

The Shifting Demographics of
Rural America:
Health and Mortality

Congressional Briefing
Washington, D.C.

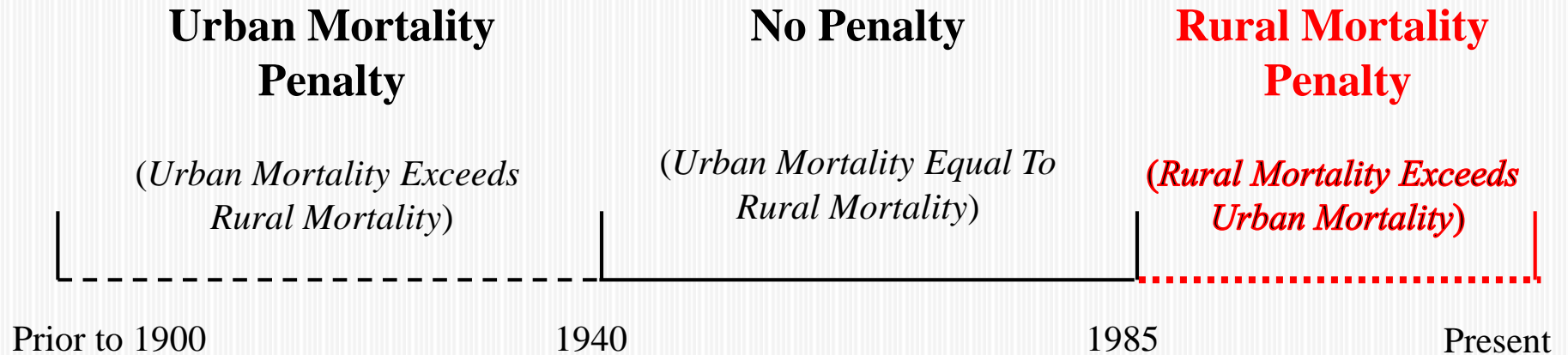
April 3, 2017



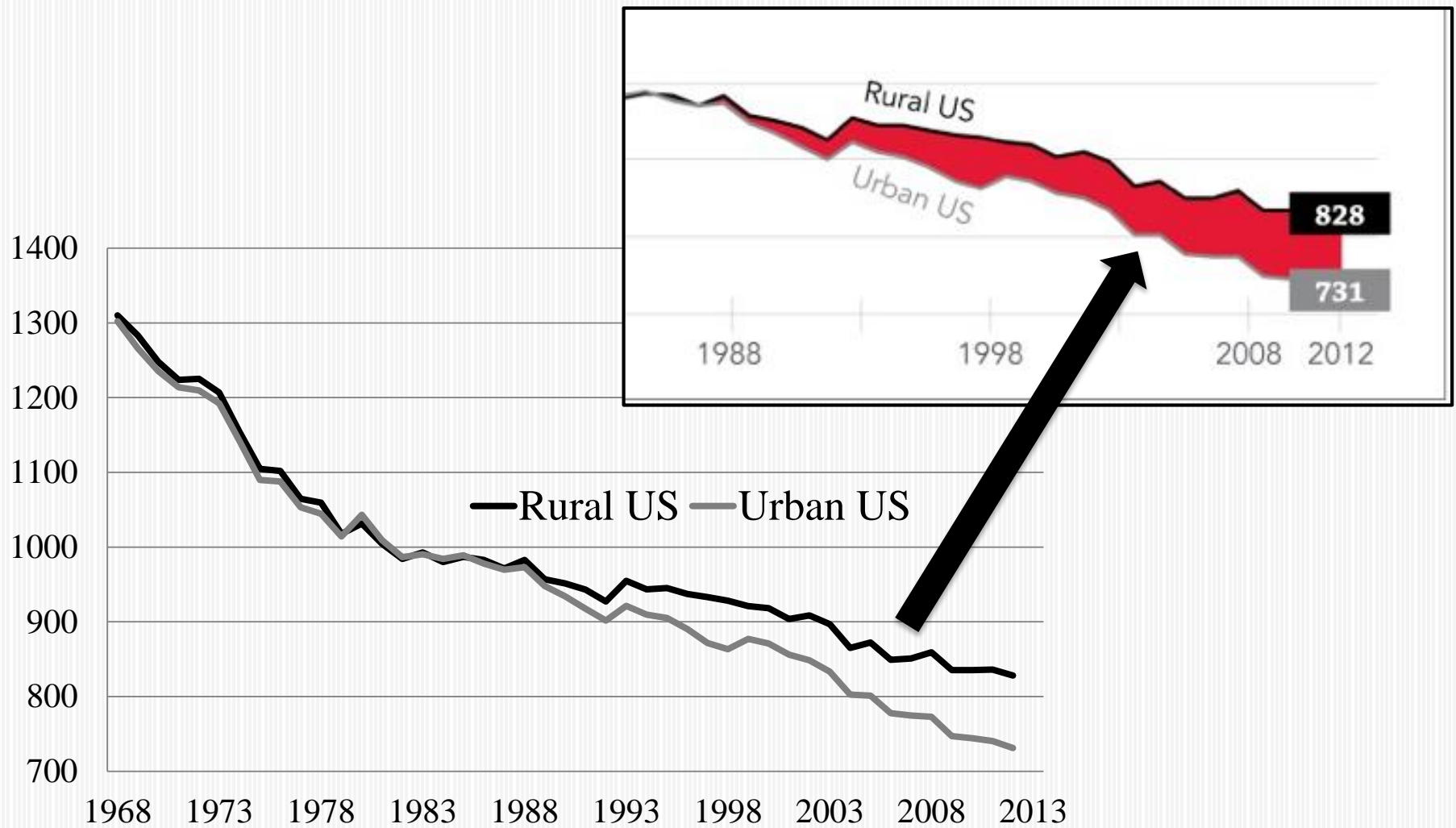
