

Poverty and Inequality in Buffalo-Niagara

July 2020

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Overview: Understanding Poverty and Inequality in Buffalo-Niagara

Art Opener: Buffalo Wings

Introduction to PPG and Cornell ILR Co-Lab

Who is poor in Buffalo-Niagara and why?

- History and context
- Key data points

3 analytical tools for understanding poverty

- What is typical versus what is disproportionate
- Individual, group, and society-wide lenses
- Income and expenses

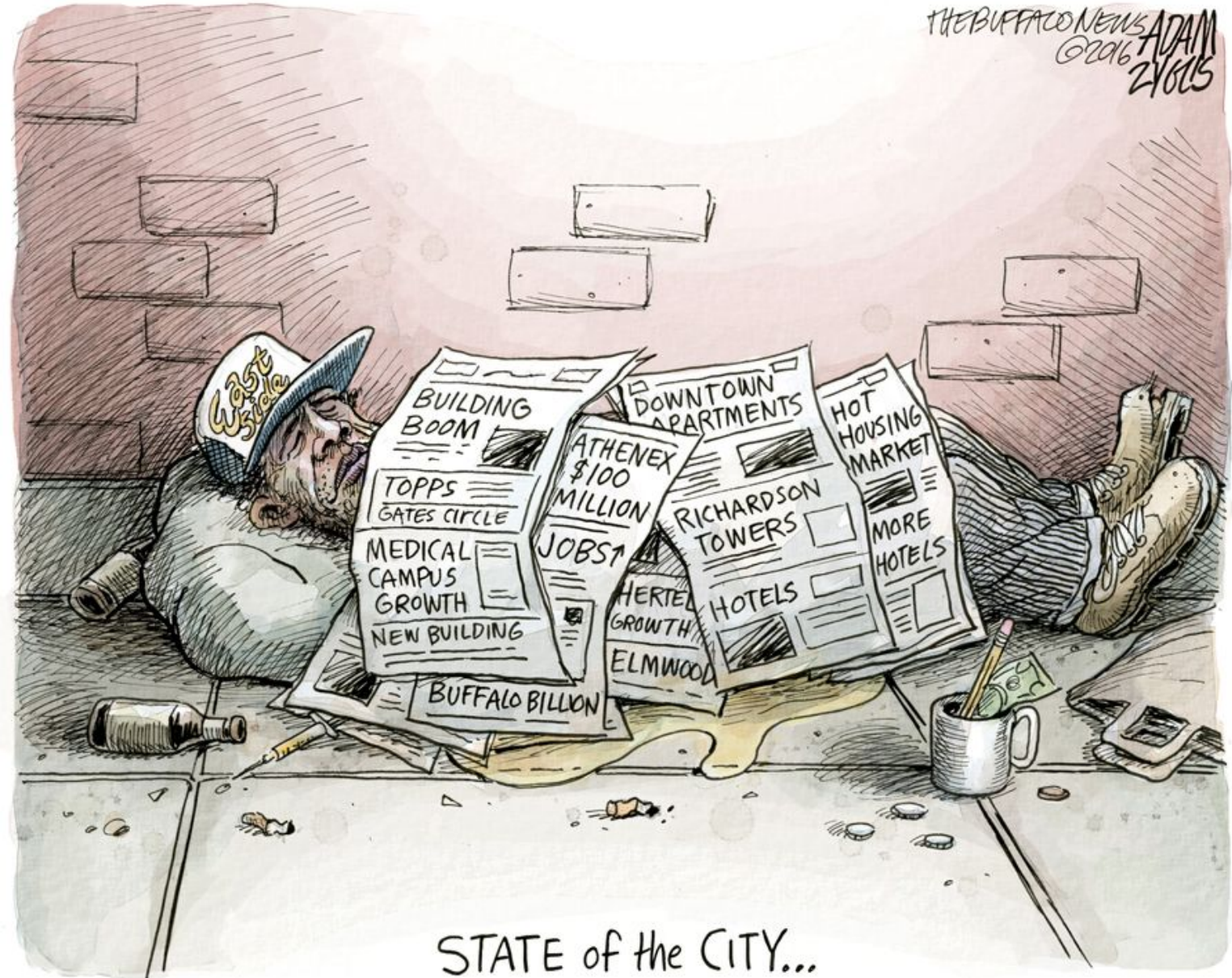
Buffalo Wings:
Spoken Word Piece

By Brandon Williamson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TE3kjZa40xs>

. . . no one has the recipe down quite like the City of Buffalo. Covered up with sauce to hide the parts that are undercooked. Add a little spice and Buffalove to draw all eyes to the inner harbor, so the inner city gets overlooked.

THE BUFFALO NEWS
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ZYGLIS



STATE of the CITY...

What is PPG

- A community-based think tank
- Doing research and advocacy
- For over 300 partner organizations, from
 - Block clubs like Greater Eastside Field of Dream to
 - Big agencies like the United Way

2020 Community Agenda

1. Eliminate New Traffic Fees and Unequal Traffic Enforcement in Buffalo

Buffalo Common Council should repeal its July 2018 amendment to Chapter 175 of the Code of the City of Buffalo that added 13 new fees under the Buffalo Traffic Violations Agency. Each year, thousands of Buffalo residents risk losing their driver's licenses, their jobs, their homes, and even their freedom because they cannot afford to pay traffic fines and associated fees. Data shows that residents of color are disproportionately stopped and ticketed, creating a cycle of debt and punishment in their communities.

