

Geographies of racially mixed people and households: A focus on American Indians

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Abstract

Multiracial individuals and mixed race households show different residential location patterns depending on the races of the groups involved and the ways in which people report their mixed racial heritage. In this research, we focus on multiracial and interracial married American Indians in recent decades. Although they are substantively interesting, American Indians and multiracial people are rarely represented in social science research on residential location and segregation. Using U.S. public-use microdata from four decades (1980, 1990, 2000, and 2008), we map the locations of two groups of multiracial American Indians and two groups of interracial married American Indians, in comparison to their single-race counterparts. In 1980 and 1990, we measure “multiracial” using the respondents’ answers to both the race and the ancestry census questions. Our disaggregation of different types of mixed-race American Indian households extends the work of Wong (1998, 1999) and Wright et al. (2003) to reflect current sociological knowledge about the varieties of experiences of people in different multiracial situations. By doing so, this research advances knowledge about the social context of race and identity in the contemporary United States.

Introduction

Although it has been a thriving field for decades, some aspects of the geography of residential settlement patterns remain understudied. Among these are patterns in non-urban areas, race-specific effects of the internal racial diversity of households, and the residential locations of small minority groups such as American Indians. In this research, we aim to understand the ways in which the United States is spatially diverse from the perspective of American Indians; how the diversity depends in part upon the diversity of bodies (i.e., multiracial individuals) and diversity within households (i.e., interracial-couple households and other mixed-race households); and how this spatial diversity has changed in the past four decades.

We address these topics using a variety of national maps generated using public use microdata from the US decennial censuses of 1980, 1990, and 2000, as well as the 2008 American Community Survey. Although aggregate census data provide more geographic detail, the microdata provide the most detailed measures of within-household racial diversity available because they provide race and ancestry data for everyone in each household and allow each person to report multiple races in 2000 and 2008. This research complements and expands previous research about racial segregation and diversity in the United States to be inclusive of American Indians and to describe spatial (and probably social) patterns for a variety of types of multiracial households. This research thus provides important contextual information about how, and where, racial experiences vary in America.

Previous research

Traditional studies of residential location and segregation focus on a single race of one person in the household (the “householder”) and assume that everyone in the home is of the same race. This assumption is built into the aggregated data released by the US Census Bureau. Given the increased prevalence of multiracial individuals and households in the US, we agree with researchers who have recently argued that directing attention to diversity *within* households is necessary for a true understanding of how race interacts with social context in the United States (e.g., Holloway et al. 2005; Ellis et al. 2007; Wright et al. 2003; Wong 1998, 1999). Within-household diversity can come from multiracial individuals, romantic partners who are different races from one another, and interracial adoptions and racially differing roommates. Mixed-race households have become increasingly common in recent decades and multiracial individuals have been enumerated as such for a decade. Thus, it is inappropriate (and sometimes unnecessary) to assume that an entire home will share a single race.

In 2003, Richard Wright and colleagues (Wright et al. 2003) called for expanded social geography research on mixed-race couples and multiracial individuals. In later research, these same authors (Ellis et al. 2007; Holloway et al. 2005) reveal that studying within-household diversity presents a much clearer picture of the contact that is actually occurring between the various races in a community because it includes private integration (in a home) as well as public integration (in terms of neighbors with different races). They focus on mixed-race households (all types grouped together) to understand whether integration within the household is associated with integration in the neighborhood. Wong (1998, 1999) ...

Although prior research on the social geography of race in the US is related to our study, our work extends previous knowledge in several important ways. First, many authors exclude American Indians from their studies (e.g., Reardon et al. 2008; South et al. 2008; Timberlake and Iceland 2007). Second, other researchers often focus on urban areas because they can study small-area segregation and most Americans live in these areas (e.g., Ellis et al. 2007; Holloway et al. 2005; Reardon et al. 2008; Timberlake and Iceland 2007). Unfortunately, this focus excludes the many American Indians who live outside of urban areas and also biases the American Indian results because those who live in urban areas have different average characteristics than those in more rural areas (Ogunwole 2006). Third, with the few exceptions noted above, multiracial people and interracial couples have rarely been measured as such. In part, this is because recent research on the US has used data from 1990 and earlier (e.g., Ellis et al. 2007; Holloway et al. 2005; Wong 1998, 1999). Fourth, change over time is rarely assessed, with the notable exception of Timberlake and Iceland (2007) who explore changes in residential equality over a 30 year period in hundreds of metropolitan areas across the United States.

These limitations are understandable given the extensive set of analyses presented in other research, but they leave room for further exploration. Clearly, multiracial individuals, rural areas, and small groups such as American Indians pose challenges to traditional studies of residential segregation. This separate study focusing on the American Indian population could produce a much different result than previous research.

American Indians present a particularly interesting case to the study of residential location. While past federal policies such as the Indian Relocation Program (administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs during the mid-20th century) aimed to minimize urban segregation of American Indians, the creation of Indian reservations was an explicit attempt to provide segregated areas. Minorities who are residentially segregated are excluded from full participation in American social, cultural, political, and economic life (Timberlake and Iceland 2007) and segregation directly affects residents' access to both physical and mental healthcare (Landrine and Correl 2009; Lee 2009). The negative consequences of concentrated neighborhood poverty, which often coincides with residential racial segregation, are of particular concern for minorities (Timberlake and Iceland 2007).

Our analyses focus on places and on people who are severely understudied by social geographers. Because of their unique history, American Indians are the most rural American minority group. Rather than focusing on residential location and segregation in major cities, as is often done (e.g., Holloway et al. 2005; Timberlake and Iceland 2007), we focus on the ways in which multiracial individuals and mixed-race couple households are distributed across Indian Country and throughout the United States. Our aim is to highlight the diversity internal to the American Indian people by revealing meaningful patterns in the race-specific locations of people with various personal, marital, and household race combinations.

Data, Measures, and Methods

Data

For this research, we use publicly available microdata from the 1980, 1990, and 2000 decennial Censuses and the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS) administered by the Census Bureau. We used the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series version of these data, available at <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/> (Ruggles et al. 2009). These four datasets are all collected at the household level and thus contain great detail about the racial diversity within homes. The decennial census data are each 1-in-20 samples of all households in the US, with limited geographic detail available. The American Community Survey data are a nationally representative 1-in-100 sample of households in the United States.