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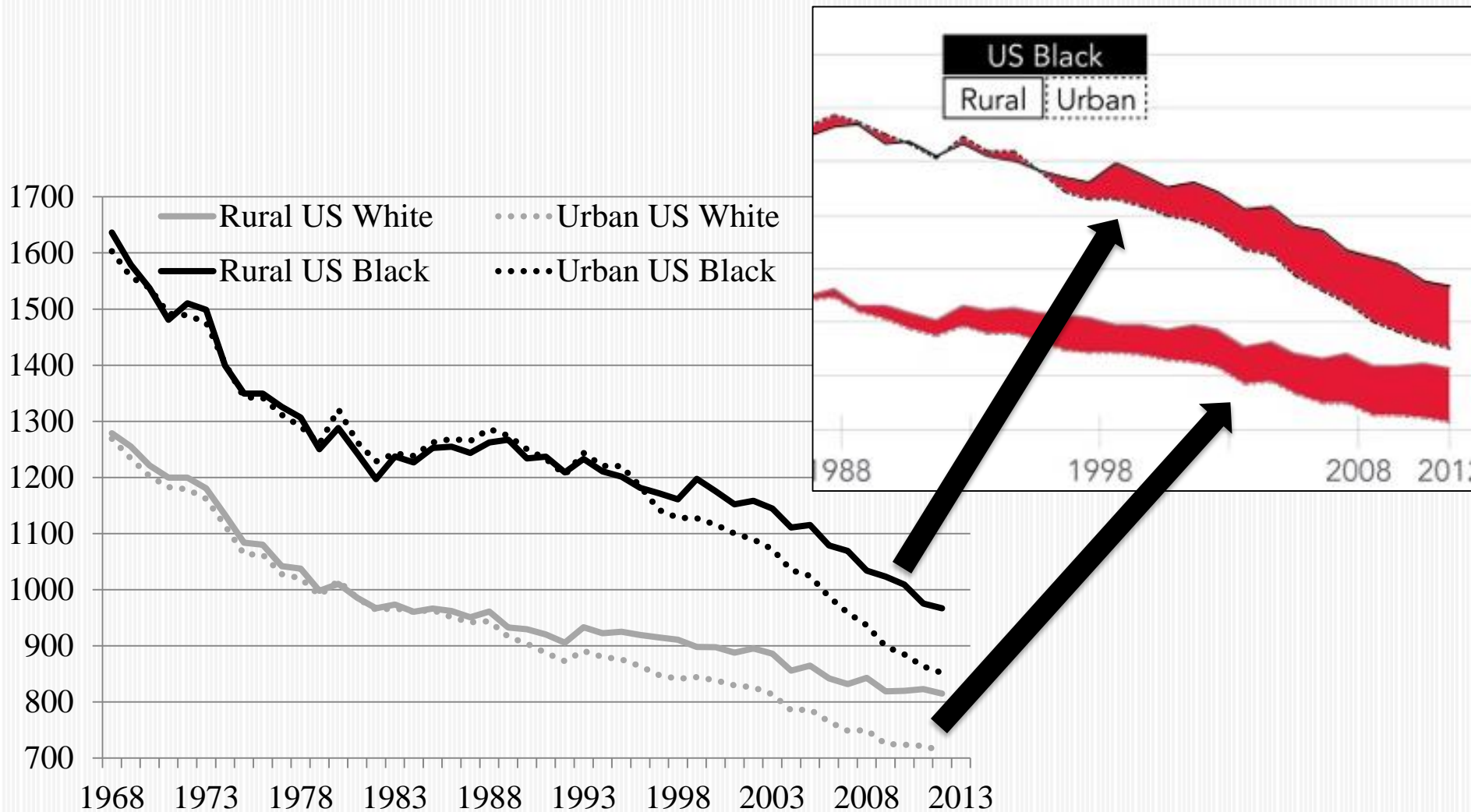
The Transition of United States Geographic Mortality Disparities in Historical Context



