

The Changing Family Structure in the Atlanta Region

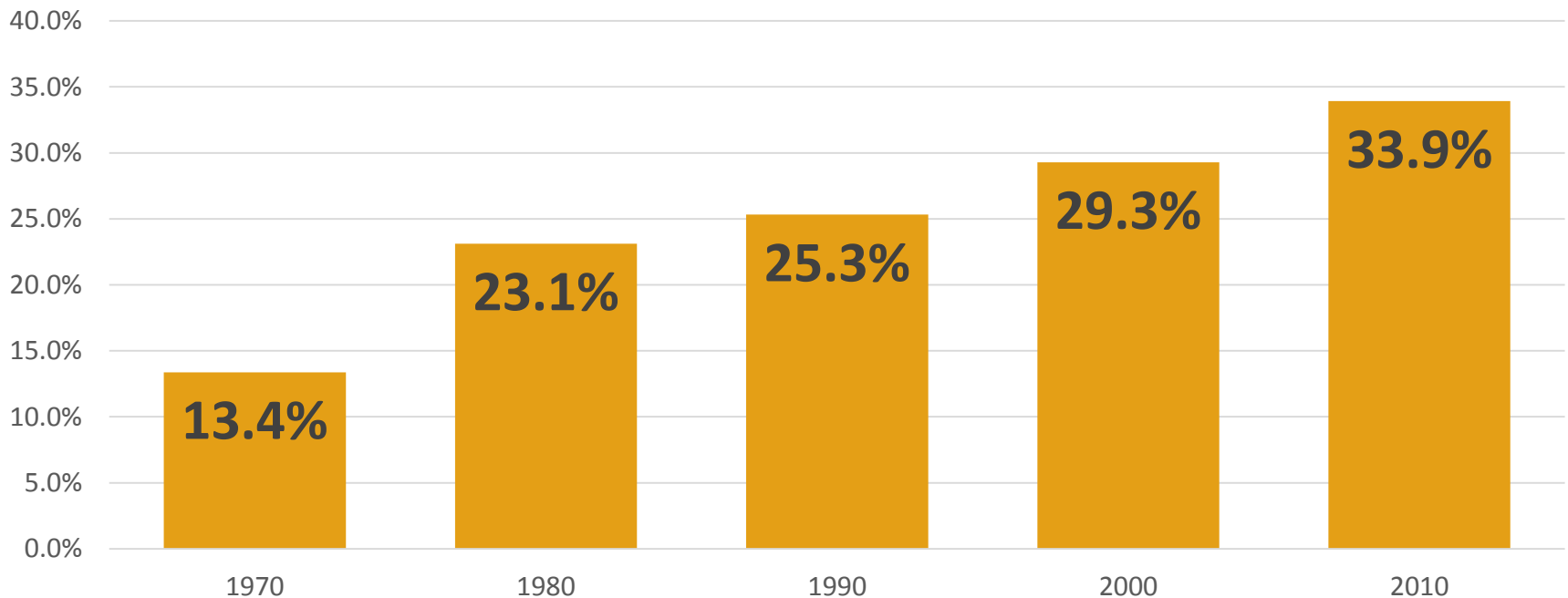
Atlanta Regional Commission
For more information, contact:
mcarnathan@atlantaregional.com

The Highlights

- As of 2010, **almost 34 percent of families with children are headed by a single-parent** in the 10-county Atlanta region. In 1970, that percentage was less than 14 percent.
- **Every county in the 10-county Atlanta region experienced double-digit percentage point increases in the proportion of single-parent families** between 1970-2010. Over the last decade (2000-2010), only Fulton had a decrease.
- The proportion of Husband-Wife families (with and without kids), conversely, has decreased dramatically. **In 1970, almost 71 percent of households were husband-wife families. By 2010, that percentage had dropped to 46 percent.**
- **Married-couple families earn more than twice as much annually** as other family types and non-families.

Significant Increase in Single-Parent Families

Percent of All Families with “Own Children” Headed by a Single-Parent
(10-County Atlanta Region)



Since 1970, the percentage of families with own children* that are headed up by a single parent has increased dramatically, from 13 percent of all families (with own children) in 1970, to almost 34 percent by 2010.

* “Own Children” are children under the age of 18 who is a son or daughter by birth, marriage (a stepchild) or adoption.