Measures: Multiracial Individuals and Mixed-Race Couples

A single race response was required for the 1980 and 1990 race question, but beginning in 2000, each individual could report one or more races. Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino origin was assessed in a separate question in all years. In all four years, the Census Bureau asked for each person's "ancestry or ethnic origin" and coded the first two write-in responses (with some triple responses allowed in 1980). It is challenging to code ancestry responses into race categories, but it has been done repeatedly in prominent research (CITES). Our *white ancestry* category includes people who report a European country or who wrote "white or Caucasian" in response to the ancestry question. Our *black ancestry* category includes people who report a sub-Saharan African country or who wrote "Afro-American" or "African-American." Our *American Indian ancestry* category includes people who reported any American Indian or Alaska Native tribal group or who wrote "American Indian" or "Native American" or "Indian." Figure 0 shows the wording of the ancestry and race questions.

[FIGURE 0 ABOUT HERE]

For this early look at the racial landscape of multiracial American Indians over the past four decades, we focus on two groups of multiracial people: multiracial white-American Indian individuals and multiracial black-American Indian individuals. We compare their location in the US to that of single-race American Indians. There is an almost infinite variety of potential measures of a person's race and ancestry using these data. We focus on a relatively small set of these measures in our tour of the spatial landscape of race over the past 30 years. Individuals who report being white and American Indian could do so in any of the following ways (a) white race only and American Indian ancestry (possible in all years), (b) American Indian race only and white ancestry (possible in all years), or (c) both American Indian race and white race (2000 and 2008 only). Below, we map each of these possibilities separately by year. We separate individuals who are both black and American Indian into three parallel groups and map them similarly. For comparison, we offer maps of the residential location of single-race American Indians who do not report any non-American Indian ancestry (note that non-response to the ancestry question is common).

To explore the related geographic distribution of interracially married American Indians, we compare the marriages of single-race people. We divide these marriages into three groups: American Indians married to whites, and American Indians married to blacks, and (for comparison) American Indians married to American Indians. In all of these cases, the respondent may be Hispanic; the spatial location of American Indians who are also Asian, Pacific Islander, or "other race" is beyond the scope of this paper.

Measures: Geography in Four Decades

The most detailed level of geography available in the public microdata from each of these years is the year-specific and state-specific Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA), which contains at least 100,000 individuals. To facilitate comparisons across decades when the PUMA boundaries are constantly shifting, we use an aggregated spatial unit called the Consistent Public Use Microdata Area (CPUMA). Details on the development of this geographical unit are available through IPUMS under the variable name "CONSPUMA." In some cases the PUMAs and CPUMAs are physically expansive spaces, especially in areas of the rural west where American Indians are likely to live. Public aggregate data are available for significantly smaller areas, but do not allow researchers to know the racial composition of the home. Despite the limited detail, this geographic unit allows us to see change over time and allows us to use microdata so that we can access respondents' ancestry responses. The maps below provide innovative information about the varying spatial location of diverse parts of the multiracial American Indian population.

Method

In the maps below, we mirror Johnston et al. (2009) by coloring geographic areas based on whether the population size of the group in that area (measured as a proportion of the CPUMA's total population) is significantly different from the national average. The CPUMA is shaded light gray if it is significantly under-represented in the area ($p \leq 0.05$), dark gray if it is significantly over-represented in the area ($p \leq 0.05$), and medium gray if the difference is not significant. This method of coding the group-specific population density of areas is impervious to changing population sizes within

the area over time. It instead highlights meaningful spatial variation in America's race landscape.

Results

The results of this paper consist of the maps shown below in Figures 1-10. Most of the figures contain four small US maps depicting the relative prominence of a particular type of multiracial person or interracial household in 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2008. Two figures (Figures 4 and 7) show maps for only 2000 and 2008 because they are describing relative locations of people who report two races – a possibility that only existed in those two years. In addition, Figure 1 shows the relative locations of single-race American Indians in these four years and another figure (Figure 8) shows the relative locations of racially homogamous American Indians. To our knowledge, the maps depicted here are the first to examine the location of a variety of types of multiracial people both across time and across the US.

Multiracial heritage and residential location

Figure 1: Relative locations of single-race American Indians of any ancestry, 1980-2008.

Figure 2: Relative locations of single-race American Indians who report white ancestry, 1980-2008

Figure 3: Relative locations of single-race whites who report American Indian ancestry, 1980-2008

Figure 4: Relative locations of dual-race American Indian-whites, 2000 and 2008

Figure 5: Relative locations of single-race American Indians who report black ancestry, 1980-2008

Figure 6: Relative locations of single-race blacks who report American Indian ancestry, 1980-2008

Figure 7: Relative locations of dual-race American Indian-blacks, 2000 and 2008

Interracial marriage and residential location

Figure 8: Relative locations of racially homogamous married American Indians, 1980-2008

Figure 9: Relative locations of American Indians married to whites (all single-race), 1980-2008

Figure 10: Relative locations of American Indians married to blacks (all single-race), 1980-2008

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Figure 1. American Indian People, PUMA 1980-2008

