

# Neighborhood Inequality in America: Continuity and Change @ 50

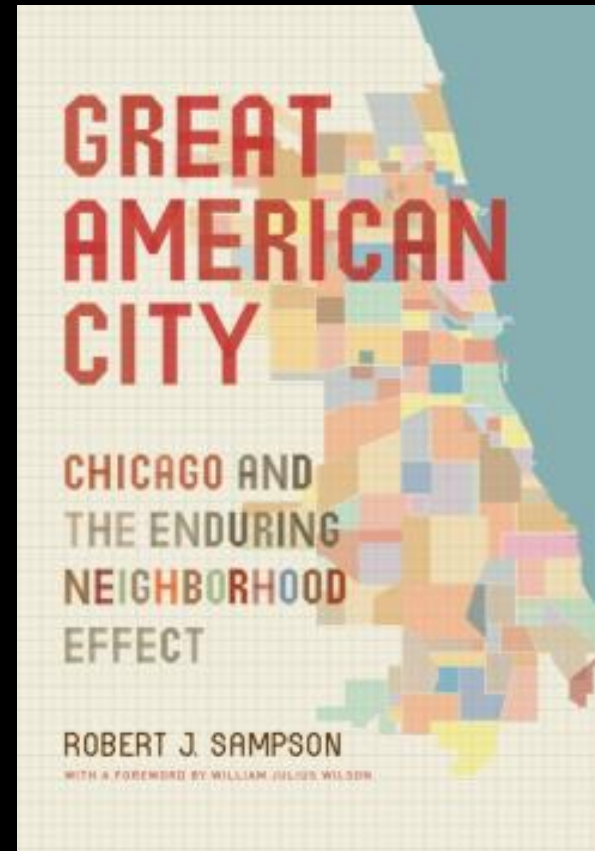
Robert J. Sampson

Harvard University

University of California, Berkeley. February 27-March 1, 2018.

# General Patterns

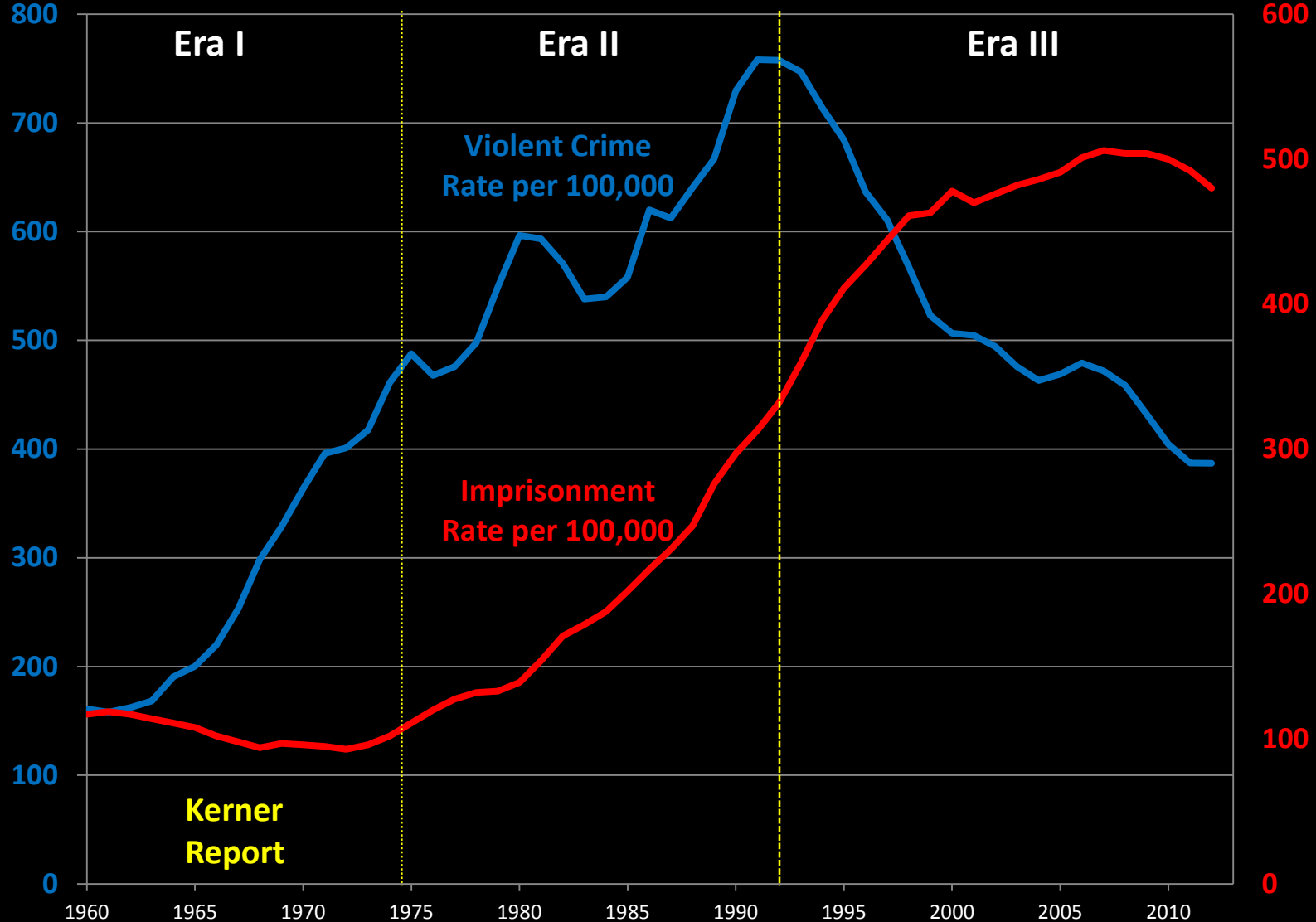
- **Neighborhood concentration**
  - Spatial foundations of inequality
- **Across diverse phenomena**
  - Compounded adversity
- **Persistence despite change**
  - The social order of the city



