachelor's degree also increased in recent decades. While just under 1 adult in 20 had completed at least 4 years of college in 1940, almost 1 adult in 4 had attained a bachelor's degree or higher in 2000. For

Figure 10-1.
Percent of Population 25 and Older Who Completed High School or College, 1940 to 2000



Note: Prior to 1990, educational attainment was measured by years of completed schooling.

both levels of schooling presented in Figure 10-1 (high school and higher, and bachelor's degree and higher), the largest percentage increases were in the period 1960 to 1980. From 1990 to 2000, the increase in the percentage of people completing a bachelor's or higher degree was about the same as the percentage

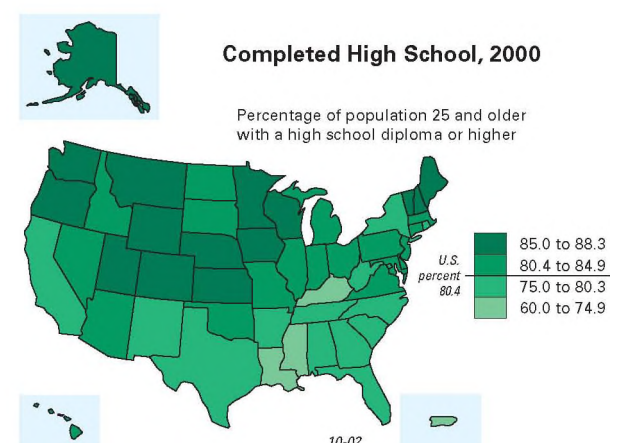
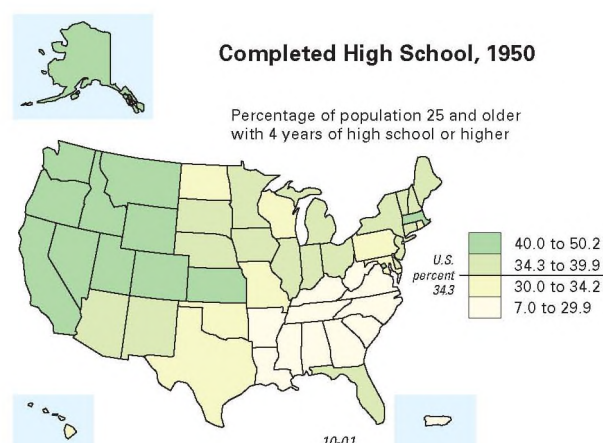
increase for the previous decade, and slightly below the rate from 1970 to 1980.

Educational Attainment in 2000

Most American adults in 2000 had graduated from high school. With respect to highest educational level attained, the three most commonly achieved education levels in 2000 were high school graduate (29 percent), bachelor's degree (16 percent), and 1 or more years of college but no degree (14 percent). Other common educational attainment levels were master's degree (6 percent), associate's degree (6 percent), and some college, but less than 1 year (7 percent). Professional and doctoral degrees were relatively rare, as were the categories of education below high school; no one of those education levels accounted for as much as 4 percent of the population 25 and older (Figure 10-2).

In 2000, more than half of the U.S. population 25 and older (52 percent) had completed at least some college education. Just under one-quarter (24 percent) had a bachelor's or higher degree (map 10-04). Nine percent had an advanced degree (master's degree, professional degree, or doctoral degree) (map 10-05).

Men and women had nearly equal rates of high school completion in 2000, with women having the slight edge—81 percent compared with 80 percent. At higher levels of education, men had higher completion rates. For example, among people 25 years or older in



2000, 26 percent of men had bachelor's degrees or more education, compared with 23 percent of women. Men also led women in holding advanced degrees, 10 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

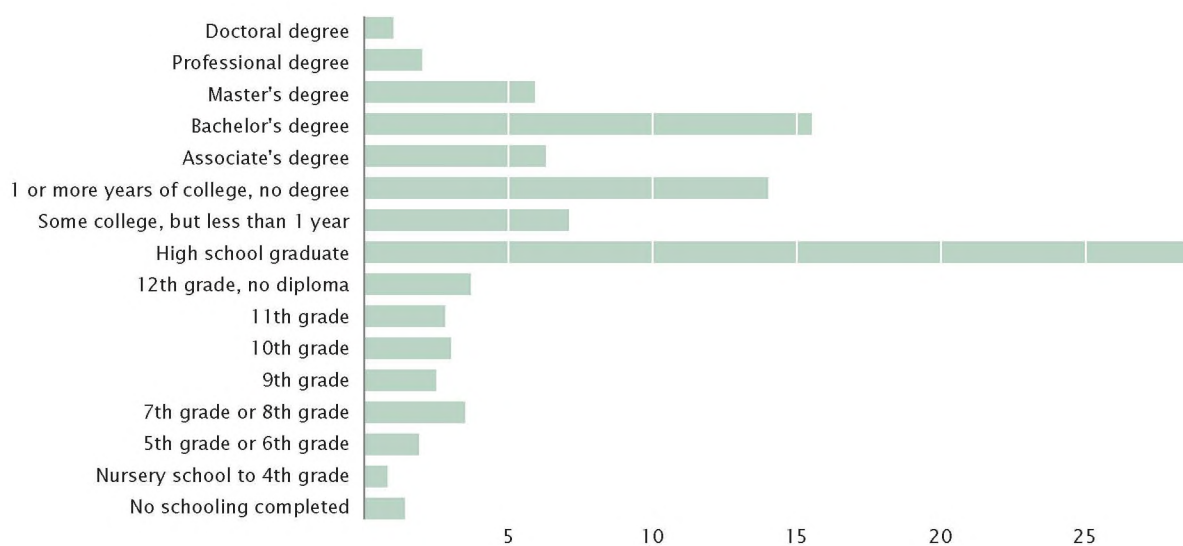
No one region could claim to have the best-educated population; the regions' ranks depended on the level of education being examined. The Midwest had the largest percentage of its population 25 and older holding a high school diploma or higher (83 percent), while the West had the largest percentage having completed at least some college (58 percent). The population in the Northeast had the highest bachelor's degree and advanced degree levels, 27 percent and 11 percent respectively. While the South had the lowest completion rates from high school through college, the Midwest had the lowest advanced-degree completion rate, at 7.9 percent, slightly below the proportion in the South, 8.1 percent.

College Attendance Patterns

Just over one-third of young adults (18 to 24 years old) were attending college in April 2000. Among young-adult women, 37 percent attended college, compared with 31 percent of men. Even though there were slightly more men than women in this age group in the general population, the college student body aged 18 to 24 was dominated by women (54 percent compared with 46 percent).

Figure 10-2.

Percent of Population 25 and Older by Highest Educational Attainment Level, 2000

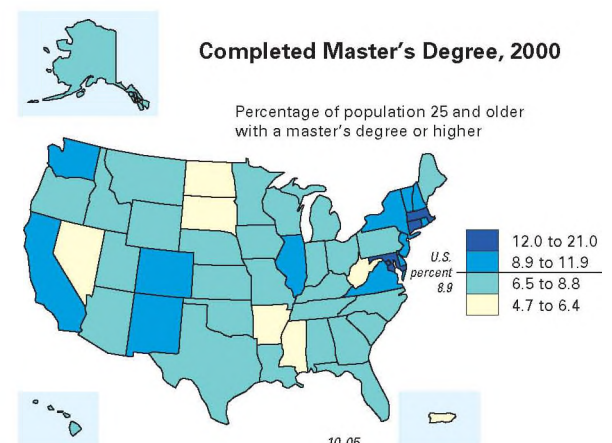
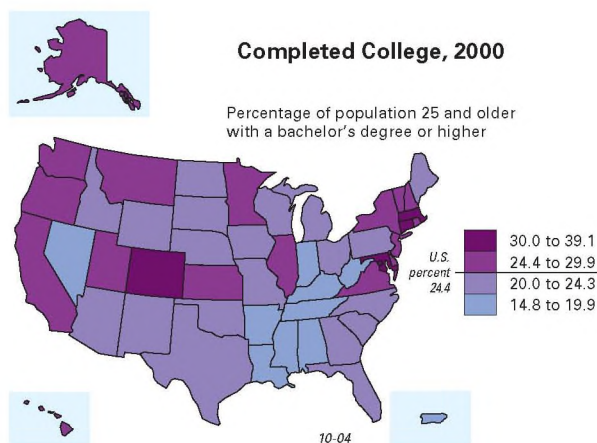
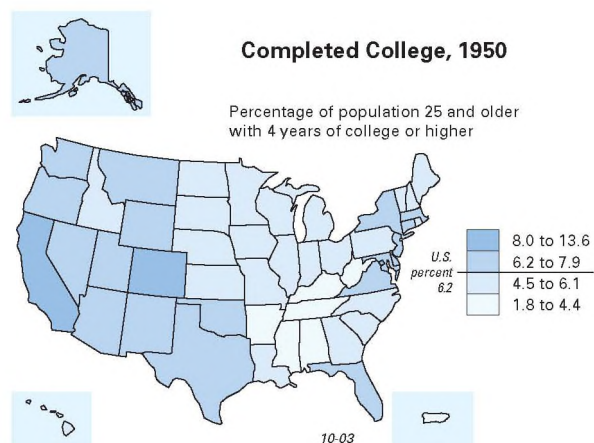


College attendance among young adults differed by race and Hispanic origin. More than one-half of young-adult Asians and more than one-third of non-Hispanic White young adults were enrolled in college in 2000. Thirty-six percent of young adults of two or more races were in college, as were 30 percent of Pacific Islanders. Twenty-seven percent of young-adult Blacks, 21 percent of American Indians and Alaska

Natives, and 14 percent of Hispanics were enrolled in college.

Enrollment Levels in Census 2000

According to findings from Census 2000, more than one-fourth of the U.S. population aged 3 and older attended school in the spring of 2000, and enrollment levels reached a new high in April 2000. The 76.6



million students included 5 million enrolled in nursery school, 4.2 million in kindergarten, 33.7 million in elementary school, 16.4 million in high school, 14.4 million in college (undergraduate), and 3.1 million in graduate school.

Among all students, more than one-half (56 percent) were enrolled in preschool, kindergarten, or elementary school; 21 percent attended high school; and 23 percent were enrolled in colleges across the country. Although the percentage of people aged 3 and older who were enrolled increased modestly between 1990 and 2000, from 27 to 28 percent, this statistic conceals the sizable numerical increase in the student population—over the decade, the total number of students grew by 12 million, or by 18 percent.

Growth of the number of school-aged children (those aged 5 to 17) accounts for most of this increased enrollment. During the decade, elementary and high schools added another 8 million students to their classrooms, reaching a record of 50 million students by April 2000.

School attendance is compulsory for children between 7 and 15 years old. (The minimum and maximum ages of compulsory school attendance vary by state law, but all cover ages 7 to 15.) In 2000, 98.7 percent of children in this age group were enrolled in school. Forty-nine percent of children 3 and 4 years old were enrolled in school, as were 91 percent of 5- and 6-year-olds. More than one-third (36 percent) of adults aged 20 to 24 and 12 percent of people aged 25 to 34 were enrolled in college.