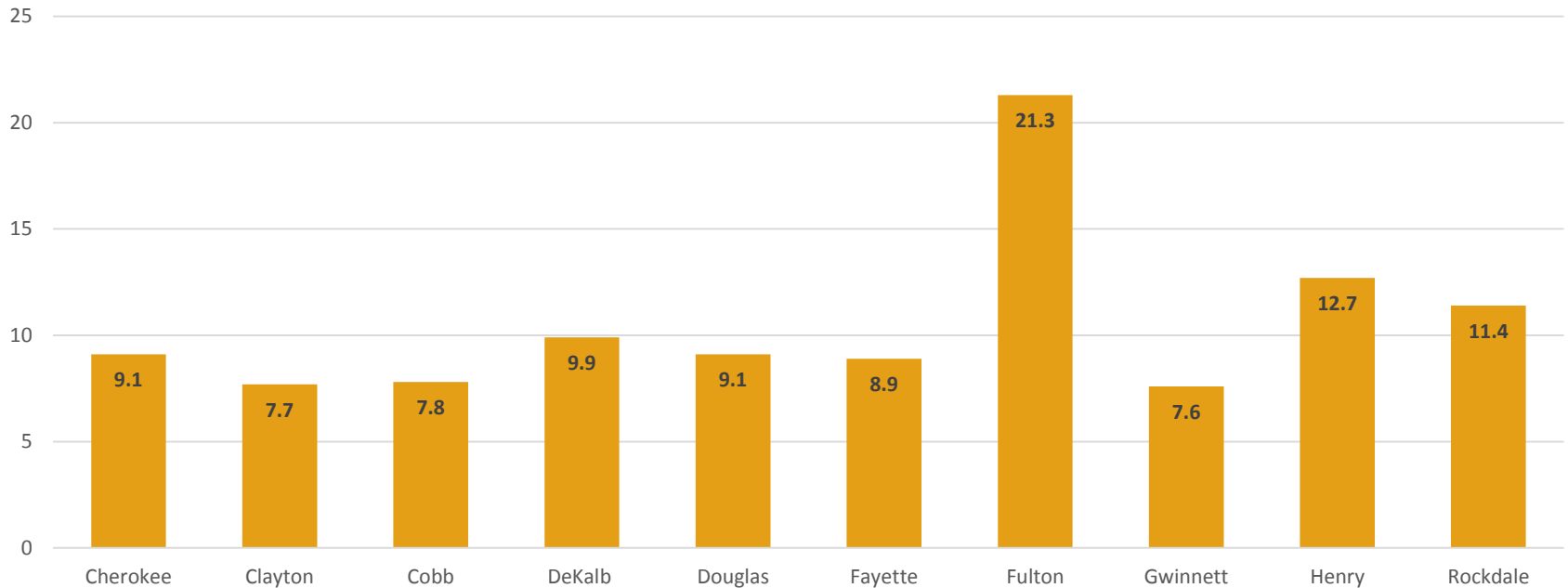
All Counties Experienced Big Increases in Single-Parent Families since 1970

County	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	% Point Change	
						2000-2010	1970-2010
Cherokee	9.1	9.8	12.3	16.2	20.7	4.5	11.6
Clayton	7.7	18	26	40.8	51	10.2	43.3
Cobb	7.8	15.4	17.5	23.1	28.5	5.4	20.7
DeKalb	9.9	23.6	31.3	39.5	42.9	3.4	33
Douglas	9.1	11	16.5	26.1	35.3	9.2	26.2
Fayette	8.9	7	11	15.2	21	5.8	12.1
Fulton	21.3	39.5	41.8	39.2	38.8	-0.4	17.5
Gwinnett	7.6	11.1	14.6	19.2	27.4	8.2	19.8
Henry	12.7	11.8	14.3	19.2	31.8	12.6	19.1
Rockdale	11.4	11.1	16.4	24.6	38.9	14.3	27.5
10-County Total	13.4	23.1	25.3	29.3	33.9	4.6	20.5

Every county in the Atlanta region has experienced significant increases in the number of single-parent families since 1970, but between 2000 and 2010 only Fulton has seen a percentage point DECREASE in the share of single-parent families. In 2010, Clayton has the highest percentage of single-parent families in the region with 51 percent, followed by DeKalb, Rockdale and Fulton.