# The Social Transformation of the City @50

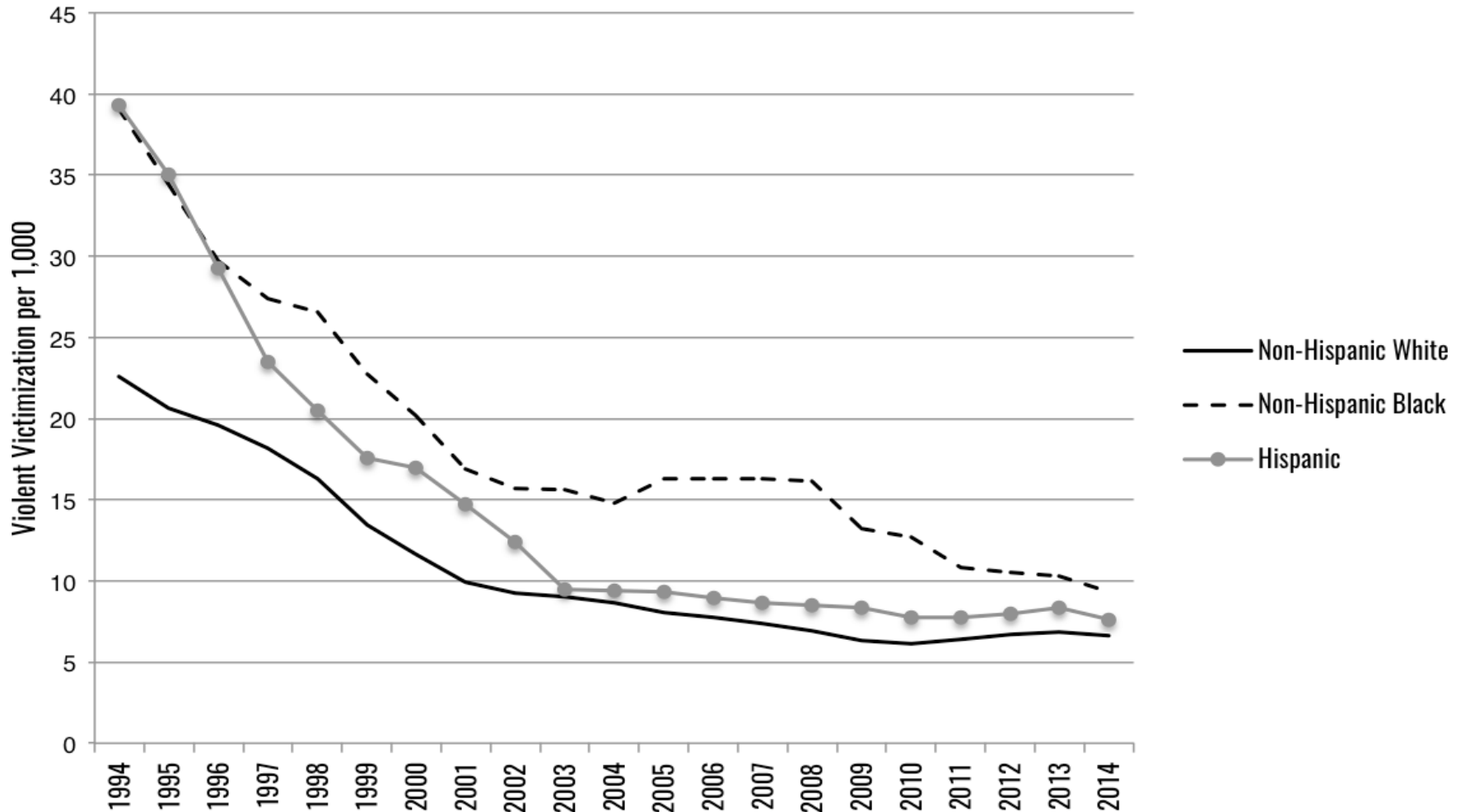
- **“Inner-city” as anachronism?**
  - Suburbanization of poverty
  - Public housing revolution (“Tear Down”)
  - Gentrification; Return to city
  - Contra Kerner: Only 12% of 50 largest cities are majority black
- **Immigration Boom (1990-present)**
  - “Smashing the black-white frame”?
  - Cause of urban revitalization and crime decline?

