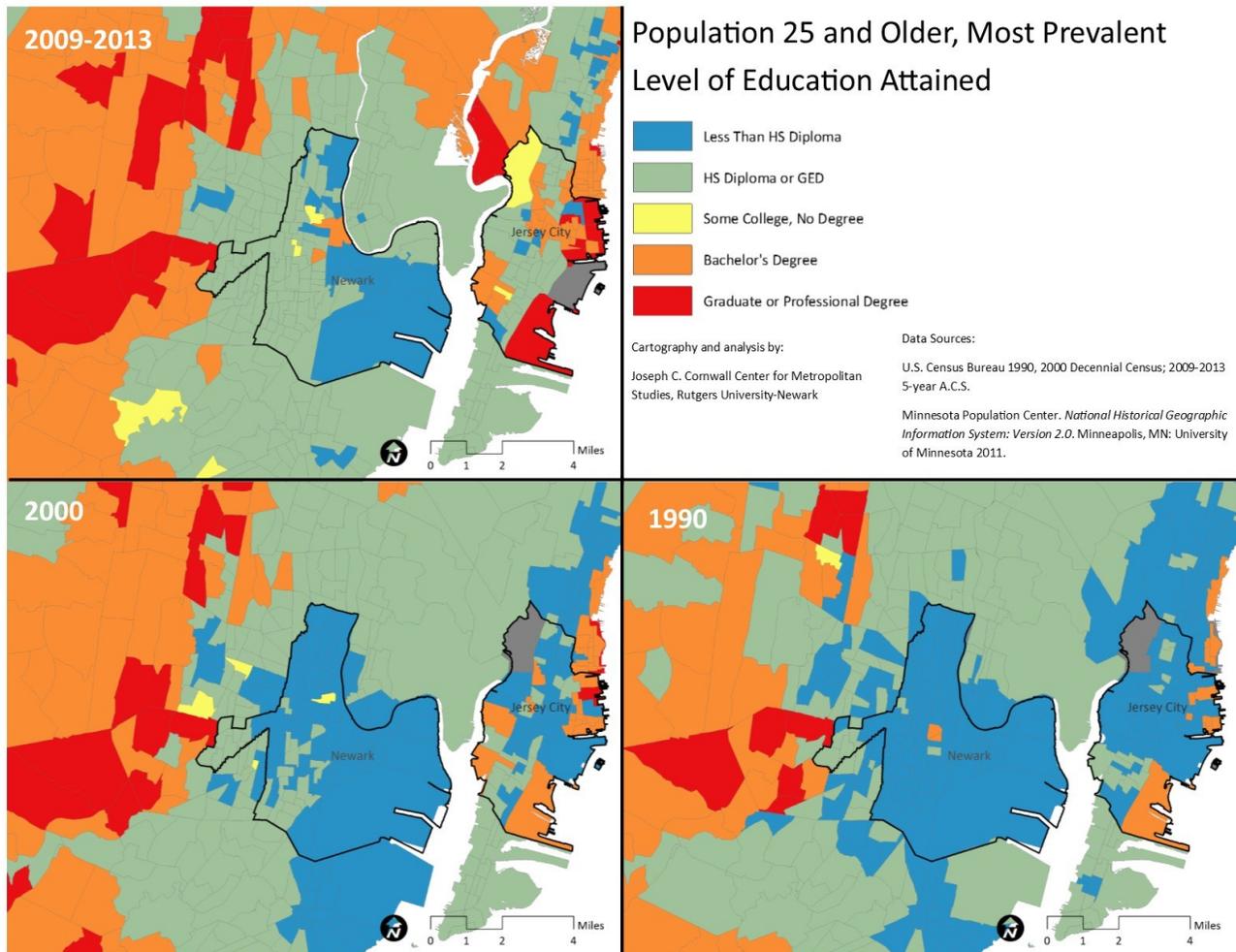


The Joseph C. Cornwall Center for Metropolitan Studies at Rutgers University-Newark is pleased to present "Map of the Week" — a weekly blog series designed to explore some of the community and economic development and social equity issues present in the Newark, New Jersey region through the use of maps and infographics. The Cornwall Center uses research and demonstration to address key urban and metropolitan problems in Newark and the surrounding region.

## Exploring Educational Attainment in the Newark Region

December 15, 2015:

### Disparities Persist in Terms of Changes in the Most Common Level of Education Attained



In this post we take a deeper look at educational attainment in our region by exploring the level of education most commonly attained in our neighborhoods. Rather than observing individual educational attainment levels (e.g. Associate Degrees and higher), this approach lets us more easily see concentrated areas of both high and low attainment, and any changes in concentration occurring over time. Areas of concentration can be predictors of outcomes for individual neighborhoods, or entire cities. Concentrated areas of low attainment, such as those where attainment is less than a high school education, are likely to be areas of high poverty and low incomes. Areas of high attainment, such as Bachelor's or Graduate Degrees, are more likely to have better outcomes.