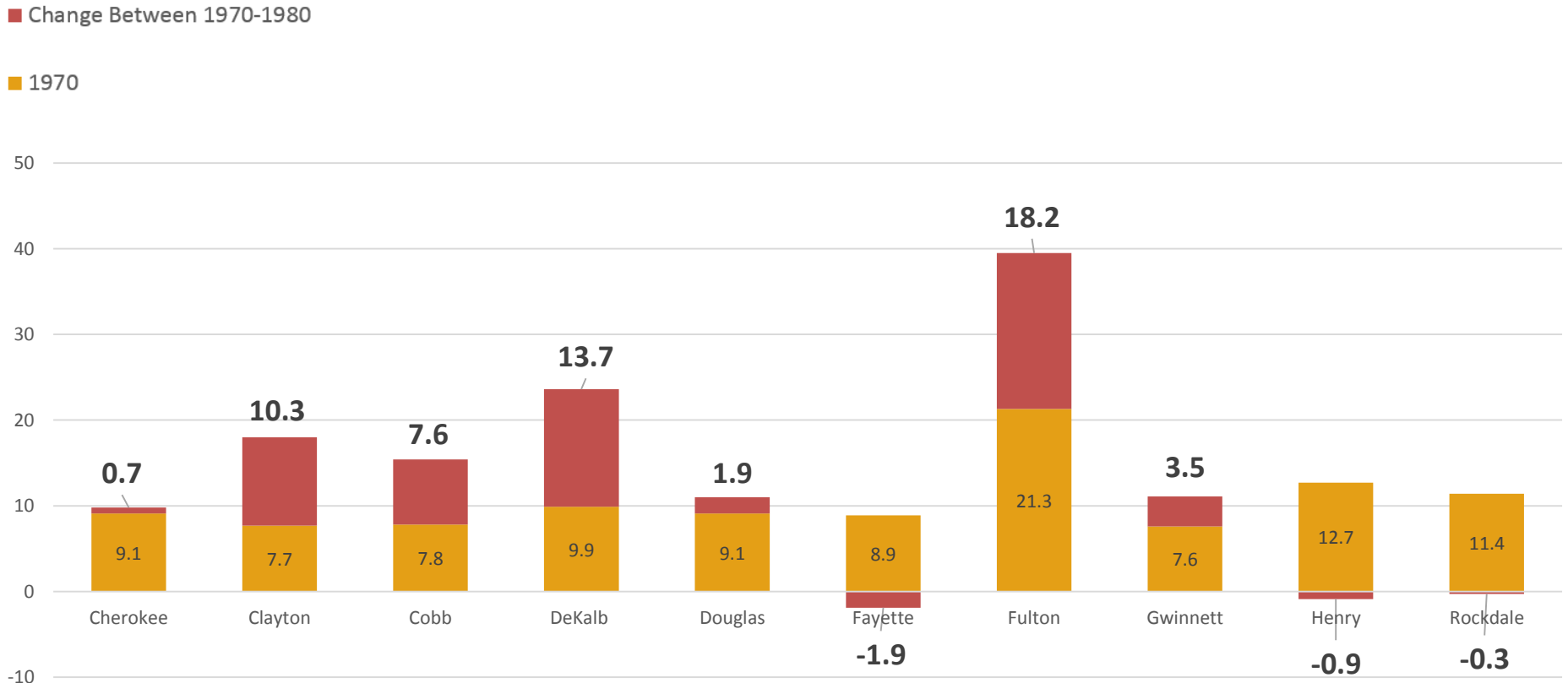
Significant Increase in Single-Parent Families

Percent of Families With Own Children Headed by a Single Parent, 1970



In 1970, Fulton had, by far, the highest percentage of single-parent families in the 10-County Atlanta region with slightly more than 21 percent. The next few slides will show how this percentage changed in each subsequent decade.

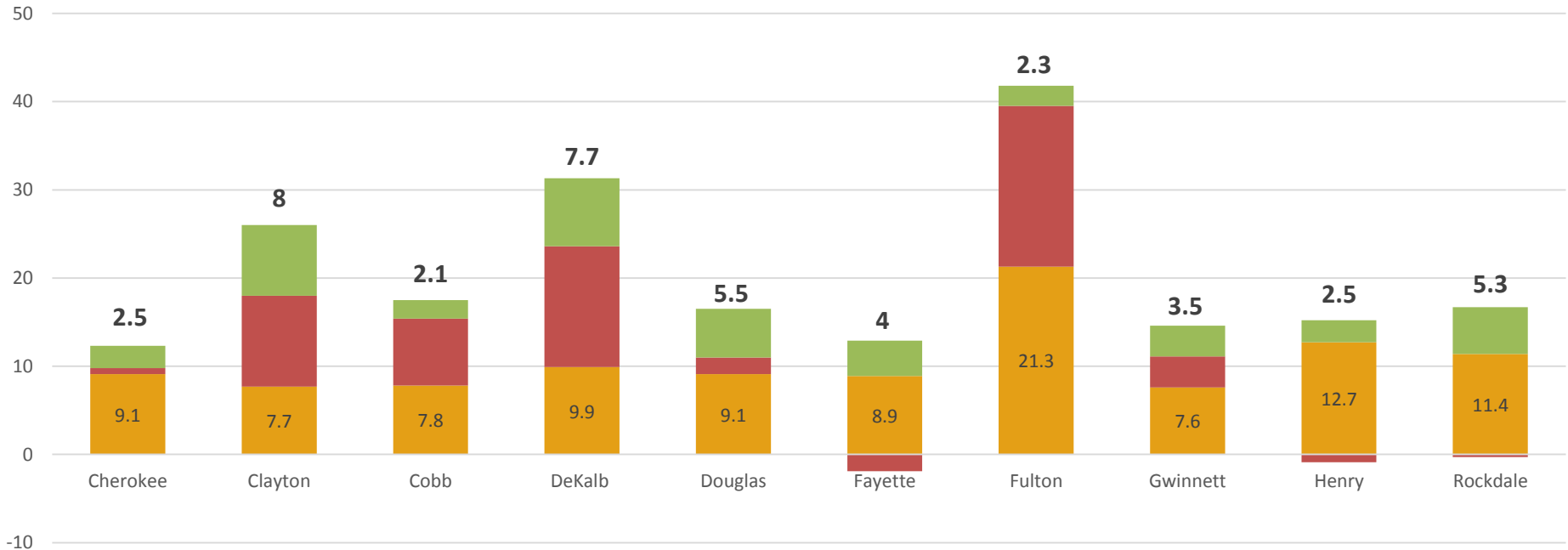
Significant Increase in Single-Parent Families: '70s