Leading partners: Western New York Law Center, Fines and Fees Justice Center, African American Health Disparities Task Force, WNY Peace Center & Interfaith Peace Network, 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East & The Healthcare Education Project, National Federation of Just Communities of WNY, NFJC of WNY, Black Love Resists in the Rust, National Center for Law and Economic Justice, Center for Constitutional Rights, UB School of Law's Civil Liberties and Transparency Clinic, Erie County Restorative Justice Coalition.

2. Implement a Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program

The Buffalo Police Department should implement a Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program to reduce arrests and racial disparities, in partnership with the City of Buffalo, the Erie County District Attorney, the Erie County Departments of Health and Mental Health, and community organizations. LEAD gives police officers an alternative to arrest in incidents driven by poverty, mental health, or substance use and prevents harm to individuals in need of services.

Leading partners: Evergreen Health, Back to Basics Ministries, VOICE-Buffalo, WNY Peace Center, Crisis Services

3. Declare a Climate Emergency in Buffalo and Erie County

Buffalo Common Council and the Erie County Legislature should declare a climate emergency, joining nearly 1,200 local governments worldwide in recognizing the threat of climate change. This is a key first step in enacting local policies that align with New York State's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, adopted in 2019, and that invest in renewable energy, create fair green jobs, provide economic support for frontline communities, and further strengthen Buffalo Niagara's climate resiliency.

Leading partners: WNY Youth Climate Council, WNY Environmental Alliance, Sierra Club Niagara Group, Interfaith Climate Justice Community, PUSH Buffalo, Massachusetts Avenue Project, Wild Spirit Education, Sunrise Movement – Buffalo Hub, Pollinator Conservation Association, Friends of Times Beach Nature Preserve, Buffalo-Niagara Waterkeeper

4. A State Park on the Outer Harbor

New York State should make Buffalo's Outer Harbor a state park to protect the Lake Erie shoreline for all people. While proposed housing development on the Outer Harbor would decrease public access and make our coast less climate resilient, a world-class waterfront park would ensure equitable public access, healthy recreation, and climate

Upcoming Events

[View All](#)

Workshop: Buffalo Police Budget 101

July 8, 2020, 12-1:30 pm

Brian Borncamp, Vanessa Glushefski, Marielle Smith, Andrea Ó Súilleabháin

In recent decades, cities across the US have dramatically increased their spending on policing, criminalization, and incarceration--often while decreasing funding for community services, infrastructure, and neighborhood priorities. According to one study, many cities allocate 20% to 45% of their ...

Buffalo Commons Public Research Fellow Workshop: Decolonizing Service Learning

July 21, 2020, 12:30-2 pm

Dr. Devonya Havis and Dr. Melissa Mosko

What is the value of service learning in higher education? What power relations does service learning reproduce? What possibilities exist for service learning? What might shift if one decolonizes service learning?

Take Action

How can you take action on the issues affecting Buffalo Niagara? Here's a tool kit for getting information, taking action, and making your voice heard.



Get Involved



Be Informed

Ways To Engage

Work with Government

Most Effective Means of Contacting Congress

[View Report](#)

Work with Government

Tips for meeting with Elected Officials

[View PDF](#)

Work with Government

Contact information for local elected officials

[League of Women Voters](#)

Work with Government

Regional, State, and National Government Offices

[League of Women Voters](#)

Work with Government

Fact Sheets about Local Government

[Visit the Commons](#)

BUFFALO Commons

Library

The knowledge, ideas, and tools collected here can make our community a better place to live, and they belong to all of us. We hope they help you achieve great things.

We would like to direct and encourage our researchers and partners to explore how they can make their publications ADA compliant and accessible to a wider audience. Here is a [link to articles on increasing accessibility](#) that can help provide guidance for a variety of document-types that you may work with--thank you.

Select a Topic

Arts / Culture

Economic Development

Equality / Civil Rights

Housing / Neighborhoods

Criminal Justice

Education

Government

Poverty / Income Inequality

Data / Demographics / History

Environment

Health

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Audio

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Publication

Book

Fact Sheet

Policy Brief

Report

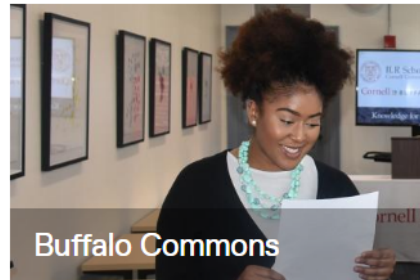
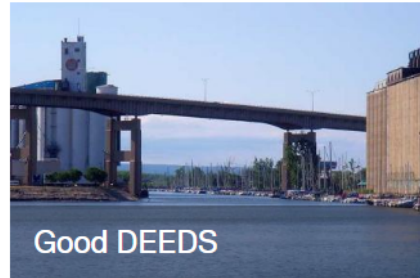
Buffalo Brief

Image

Presentation

Video

Cornell ILR Buffalo Co-Lab



The Context

Buffalo Geography and History

NEW YORK STATE CANALS
To be constructed under
Chapter 147 Laws of 1903
MAP
SHOWING PRESENT AND PROPOSED
CANAL SYSTEM
TO ACCOMPANY REPORT OF
EDWARD A. BOND
State Engineer & Surveyor of N. Y.

