

The impoverished states of America

“A little geographical imagination helps to convey the scale of joblessness in the West,” The Economist observed this month. Elaborating on the idea, the graphic below

compares the worsening poverty figures released last week by the Census Bureau and the latest unemployment totals with the populations of various states. The poverty and income

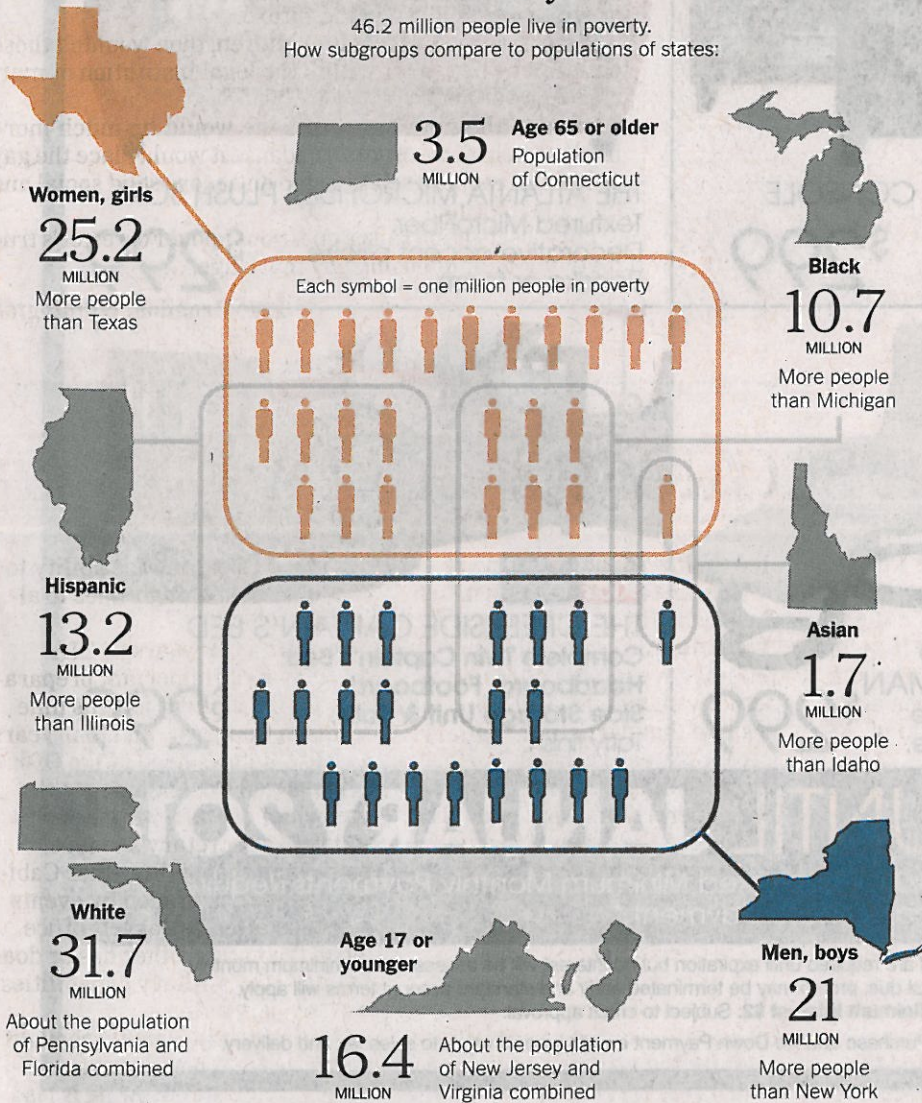
numbers invite other comparisons as well.

How does the official poverty line compare with the value of a new car? How does the median annual family

income stack up against the cost of a year in the Ivy League? Solutions to the nation's economic problems may be scarce, but ways to put them into perspective are not.

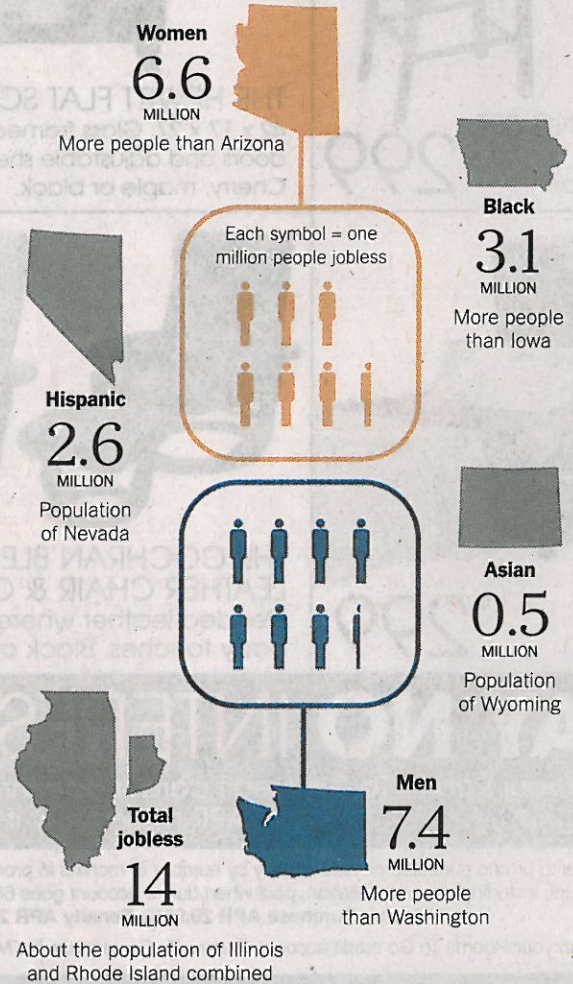
Poverty

46.2 million people live in poverty.
How subgroups compare to populations of states:



Unemployment

14 million people are jobless and seeking work.
How subgroups compare to populations of states:



Compare And Contrast

Economic realities and middle-class aspirations:

\$22,314

The official poverty line in 2010 for a family of four (including Social Security and other cash benefits) — about the cost of a 2012 Ford Focus with some options.

\$49,445

The median household income (half of Americans make more, half less), down 8 percent from its peak in 1999 — less than the cost of a year at Princeton (\$52,670) or the average major kitchen remodeling (\$58,367).

49.9 million

Americans without health insurance, roughly the population of South Africa or South Korea.