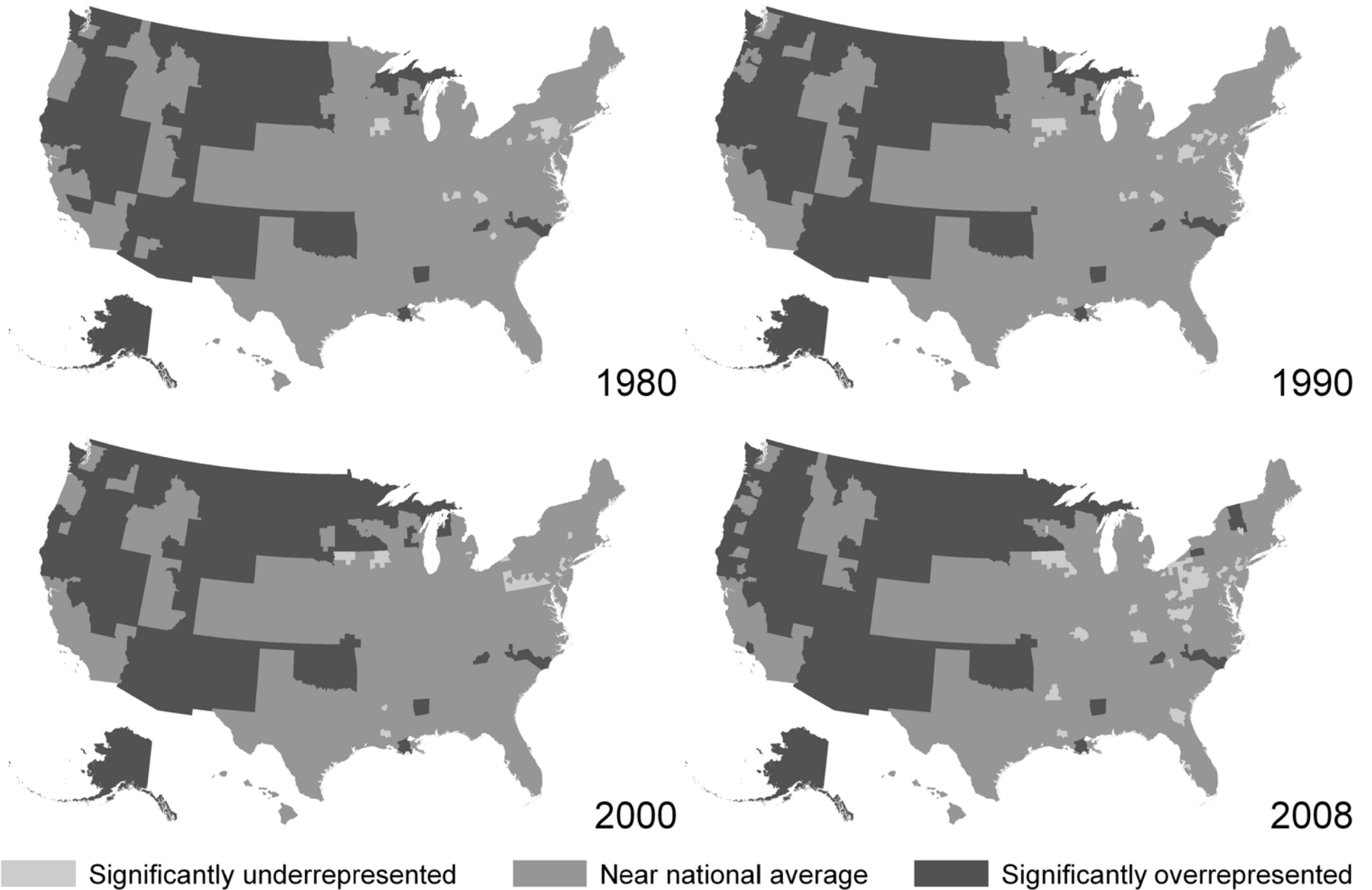
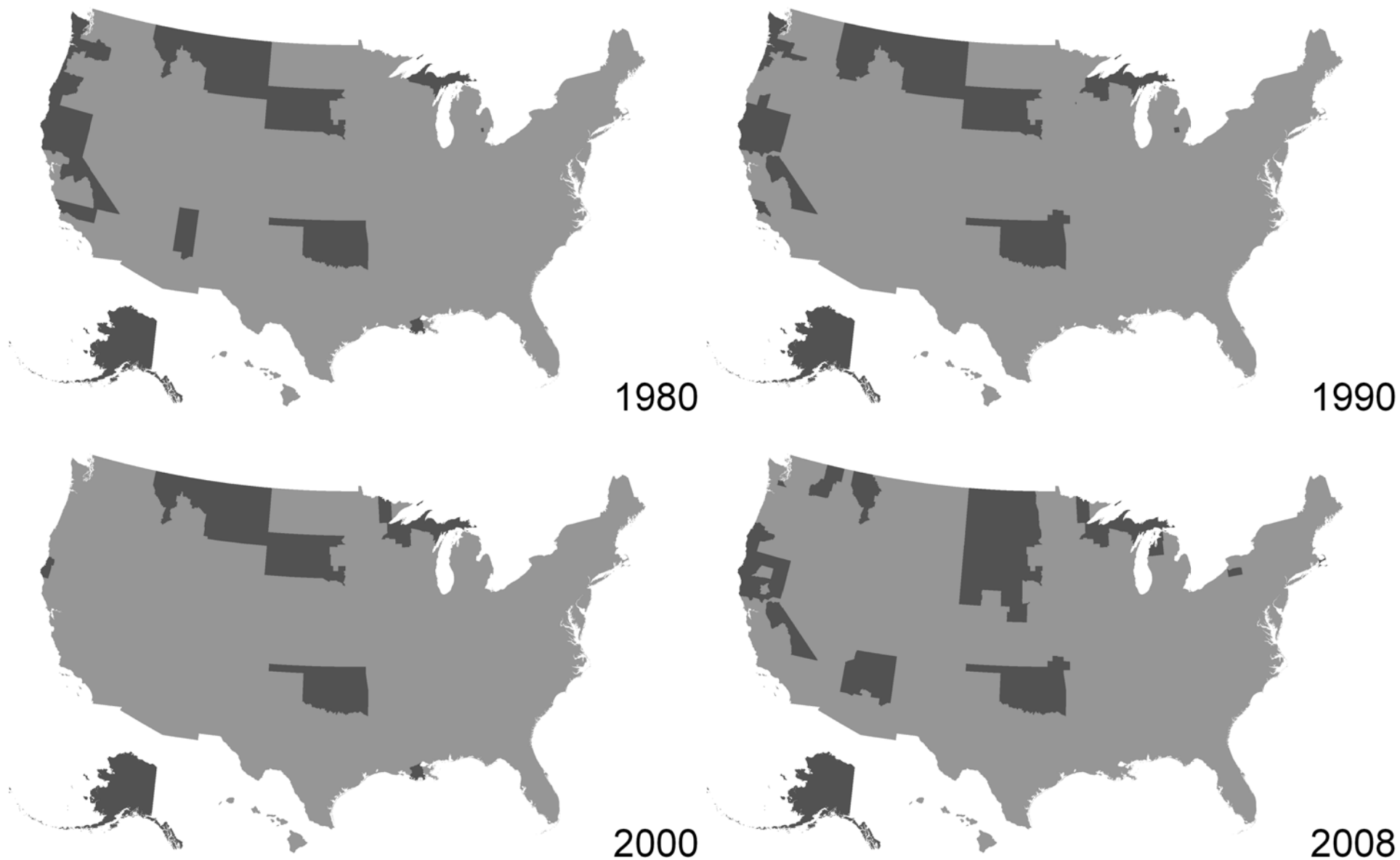