Legend
——— Line of proposed canal not to be built
——— Line of proposed canal to be built
——— Line of the canal

Note: This map is compiled from a
Professional Engineer's Report made by
the State Engineer. It is not to be
used as a guide for the location of the
canals. The State Engineer's Office
has the honor to acknowledge the
kindness of the State Engineer of the
Board of Engineers in the Surveying
Department.





Niagara Falls



Grain Silo on the River

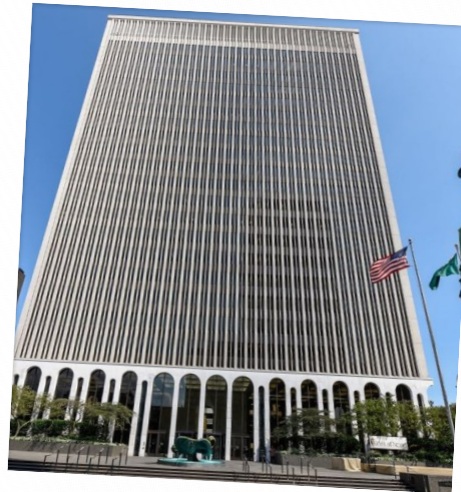


Bethlehem Steel

Economy Today



UB North Campus



One M&T Plaza

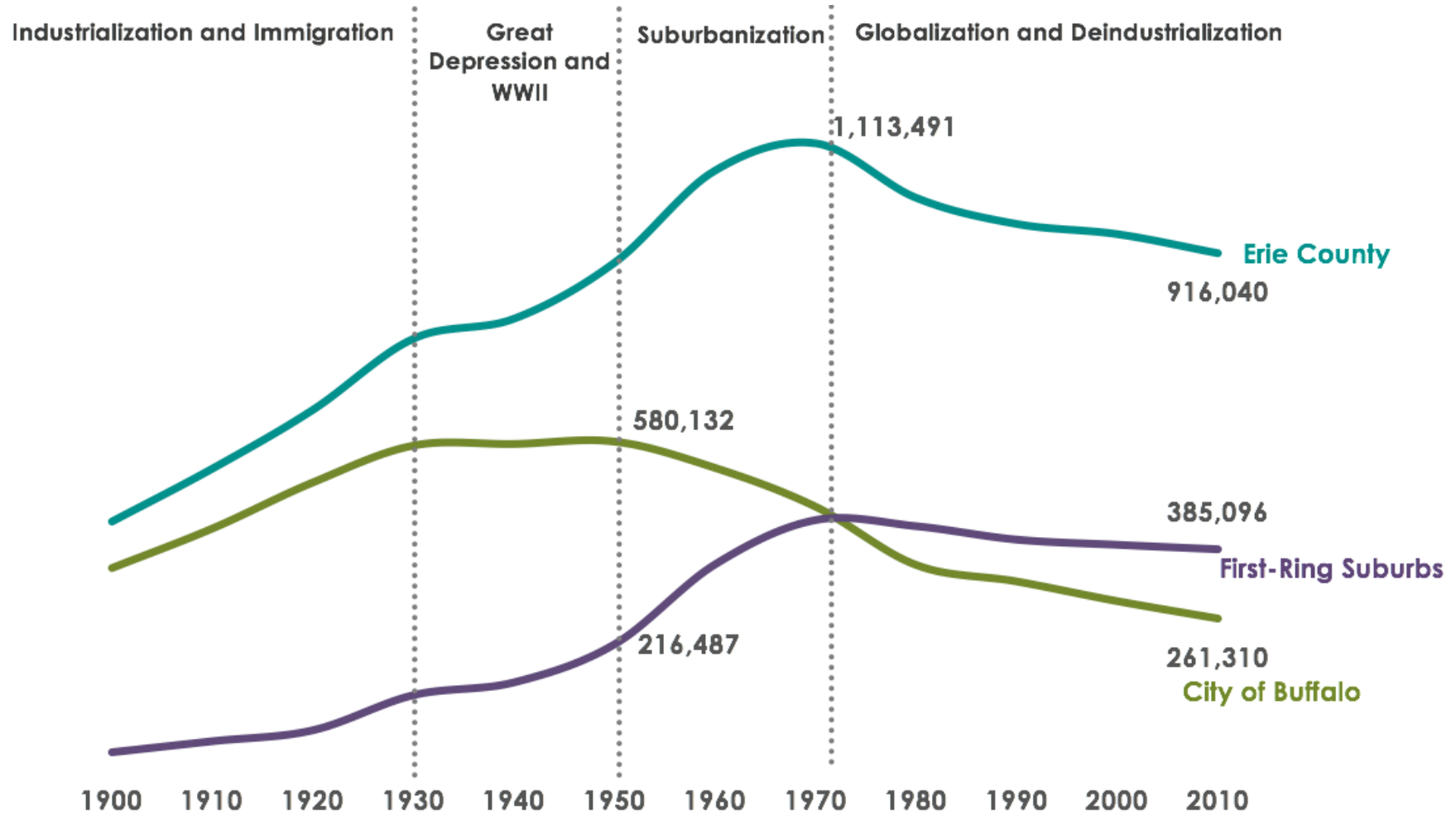