During the 1970s, suburban counties saw very little change in the percent of single-parent families. In some cases, as in Fayette, Henry and Rockdale, the percentage of single-families decreased during this decade as more affluent families moved away from the urban core. Fulton led the region in percentage-point increase during the 70s, increasing by 18.2 percentage points, meaning that by 1980, 39.5 percent of families with children in Fulton were headed by a single-parent.

Significant Increase in Single-Parent Families: '80s

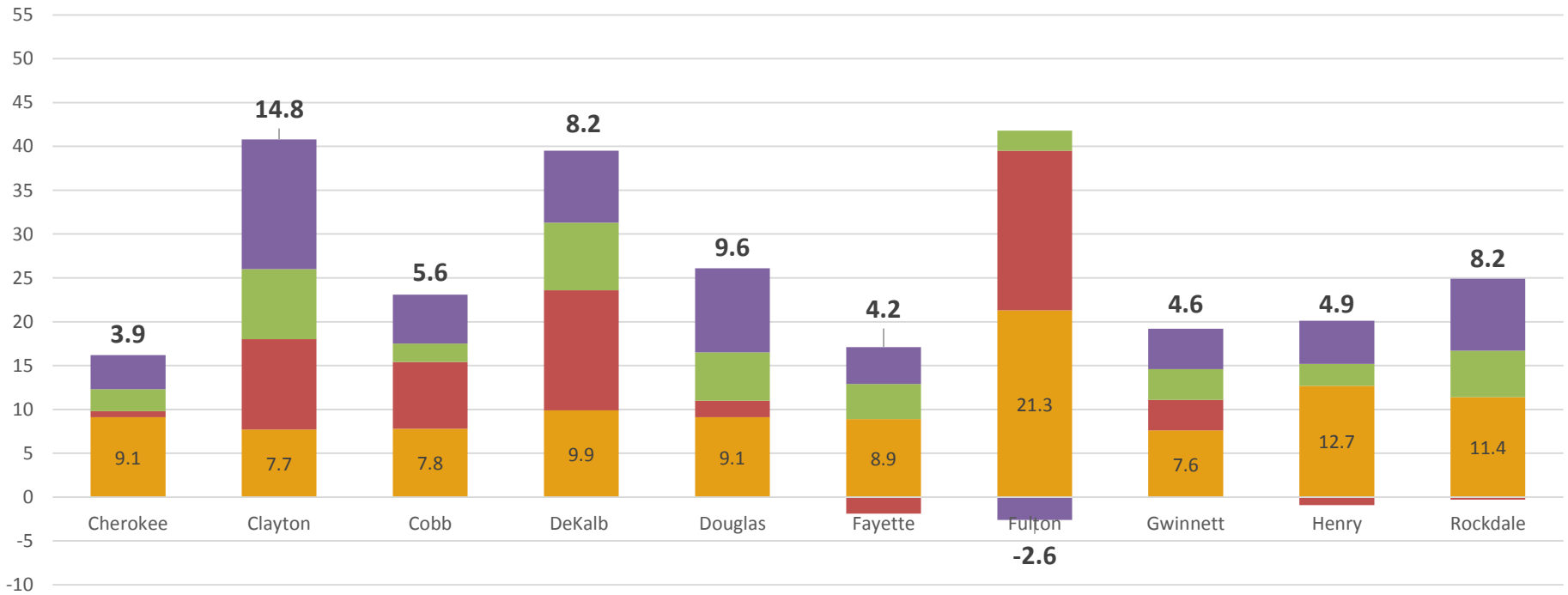
- Change Between 1980-1990
- Change Between 1970-1980
- 1970



During the 1980s, all counties, both urban and suburban, experienced increases in the percent of single-parent families. The more urban counties of Clayton (+8 percentage points) and DeKalb (+ 7.7 percentage points) had the largest increases in the region, but these gains were followed by the more suburban counties of Douglas (+5.5) and Rockdale (+5.3). Fulton, which still had the highest percentage of single-parent families by 1990, only added 2.3 percentage points to its lead during the 1980s.

