

PHILADELPHIA'S SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

The goal of this research project was to determine whether the emerging solidarity economy in Philadelphia is equally present across all socioeconomic, racial, and other demographic variables. Philadelphia is comprised of an African-American population 3 times that of the national average, as well as a population living below the federal poverty line that is twice the national average.

Philadelphia Demographic Statistics

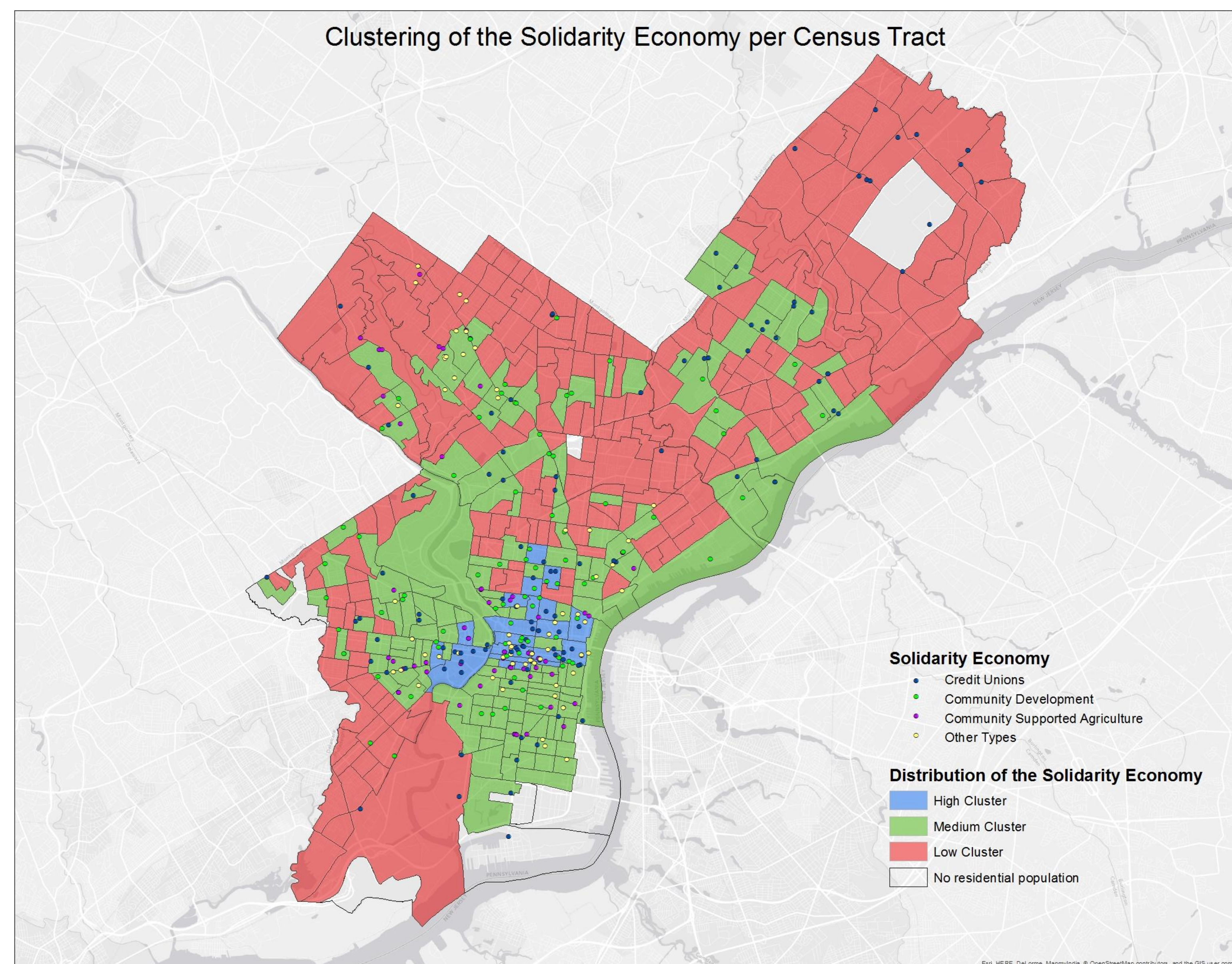
Philadelphia 2010

Land area:	134 sq. miles
Population:	1,526,006
Population density:	11,380 persons/square mile
NonHispanic White:	41%
Black /African American:	43.4%
Asian:	6.3%
Hispanic/Latino*:	13%
Median Household Income:	\$36,957
Residents below poverty line:	25.6%

* In the census, the concept of race is separate from the concept of Hispanic origin.

