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Cities, Suburbs, Neighborhoods, and Schools: How We Abandon Our Children

Paul A. Jargowsky, Director
Center for Urban Research and Education

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Dimensions of Poverty

- First and foremost poverty is about money
  - Poverty Line compares family income to amount needed to buy necessities
- Families don't exist in isolation
  - Connected to people who live near them and depend on resources, services, and opportunities in their communities
  - Likewise, they tend to be disconnected from people, resources, and opportunities far from them
- *The "spatial context of poverty"*

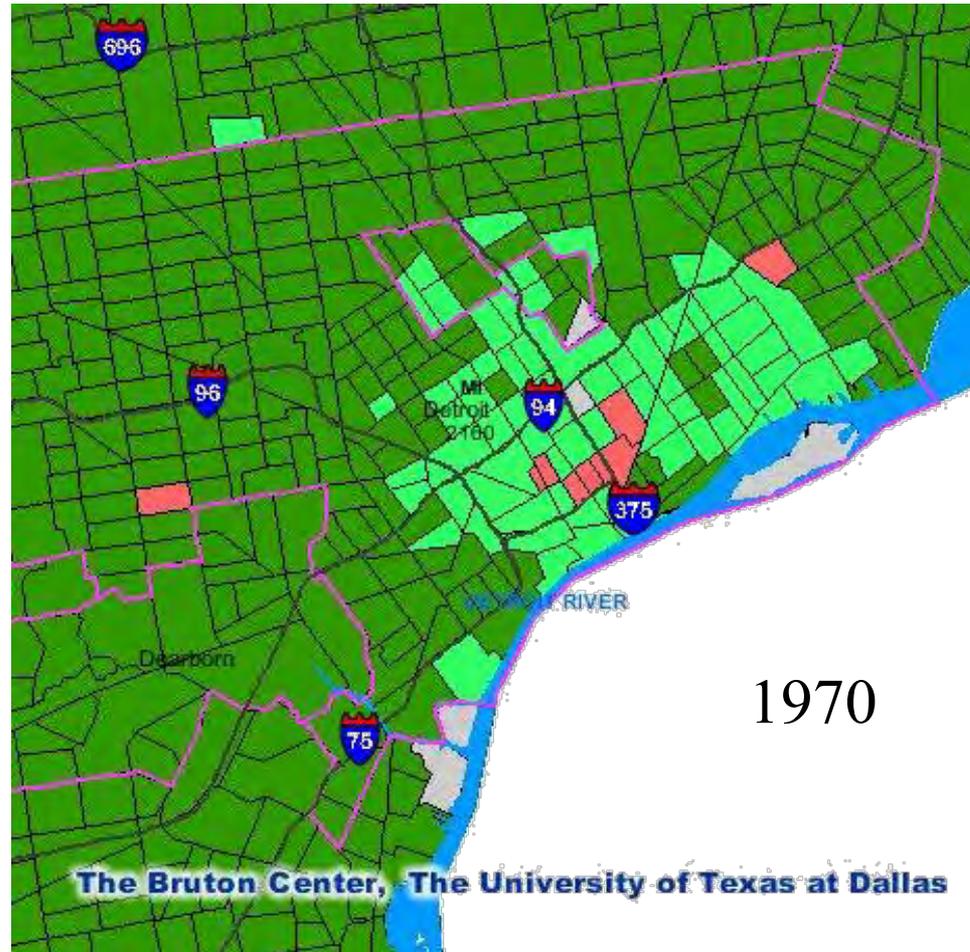# *"I Dream'd in a dream I saw a city invincible" – Walt Whitman*

Photos by Camilo José Vergara,
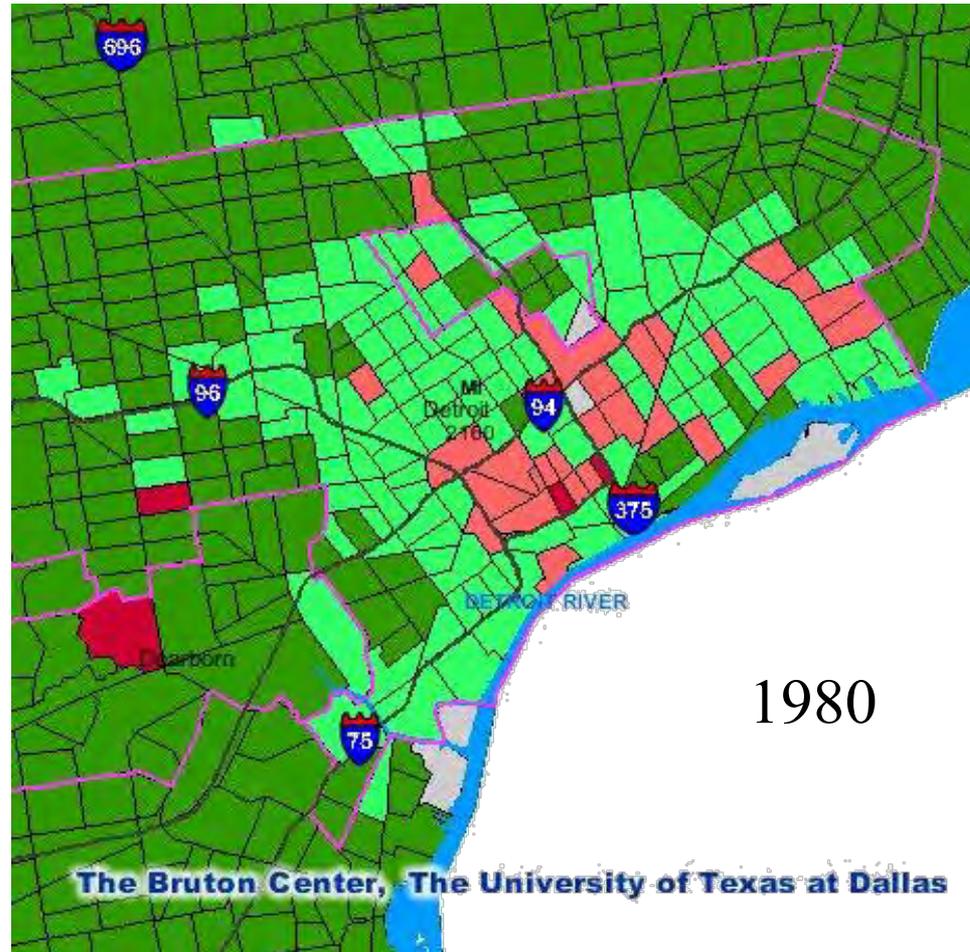http://invinciblecities.camden.rutgers.edu/intro.html

History of Concentrated Poverty

- Wilson and other scholars call attention to harsh conditions in urban ghettos, "underclass areas," etc., in major US areas.

- Concentration of poverty **doubled** between 1970 and 1990.

- In the 1990s, with strong economy and housing policy changes, there was "stunning progress."

- But what has happened since then?
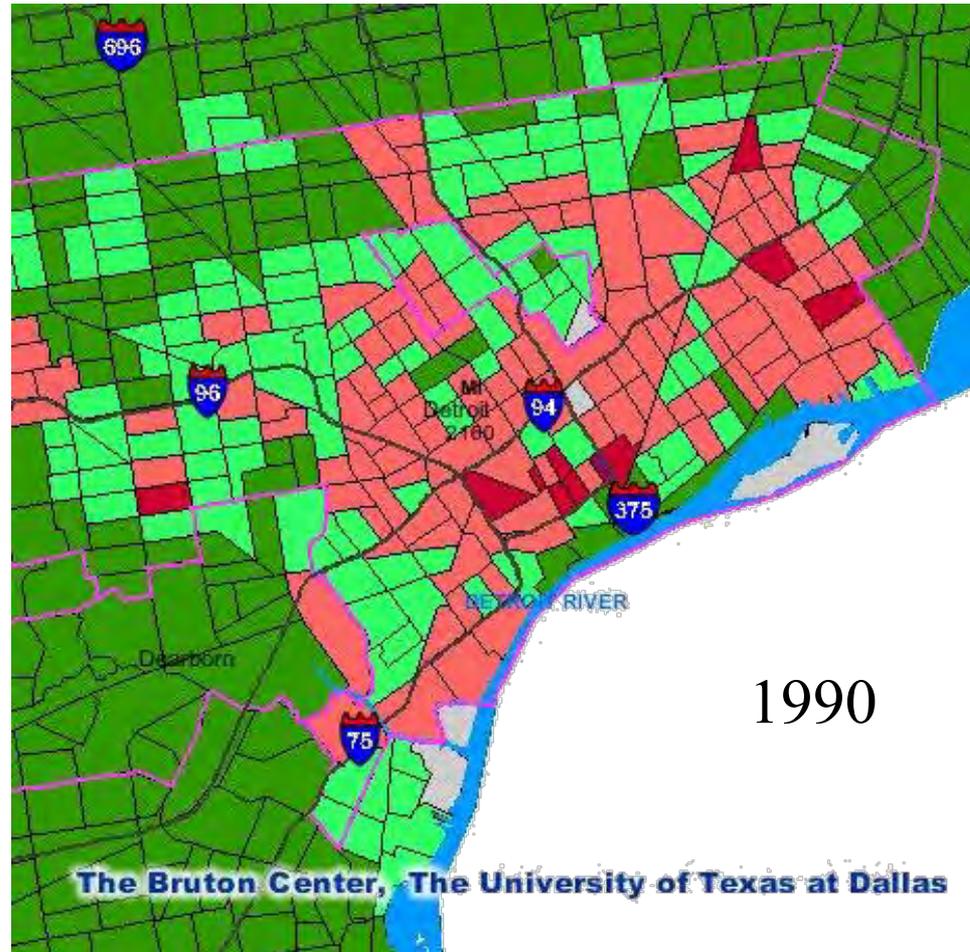
Poverty Level: Detroit Neighborhoods, 1970-2000