Significant Increase in Single-Parent Families: '90s

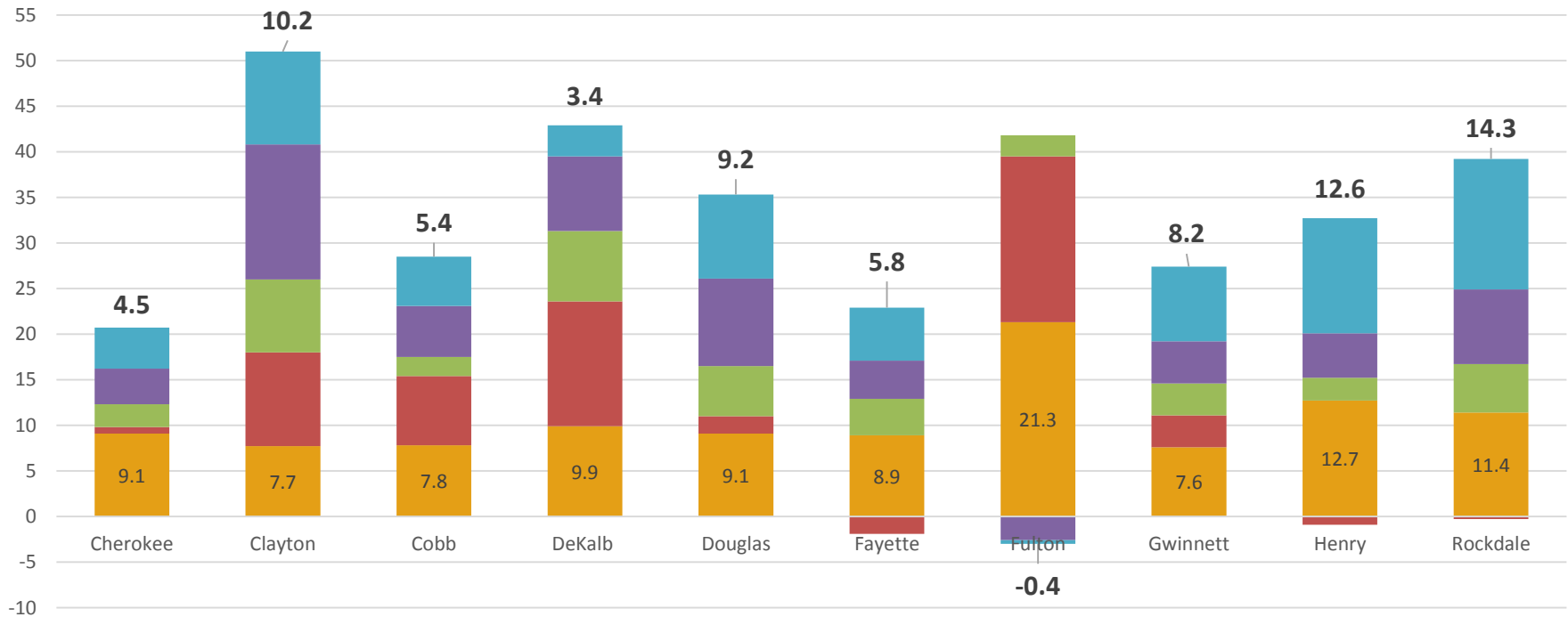
- Change Between 1990-2000
- Change Between 1980-1990
- Change Between 1970-1980
- 1970



During the 1990s, all counties, except Fulton, experienced dramatic increases in the percent of single-parent families.. Clayton had the biggest percentage point increase in single-parent families during the 1990s, up 14.8 points. Thus, as of 2000, almost 41 percent of Clayton’s families with own children were headed by a single-parent, overtaking Fulton for the highest percentage in the region. Fulton was the only county to have a decrease in the 1990s.

Significant Increase in Single-Parent Families: 2000s

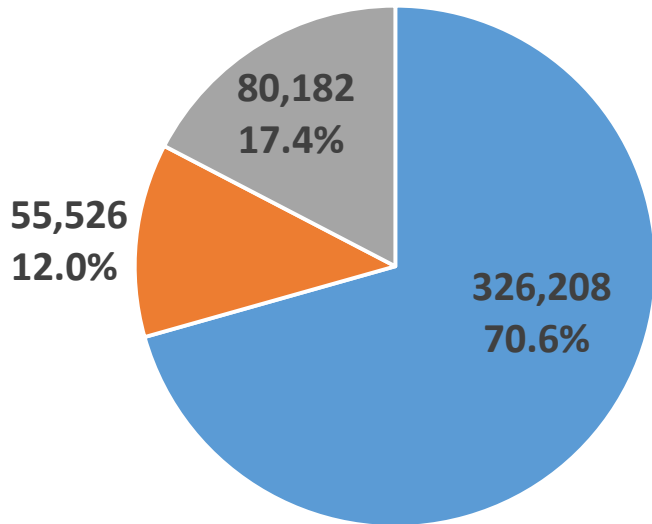
- Change Between 2000-2010
- Change Between 1990-2000
- Change Between 1980-1990
- Change Between 1970-1980
- 1970