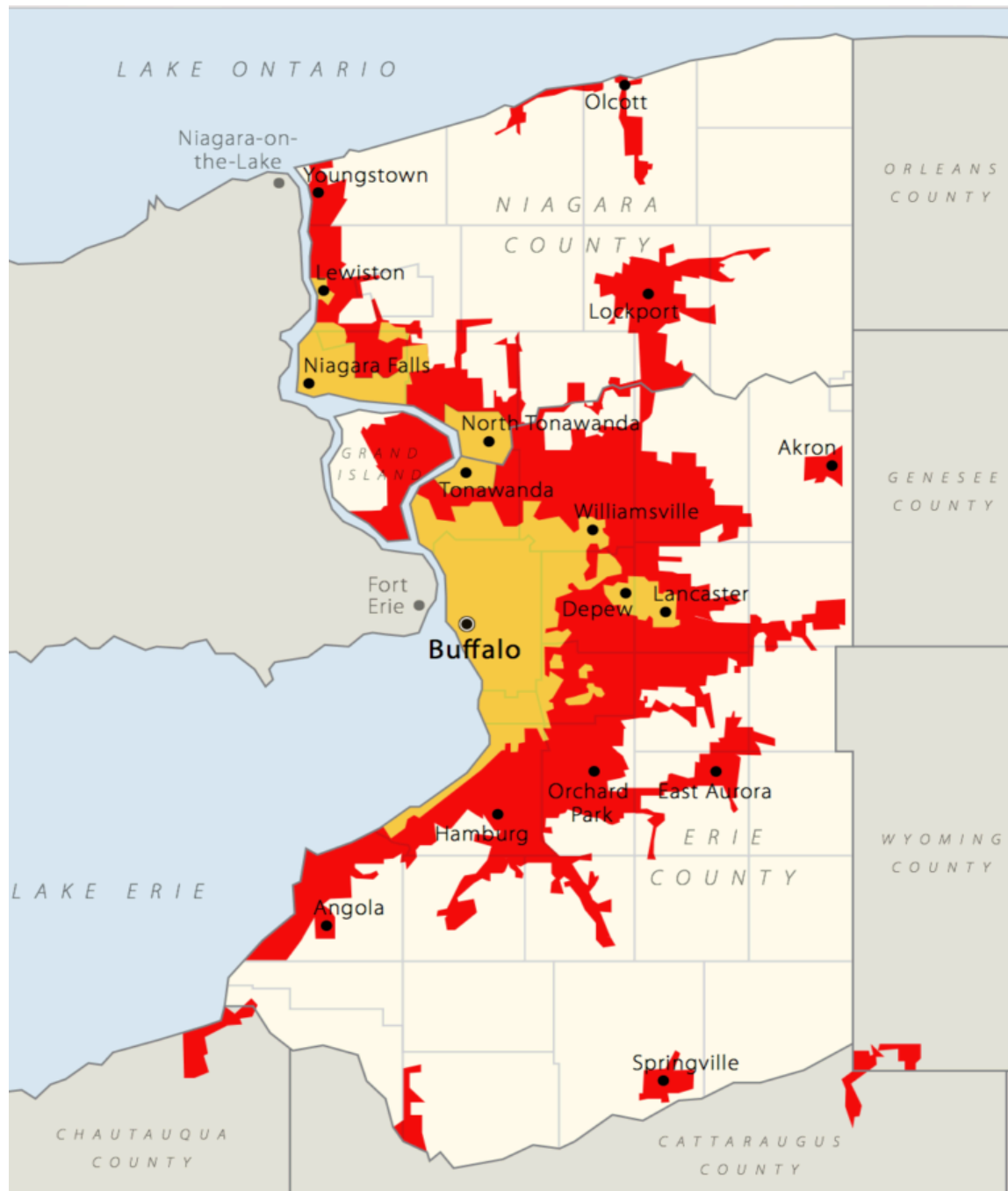
Galleria Mall



Vascular Institute

Populations of Erie County, Buffalo, and First-Ring Suburbs, 1900-2010





Expansion of
Urbanized Area
since 1950

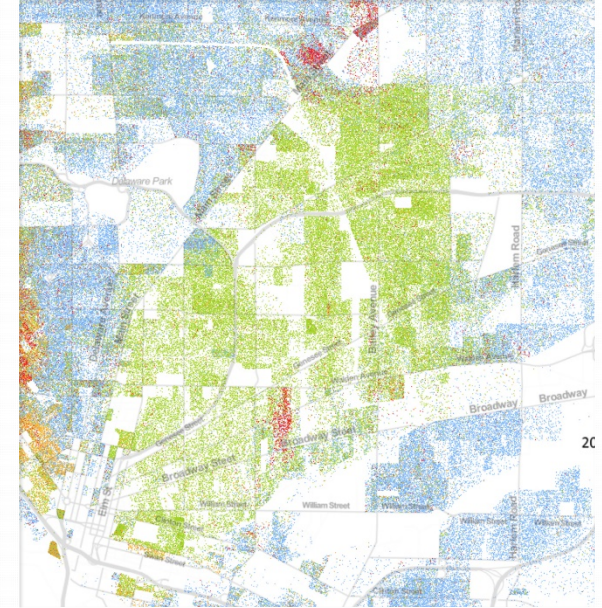
Development and Inequality



Route 33



Vacant House



Racial Segregation

3 Tools for Understanding Poverty

The Typical and the Disproportionate

Finding the most typical American family living in poverty

- City, suburb, or rural area
- White, black, or Hispanic
- High school graduate or drop-out
- Married couple, single mom, or single dad
- Large family or small