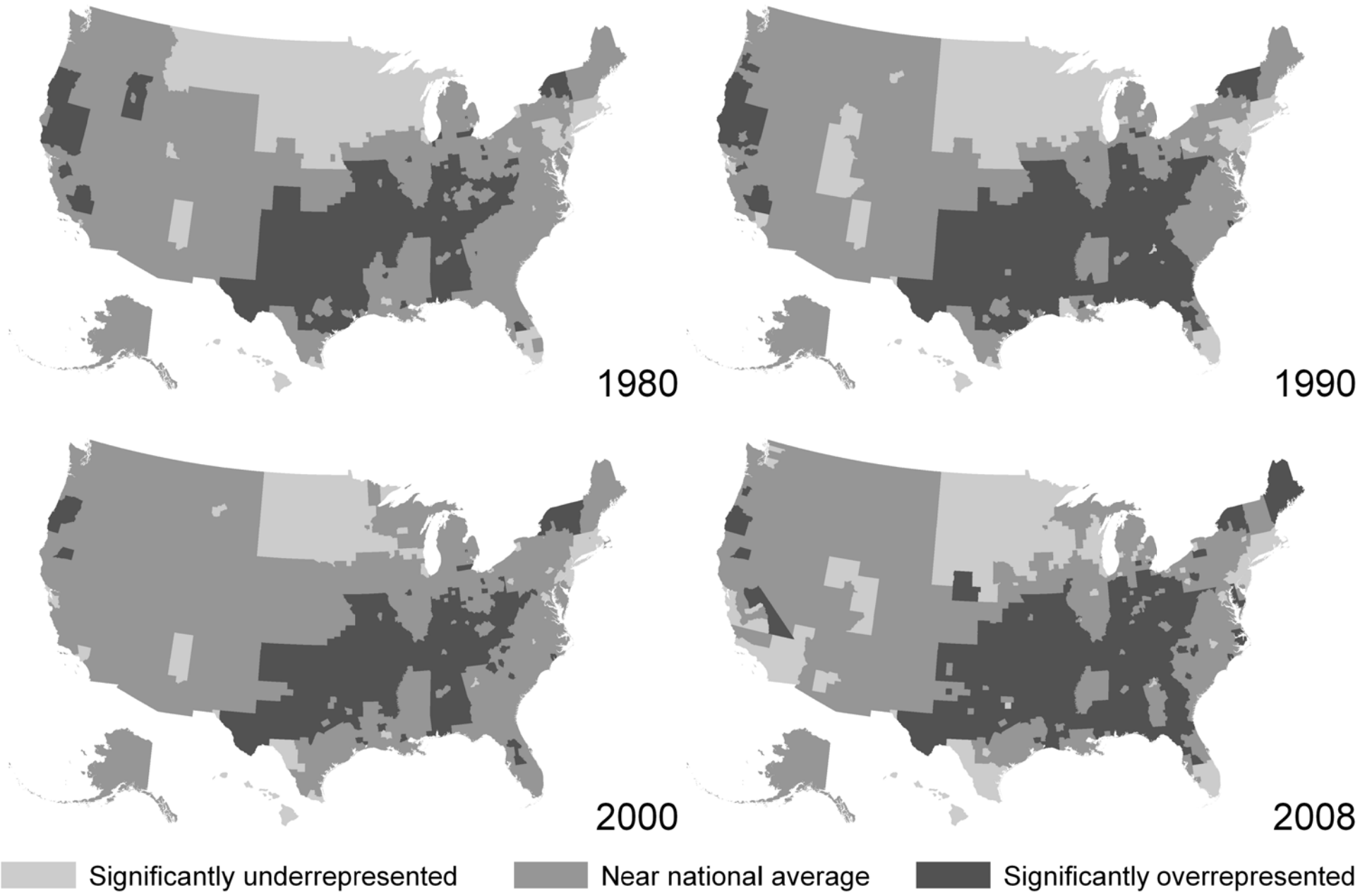