Trends in Rural-Urban Mortality Rates



Trends in Rural-Urban Mortality Rates by Race



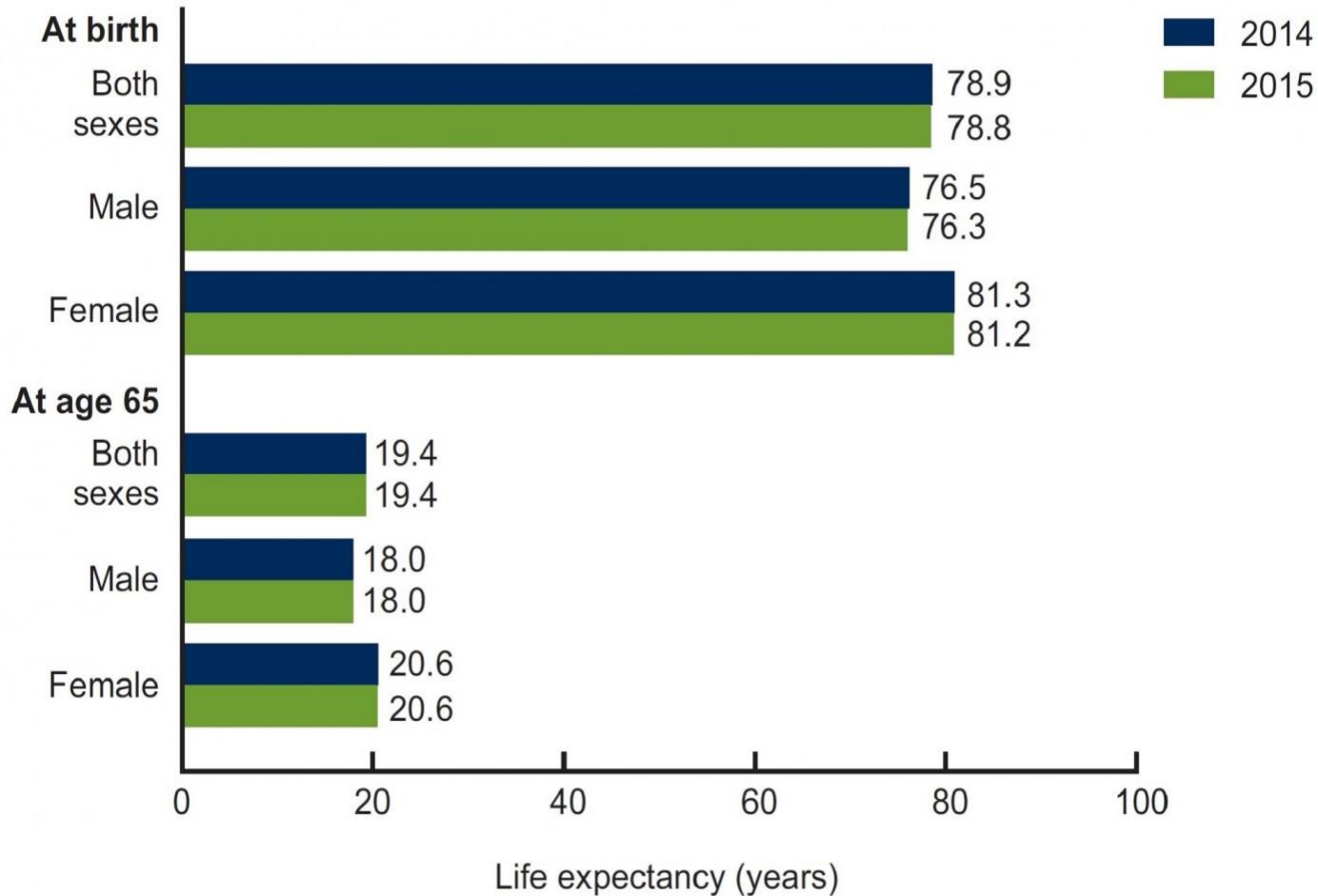
The Shifting Rate of Change in Mortality Rates