This Chapter's Maps

The chapter's maps on school enrollment reveal demographic and geographic dimensions. Enrollment patterns in American schools are in part a reflection of the

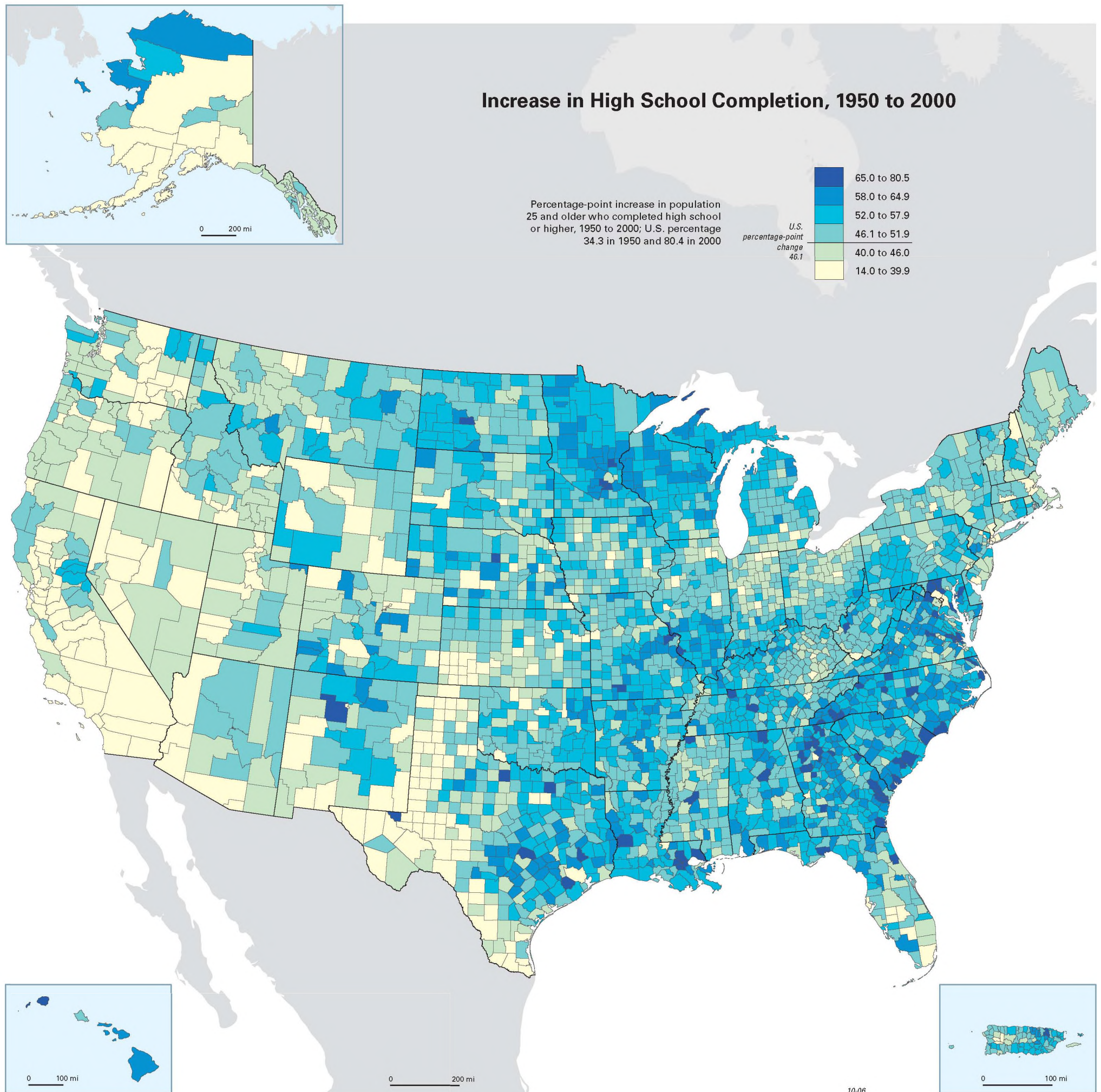
current age structure and historical fertility trends of the American population. Map 10-36 presents the percentage-point change in the share of the U.S. population aged 3 to 17. In 1970, when members of the Baby Boom were between the ages of 6 and 24, fully 29.3 percent of the population was between ages 3 and 17; in 2000 the share was 21.6 percent, a 7.6 percentage-point decline. Counties in the category with the largest percentage-point declines were located throughout the country, especially in the southeast, Appalachia, the Dakotas, and parts of New Mexico and Colorado.

In 1950, when 34.3 percent of the population 25 and older in the United States had completed at least 4 years of high school, many counties in the South had percentages of 14.9 percent or less (map 10-07). In 2000, 80.4 percent of the population 25 and older had a high school diploma, and an increasing number of counties in the South—particularly in metropolitan areas—had percentages at or above the U.S. rate. While some other southern counties continued in the lowest category, their percentages now ranged from 34.7 percent to 44.9 percent.

The percentage of the population 25 and older with at least a bachelor's degree also increased in the 1950-to-2000 period, from 6.2 to 24.4 percent (maps 10-09 and 10-10). In 1950, counties with lower percentages of their populations having 4 or more years of college were found in parts of the South and the northern Great Plains. In 2000, counties with higher percentages were seen throughout the country and were prominent in the metropolitan corridor from Boston to Washington, Colorado, California, and elsewhere in the West. The percentage with at least a bachelor's degree also varied by race and Hispanic origin, as seen in maps 10-15 through 10-21, and by sex, as seen in maps 10-12 and 10-14.

The percentage of the population 25 and older that completed college is shown by census tract for the most populous metropolitan areas in 2000 in maps 10-23 through 10-31. As the county-level map accompanying this series demonstrates, many of the counties in 2000 with high percentages completing college are located within the country's largest metropolitan areas. As the tract-level maps reveal, large differences in college completion rates exist within the metropolitan areas themselves. In the Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County metropolitan area, for instance, college diplomas were more common among the adult population residing in census tracts on the western side of the city of Los Angeles and were less common in tracts on the south side of the city. Similarly, in both the Dallas-Fort Worth and Chicago areas, the percentage of the population with a bachelor's degree was higher in many tracts in their northern sections. In the San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose metropolitan area, relatively few census tracts had percentages below the U.S. figure.

The maps in this chapter reveal broad geographic differences in educational attainment and school enrollment patterns nationwide, from high school and college completion rates to the private school enrollment of elementary and high school students. Comparisons of maps for various levels of educational attainment show that some areas have nearly universal high school completion and relatively low rates of college completion. Such areas had few high school dropouts, in other words, yet also had few college graduates. Other areas, often in larger cities or metropolitan areas, had distinctly bimodal patterns, with high percentages of both high school dropouts and college graduates.

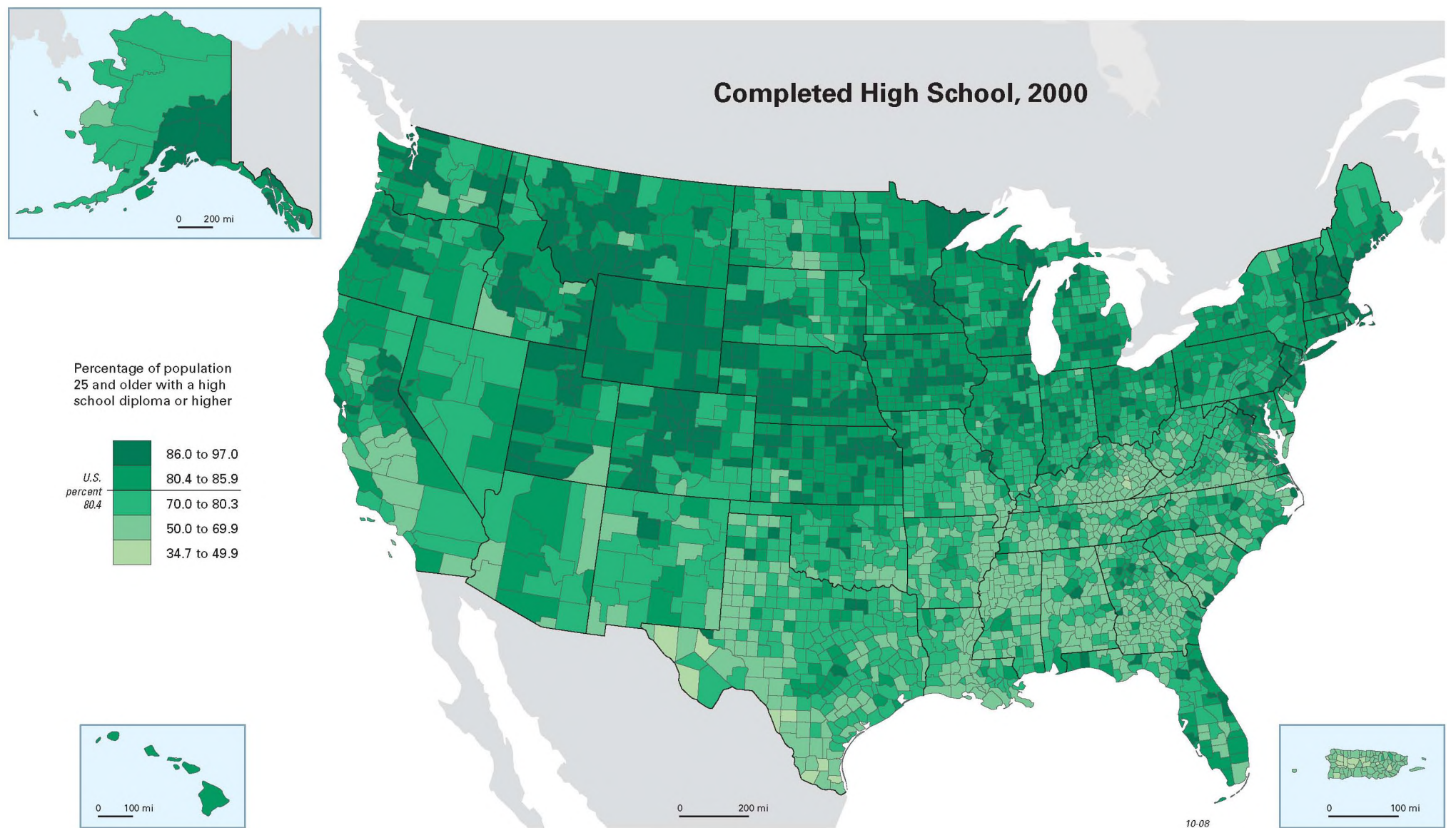
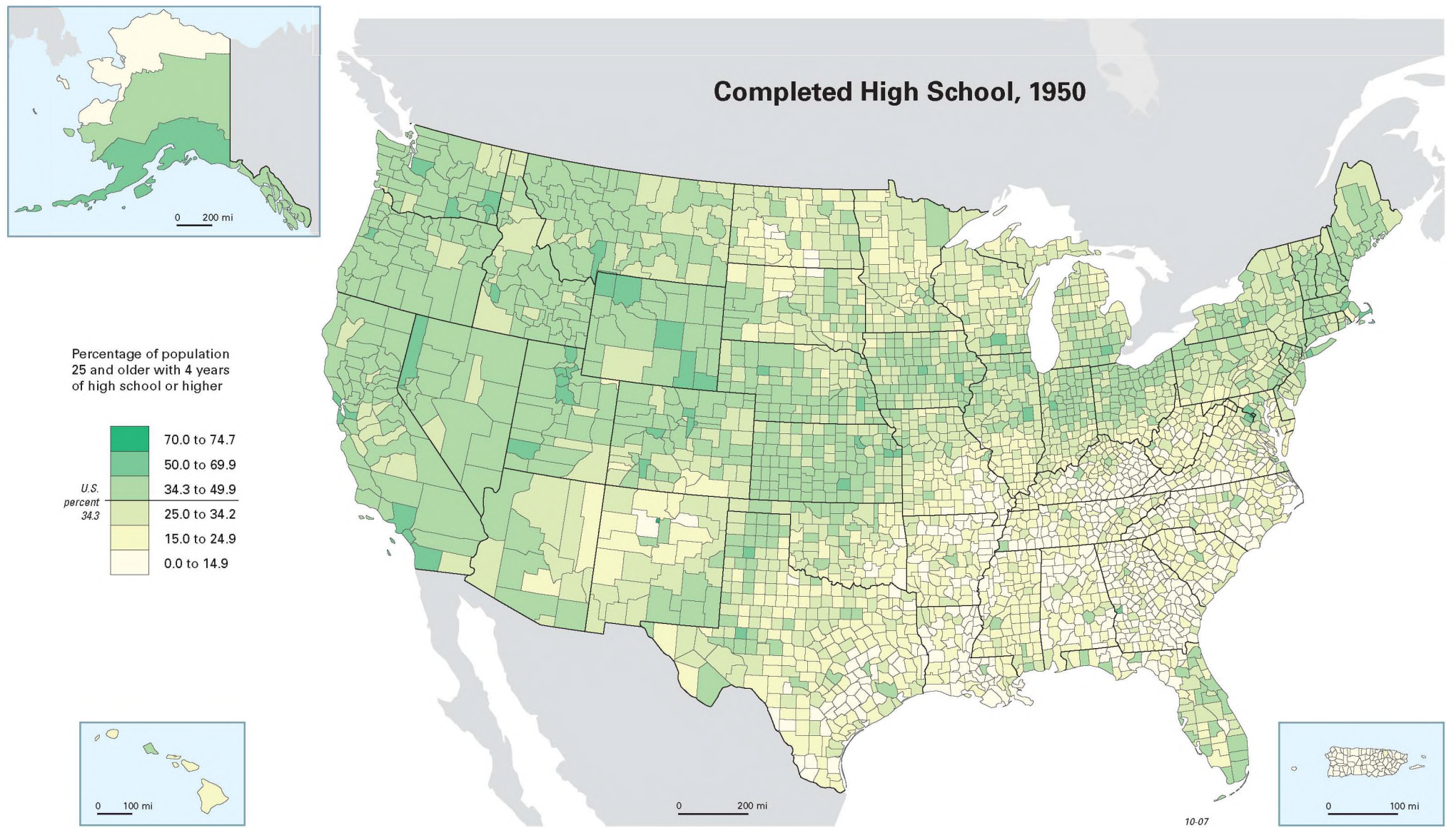