Figure 2. American Indian People with White Ancestry, PUMA 1980-2008

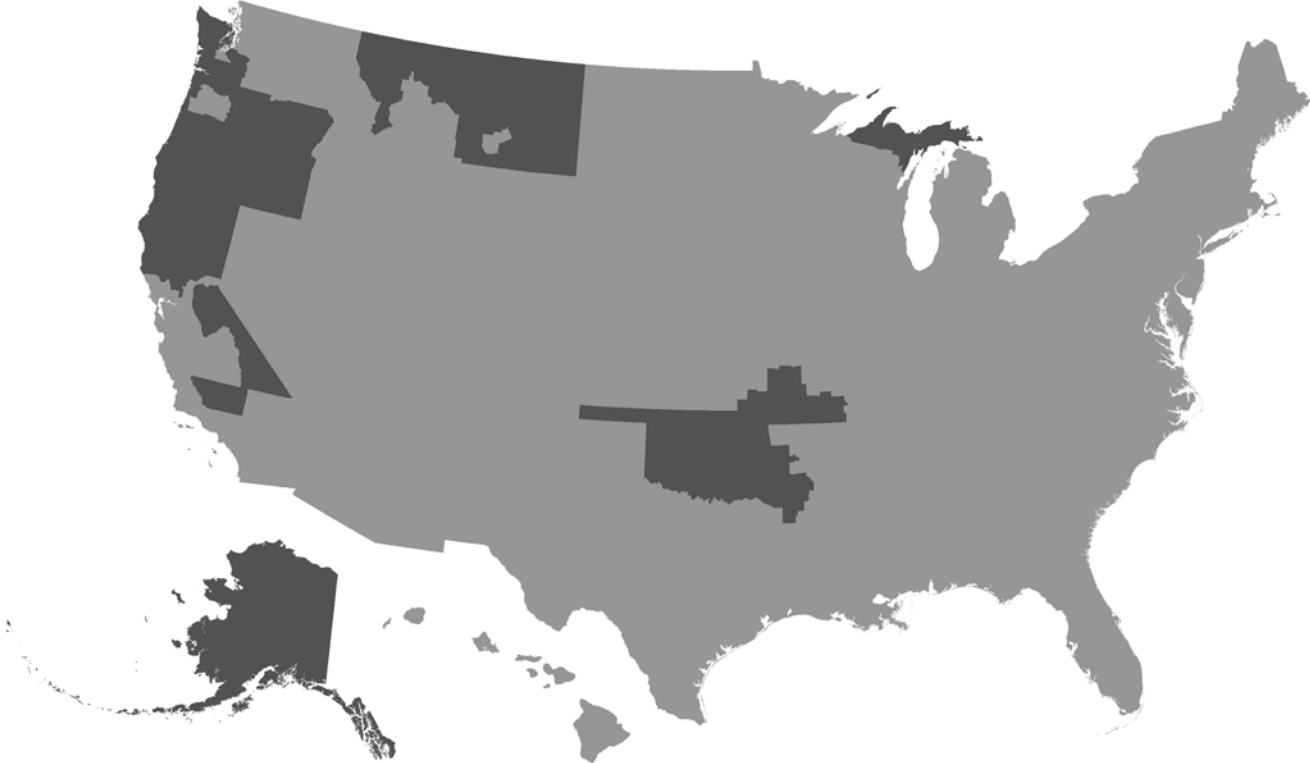


Significantly underrepresented Near national average Significantly overrepresented

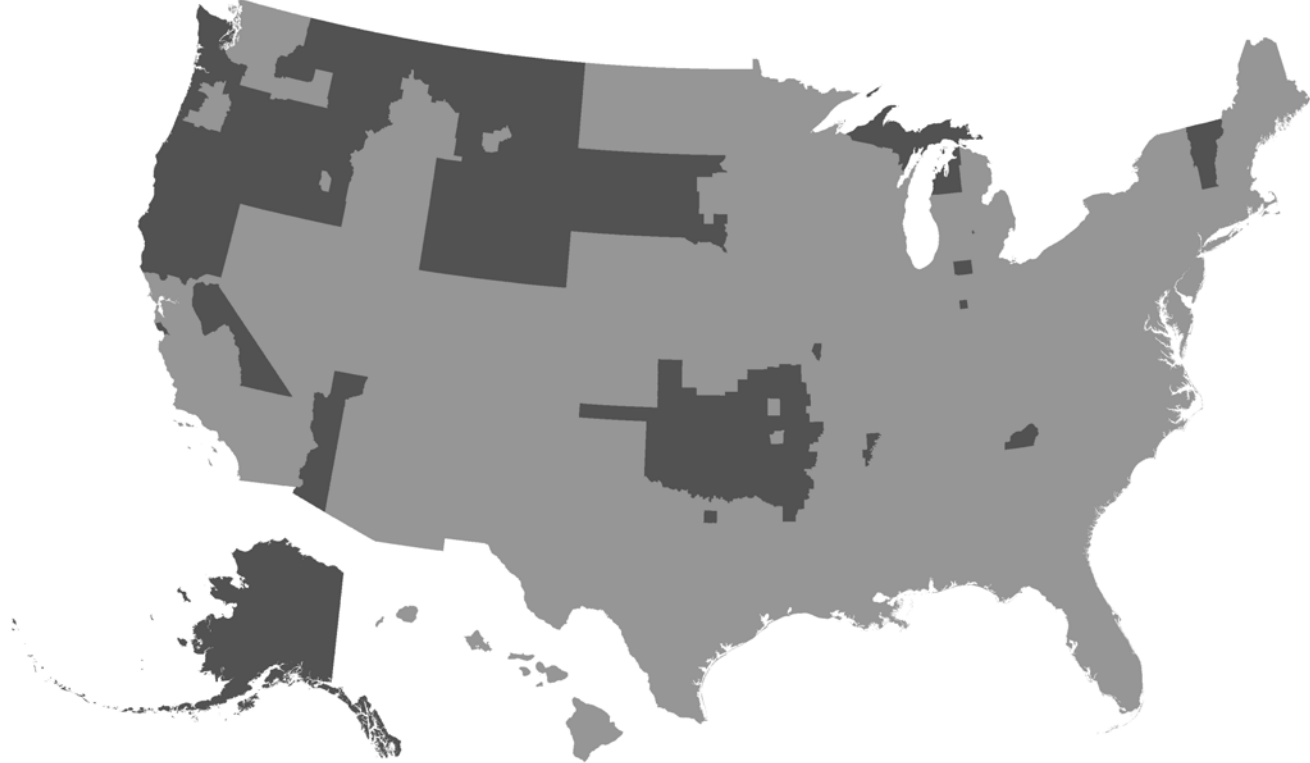
Figure 3. White People with American Indian Ancestry, PUMA 1980-2008