Excess Deaths and Rate of Change By Rural-Urban and Race

	Excess Deaths (1986-2012)	Rate of Change (1968-1985)	Rate of Change (1986-2012)
Rural U.S.	>700,000	1.57%	0.62%
Urban U.S.	---	1.56%	1.06%
Rural White	693,300	1.62%	0.62%
Urban White	---	1.59%	1.10%
Rural Black	53,657	1.52%	0.94%
Urban Black	---	1.37%	1.43%

- High rates of rural mortality are due to a slow down in the annual rate of improvement since the mid-1980s
- Rural white mortality has seen the greatest decline in improvement
- More than 700,000 rural deaths occurred due to unequal death rates

Declining Life Expectancy



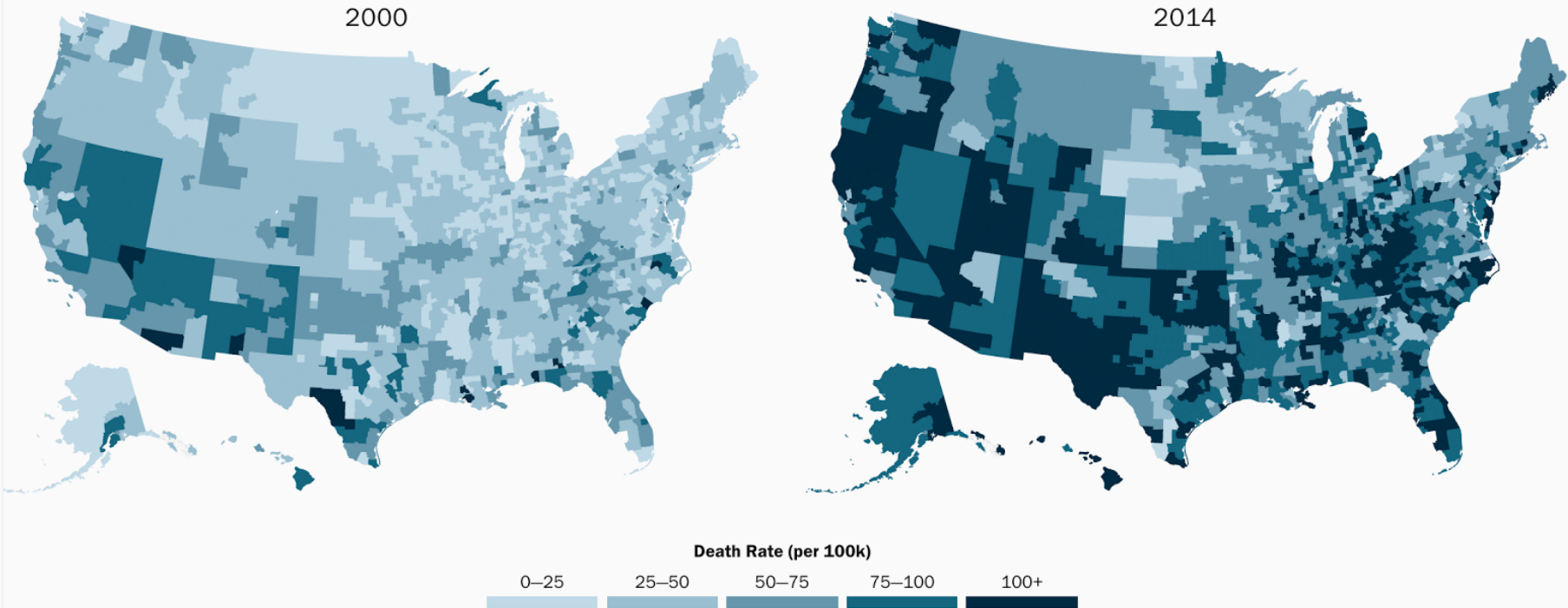
- Declining life expectancy corresponds with increasing mortality
- The first decrease since 1999