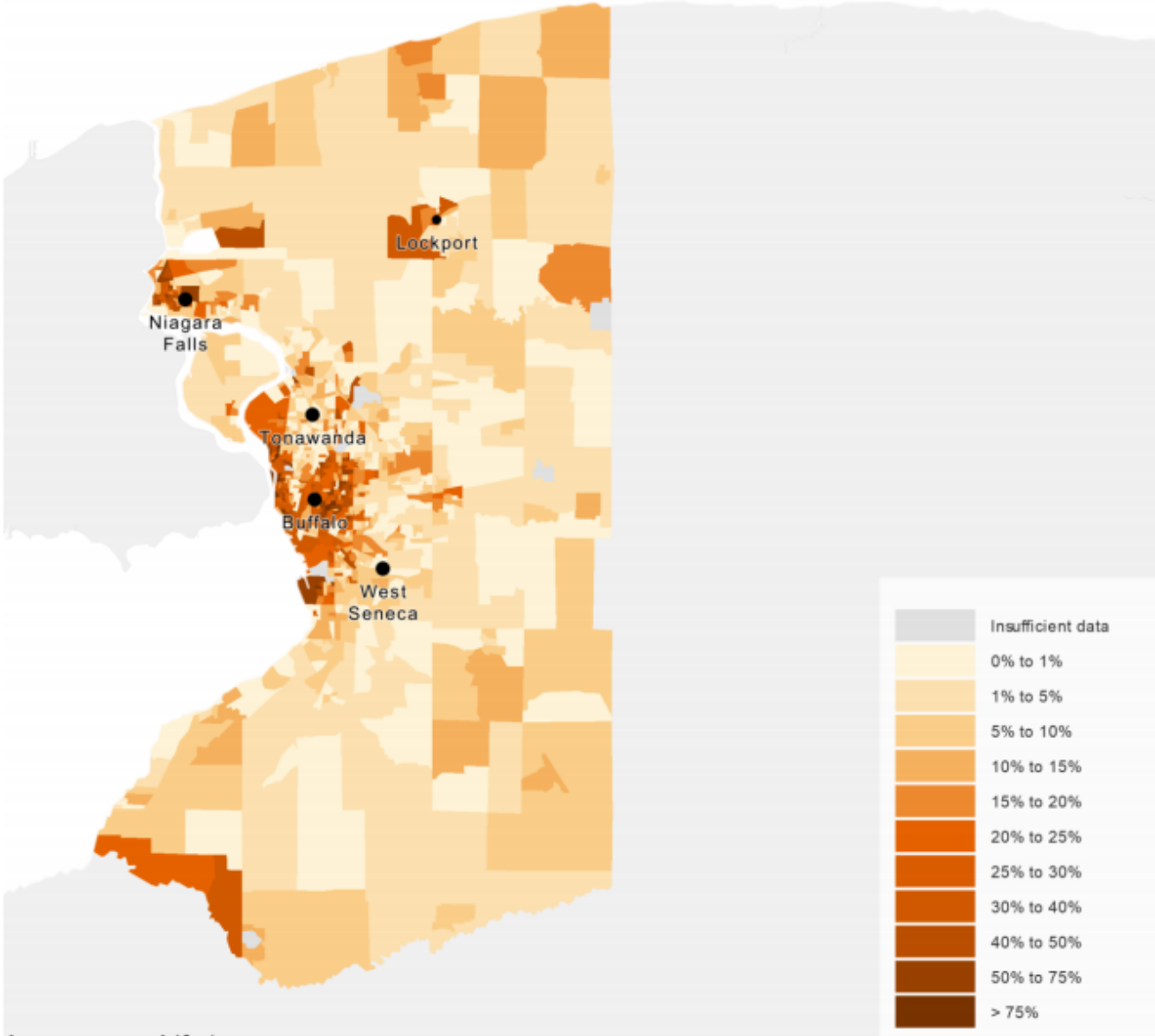


Why do we get it wrong?

- Stereotyping
- Mistaking what's disproportionate for what's typical
- Disproportionate poverty rates in Buffalo-Niagara
 - Race
 - Geography
 - Educational level
- Compared to absolute numbers of people in poverty