**Figure 4. American Indian-White Multiracial People,
PUMA 2000-2008**



2000



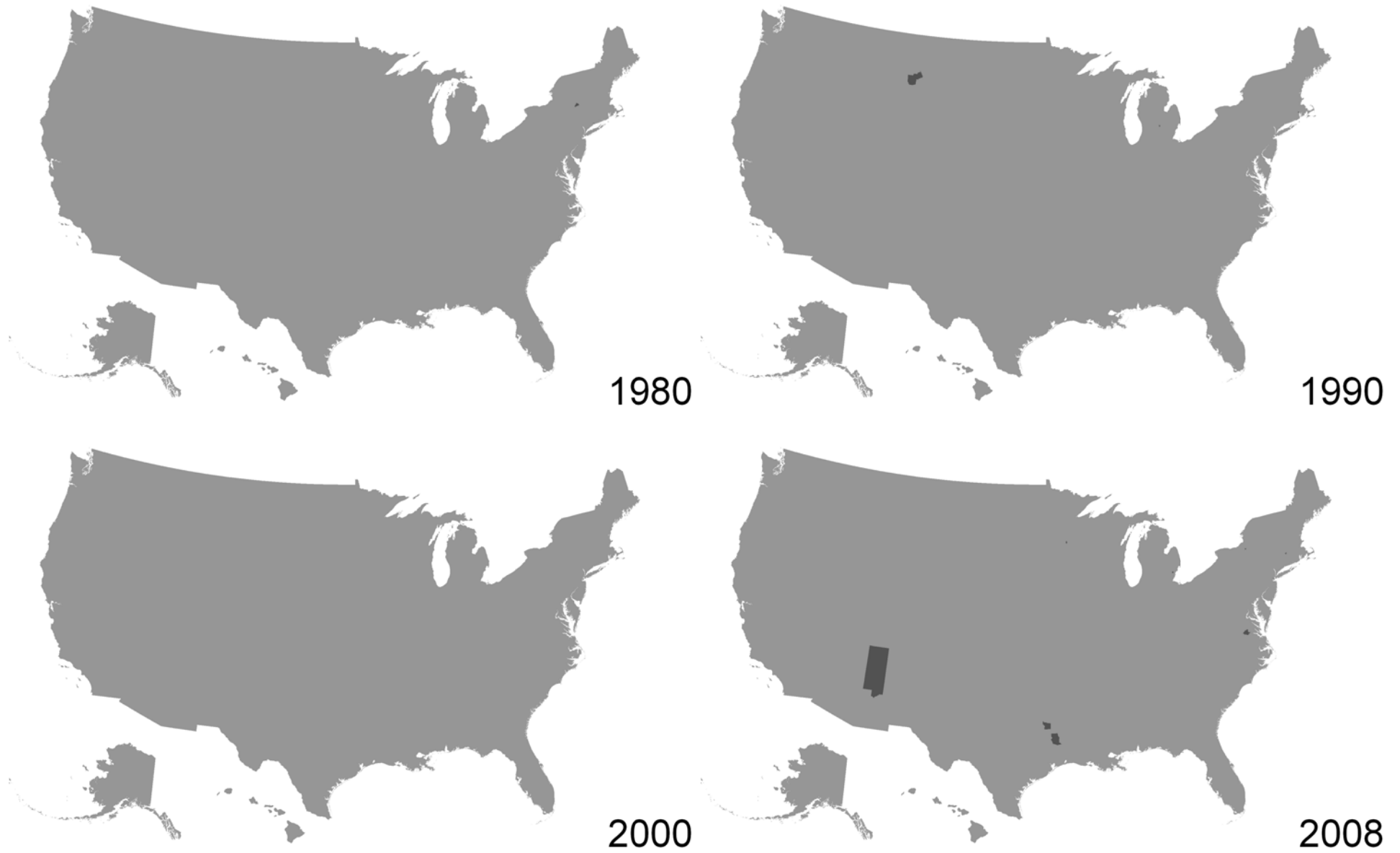
2008

Significantly underrepresented Near national average Significantly overrepresented

Minnesota Population Center Data Source: Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (1980, 1990, 2000, 2008)

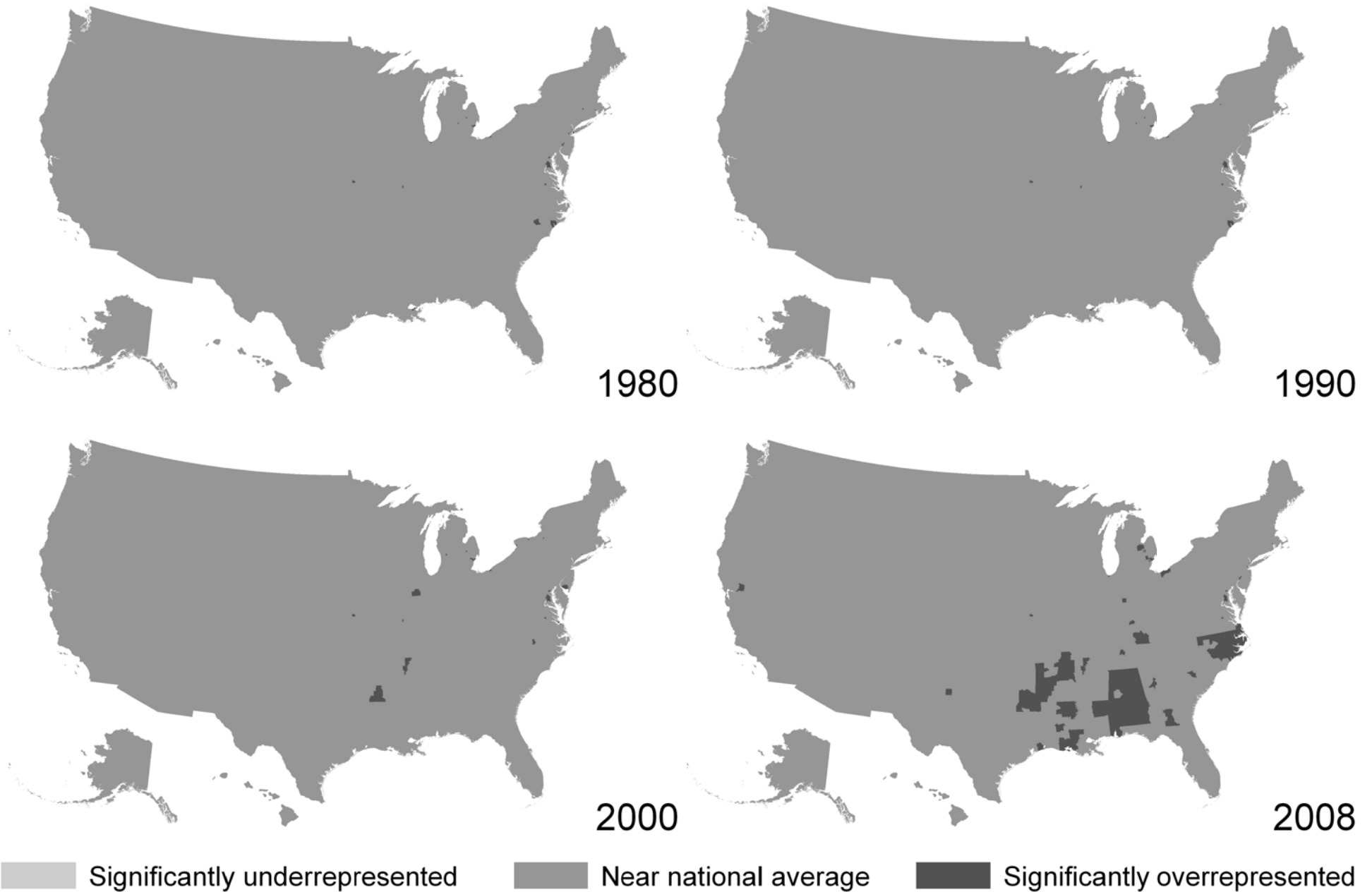
Created: March 2, 2010

Figure 5. American Indian People with Black Ancestry, PUMA 1980-2008



Significantly underrepresented Near national average Significantly overrepresented