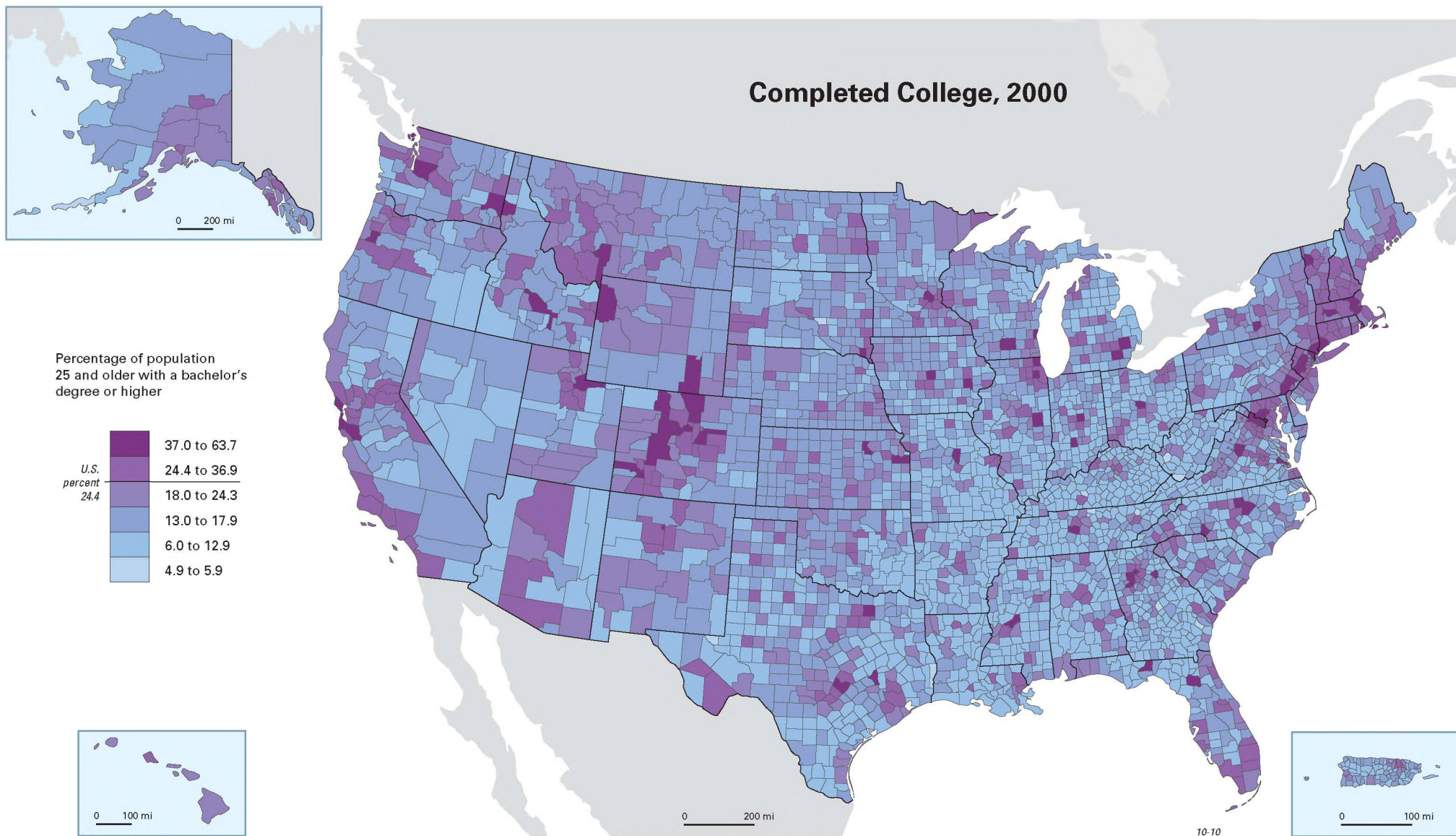
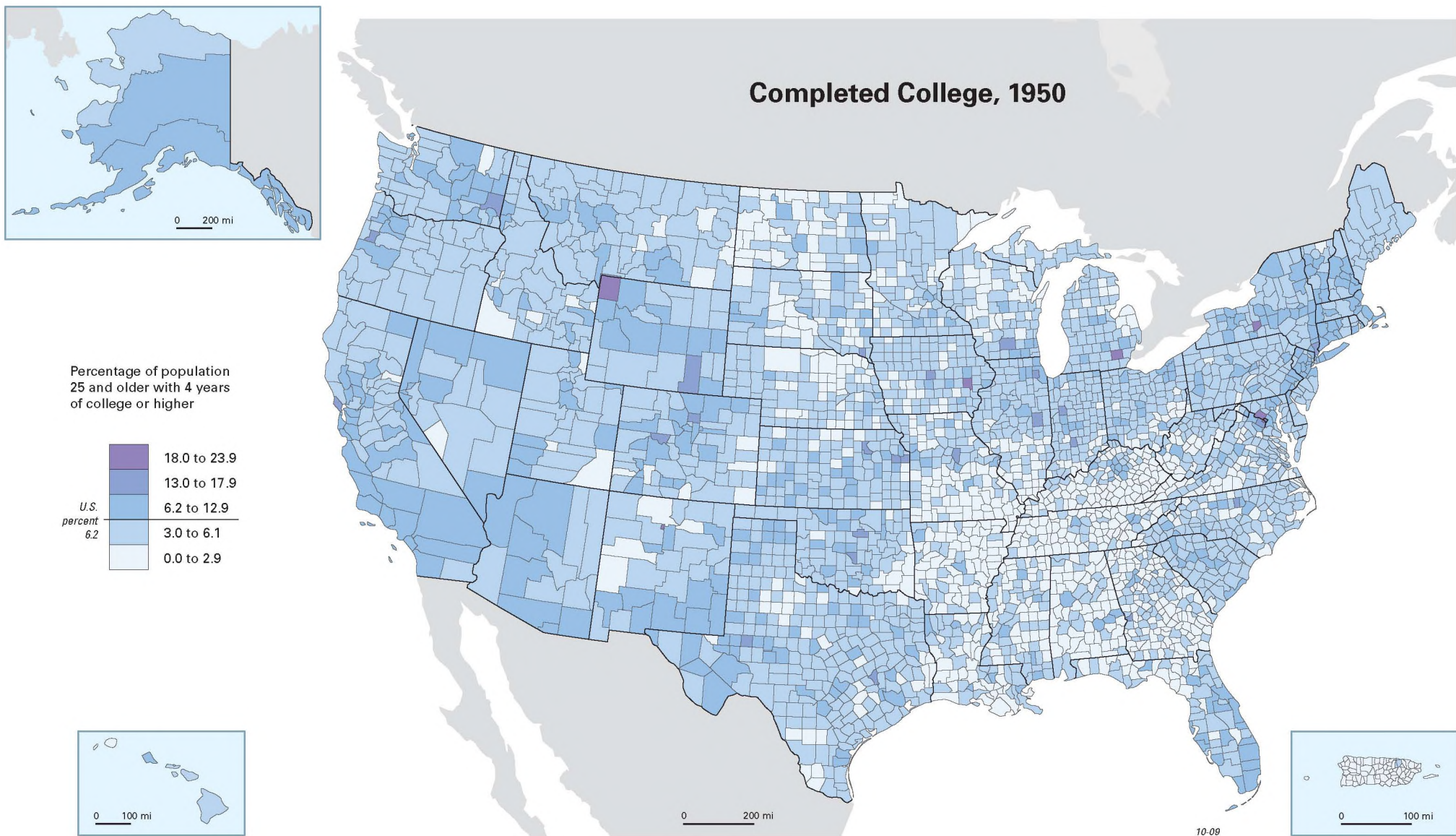
Between 1950 and 2000, the percentage of the population 25 and older with a high school diploma rose from 34.3 percent to 80.4 percent, an increase of 46.1 percentage points. While increases were widespread across the country, some counties' increases were considerably larger than the national average. Some of these counties also had high rates of high school completion in 2000,