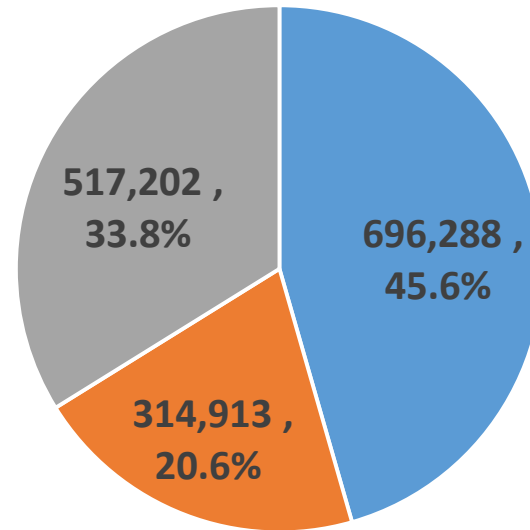
During the 2000s, the acceleration trend continued, especially in the suburban counties. Rockdale's percentage of single-parent families increased by 14.3 percentage points, meaning that as of 2010, almost 39 percent of families with own children in Rockdale are headed by a single-parent. Henry had the second-largest gain (+12.6), followed by Clayton. As of 2010, the majority of families with own children in Clayton were headed by a single-parent. Fulton's percentage of single-parent families dropped for a second consecutive decade.

Also Significant Increases in “Non-Families” (10-County Atlanta Region)

10-County Region: 1970



10 County Region: 2010



■ HW Families ■ Other Families ■ Non-Families

In addition to significant increases in single-parent families, “non-families” have increased as well. In fact, the growth of “non-families” dwarfs the growth of “other families” over the 40 year period. In 1970, only 17 percent of households were considered “non-family.” By 2010, almost 34 percent were non-family.

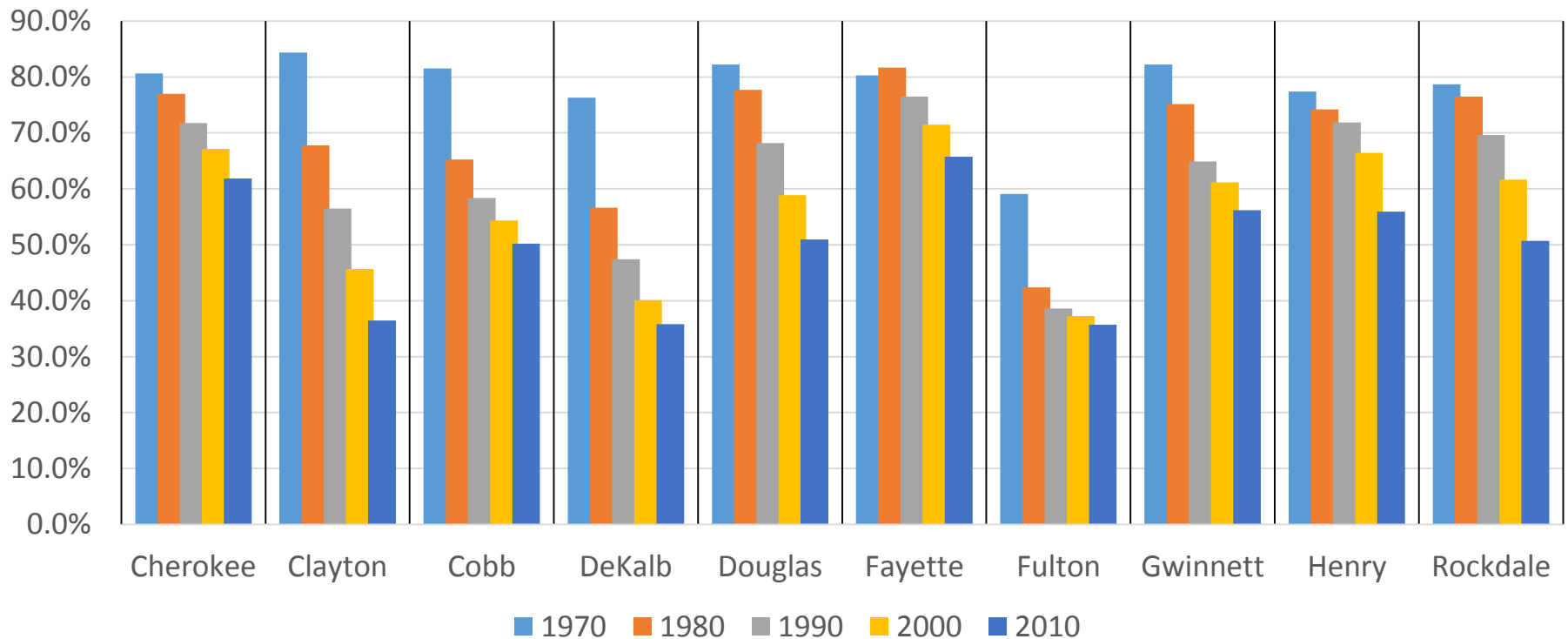
HW Families = Husband-Wife families, with or without kids.