Figure 6. Black People with American Indian Ancestry, PUMA 1980-2008



**Figure 7. American Indian-Black Multiracial People,
PUMA 2000-2008**

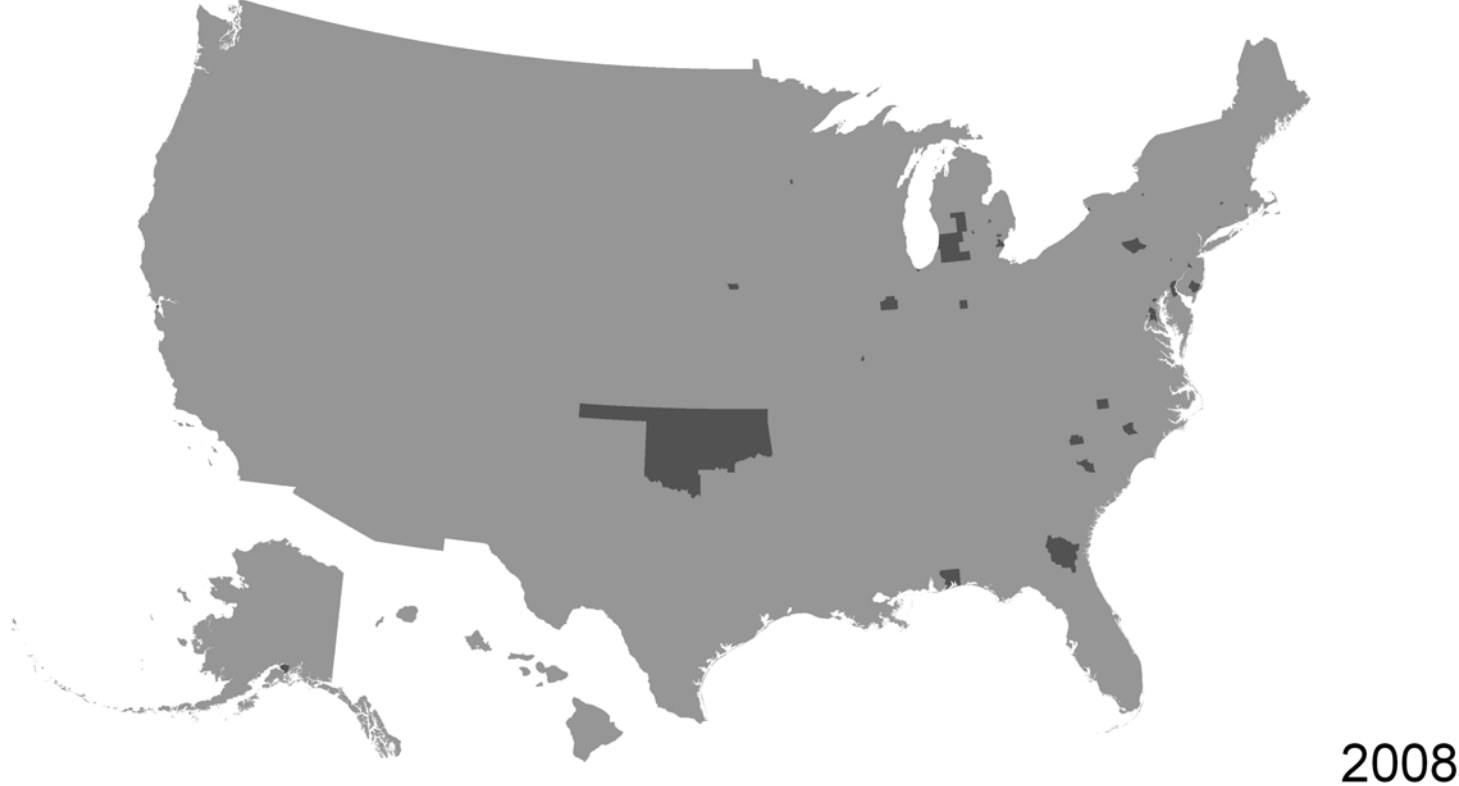


Figure 8. American Indian-American Indian Same-Race Couples, PUMA 1980-2008