# Three Eras of Crime and Criminalization in the Last Half Century



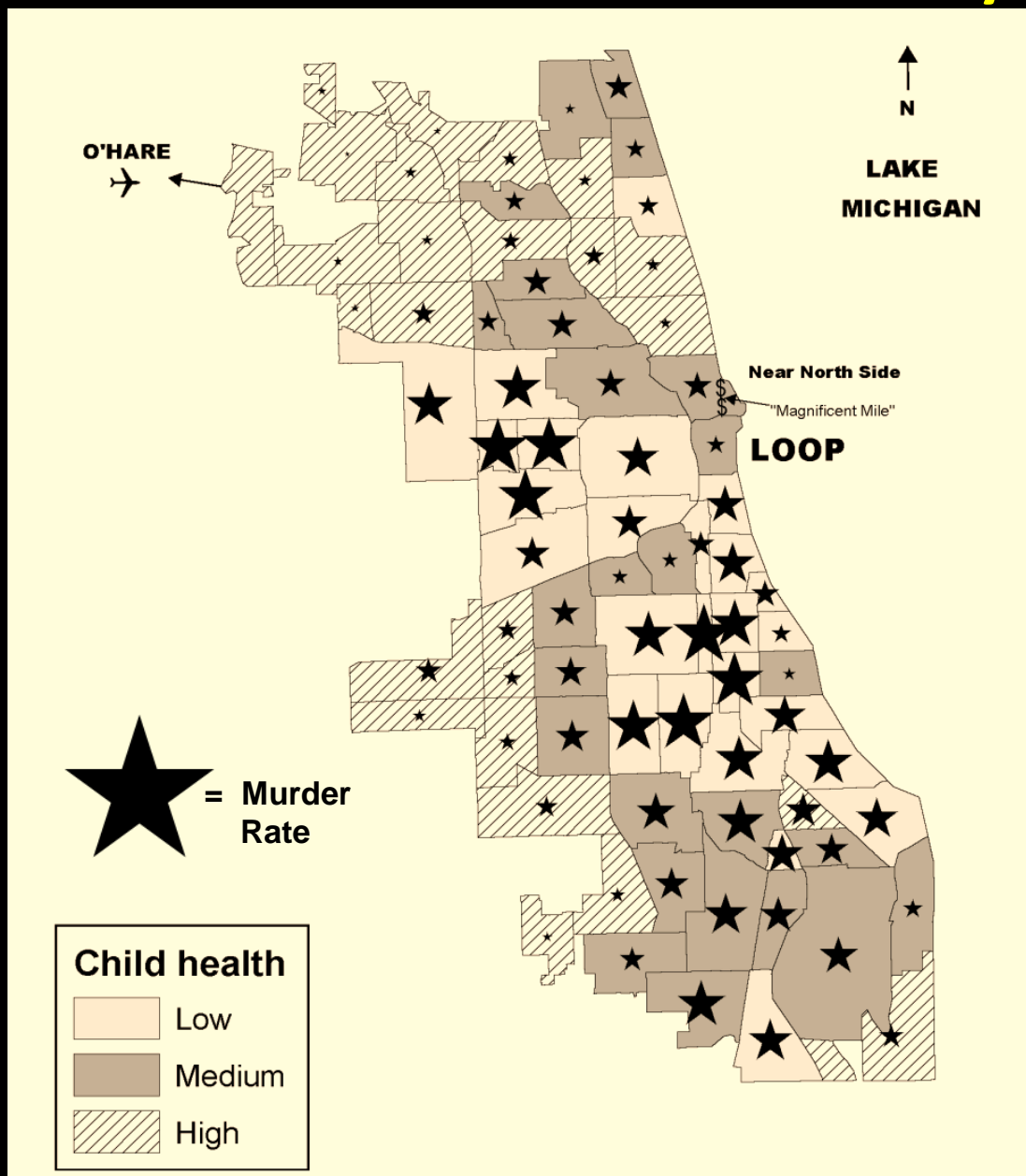
Data Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting System.

# Large Reductions In Violence by Race and Beneficial Increases in Life Expectancy Among African Americans



\*Source: National Crime Victimization Survey; Patrick Sharkey, *Uneasy Peace* (2018)

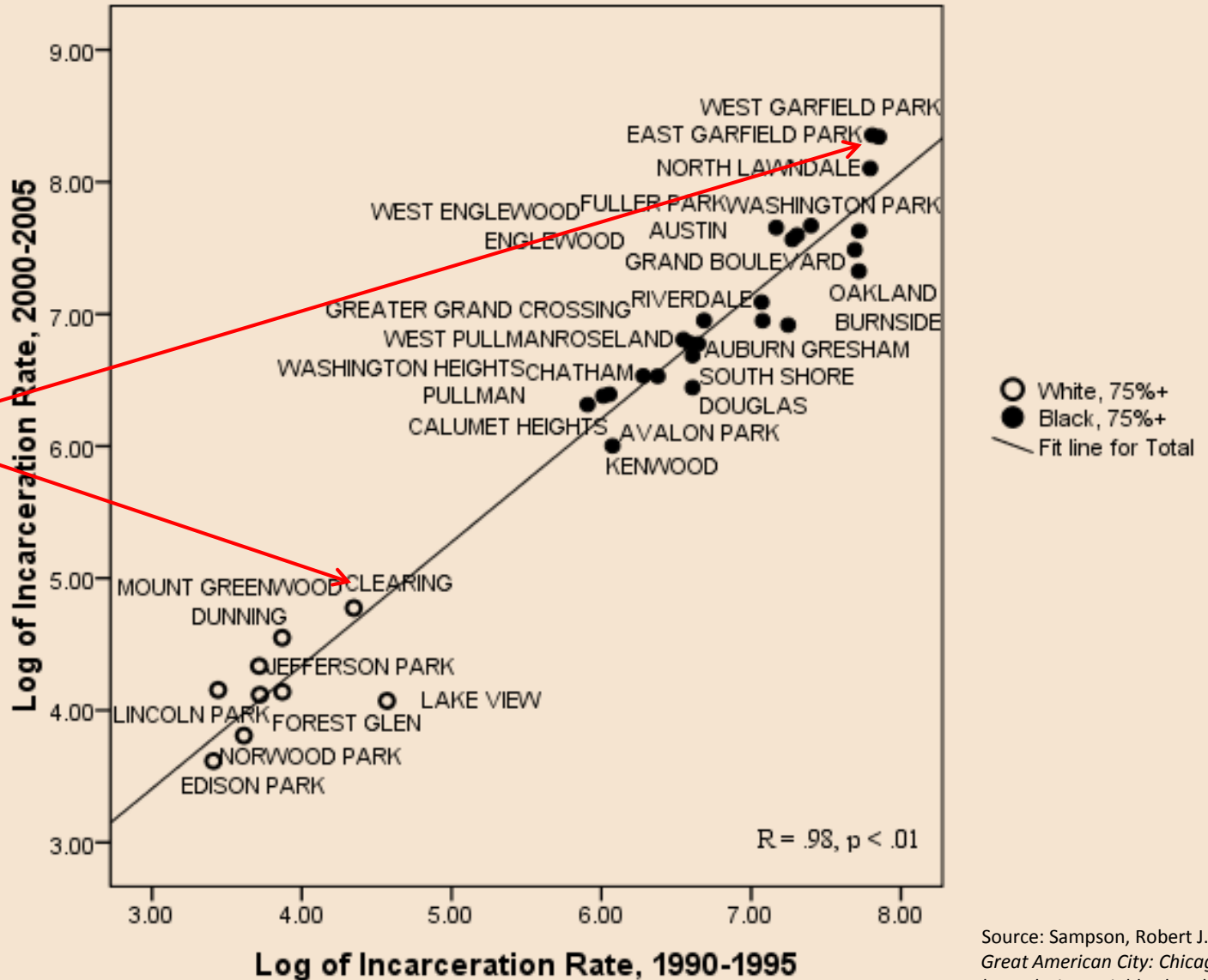
# Yet, Enduring Neighborhood Effect: Violence and Child Health in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Chicago