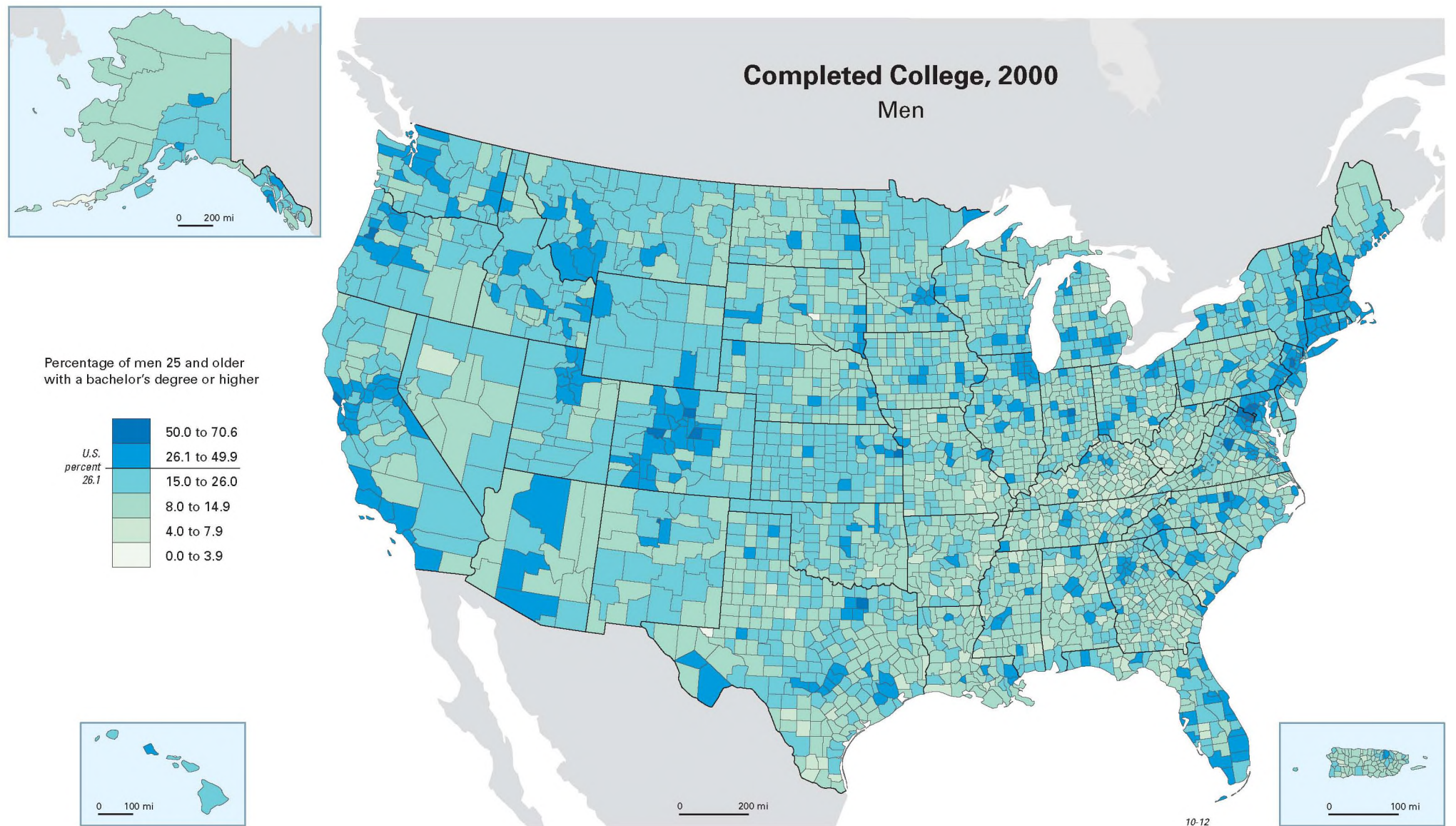
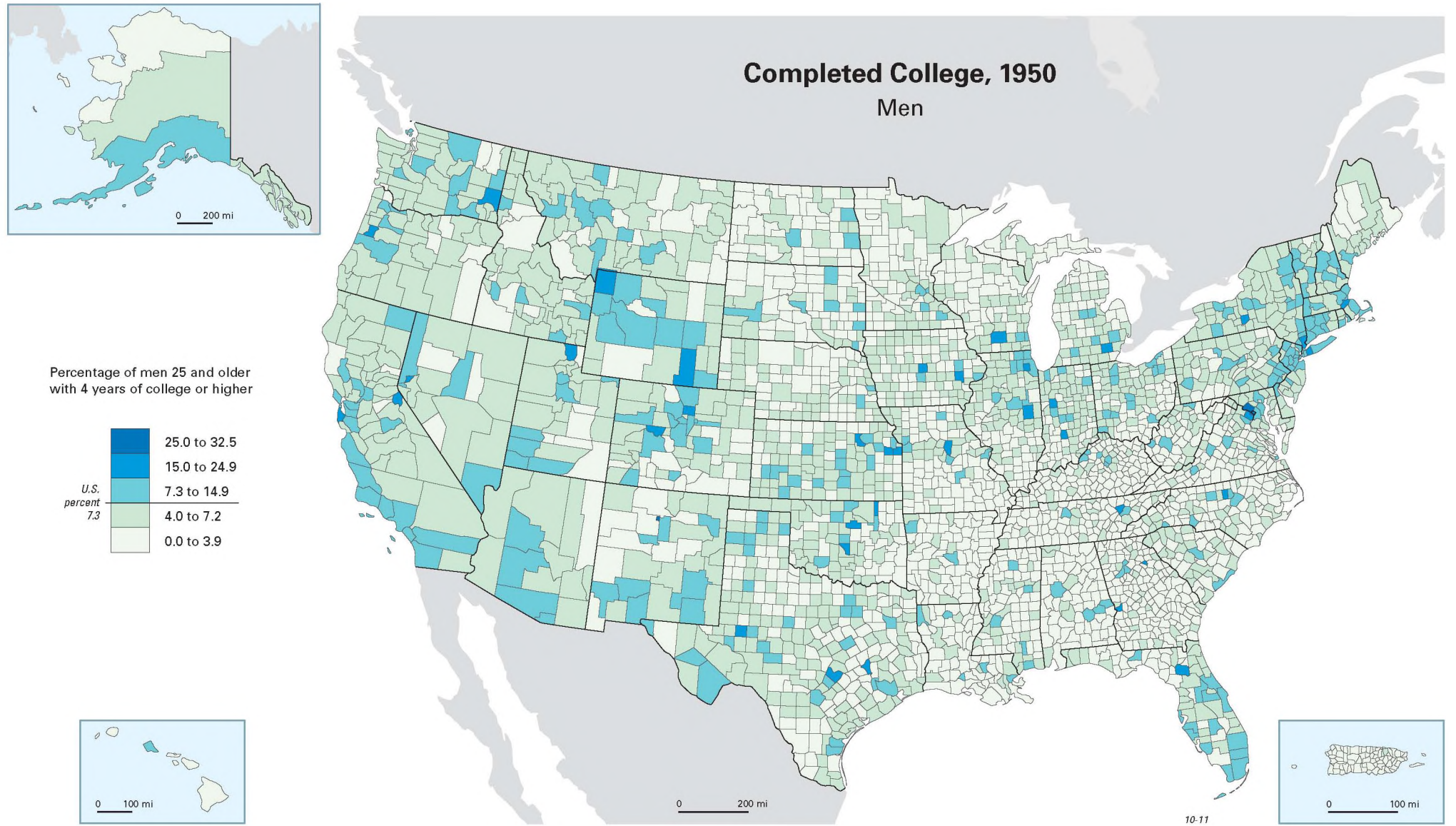
while others did not. High school completion rates in 1950 and 2000 are shown in other maps in this chapter.

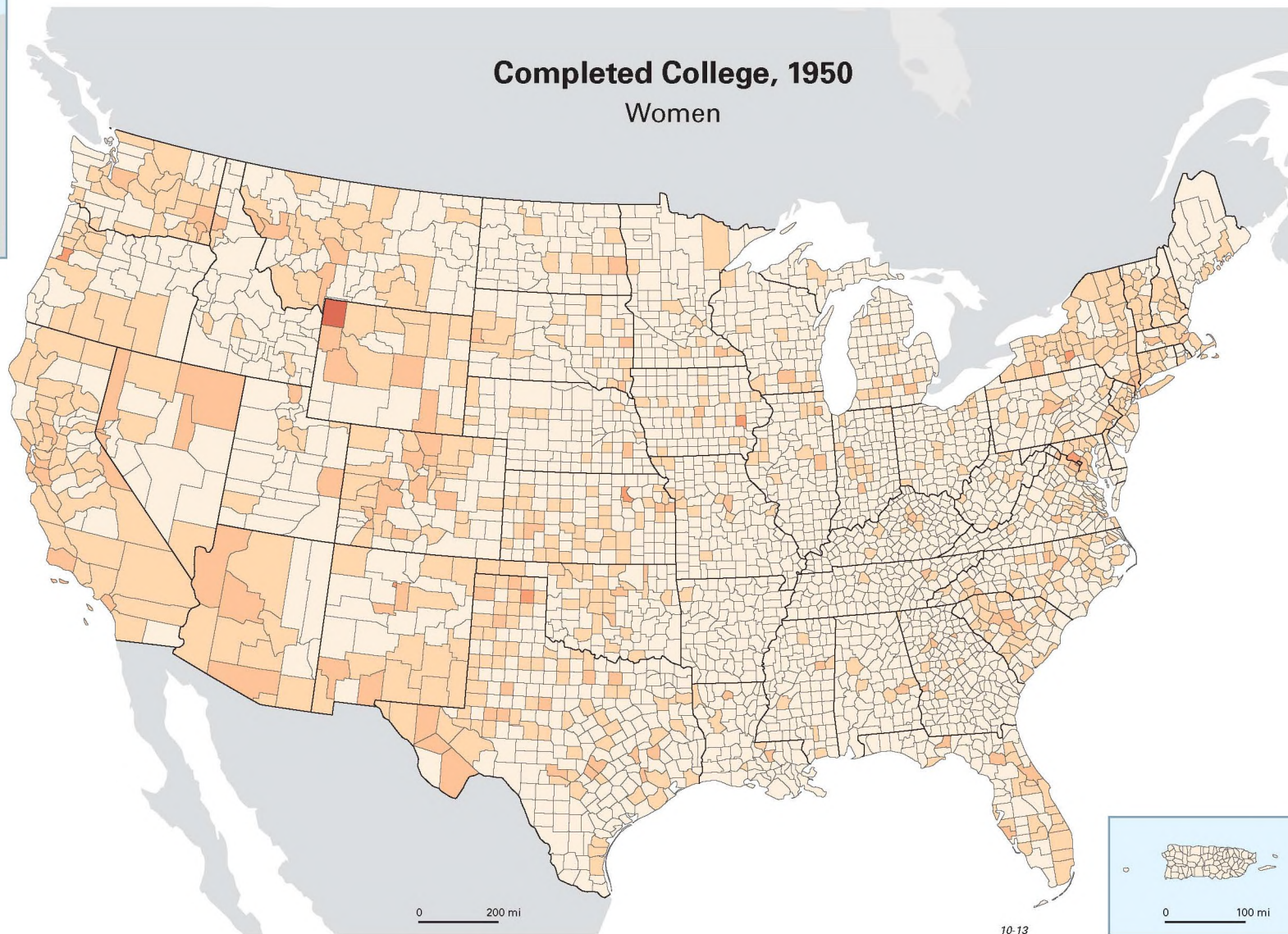
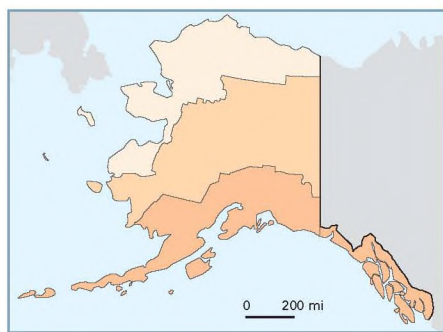
Many counties in southern states had large percentage-point increases in high school completion. Parts of the Midwest also show large increases, especially in the southern portions of Illinois and Missouri, and in Michigan and Wisconsin.

In some Texas counties in the western part of the state and along the border with Mexico, the percentage-point changes were lower than the national average. The West, particularly California, also contained a number of counties with smaller percentage-point increases in high school completion.