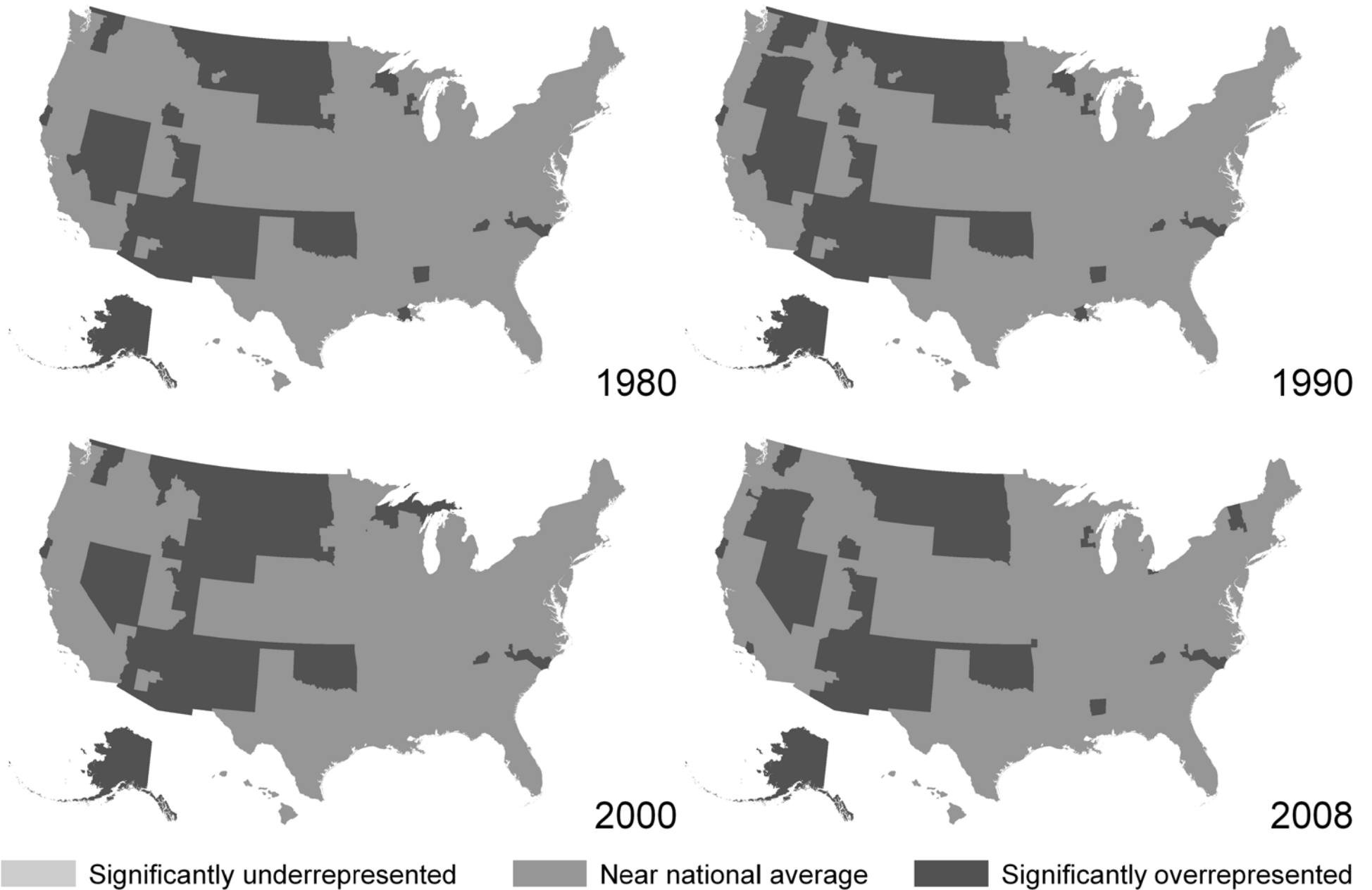


Figure 9. American Indian-White Interracially Married Couples, PUMA 1980-2008

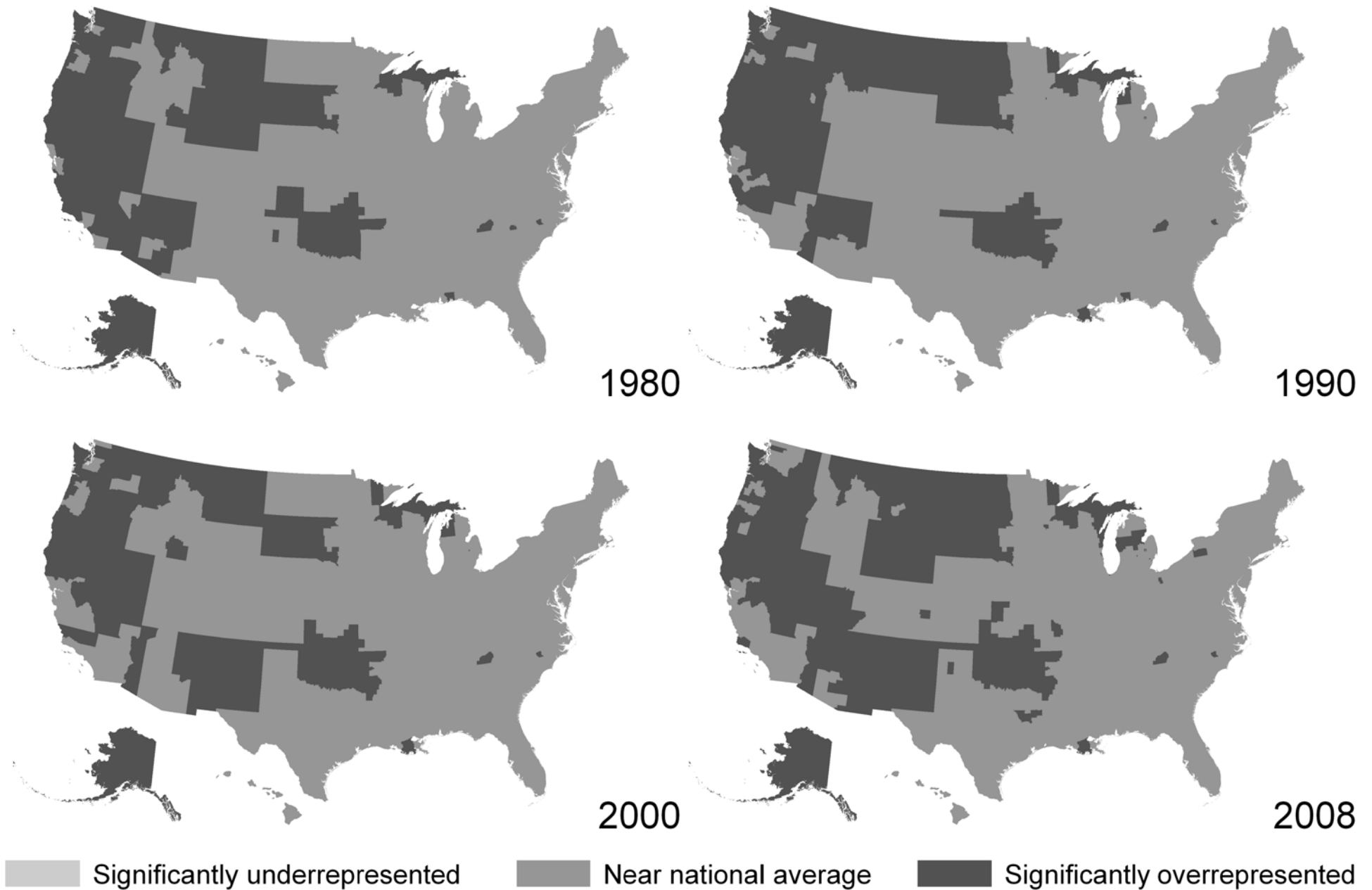


Figure 10. American Indian-Black Interracially Married Couples, PUMA 1980-2008