Legend

Interstate HWY
Central Cities
Rivers/Lakes
MSAs
States

No Data
0 - 19.9
20.0 - 39.9
40.0 - 59.9
60.0 - 79.9
80.0 - 100

1970

The Bruton Center, The University of Texas at Dallas

Poverty Level: Detroit Neighborhoods, 1970-2000

Legend

Interstate HWY
Central Cities
Rivers/Lakes
MSAs
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20.0 - 39.9
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Poverty Level: Detroit Neighborhoods, 1970-2000

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40.0 - 59.9
60.0 - 79.9
80.0 - 100

2000

The Bruton Center, The University of Texas at Dallas

Detroit High-Poverty Neighborhoods

Legend

Zero or No Data

The Total Poverty Rate

0.0 - 20.0

20.1 - 40.0

40.1 - 100.0
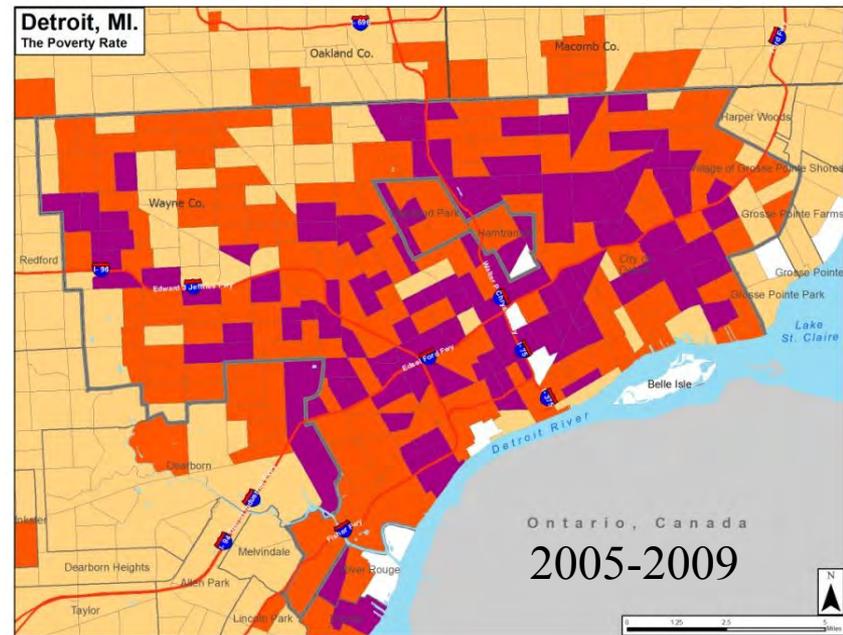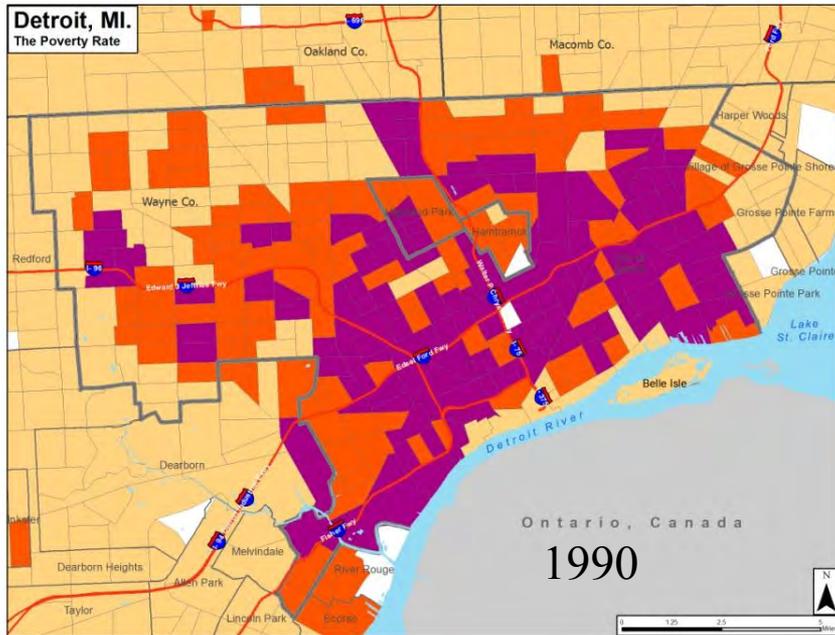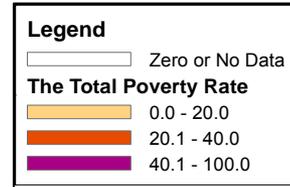
Number of High-Poverty Census Tracts
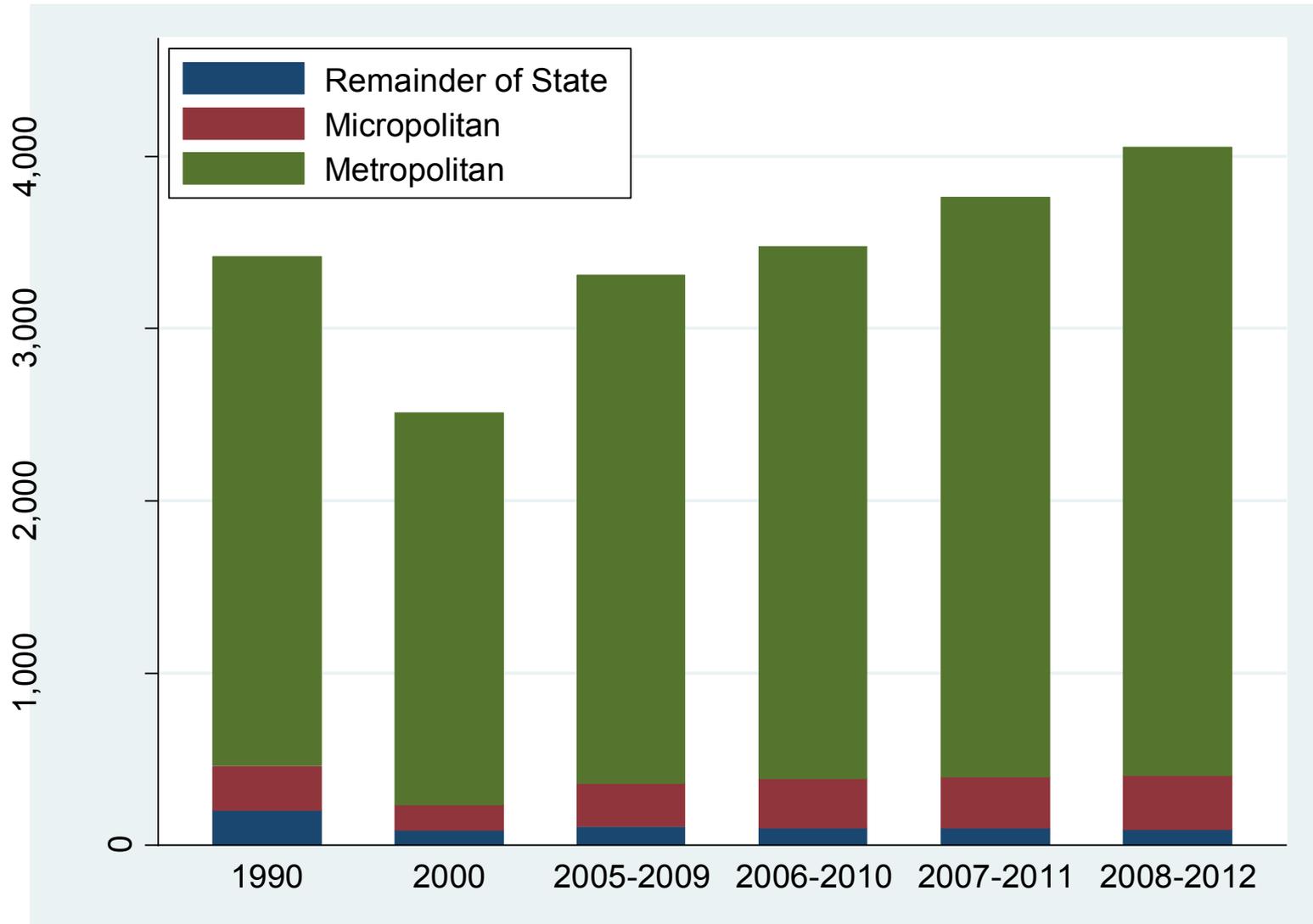
Population of High-Poverty Areas