The series of maps above show the most commonly reported level of education attained in each neighborhood (census tract) for 1990, 2000, and 2009-2013. Let's look at the maps in the same way we did the previous maps of Associate-or-higher attainment—by observing any changes in levels of attainment and any disparities in terms of the locations changes are occurring.

We can very easily see dramatic changes occurring from 1990 to the current period of 2009-2013. In 1990, less than a high school education was the most commonly reported level of education attained in nearly every Newark neighborhood. This essentially means that, in 1990, the whole city of Newark was considered a concentrated area of low educational attainment. With many of Newark's neighborhoods changing from blue to green in the maps, we can see that many neighborhoods experienced a one-level increase in educational attainment, and currently report a High School Diploma or GED as the most common level of education attained. Some Newark neighborhoods experienced a multiple-level upgrade, rising from less than a High School diploma to some college but no degree, or even Bachelor's Degree. However, this is the exception rather than the rule.

Similar to Newark, less than a high school education was the most commonly reported level of education attained in the majority of Jersey City neighborhoods in 1990. As with Newark, we can see a dramatic change in the most commonly reported attainment levels over this period. Where the disparity lies between these two cities is in the extent and nature of the change. Nearly every Jersey City neighborhood that reported less than a high school education as its most commonly attained level of education in 1990 experienced at least a one-level upgrade in the current period. Currently, there are only five (5) neighborhoods in Jersey City where less than a high school education is the most commonly reported level of education attained. The proliferation of orange and red neighborhoods throughout the years illustrates that many Jersey City neighborhoods have experienced a significant upgrading of their educational attainment levels.

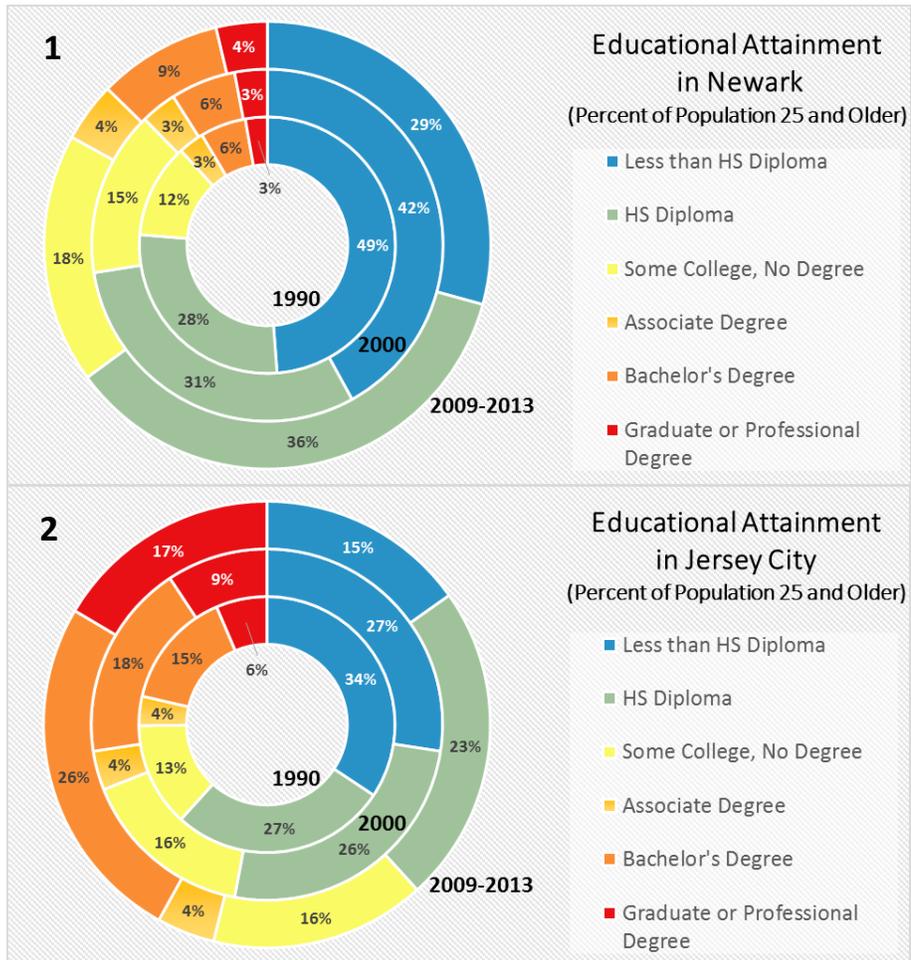
*Greater shares of the adult population are attaining higher levels of education at the citywide level, although disparities persist.*

While these maps give us a general sense of the dramatic changes in attainment happening across our region's individual neighborhoods, they are unable to show specifics of citywide changes. The charts below allow us to compare attainment changes in Newark and Jersey City of over this period and reinforce the idea that all areas are not experiencing the same type of upgrades.