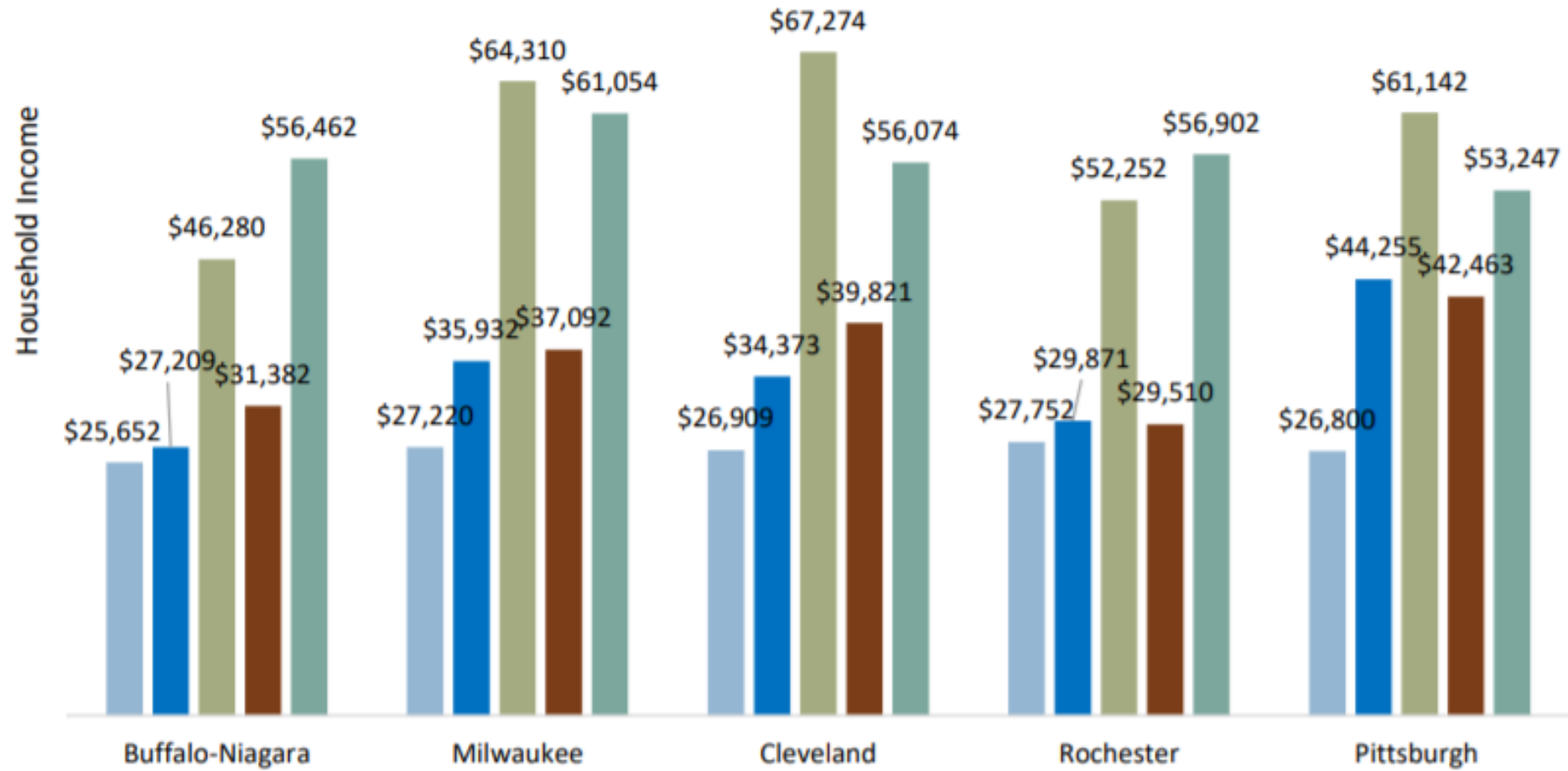
ERIE AND NIAGARA COUNTY HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY

ACS 2016 (5-YEAR ESTIMATES)



Median Income, by Race/Ethnicity (2015)

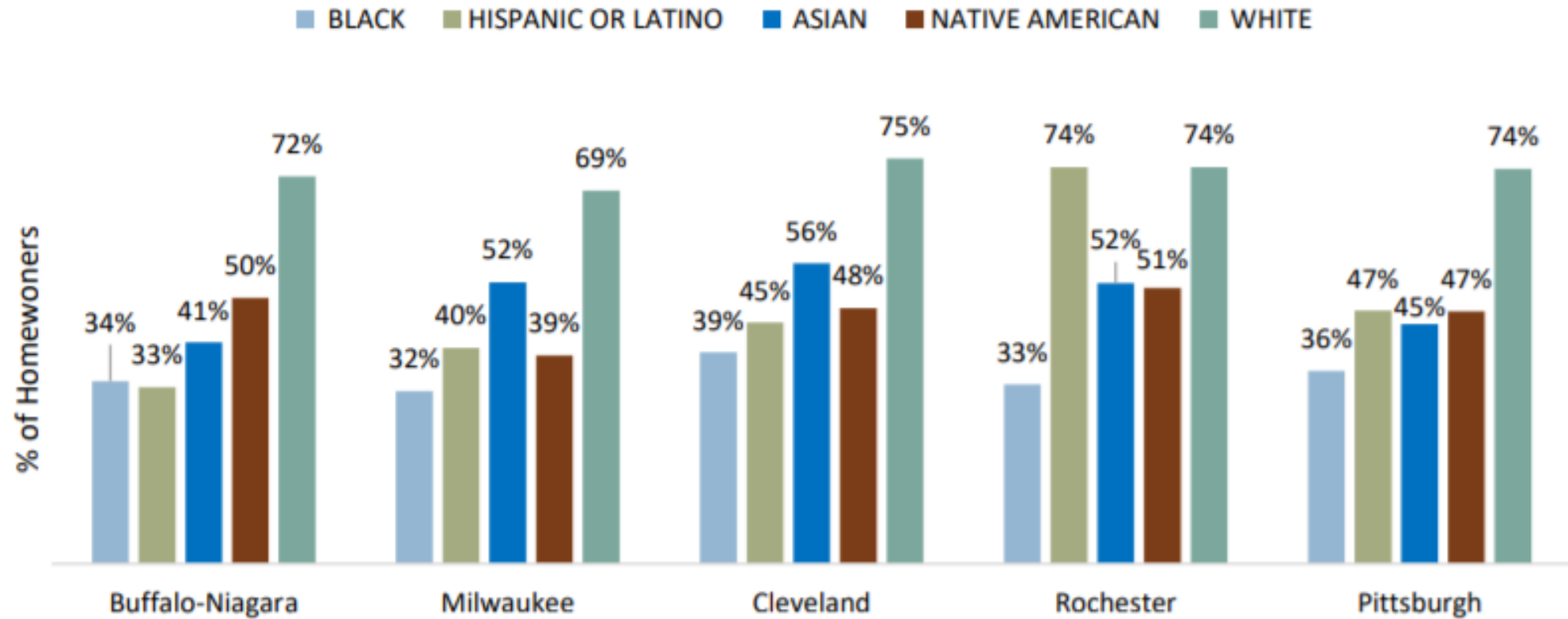
■ BLACK ■ HISPANIC/LATINO ■ ASIAN ■ NATIVE AMERICAN ■ WHITE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