Year	Population				Change since 2000	
	Persons	**(%)**	**Poor**	**(%)**	**Persons**	**Poor**
1990	9,592,333	4.0	4,802,686	15.1		
2000	7,198,892	2.6	3,487,015	10.3		
2005-2009	9,506,534	3.2	4,687,383	11.9	32%	23%
2006-2010	10,309,844	3.5	5,049,956	12.3	43%	32%
2007-2011	11,224,438	3.8	5,484,665	12.8	56%	43%
2008-2012	12,409,009	4.1	6,079,614	13.6	72%	57%

Year	Total	White	%	Black	%	Hispanic	%
2000	7,198,892	1,439,889	20.0%	3,010,537	41.8%	2,236,604	31.1%
2008-2012	12,409,009	3,191,497	25.7%	4,545,112	36.6%	3,899,857	31.4%
Change	5,210,117	1,751,608		1,534,575		1,663,253	
% Change	72%	122%		51%		74%	

Concentration of Poverty, 2000 to 2008-2012

Sources: 2000 Census, ACS 2008-2012 5-year release
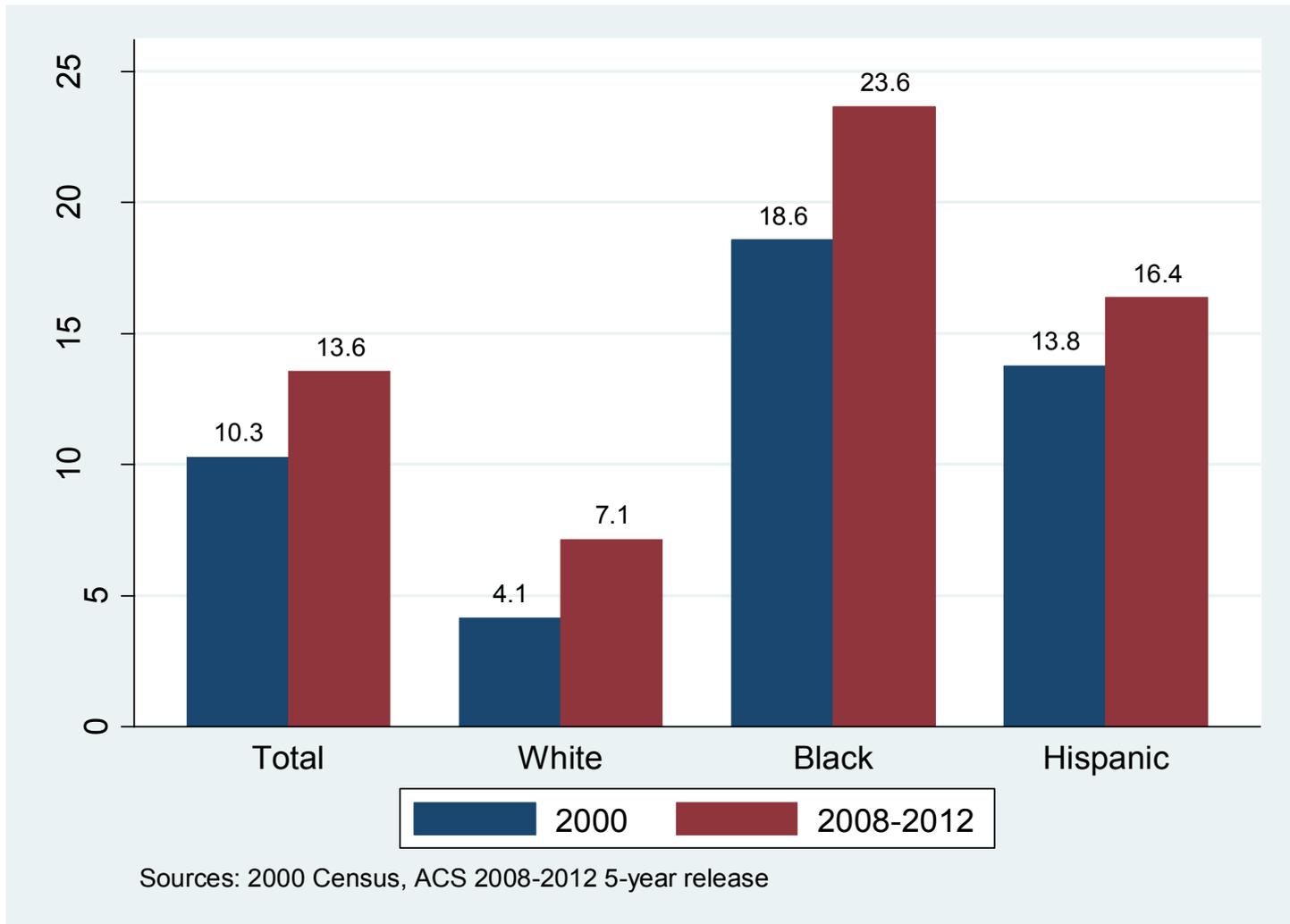
Metropolitan Areas with the Highest Concentration of Poverty Among Blacks

	Black* Total	Black* Poor All census tracts	Black* Poor High-poverty census tracts	Black* Poor %
Detroit-Livonia-Dearborn, MI	727,260	262,488	130,698	49.8
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	251,557	94,843	46,736	49.3
Rochester, NY	116,570	40,344	18,410	45.6
Tallahassee, FL	111,243	37,048	16,498	44.5
Dayton, OH	120,049	37,637	16,511	43.9
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	403,714	132,603	57,160	43.1
Gary, IN	128,769	43,084	17,911	41.6
Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN	169,553	54,249	22,463	41.4
Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	131,685	47,491	19,160	40.3
Memphis, TN-MS-AR	581,908	168,252	65,711	39.1

*Metropolitan areas with at least 100,000 blacks.

Source: 2008-2012 American Communities Survey.

Metropolitan Areas with the Highest Concentration of Poverty Among Hispanics

| | Hispanic** | | | |
| | Total | Poor | | |
		All census tracts	High-poverty census tracts	%
Philadelphia, PA	290,652	93,338	49,199	52.7
Laredo, TX	236,080	73,844	38,554	52.2
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	696,694	260,977	131,992	50.6
Brownsville-Harlingen, TX	353,240	133,144	66,461	49.9
Springfield, MA	103,370	41,965	20,723	49.4
Fresno, CA	460,606	148,272	67,303	45.4
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	144,697	38,216	15,025	39.3
Hartford-W. Hartford-E. Hartford, CT	146,028	42,653	16,704	39.2
Las Cruces, NM	134,588	42,900	14,965	34.9
Visalia-Porterville, CA	264,202	83,236	28,475	34.2

**Metropolitan areas with at least 100,000 Hispanics.

Source: 2008-2012 American Communities Survey.