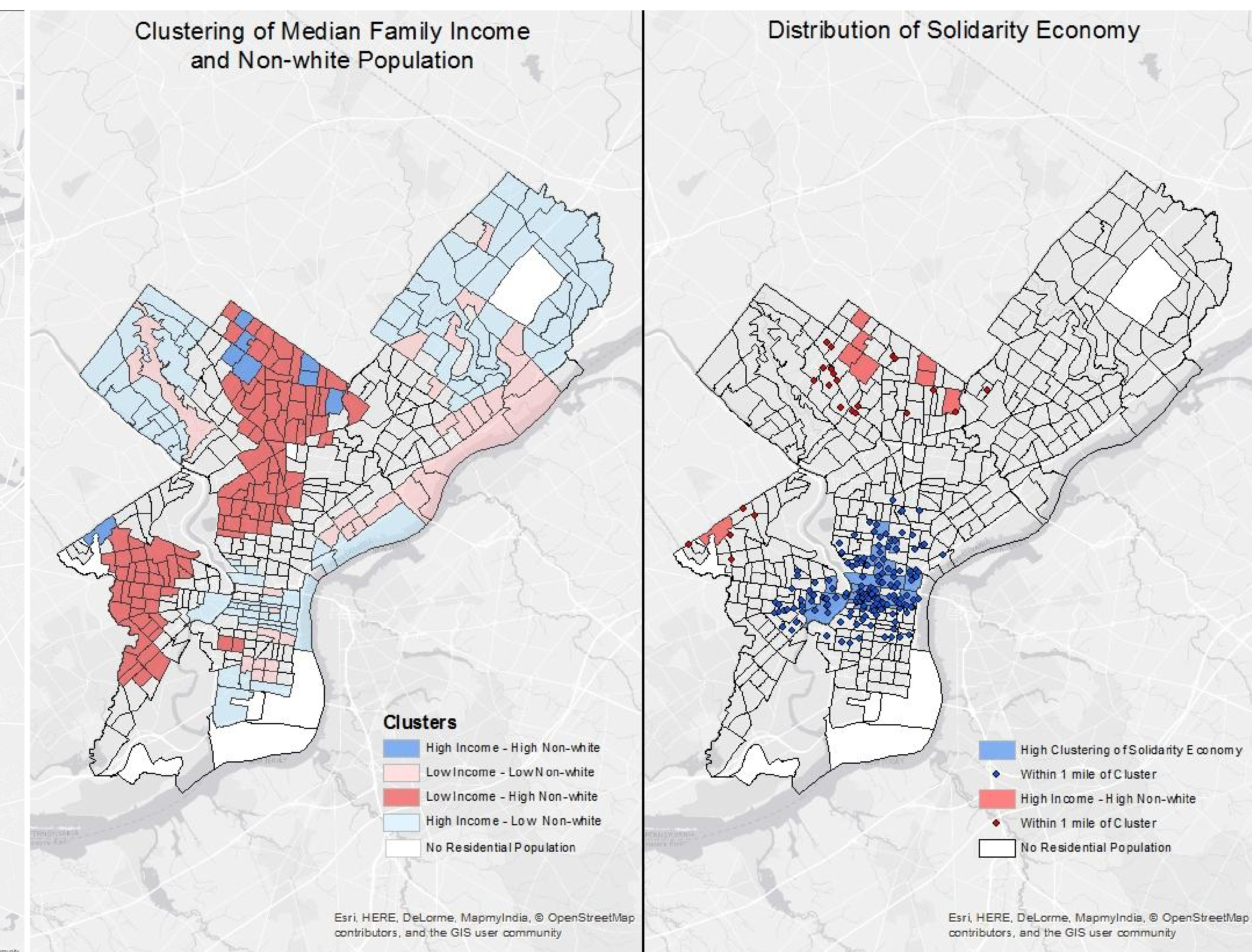
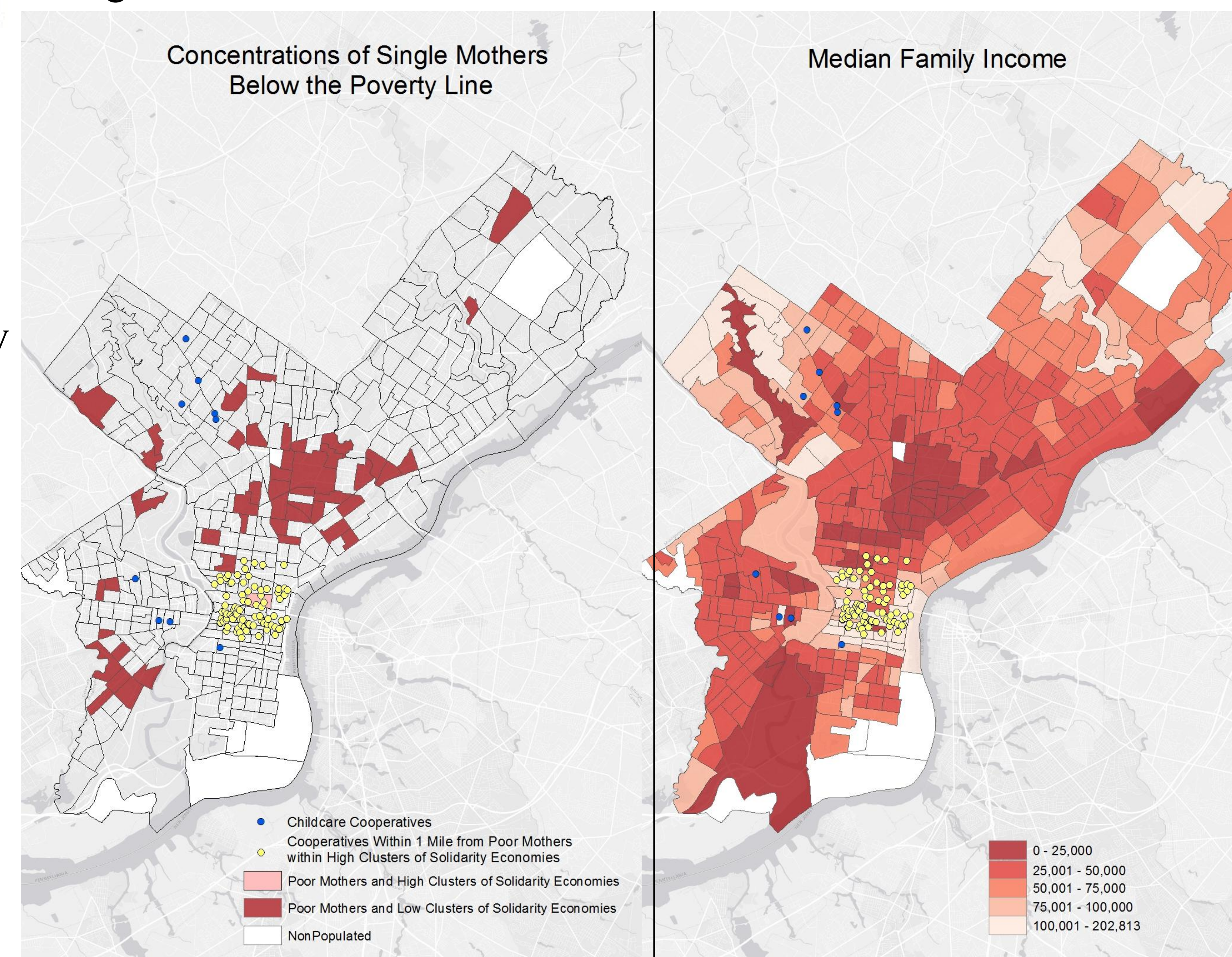
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/42/4260000.html>