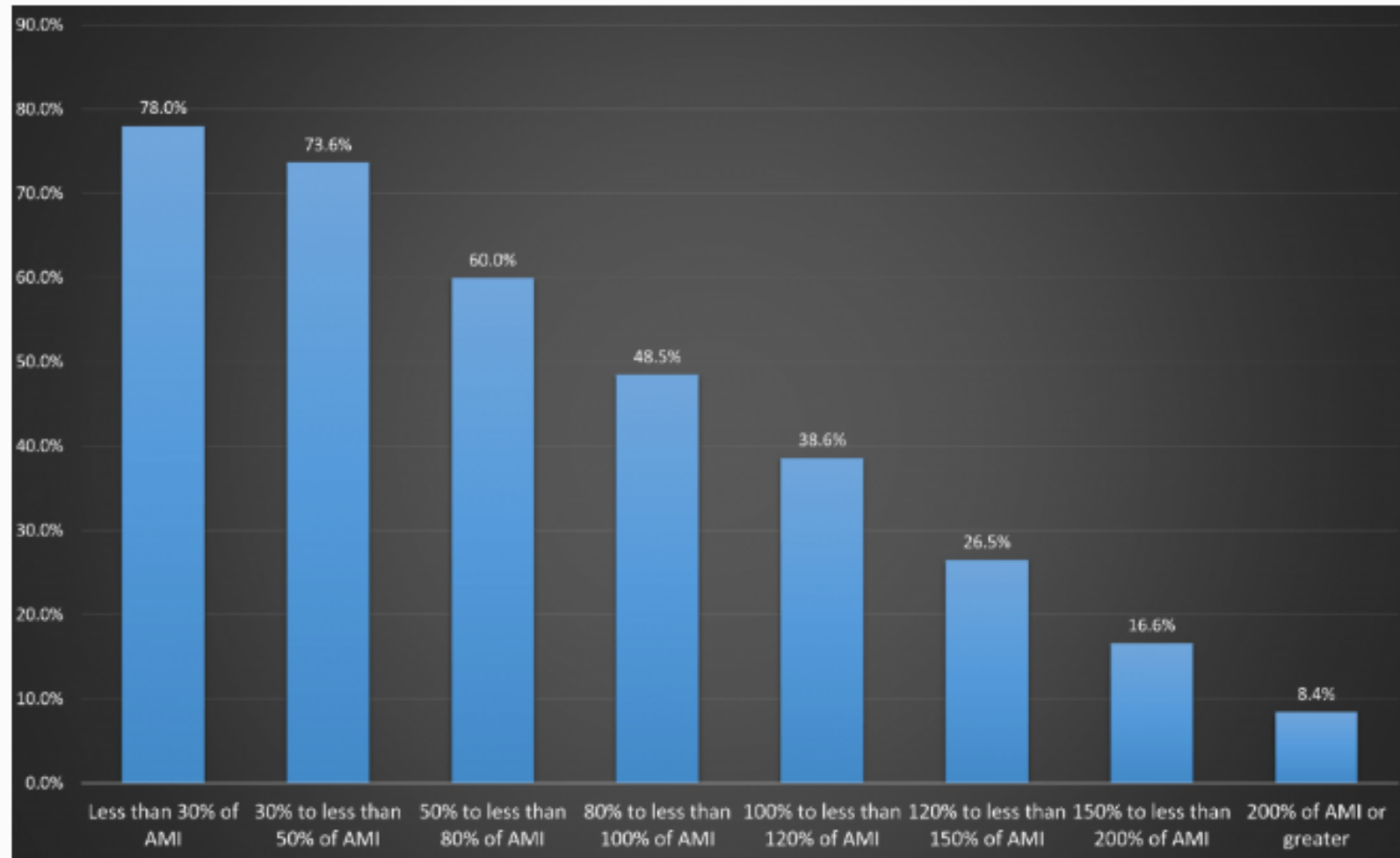
Home Ownership Rates, By City 2010

Source: Brandeis University DiversityData.org



Source: 2010 Census Summary File 1

Renter share of households with at least one member employed in an at-risk occupation, by household income