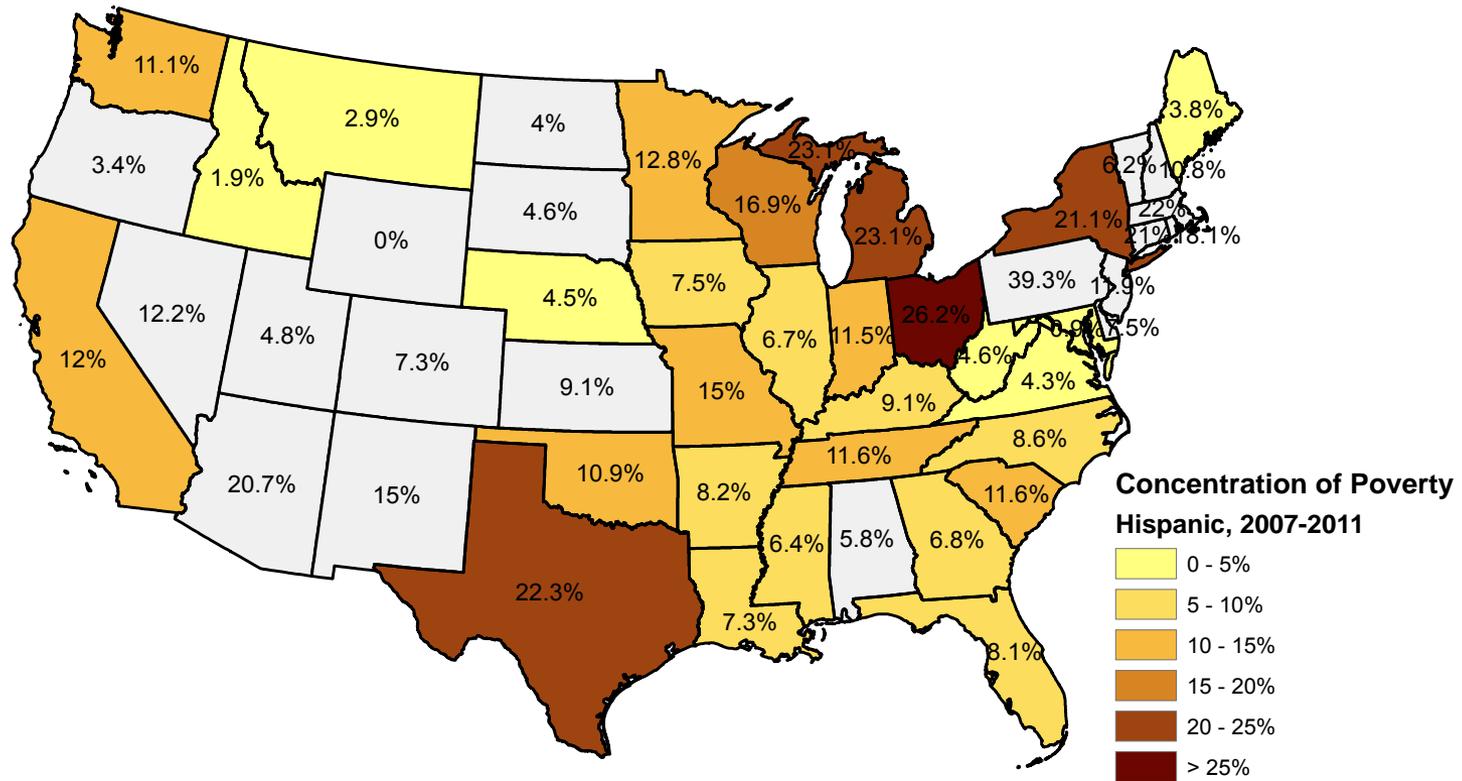# Another Look at Concentration of Poverty in Metropolitan Areas by Size.
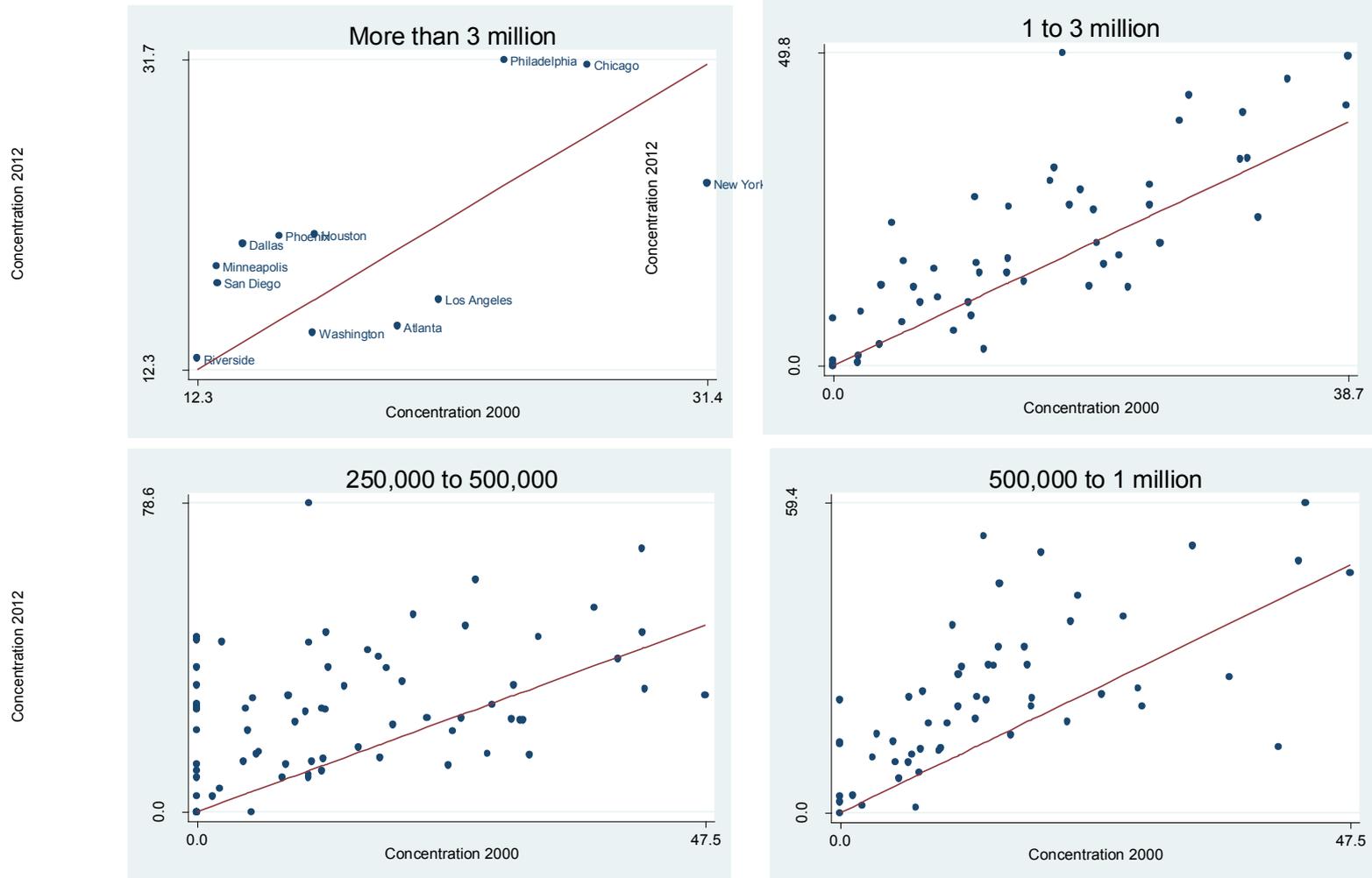
Metropolitans area above the diagonal experienced increases in concentration of poverty since 2000, those below experienced decreases.