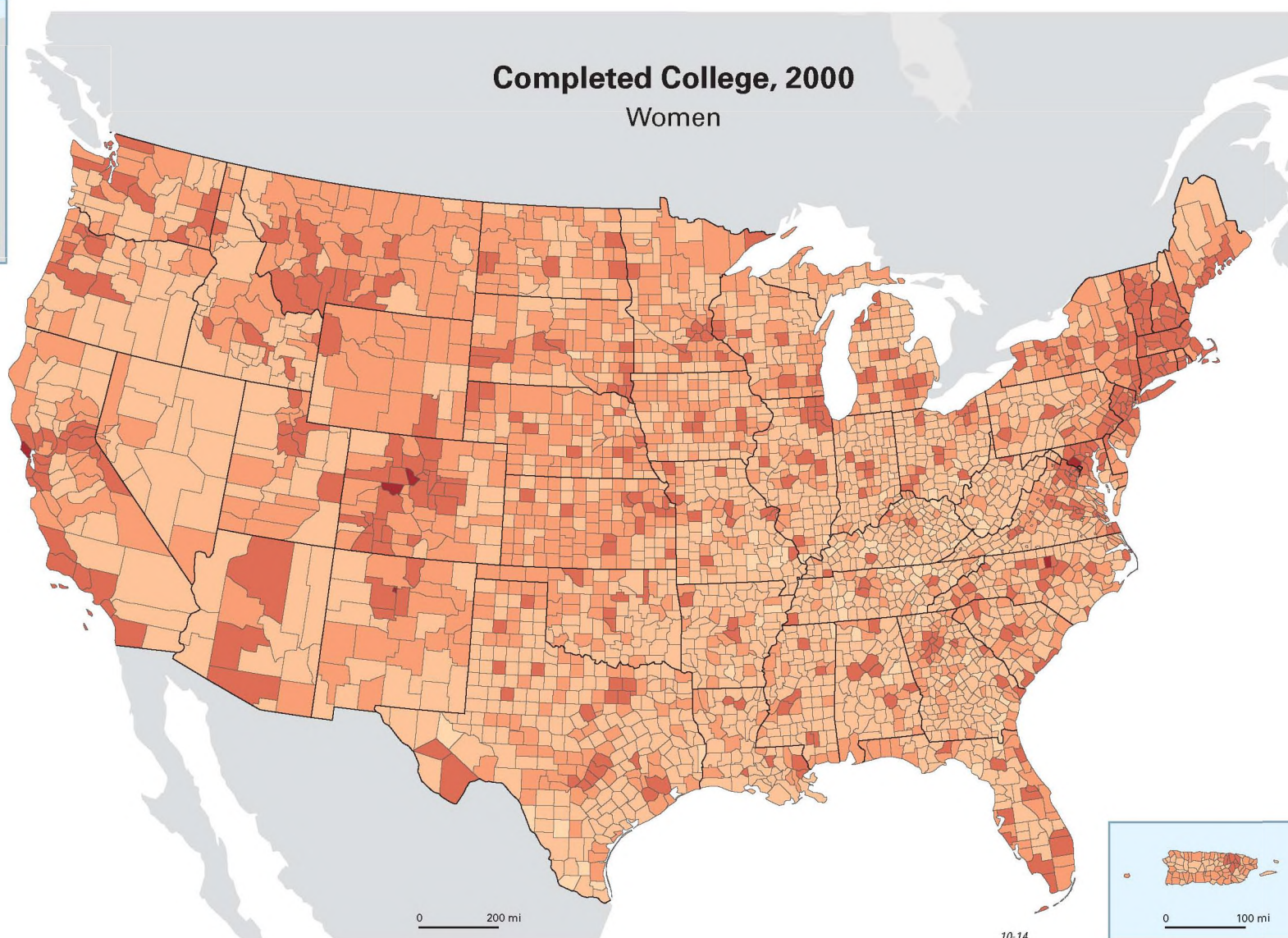
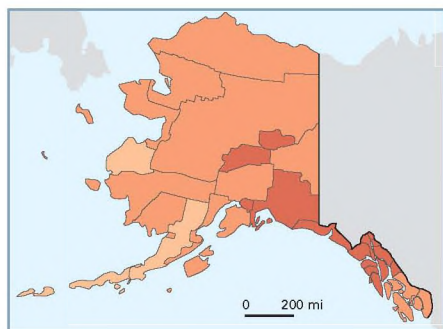
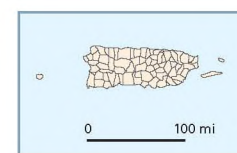
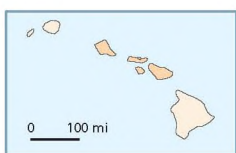
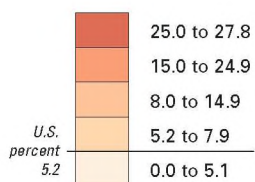




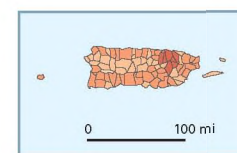
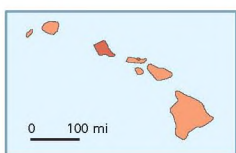
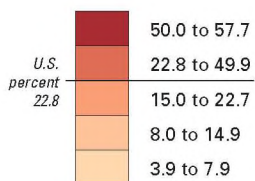


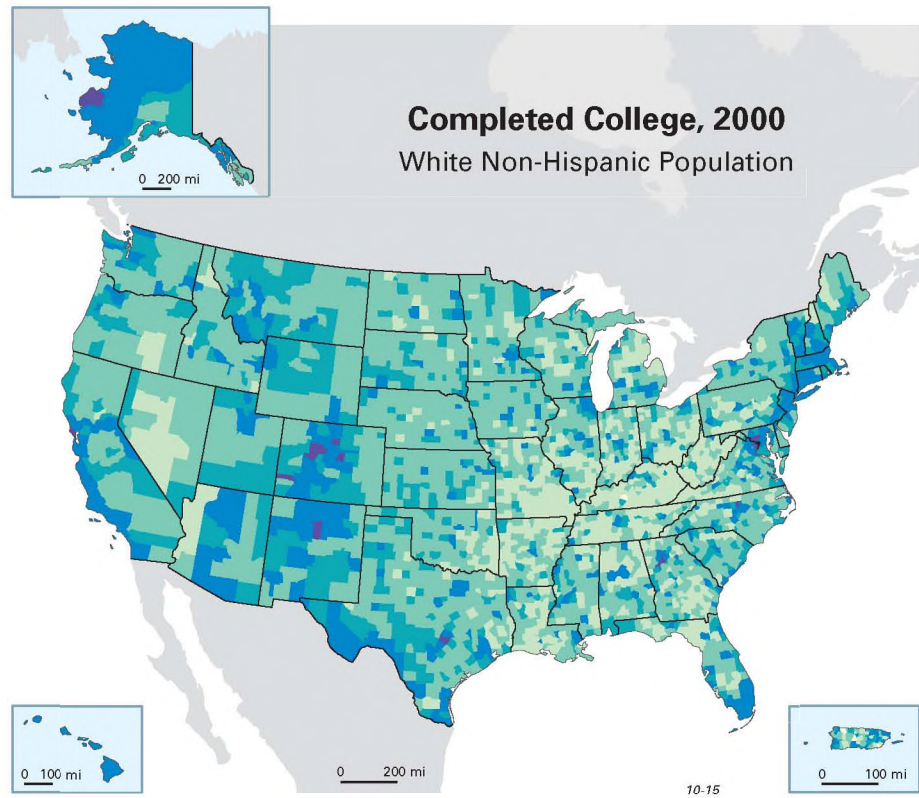


Percentage of women 25 and older with 4 years of college or higher



Percentage of women 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or higher

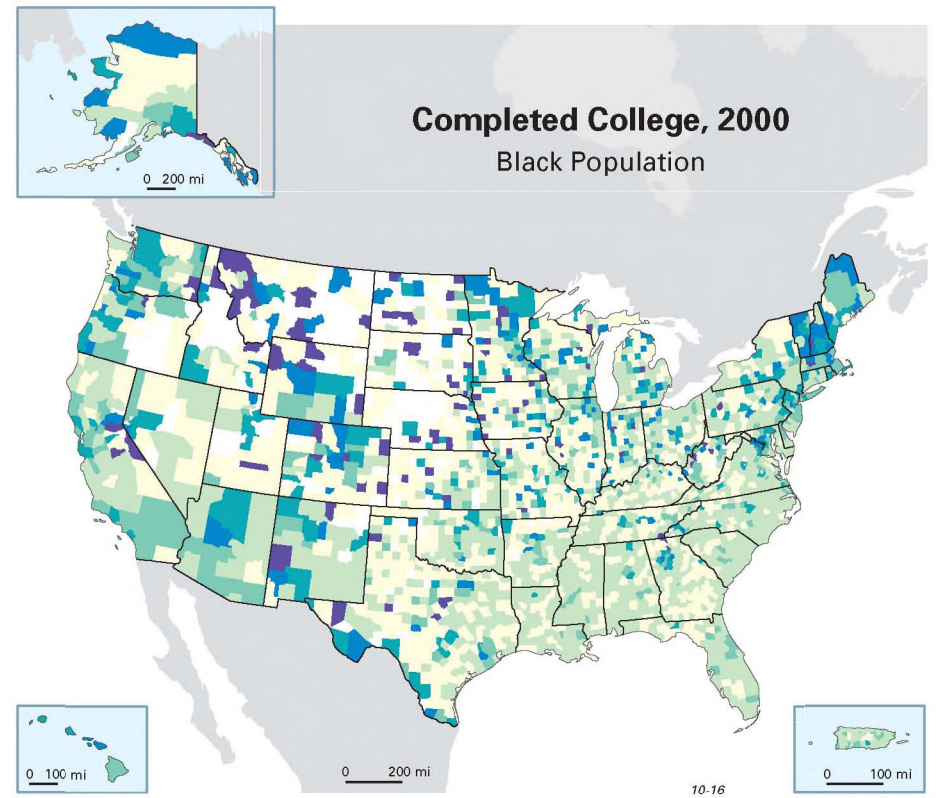




Percentage of non-Hispanic White population 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or higher

50.0 or more
27.0 to 49.9
20.0 to 26.9
12.0 to 19.9
5.0 to 11.9
Less than 5.0

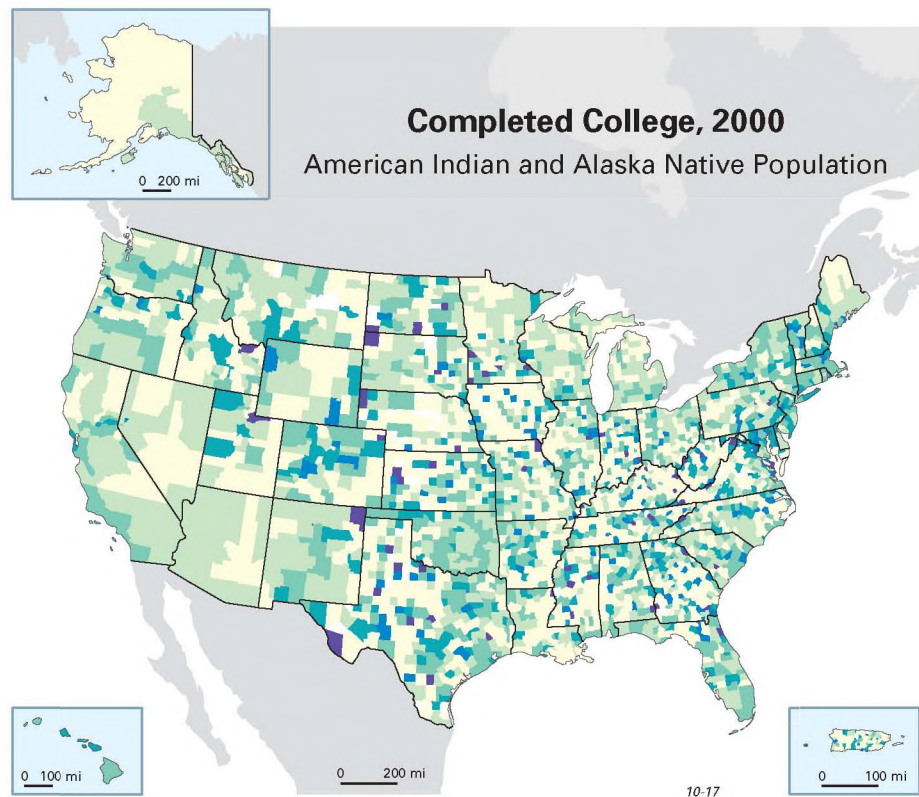
U.S. percent 27.0



Percentage of Black population 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or higher

50.0 or more
30.0 to 49.9
20.0 to 29.9
14.3 to 19.9
5.0 to 14.2
Less than 5.0
No Black population 25 and older