Deaths of Despair

- An important part of rural America's problems is the recently identified opioid epidemic
 - Accompanied by suicide and alcoholism
- Alarming increase in deaths due to external causes for mid-life white Americans with little education
- This corresponds with declining reports of physical and mental health, joblessness, joint pain, sciatica, distress, isolation

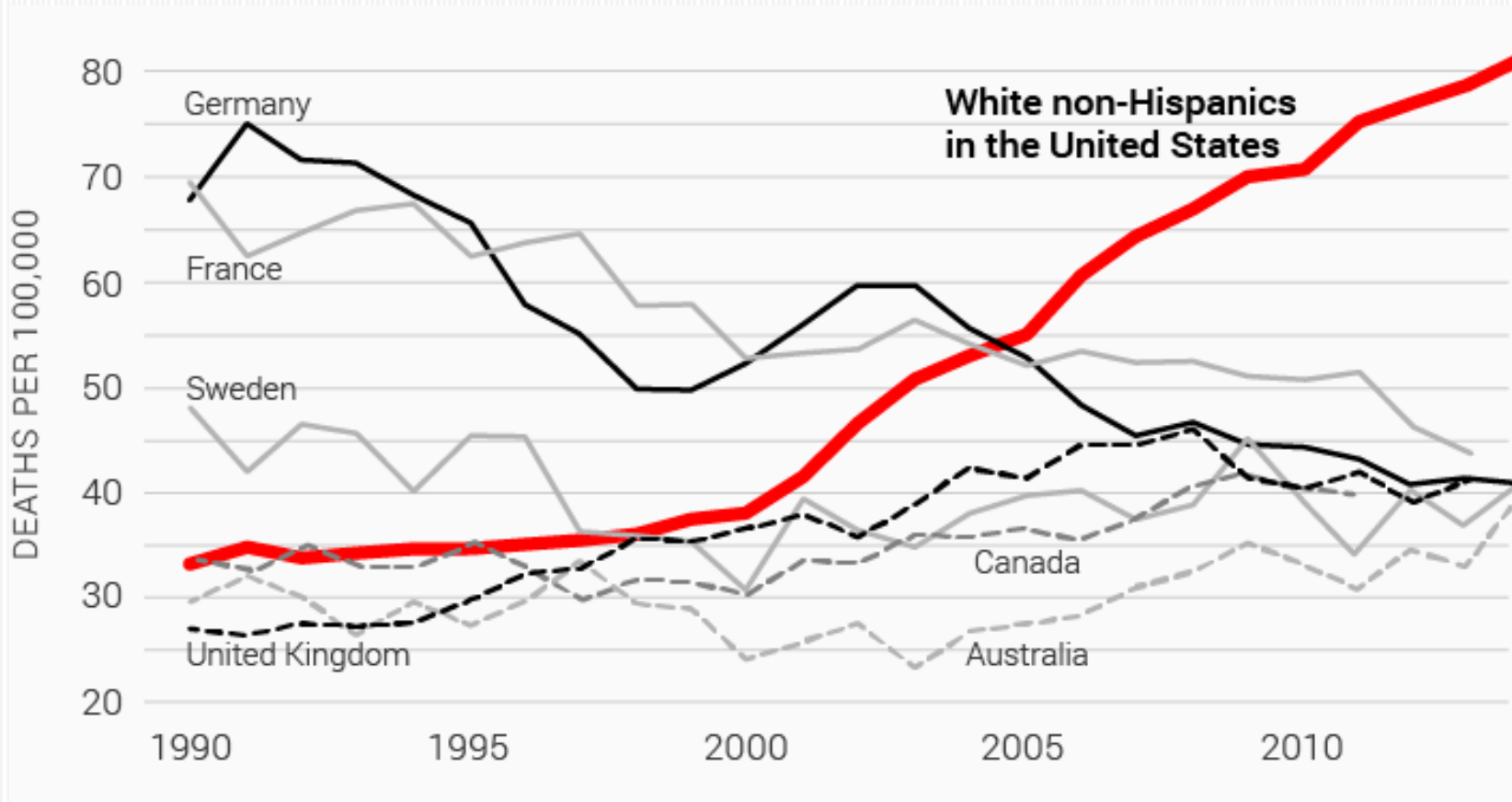
Geographic Expansion of Deaths of Despair