Black Concentration of Poverty

Concentration of Poverty

Black, 2011

- 0 - 5%
- 5 -10%
- 10 - 15%
- 15 - 20%
- 20 - 25%
- > 25%
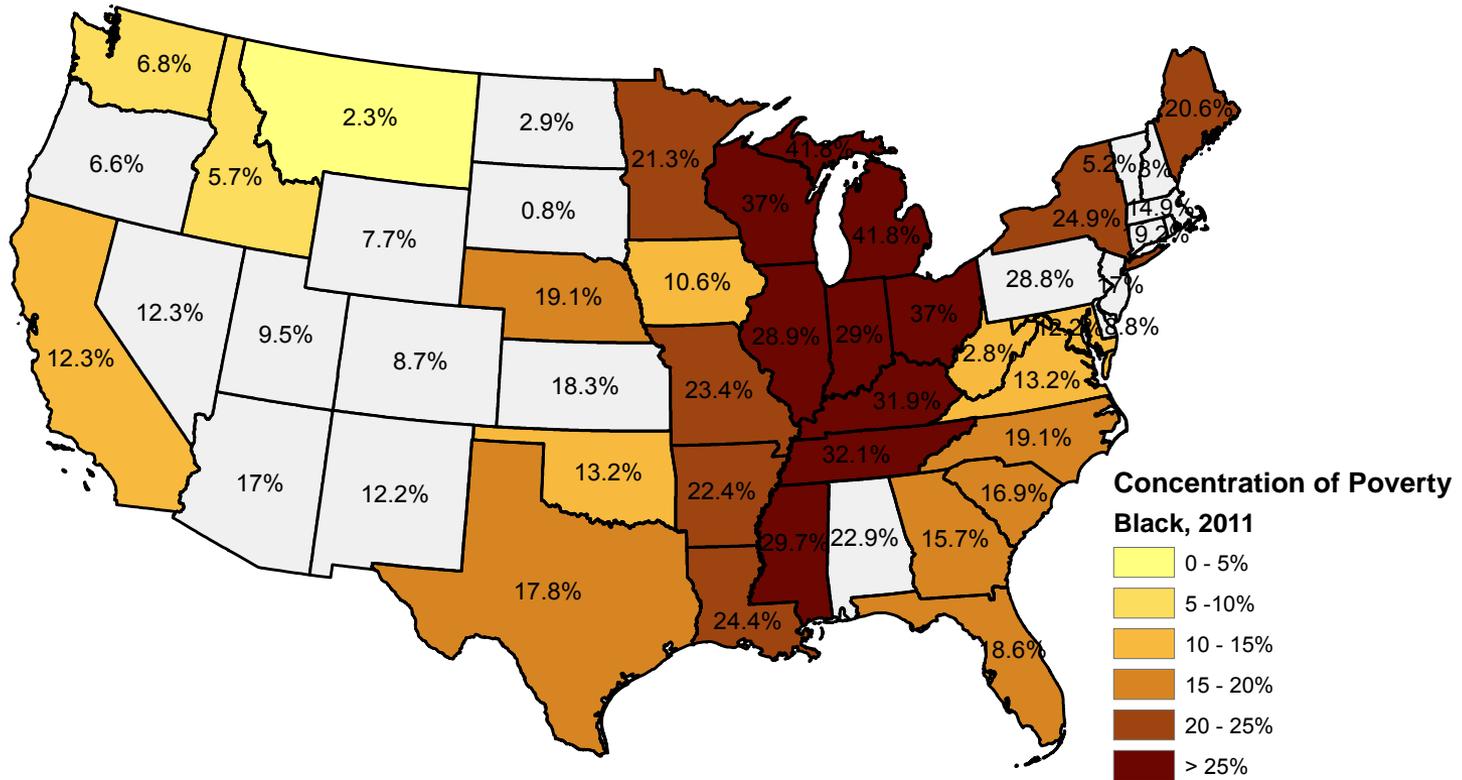
Hispanic Concentration of Poverty