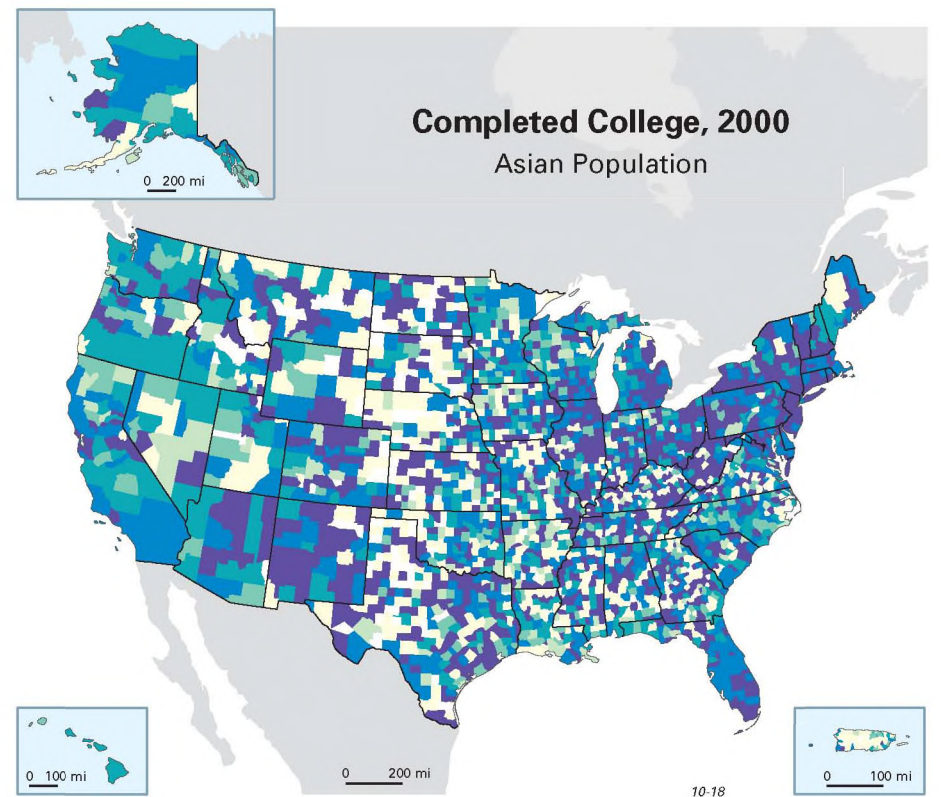
U.S. percent 14.3



Percentage of American Indian and Alaska Native population 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or higher

50.0 or more
30.0 to 49.9
20.0 to 29.9
11.5 to 19.9
5.0 to 11.4
Less than 5.0
No AIAN population 25 and older

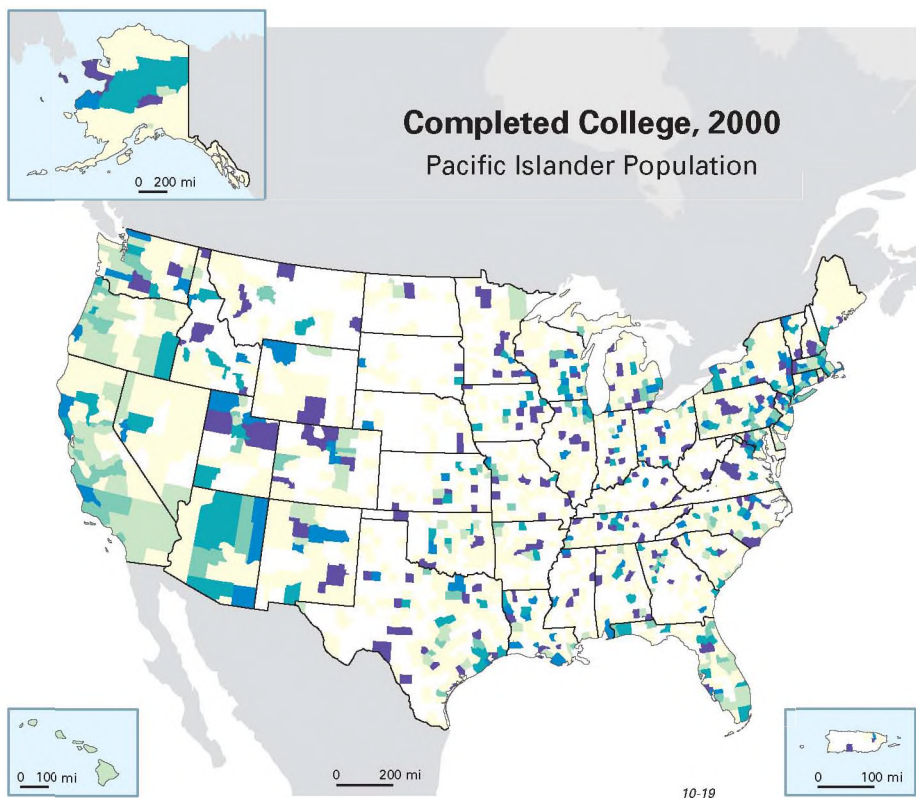
U.S. percent 11.5



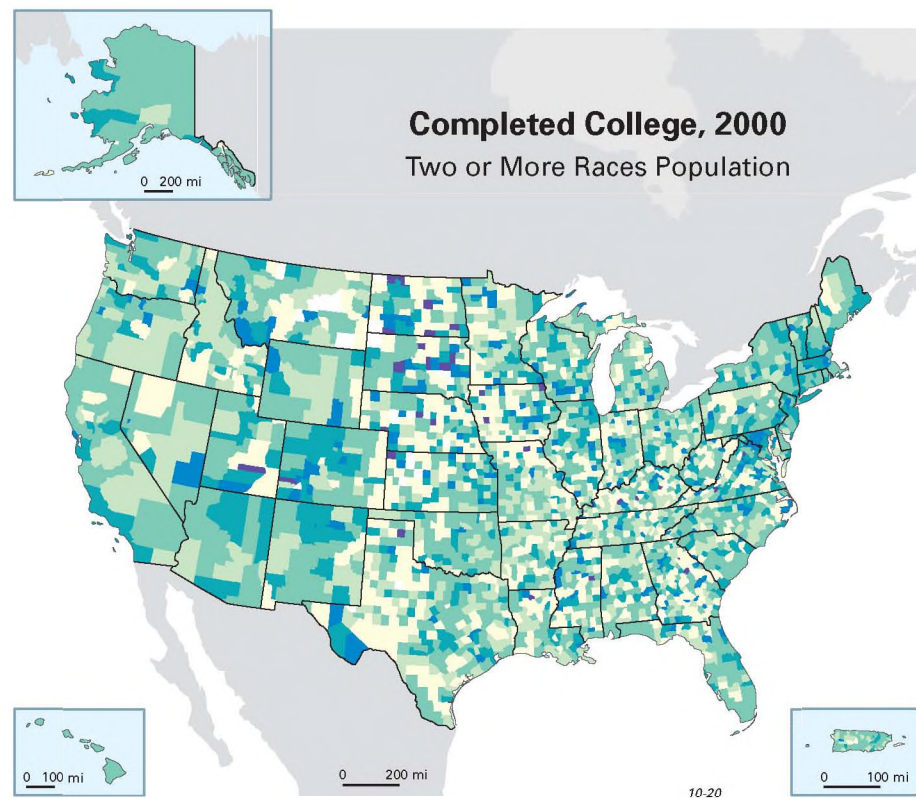
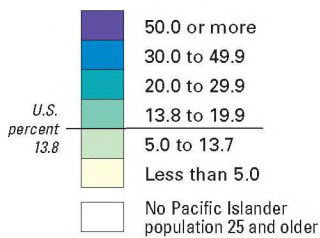
Percentage of Asian population 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or higher

50.0 or more
44.1 or more
30.0 to 44.0
20.0 to 29.9
12.0 to 19.9
5.0 to 11.9
Less than 5.0
No Asian population 25 and older

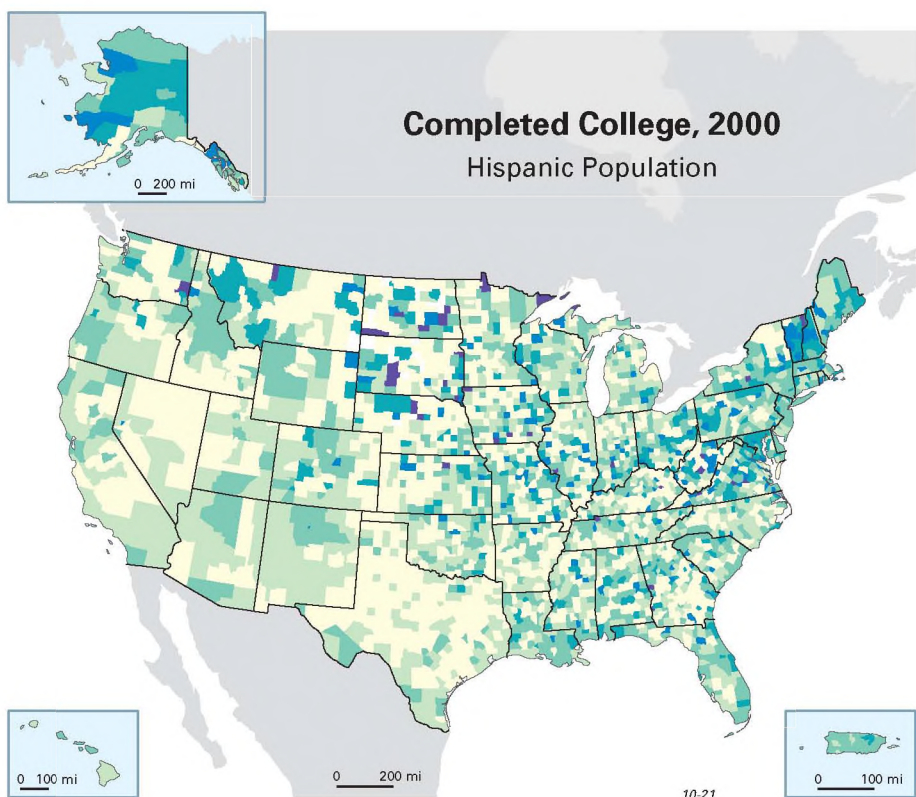
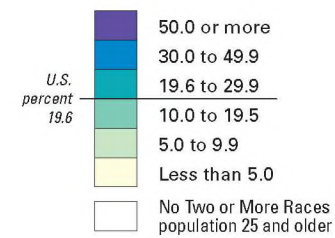
U.S. percent 44.1



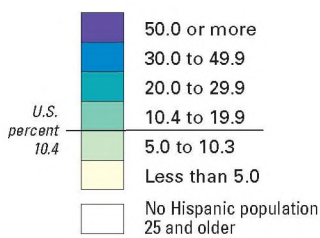
Percentage of Pacific Islander population 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or higher



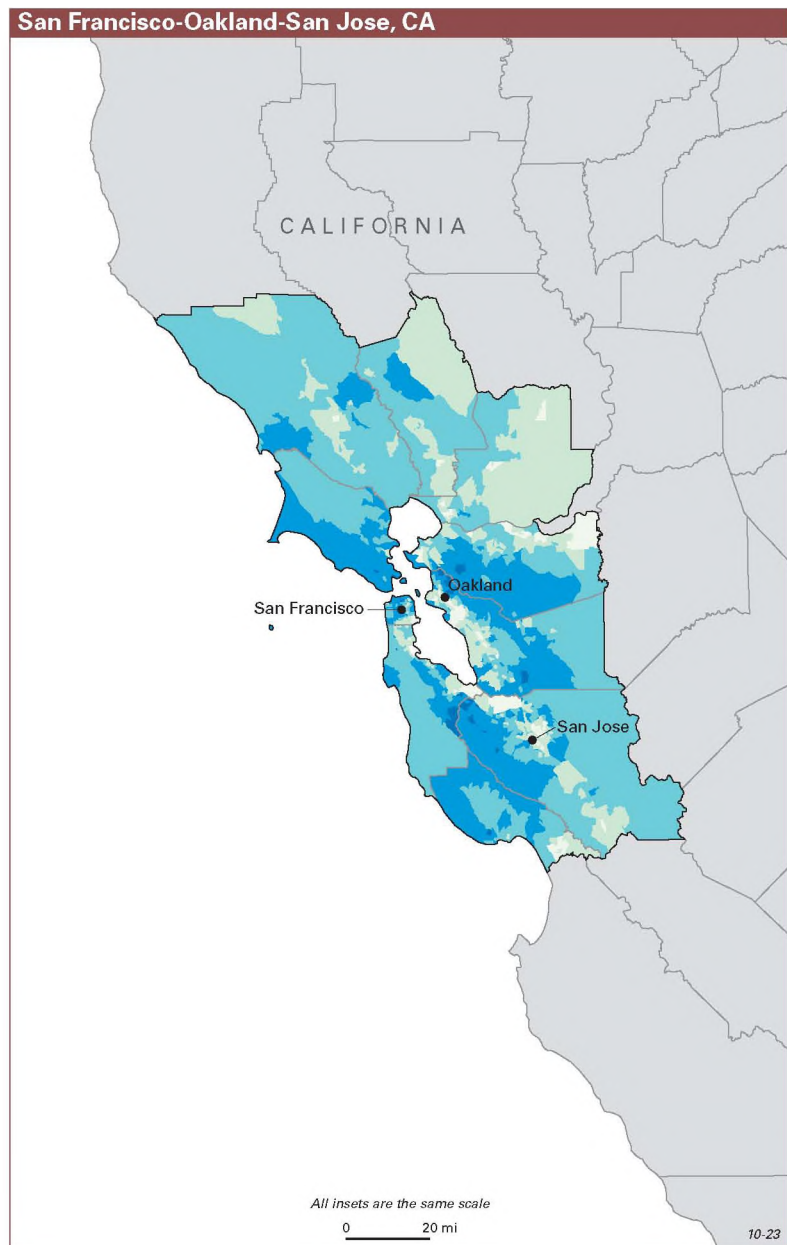
Percentage of Two or More Races population 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or higher