Race	% of All Workers	% of At-Risk Workers
White (Not Hispanic or Latinx)	83.0%	78.0%
Black or African American (Not Hispanic or Latinx)	9.3%	12.4%
Hispanic or Latinx	3.6%	4.6%
Asian or Pacific Islander (Not Hispanic or Latinx)	2.4%	2.4%
Other Person of Color (Not Hispanic or Latinx)	1.3%	2.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native (Not Hispanic or Latinx)	0.4%	0.6%
<i>All Persons of Color, Combined</i>	<i>17.0%</i>	<i>22.0%</i>

Three Lenses for Viewing Poverty

- Individuals
- Groups
- Societies

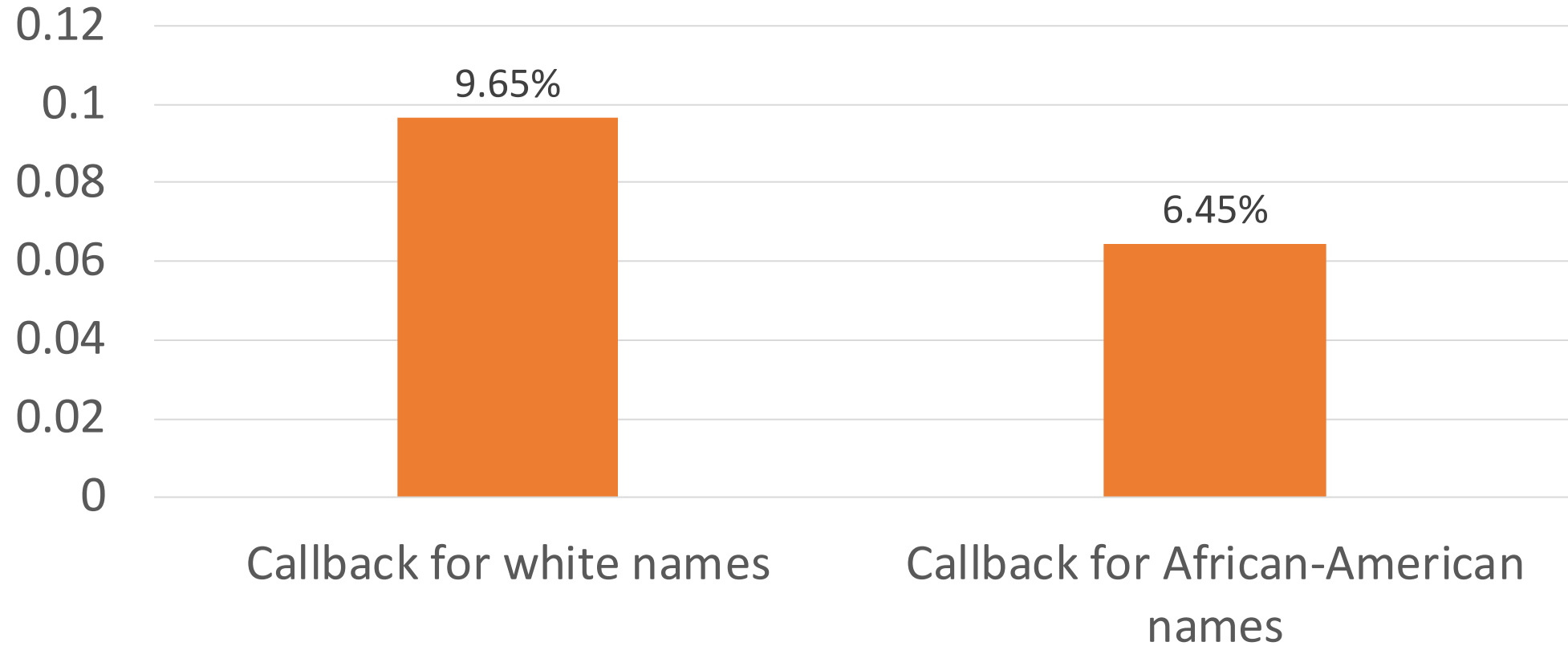




Individual Level: 2 Brothers



Mean Callback Rates by Racial Soundingness of Names





What is Poverty

Too little income

Too high expenses

Main Sources of Income for People in or Near Poverty

- If you can work: wages
- If you can't work: public assistance
 - Unemployment insurance
 - Cash welfare programs
 - Disability programs
 - SSI
 - SSDI

Federal Minimum Wage in Today's Dollars

Today: **\$7.25**

1960s: **> \$10.00**

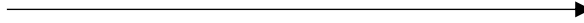


Poverty line



\$12,760

SSI



\$9,408

Main Expenses for Families Near or in Poverty

- Housing
- Utilities
- Food
- Child care
- Health
- Transportation
- Education
- Taxes



Question and Answer