Concentration of Poverty

Hispanic, 2007-2011

- 0 - 5%
- 5 - 10%
- 10 - 15%
- 15 - 20%
- 20 - 25%
- > 25%
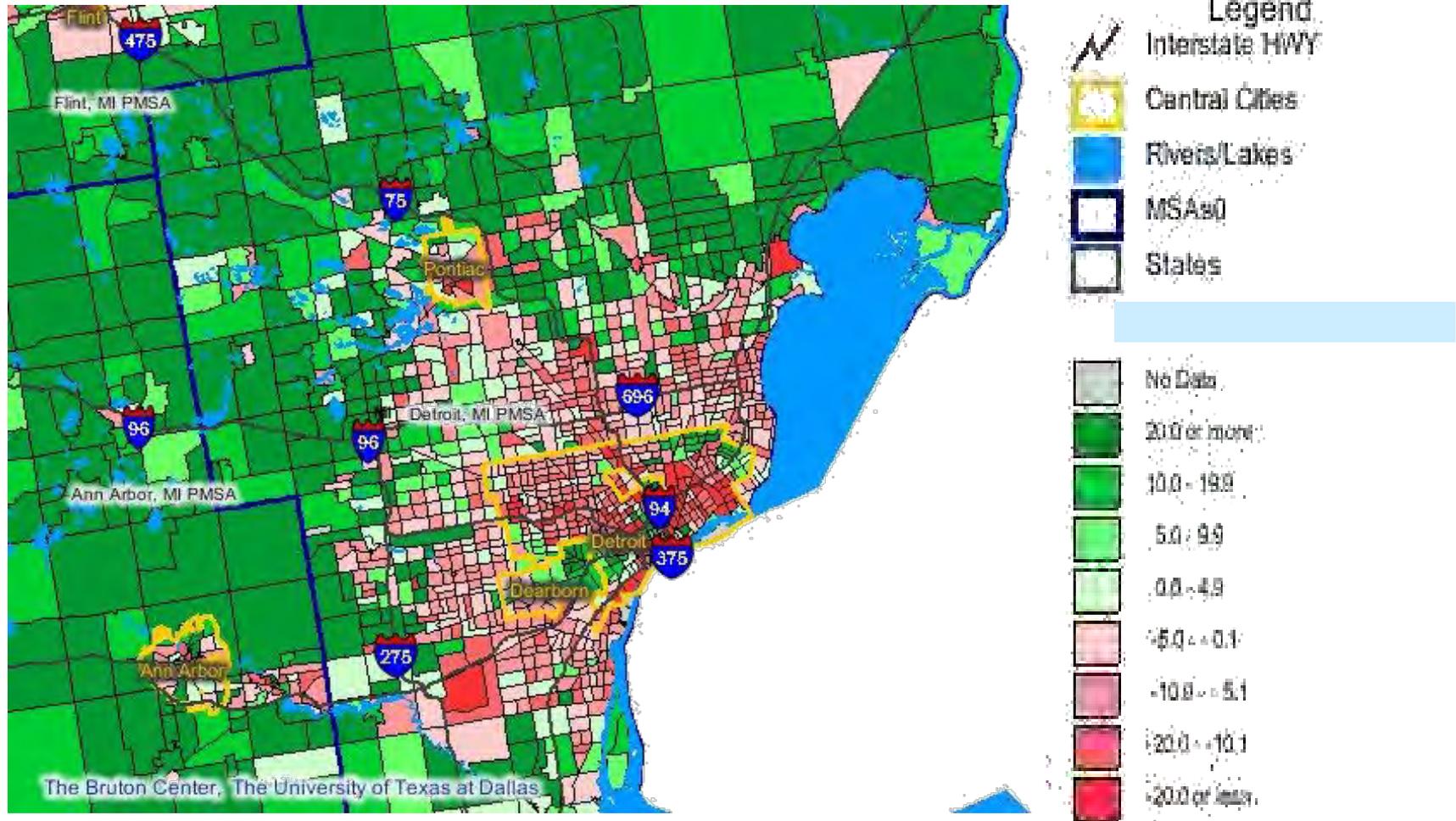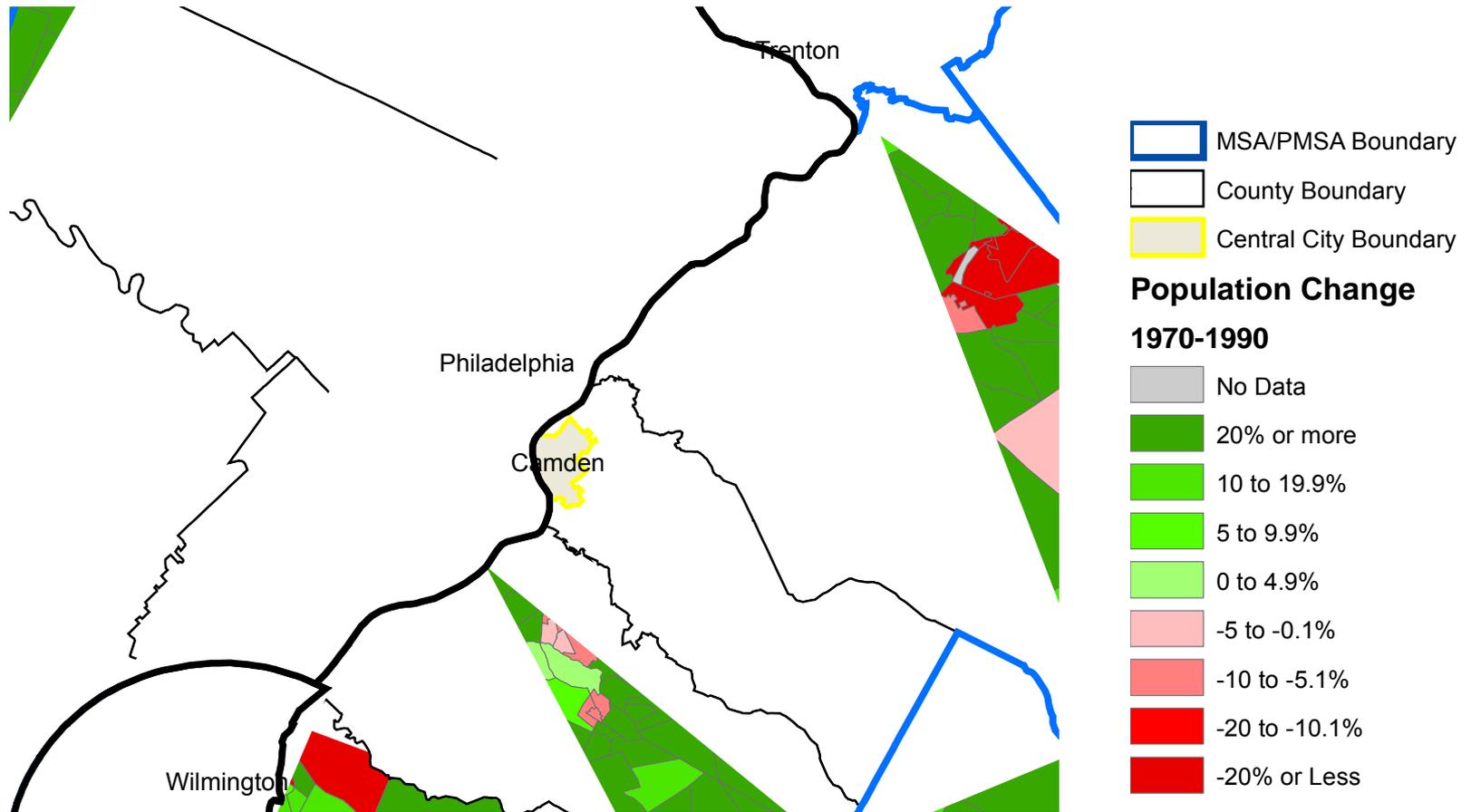
Population Changes, 1970-1990:
The MSA Hollows Out
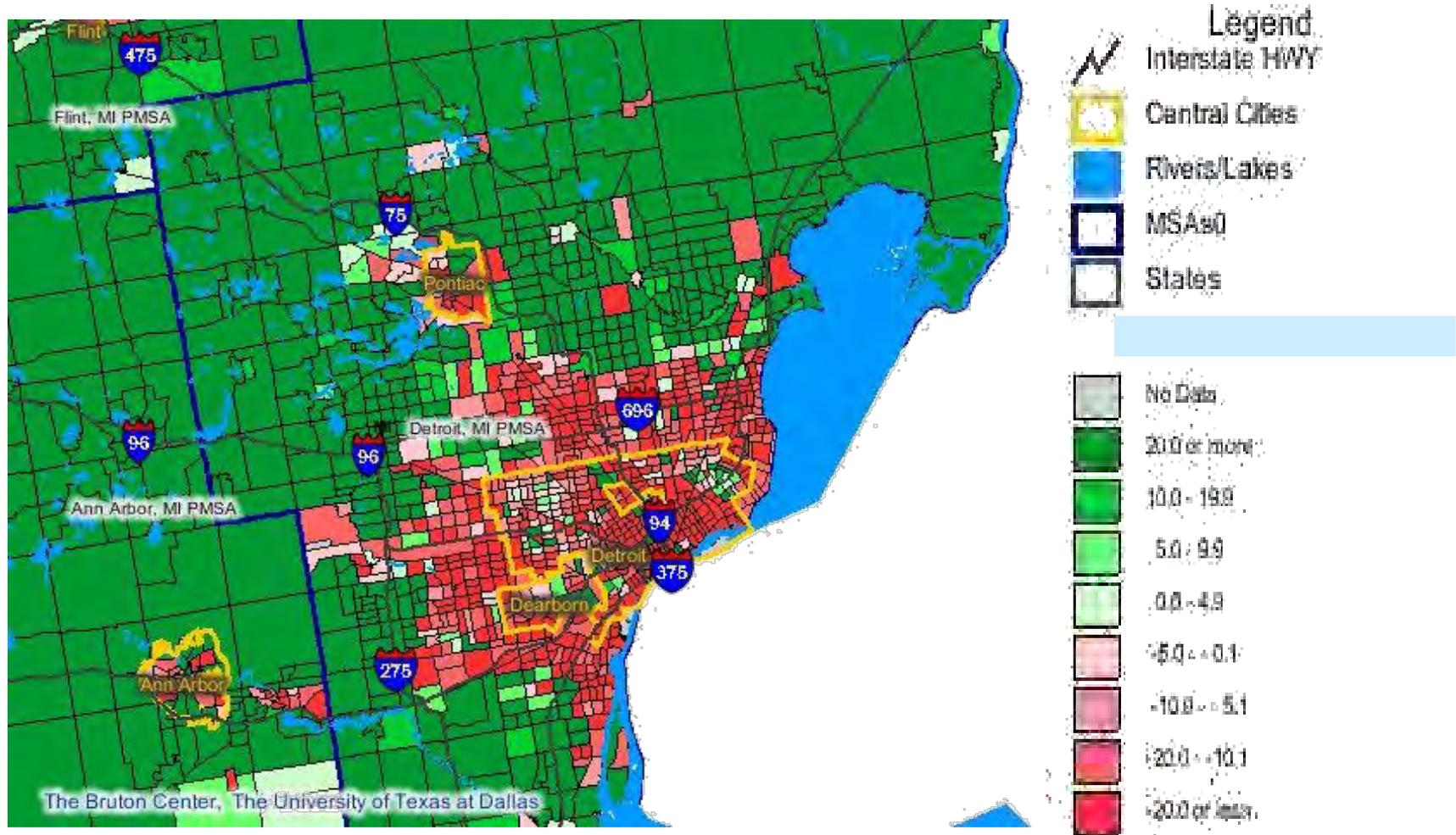
The Process Continues, 1990-2000