Figure 1 shows the proportion of the adult population each individual level of educational attainment accounted for in the time periods observed. The change from blue to green in Chart 1 illustrates the one-level upgrading in educational attainment experienced by the Newark adult population from 1990 to 2009-2013. The proliferation of orange and red in Chart 2 shows higher education levels comprising increasingly larger shares of the adult population, thus illustrating a multi-level upgrade of educational attainment for the Jersey City adult population.

*Educational attainment is growing—but what is the rate of this change?*

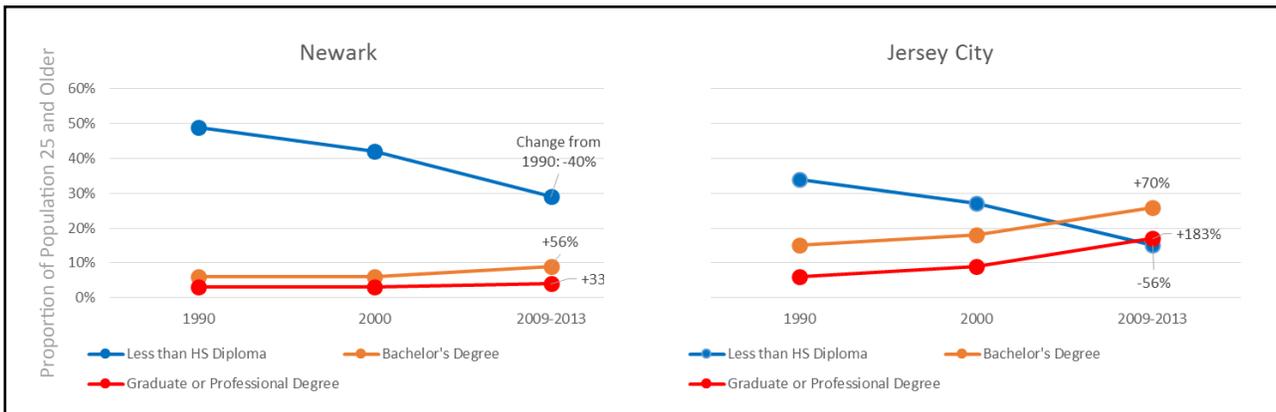
**Figure 1: Changes in Educational Attainment Levels**



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 1990, 2000, 2009-2013 5-year A.C.S.

In Figure 2, below, we can compare the changes of less than a high school education, Bachelor's Degree, and Graduate Degree attainment for the two cities. These levels of educational attainment are three of the most critical levels to observe; as one indicates a population that is underprepared for competing in the economy while the others indicate a population that is more likely to be sufficiently prepared.

**Figure 2: Rate of Change in Selected Educational Attainment Levels**



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 1990, 2000, 2009-2013 5-year A.C.S.

We can see the decline in Newark's less than high school attainment rate as well as the rise in the rate of Bachelor's Degrees attained over the course of 1990 to 2009-2013. Newark's rate of less than high school attainment fell from 8.2 times its rate of Bachelor's Degree attainment in 1990 to only 3.2 times higher in 2009-2013. However, these changes were not as dramatic as Jersey City's in the respective categories. Jersey City's rate of less than high school attainment declined by 56% from 1990 to 2009-2013, while it saw dramatic increases in its rates of Bachelor's Degree attainment (+70%) and Graduate Degree attainment (+183%). The changes in Jersey City over this time were so dramatic, that Bachelor's Degrees and Graduate Degrees have both overtaken less than high school education in terms of proportions of adult population the levels comprise.

Although not as pronounced as Jersey City's, such a narrowing of the gap between the lowest level of attainment and the highest levels is good news for Newark, as it suggests its population and workforce are more prepared to compete in today's economy, more likely to earn higher incomes, and less likely to live in poverty. It is a trend that should be both celebrated currently and amplified in the future.

Changes in individual levels of education are important to observe, as different levels are associated with different socioeconomic outcomes. In other words, not all degrees are created equally, in terms of their income-earning potential. Read our post next week as we explore specific socioeconomic differences among education levels in our region and the impact these differences can have on our population, workforce, and economy.

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