Given the purpose of the solidarity economy, one would hope it would have a significant presence in marginalized communities. Unfortunately, our findings suggest that that is not the case. The majority of the solidarity economy is located in central Philadelphia, among the tracts with a mostly white, high income-earning population. Given the lack of solidarity economy presence in either other overwhelmingly white areas or in non-white high income-earning areas, the question remains whether the spatial distribution of Philadelphia's solidarity economy is a function of demographics or a reflection of the distribution of businesses in general. Regardless, the conclusion is that Philadelphia's solidarity economy does not fill the gaps of the solidarity economy.



The above map shows the spatial distribution of the solidarity economy in Philadelphia. There are 119 credit unions, 83 community development institutions, 63 community supported agriculture organizations, and 72 other forms of solidarity economy. It is evident that the solidarity economy is clustered in central Philadelphia.

The bottom-left map shows the tracts where of the total population living below the federal poverty level, over 55% are single mothers. Only one such tract also is among a high cluster of solidarity economies. The bottom-right map shows that a high presence of extremely poor single mothers exists even in areas of high income.



The above-right map emphasizes the fact that there are no census tracts which have a high concentration of minorities earning a high income among high clusters of solidarity economies. This contradicts the hypothesis that high clusters are found in high income neighborhoods regardless of race.

The map below shows that there is no overlap between the area of highly clustered solidarity economy and a large population of SNAP benefit recipients or a “middle”-aged population. Looking at the median-income map, you can also see that there is a high clustering of SNAP benefit recipients among high income areas.