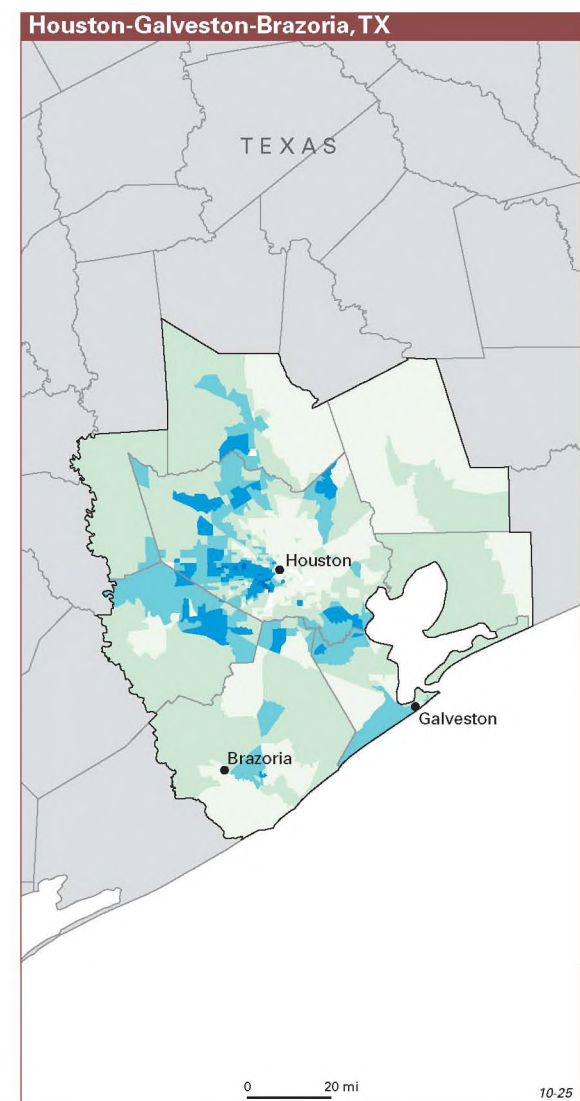
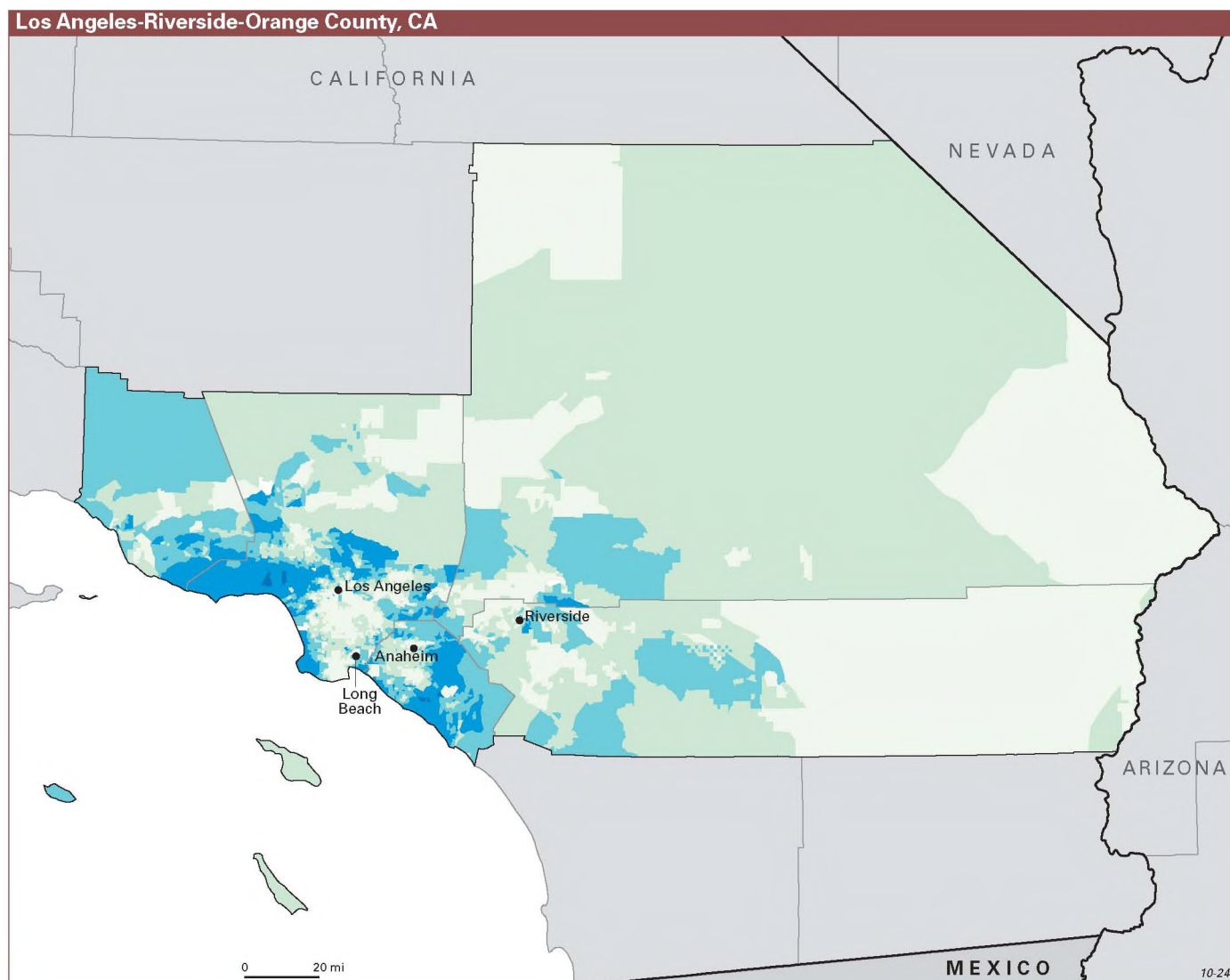
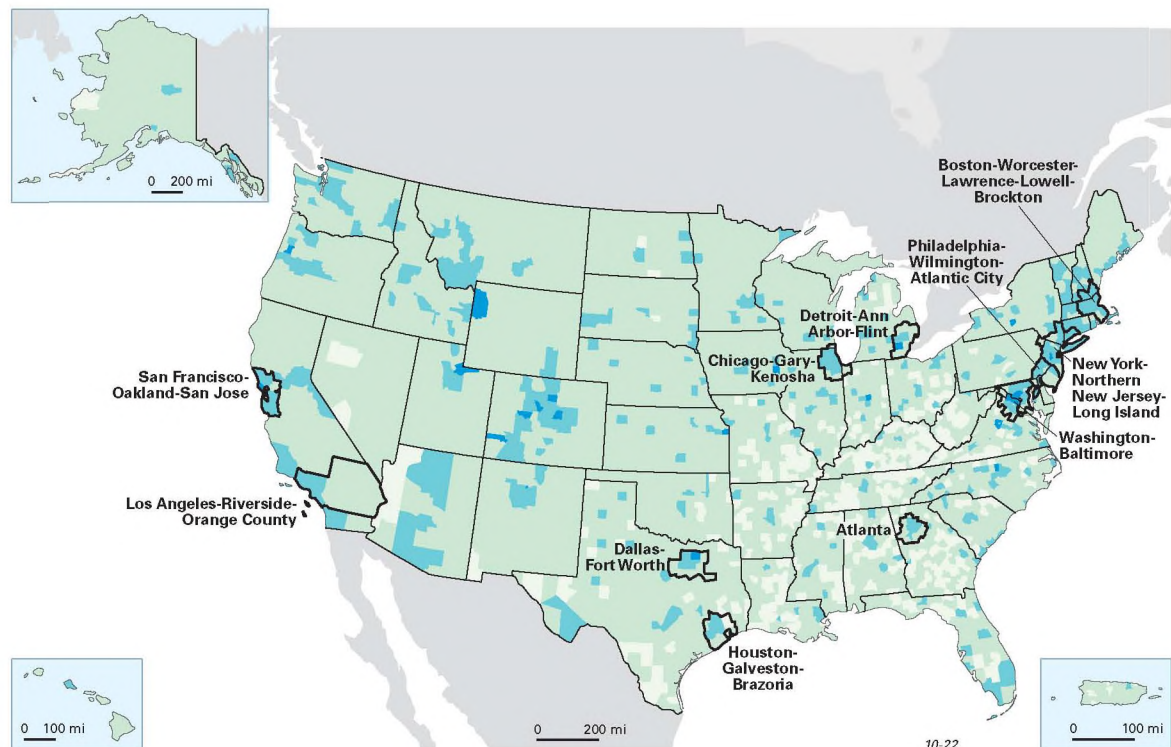
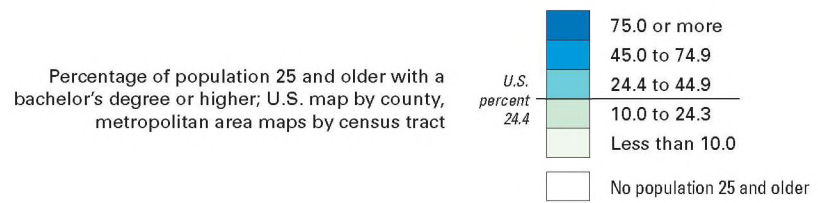
Percentage of Hispanic population 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or higher



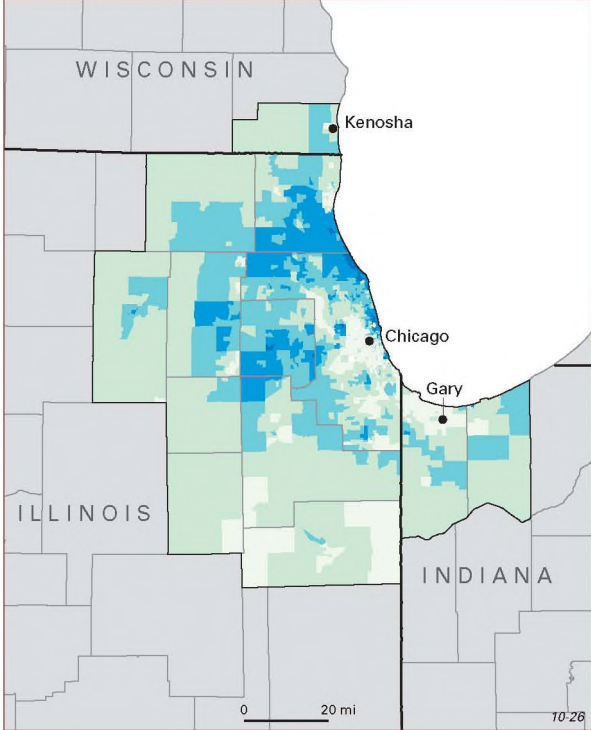
METROPOLITAN AREAS



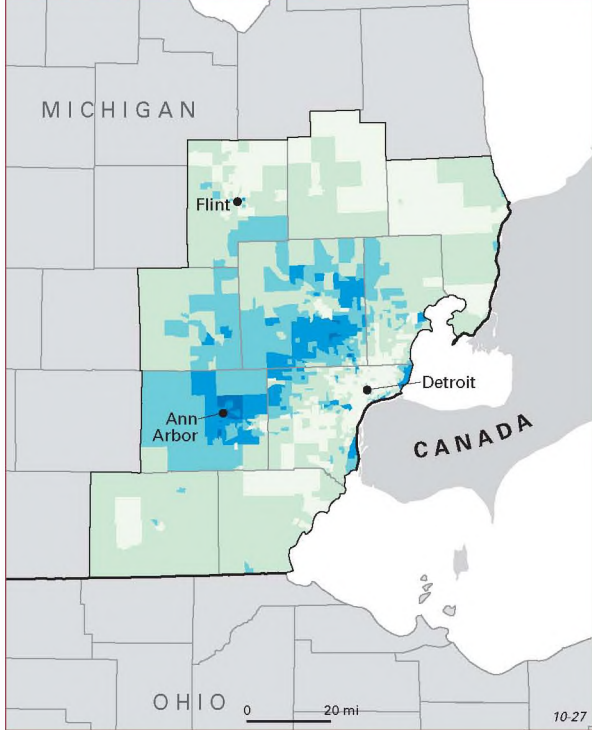
Completed College, 2000
Largest Metropolitan Areas