Other Families = Single-Parent families, adult siblings living together, an adult person living with an elderly parent

Non-Families = People living alone or living with non-related roommates. Could also include same-sex couples.

So, The Percentage of Husband-Wife Families OBVIOUSLY Has Declined Dramatically

Percentage of Households That Are Husband-Wife Families, 1970-2010

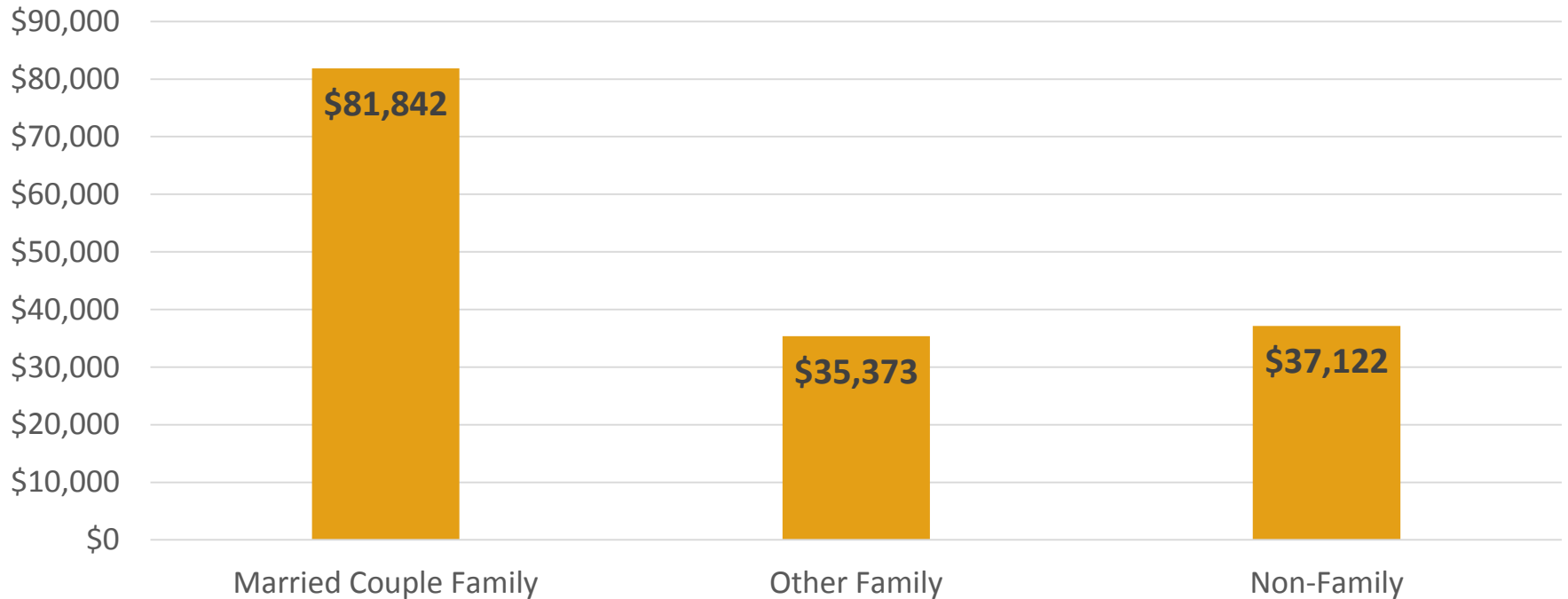


With significant increases in both “other families” and “non-families”, it stands to reason that the percentage of husband-wife families has fallen precipitously over the past four decades. Every county has experienced such a decline, ranging from a 14.6 percentage point decline in Fayette (smallest decrease) to a 47.9 percent decline in Clayton (largest decrease).