“Deaths of despair” for white non-Hispanics, 2000 and 2014
Ages 45-54, by couma*



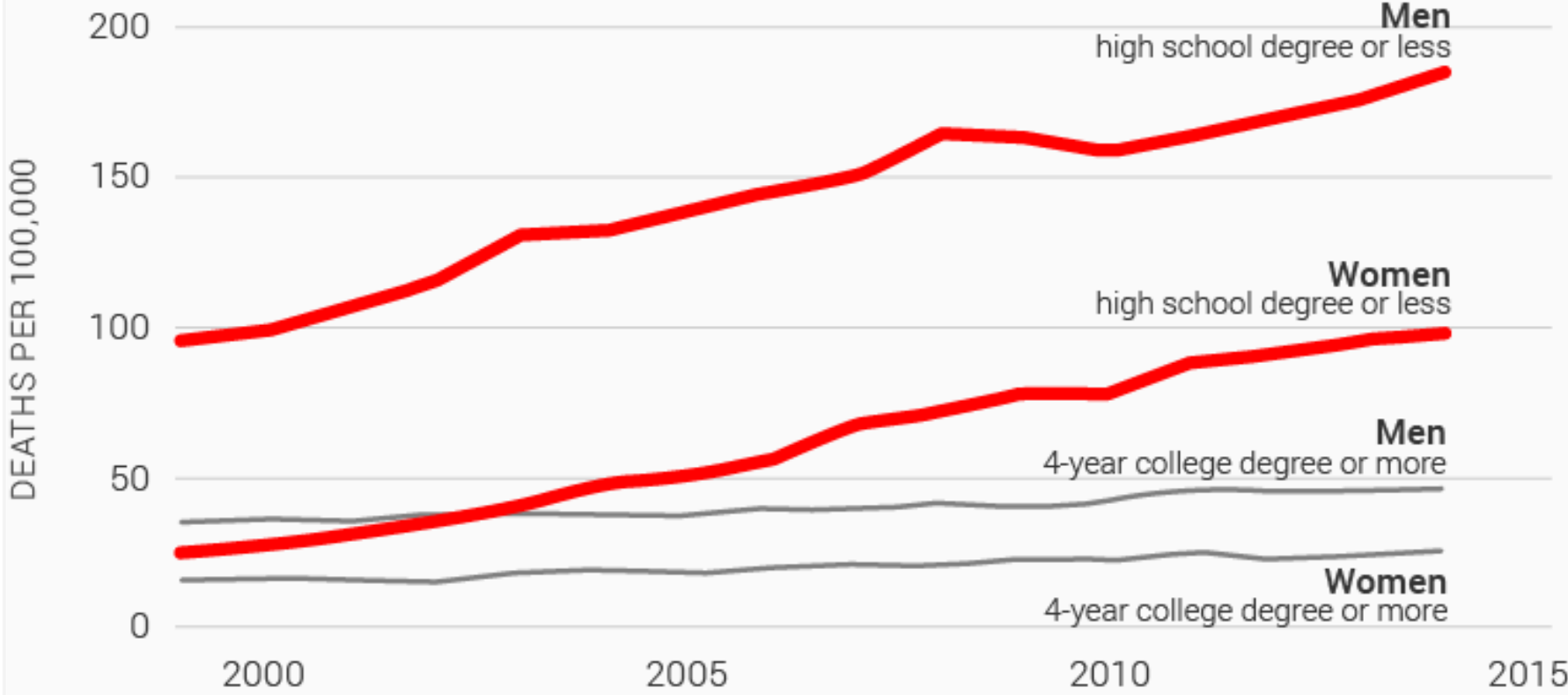
*A blend of counties and PUMAs. See [full paper](#) for more explanation.

International Comparison of Deaths of Despair



Source: "Mortality and morbidity in the 21st century" by Anne Case and Angus Deaton, Brookings Papers on Economic Activity, Spring 2017

Deaths of Despair by Sex and Education Level



Source: "Mortality and morbidity in the 21st century" by Anne Case and Angus Deaton, Brookings Papers on Economic Activity, Spring 2017

Take Home Points

- Deaths in America are not created equal
 - Rural Americans die at a higher rate than urban Americans, and it's getting worse every year
- Who is hit the hardest?
 - Rural black Americans
 - Rural, middle-aged white women and men
 - < high school education
 - Unemployed
 - Those who accumulate disadvantages
- The American Dream?