Suburban Sprawl and Central City Decline

Trenton

Philadelphia

Camden

Wilmington

Legend:
- MSA/PMSA Boundary
- County Boundary
- Central City Boundary

Population Change

1970-1990

- No Data
- 20% or more
- 10 to 19.9%
- 5 to 9.9%
- 0 to 4.9%
- -5 to -0.1%
- -10 to -5.1%
- -20 to -10.1%
- -20% or Less
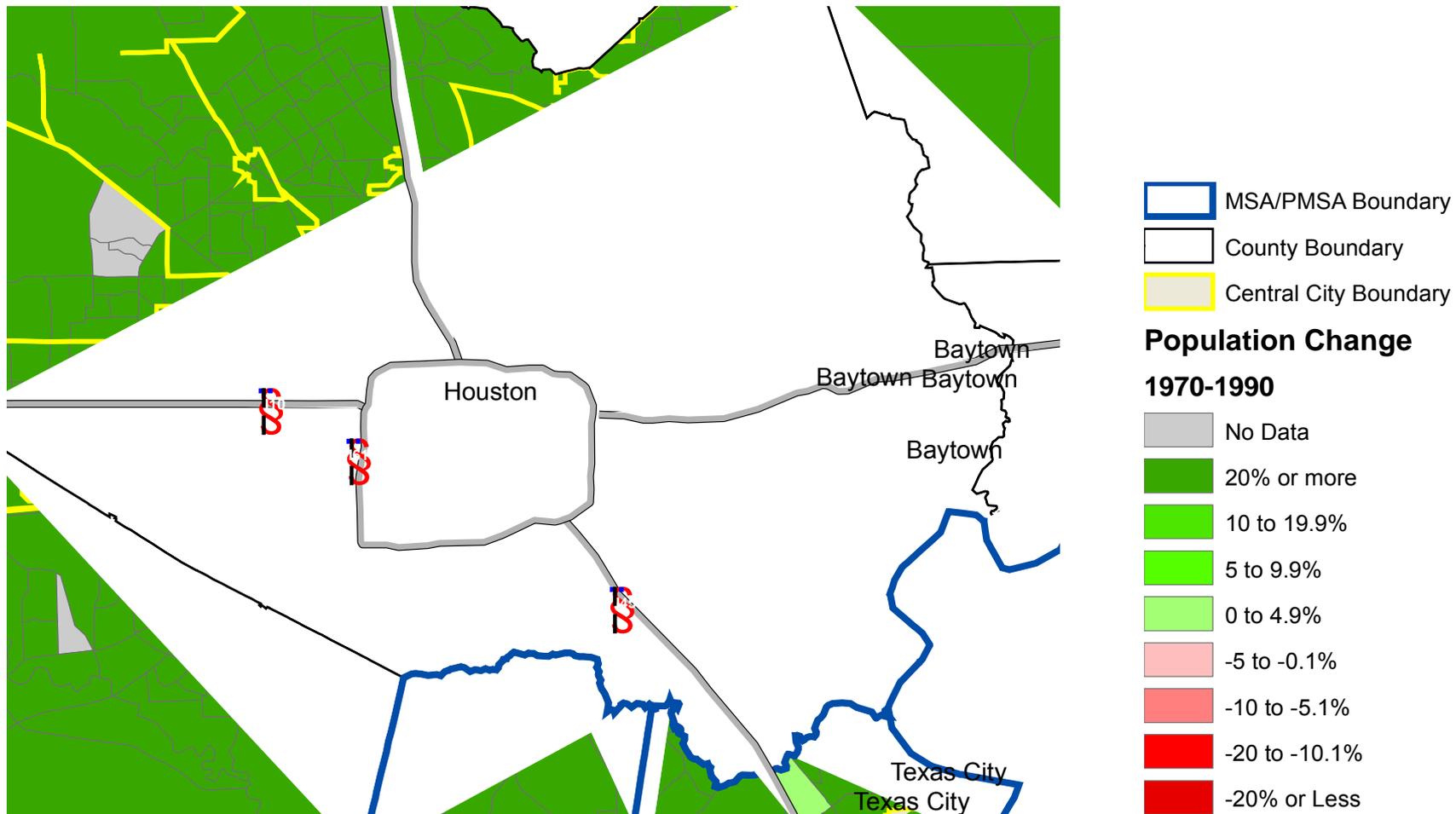
A large cause of concentration poverty historically has been rapid suburbanization, as the affluent moved out to exclusive suburbs and the poor were left behind in the central cities and older suburbs.

Population Change 1970-1990: Chicago Metropolitan Area

Elgin
Elgin
Elgin

Evanston

Chicago

Aurora
Aurora

East Chicago

Gary

Joliet
Joliet Joliet
Joliet Joliet

Legend:

- MSA/PMSA Boundary
- County Boundary
- Central City Boundary

Population Change 1970-1990

- No Data
- 20% or more
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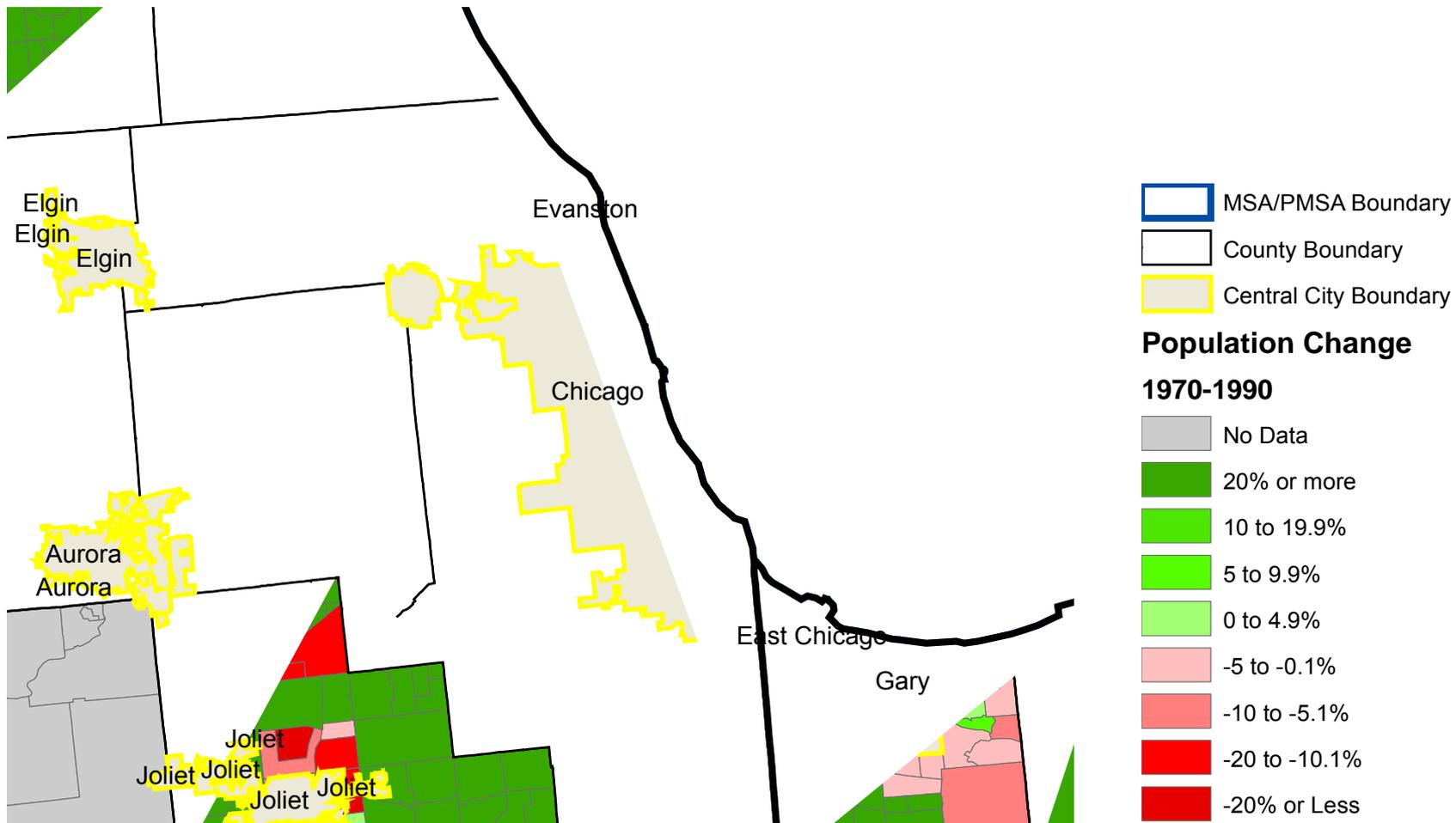
Population Change 1970-1990: Houston Metropolitan Area

Houston

Baytown
Baytown Baytown

Baytown

Texas City
Texas City

Legend:

- MSA/PMSA Boundary
- County Boundary
- Central City Boundary

Population Change 1970-1990

- No Data
- 20% or more
- 10 to 19.9%
- 5 to 9.9%
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- -10 to -5.1%
- -20 to -10.1%
- -20% or Less

Population Change 1970-1990: Baltimore Metropolitan Area (18)

Baltimore

Legend:

- MSA/PMSA Boundary
- County Boundary
- Central City Boundary

Population Change 1970-1990

- No Data
- 20% or more
- 10 to 19.9%
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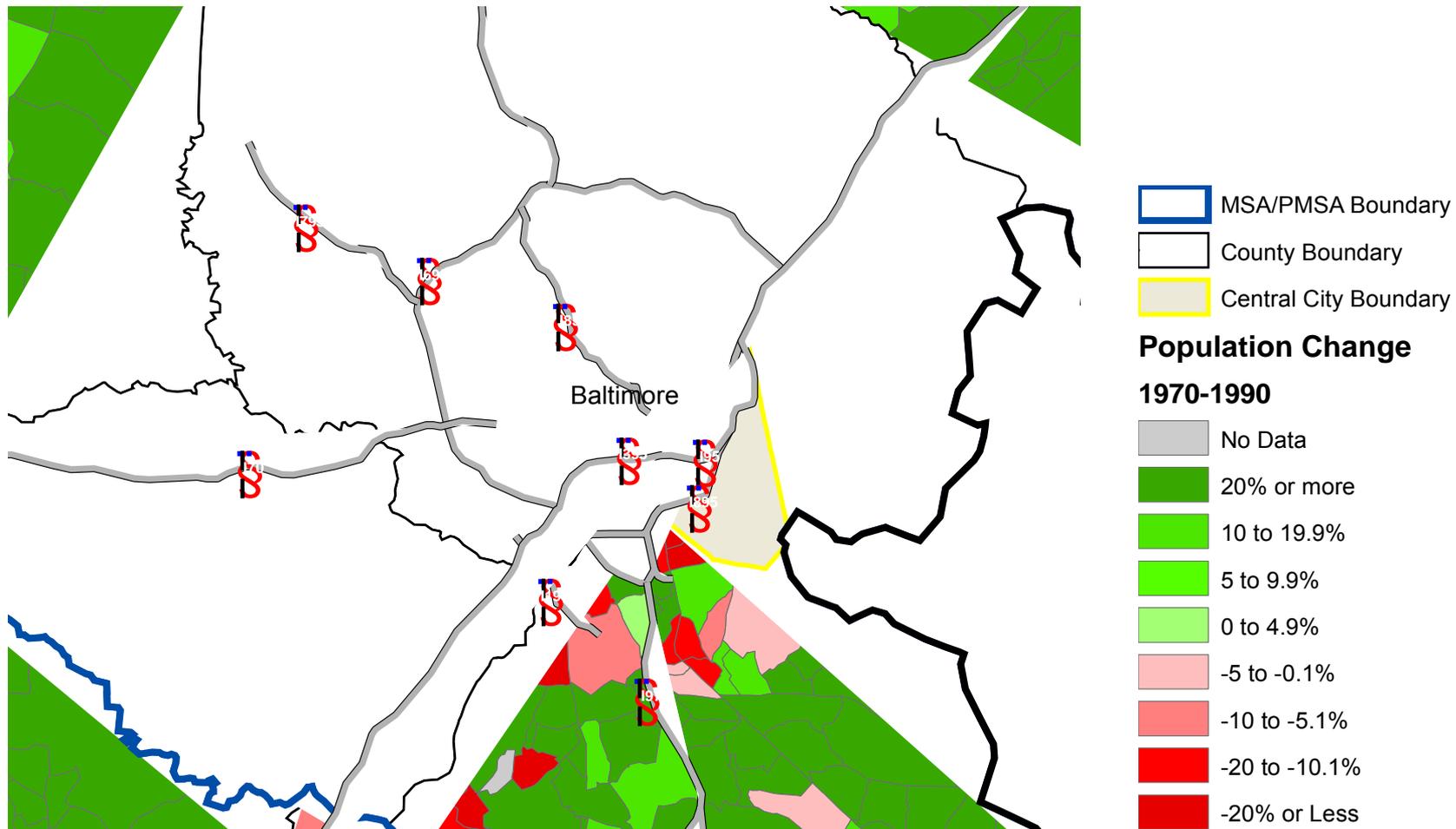
Institutional Context of US Suburban Development

- In US, major metropolitan areas have extensive political fragmentation
- Central cities are surrounded by politically independent suburbs
- Federal and state government play only a secondary role in development decisions
- Central cities are relatively poor and have greater minority populations
- Suburbs are rich and mostly white

Political Fragmentation, Dallas Metropolitan Area
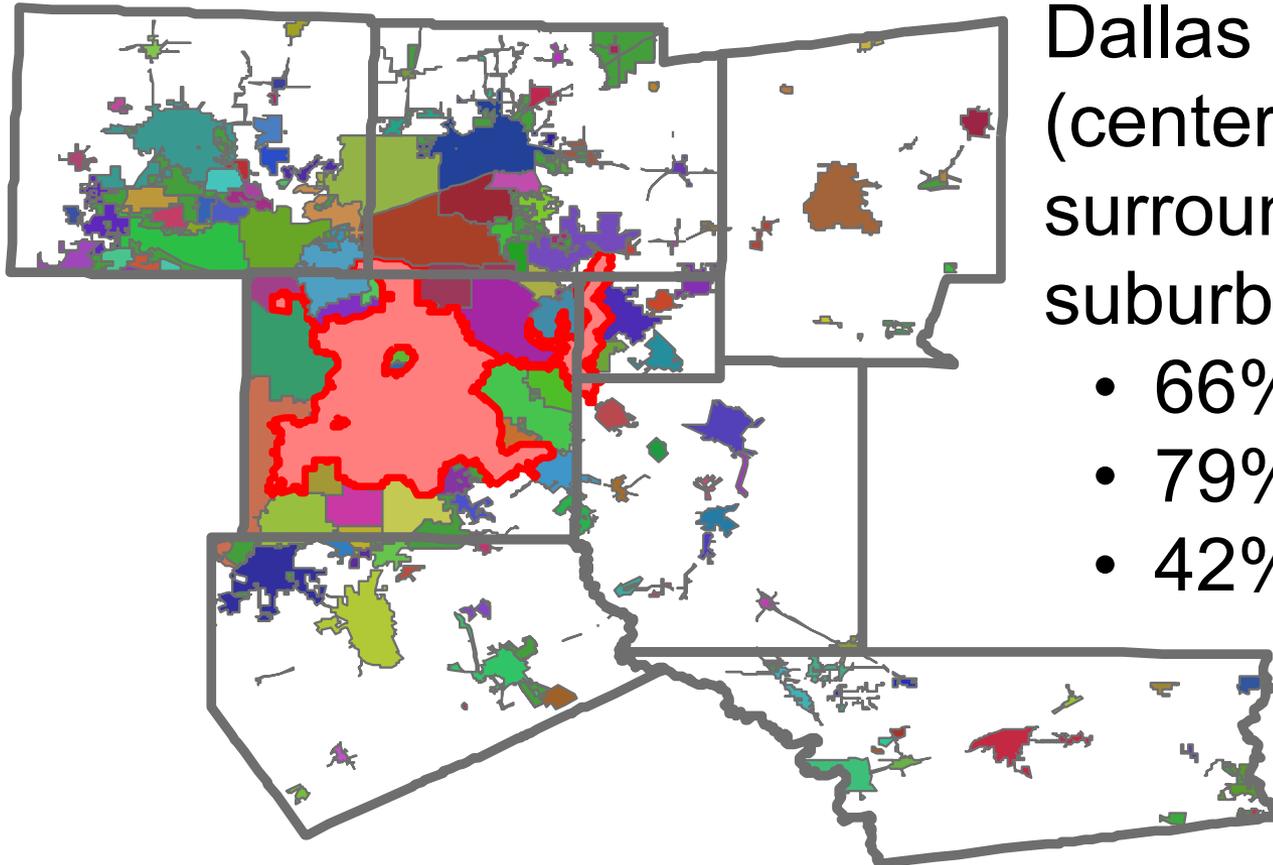
Dallas central city (center, in red) is surrounded by 154 suburbs, containing:

- 66% of total
- 79% of whites
- 42% of blacks

"Exurban" Development

Photo: Wisconsin Alliance of Cities

The rate of rural land conversion is far more rapid than population growth.

Economically Exclusive Developments Over Large, Peripheral Areas

Photo credits: Left: Sierra Club; Right: North Texas Council of Governments

The policy conversation has to change.

- The policy conversation today is either *how to "fix" high-poverty neighborhoods* or *how to help residents leave*.
  - Enterprise Zones, Promise Neighborhoods, and many others
  - MTO, Section 8 vouchers, scattered site housing (but mostly still within central cities)

- These programs have a role to play, especially in the short run.

- But they *do not address the fundamental underlying issue*.

- The conversation should be *WHY are there so many high-poverty neighborhoods to begin with*?

WHY there are so many high-poverty neighborhoods?

- Concentration of poverty is the direct result of policy choices:

    - *Political fragmentation* means that hundreds of suburbs develop without regard for the larger impact of their choices.

    - Suburbs grow much faster than is needed to accommodate metropolitan population growth.
        - Thus, suburban growth comes at the expense of central cities and older suburbs (Cannibalistic growth).
        - Infrastructure of new suburbs is subsidized, even as older infrastructure is underutilized.

    - Exclusionary zoning ensures economic and racial segregation.

- By policy and tradition, we create *a durable architecture of segregation* that ensures the concentration of poverty.

The policy question: will we continue to build ghettos and barrios?

- Without abandoning efforts to help those who currently live in high-poverty neighborhoods, *we must nonetheless work to change the development paradigm that builds high-poverty neighborhoods in the first place.*
  - State and federal governments must begin to *control suburban development* so that it is not cannibalistic: new housing construction must be in line with metropolitan population growth.
  - Every city and town in a metropolitan should build *new housing that reflects the income distribution of the metropolitan area as a whole.*
  - Over decades, this will result in less differentiation among places, more in-fill development, higher density, more efficient public transportation, and fewer failing schools.
- The fundamental question is not how to fix Camden, but how to fix the metropolitan development paradigm that creates Camdens and Detroits in the first place.