Married Couple Families Have Higher Incomes

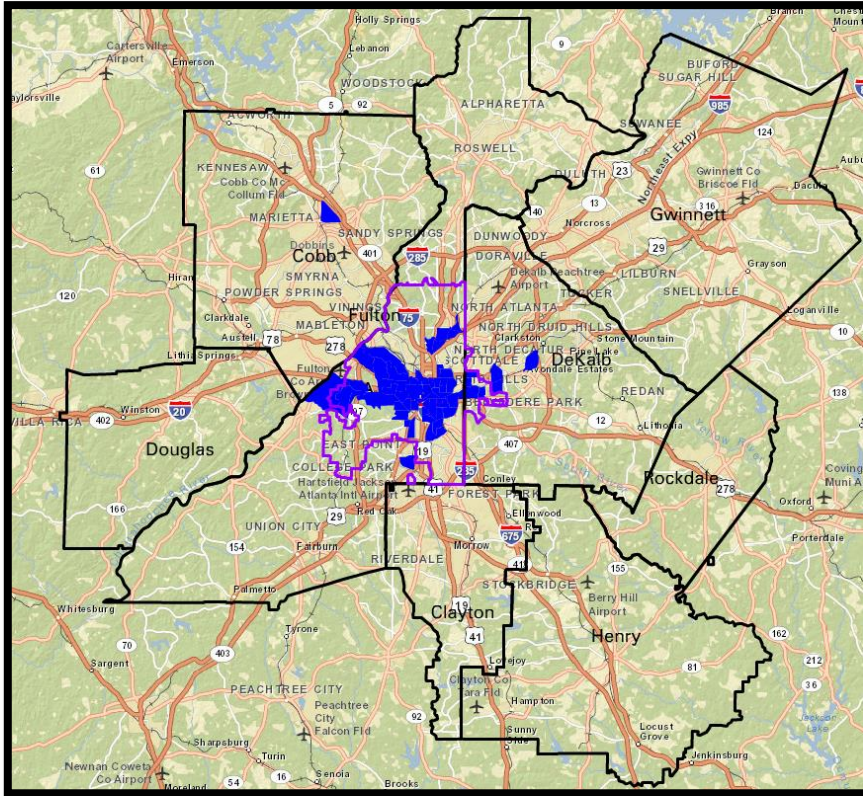
Median Family Income by Family Type



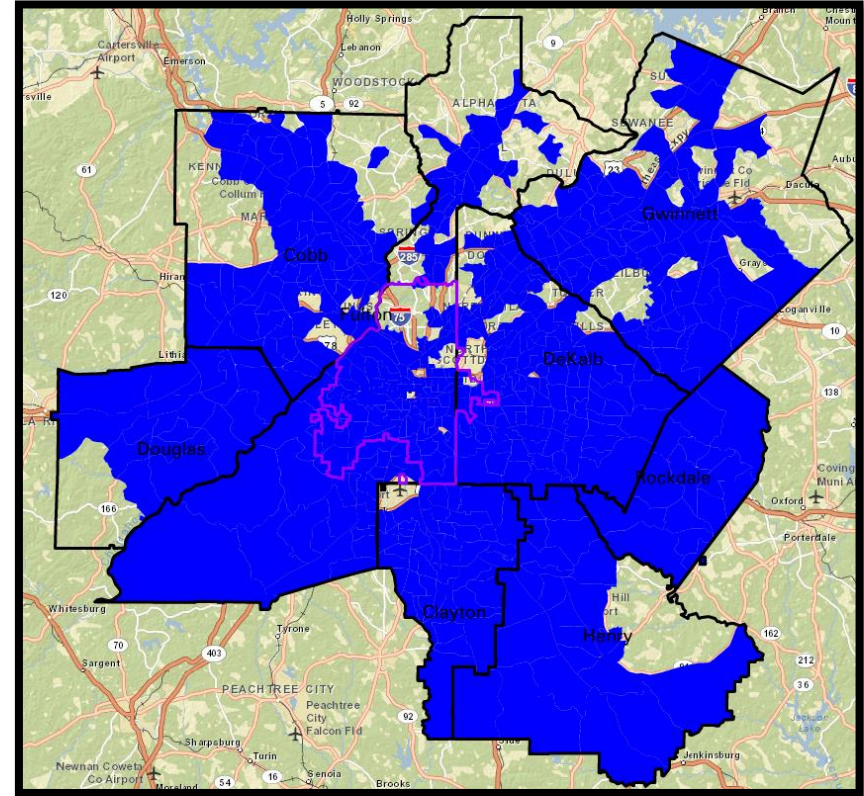
It also stands to reason that married couple families have higher income than do single-parent or non-families. The differences, however, are stark. The typical married couple family (with or without kids) in metro Atlanta (29 counties) makes more than twice the annual income than does “other families” or “non-families”.

A Look at Changes in Family Structure at the Neighborhood Level

Neighborhoods where more than 20% of Families with Kids Are Headed by Single-Parent: 1970



Neighborhoods where more than 20% of Families with Kids Are Headed by Single-Parent: 2010



These maps show, at the neighborhood level, just how dramatically family structures have changed since 1970. The map on the left shows the areas in the 8-county region where at least 20 percent of all families with “own children” were headed by a single-parent (mom or dad). As you can see, there just weren’t that many areas that met this threshold. The map on the right, however, shows how dramatically family situations have changed in the past 40 years.

Change in Family Composition: 1970-2010

This map highlights...

...Neighborhoods where fewer than 20% of families with kids were headed by a single-parent in 1970, but in 2010, more than 50% are headed by a single-parent.

This map shows the areas most affected by the changing family structures. The areas highlighted in Blue are those that flipped from very light concentrations of single-parent families (20% or less) to very heavy concentrations of single-parent families (50% or more).