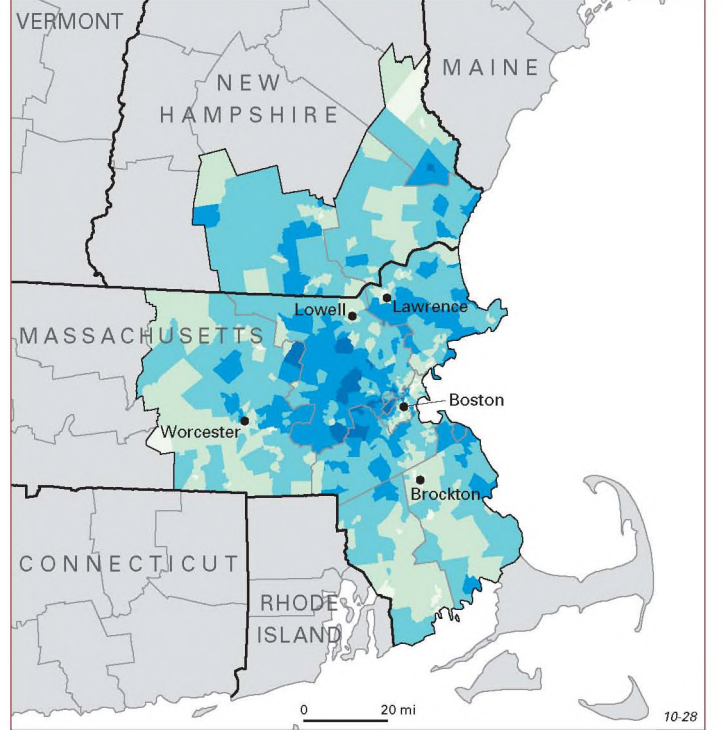
Chicago-Gary-Kenosha, IL-IN-WI



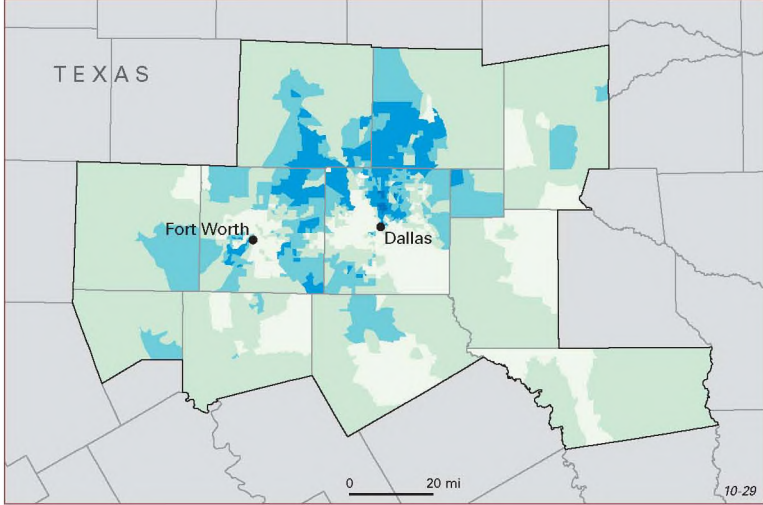
Detroit-Ann Arbor-Flint, MI



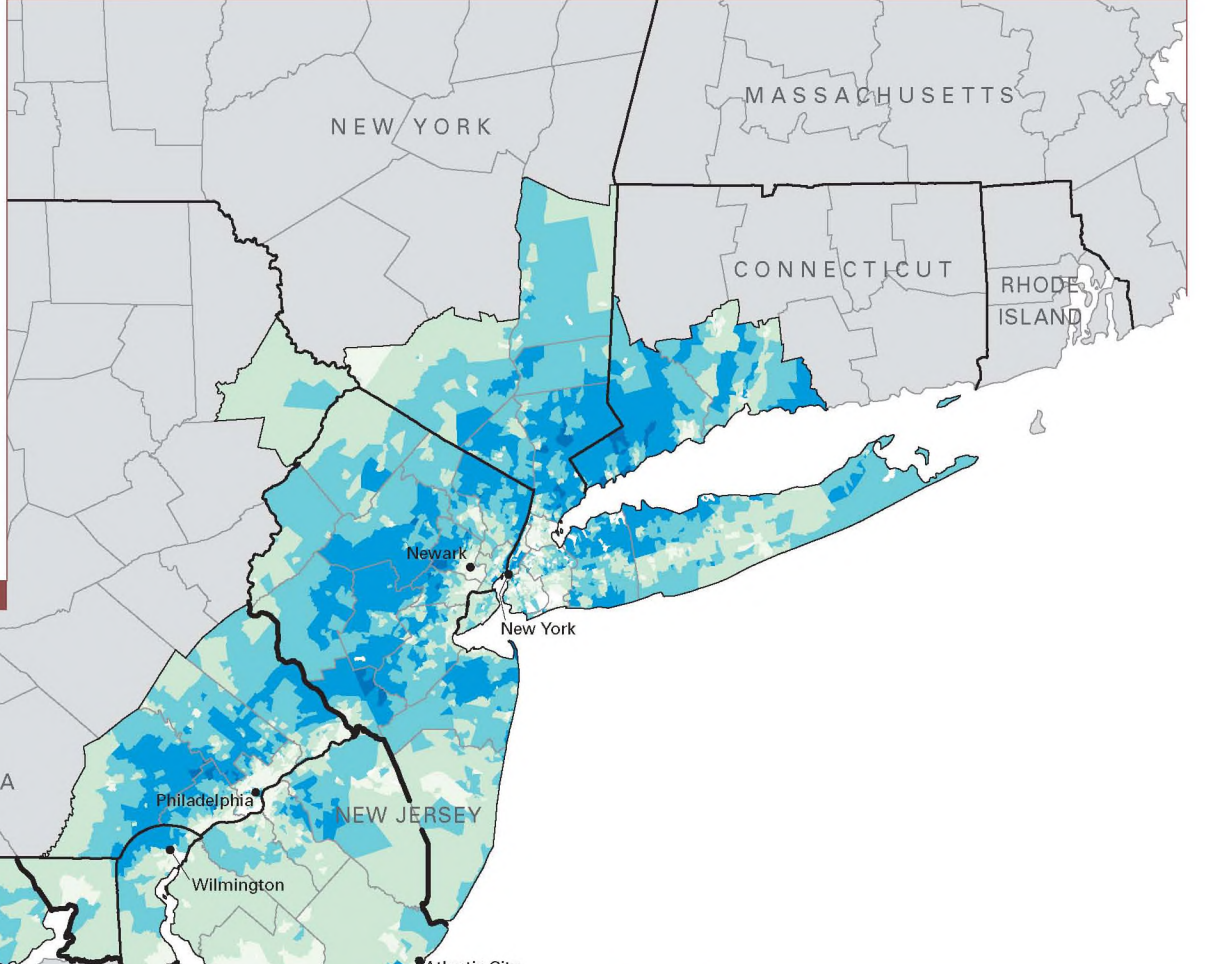
Boston-Worcester-Lawrence-Lowell-Brockton, MA-NH



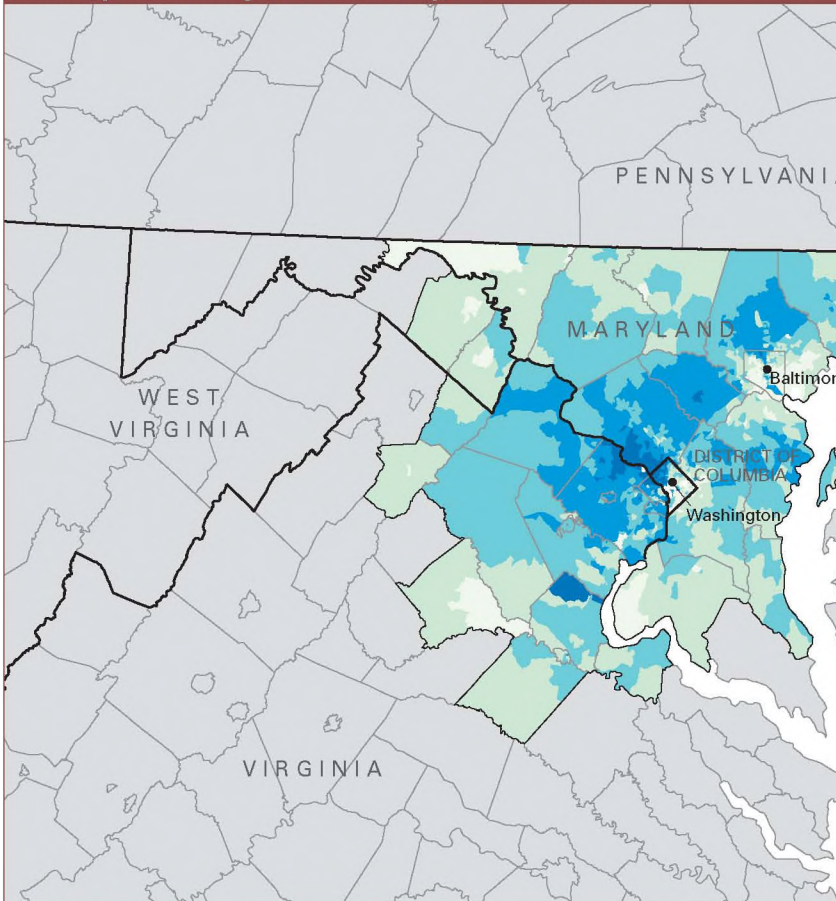
Dallas-Fort Worth, TX



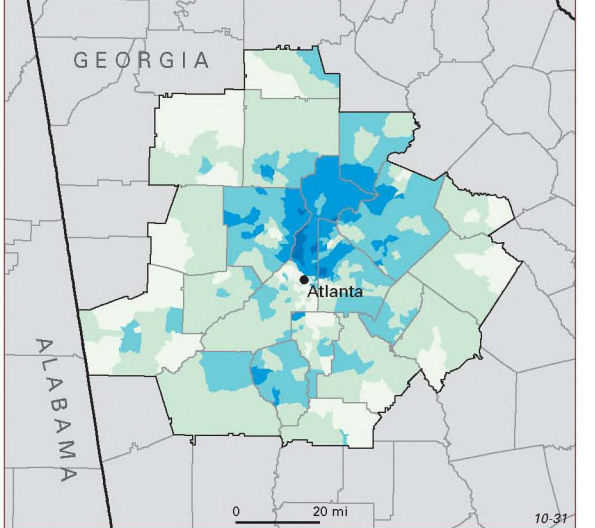
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA



Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, PA-NJ-DE-MD



Atlanta, GA



Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV