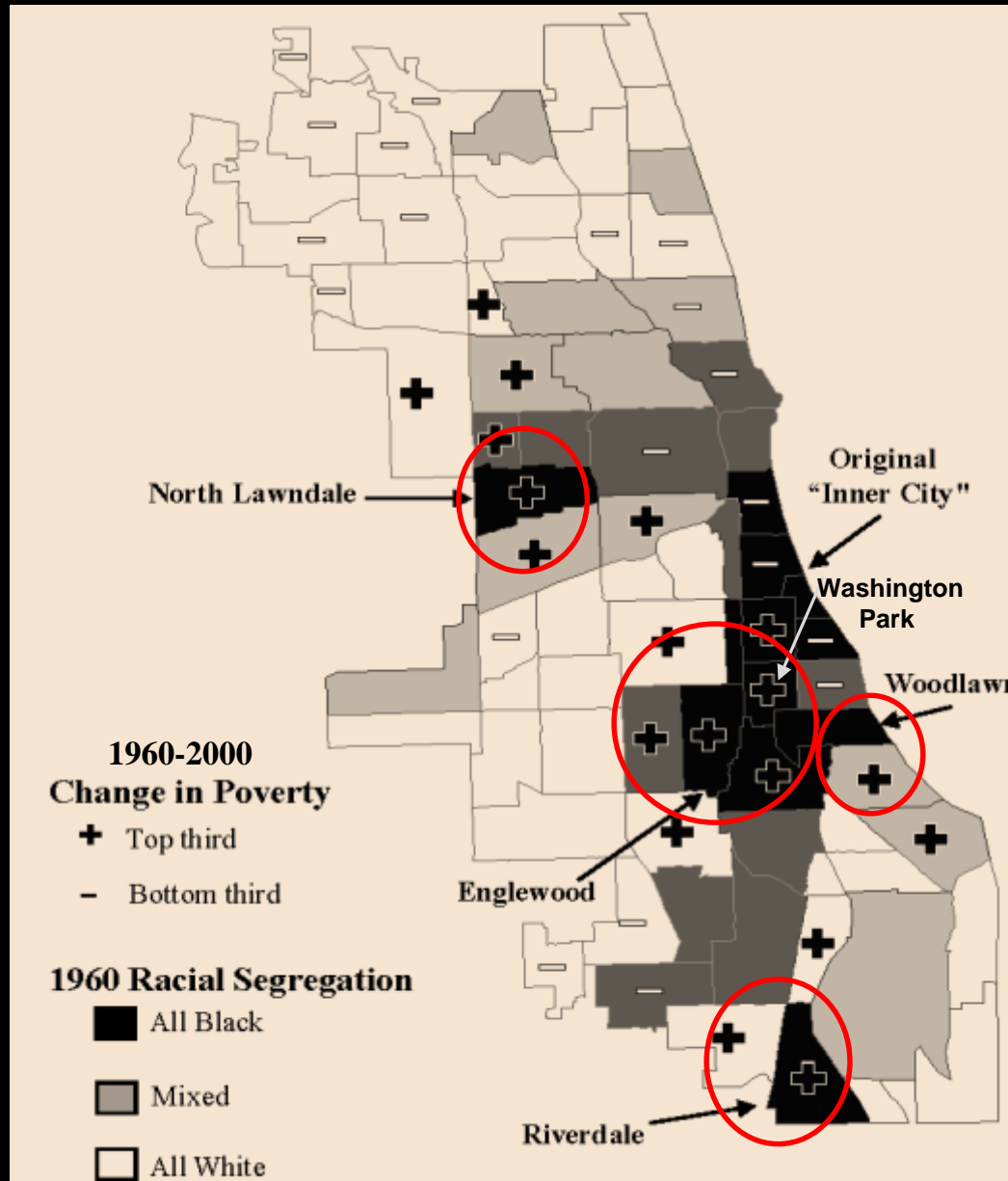
Source: *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect*

# “Mass Incarceration” in Black and White

The highest-ranked black community has an imprisonment rate over **40 times higher** than the highest-ranked white community (4,226 vs. 103 per 100,000)



# Legacies of Inequality Across 50 Years



**Concentrated  
foreclosures,  
2010**



# Good News, Bad News: Paradoxes of Racial Inequality

- Disparities in Crime and Criminalization
  - Persistence vs. change
- Compounded Deprivation
  - Poisoned Development
- New Form of Social Isolation?

# Reassessing “Toward a Theory of Race, Crime, and Urban Inequality”:

## Enduring and New Challenges in 21<sup>st</sup> Century America

Robert J. Sampson and William Julius Wilson

*Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*

Special volume on “Color Matters: Race, Ethnicity, Crime, and Justice in Uncertain Times.” Forthcoming, Spring 2018

# The Racially Stratified Life Course of Compounded Poverty: Recent Evidence

- Bottom Fifth of Individual Income

and

- Living in Neighborhood > 30% Poverty



# **Project on Human Development Chicago in Neighborhoods**

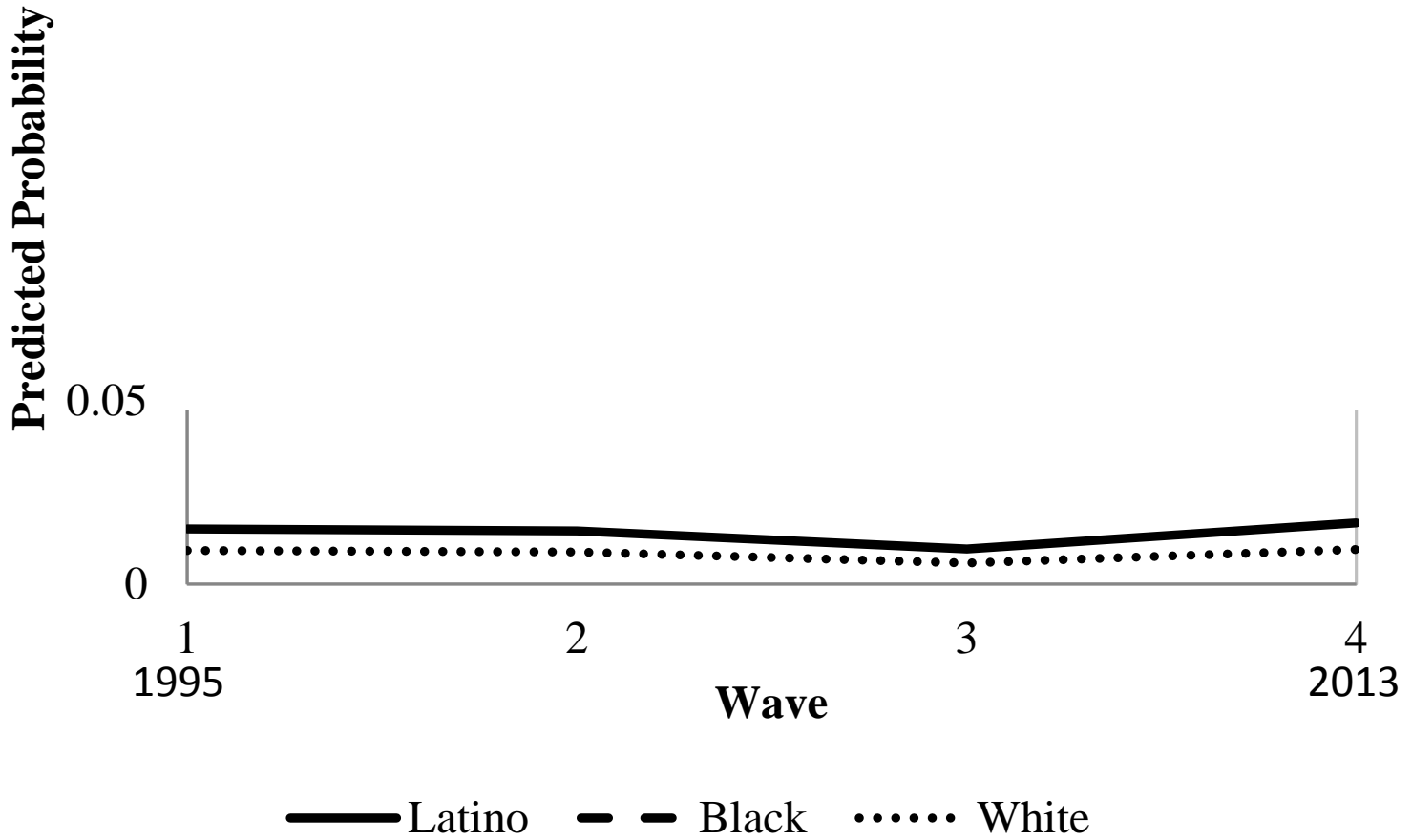
**Longitudinal study of 1,052 children**

- **4 Waves, 1995 – 2013**
- **Birth Cohort**
- **Age 9, 12, 15 Cohorts**

# Accounting for Alternatives: Family Background and Individual Differences

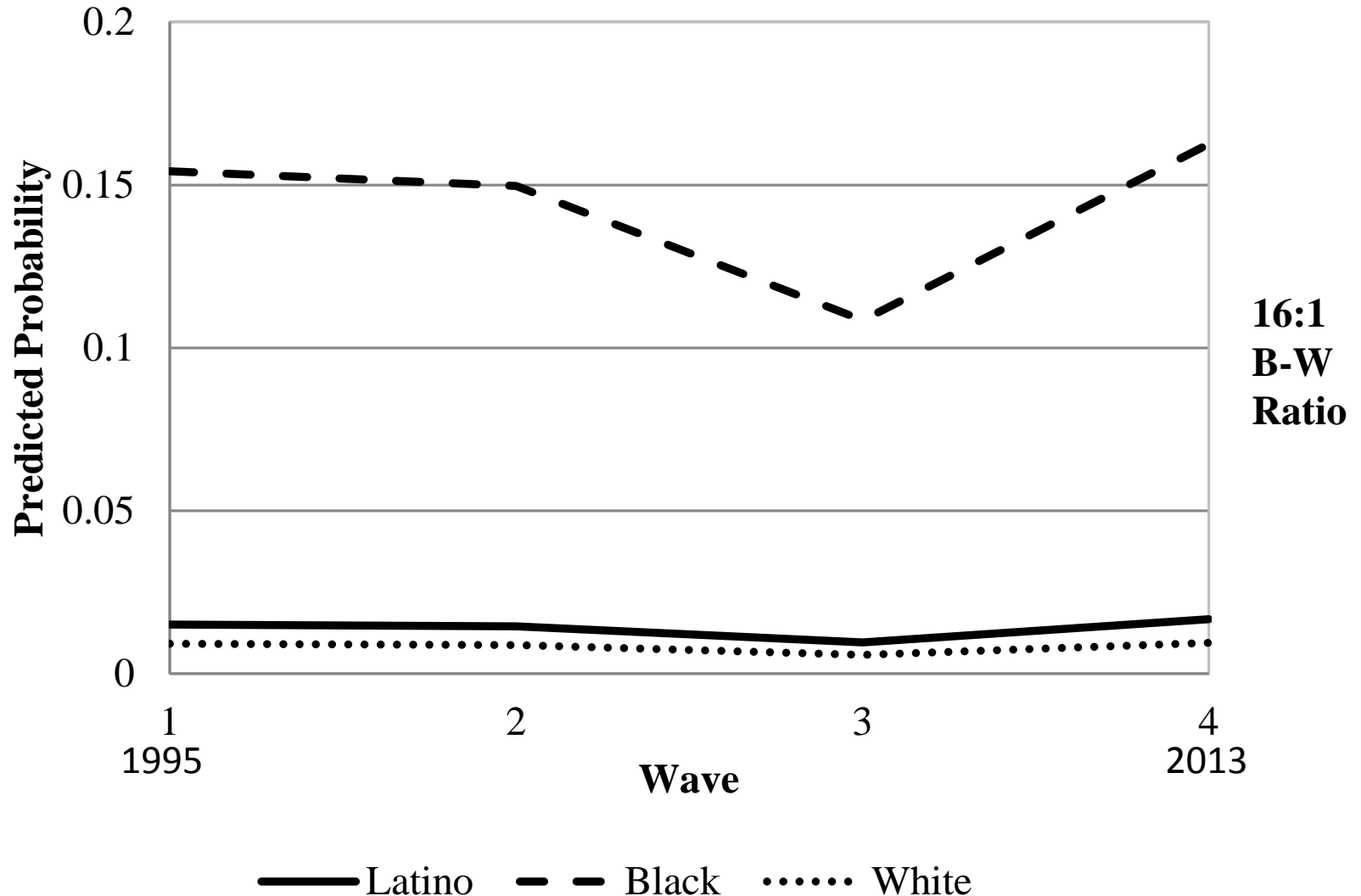
- Self-Control (so called “Grit”) (CBCL)
- Anxiety/Depression (CBCL)
- Aggression/Antisocial Behavior (CBCL; self report)
- “IQ” (WISC/WRAT Ability Tests)
- Exposure to Violence
- Family Criminality, Parent SES, Mobility, Immigrant

# Predicted Probability of Compounded Poverty, Conditional on Individual Differences and Family Background



Perkins, Kristin L. and Robert J. Sampson. 2015. "Compounded Deprivation in the Transition to Adulthood: The Intersection of Racial and Economic Inequality among Chicagoans, 1995-2013." *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 1:35-54.

# Large Black-White Disparities in Compounded Poverty Endure During the Transition to Young Adulthood



# Poisoned Development



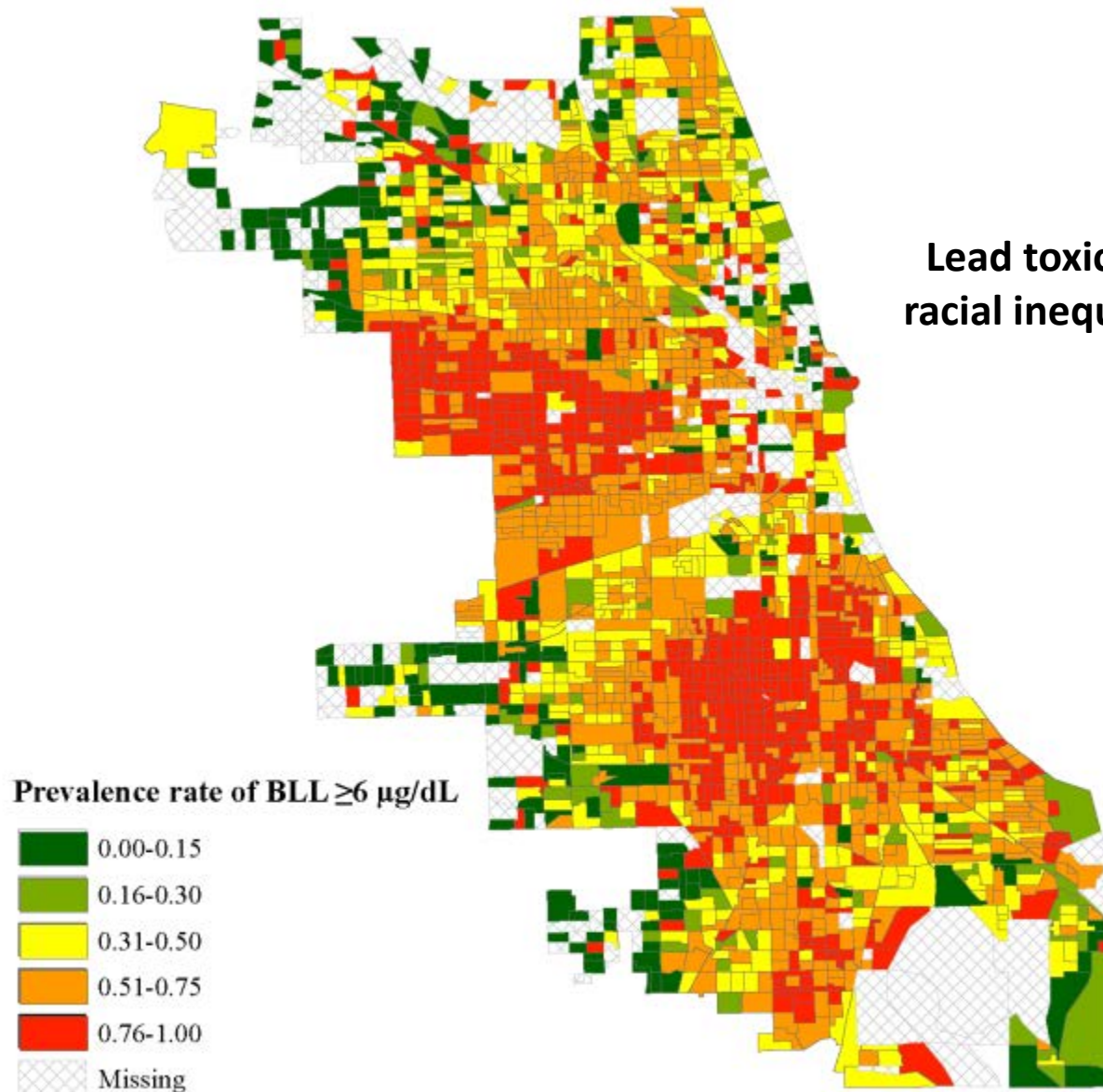


**Pilsen, Chicago (2012): Contaminated Soil at the Former Loewenthal Metals Site**



# The Racial Ecology of Lead Poisoning

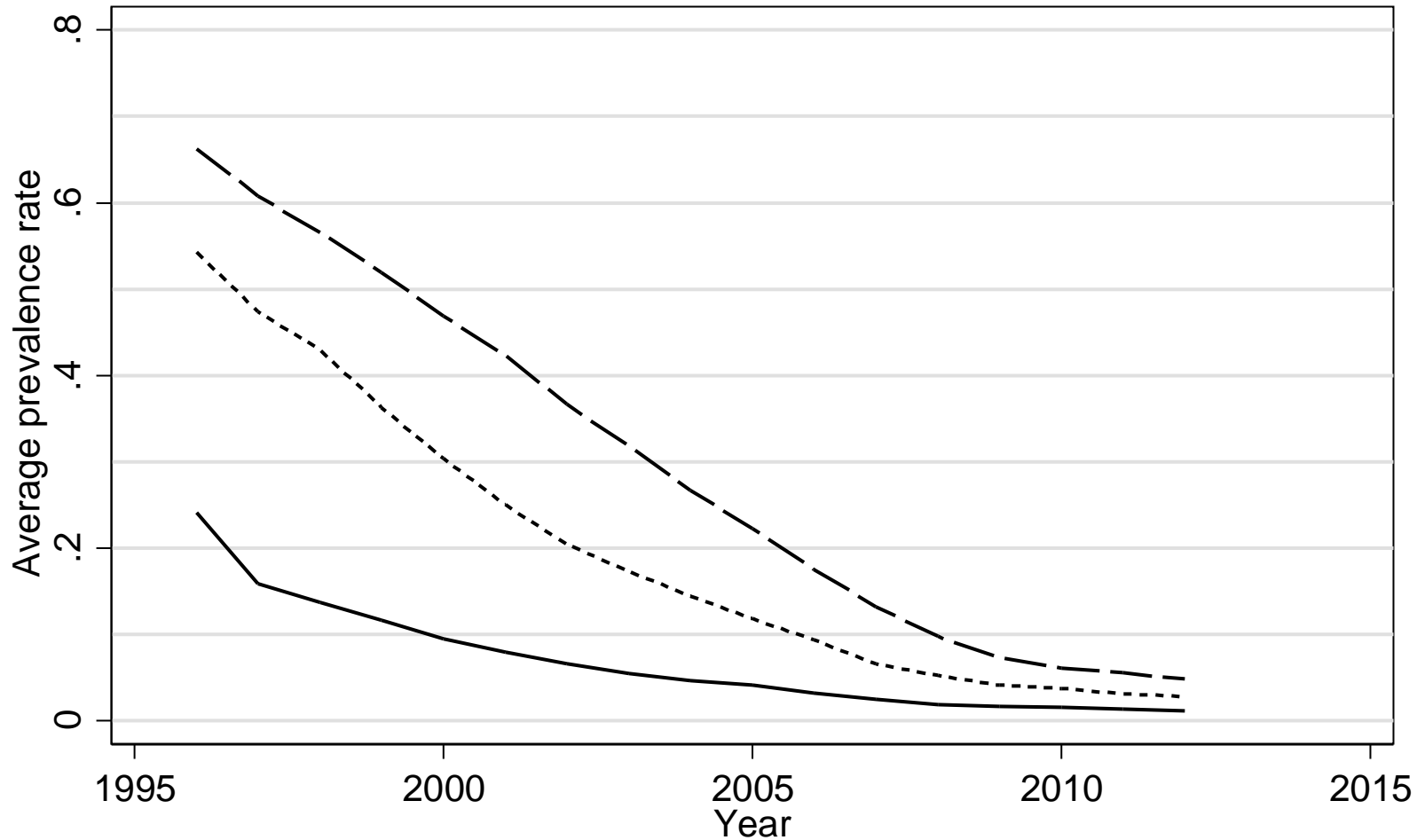
**Lead toxicity is a pathway through which racial inequality literally gets into the body.**



Source: "Toxic Inequality in Chicago Neighborhoods, 1995-2013." Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race (2016). With Alix Winter.

# Good News: Large Declines for all Race/Ethnic Groups

(Average Block-Group Prevalence Rates of Elevated Lead Levels,  
By Racial Composition of Block Groups, 1995-2013)

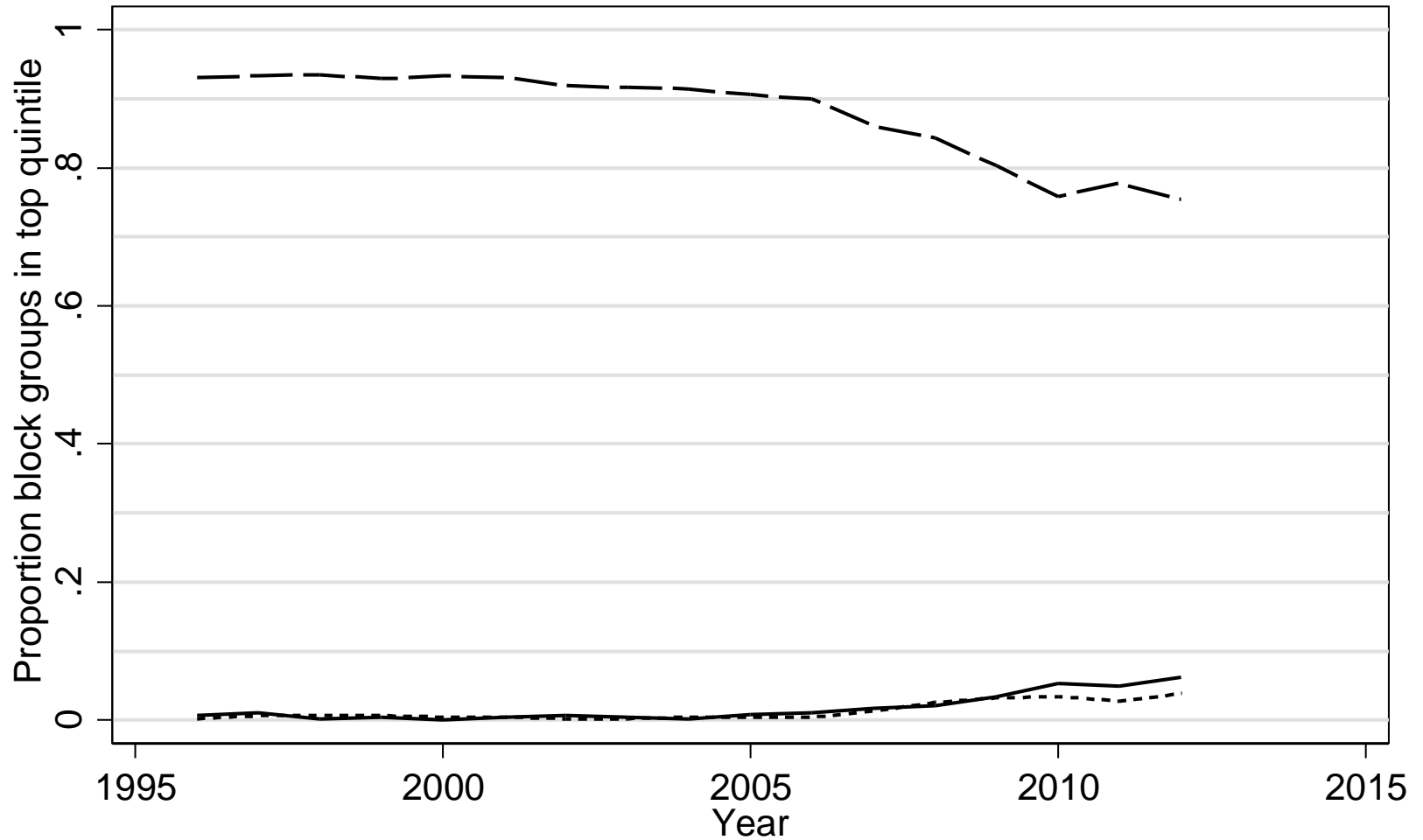


— ≥70% non-Hispanic White  
- - - ≥70% non-Hispanic Black

..... ≥70% Hispanic

# But Enduring Racial Inequality

(Proportion of Block Groups in Top Quintile of Elevated Lead Levels, by Race/Ethnic Composition and Year)



— ≥70% non-Hispanic White  
- - - ≥70% non-Hispanic Black

..... ≥70% Hispanic

# **Final Paradox**

**Increasing Ethnic Diversity of the City**

**Declining Racial Segregation**

**Black Middle Class**

**Yet: A New Form of Separation?**

**“Urban Mobility and Neighborhood  
Isolation in America’s 50 Largest Cities**

Ryan Wang, Nolan Phillips, Mario Small, Robert Sampson

# Use Machine Learning to Estimate the Home Neighborhood and Daily Rounds (e.g., Shopping, Entertainment, Visiting Friends, Work) in Larger Commuting Zone

50

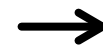
Largest Cities in the U.S.

653 Million

Geo-tagged tweets

~400,000

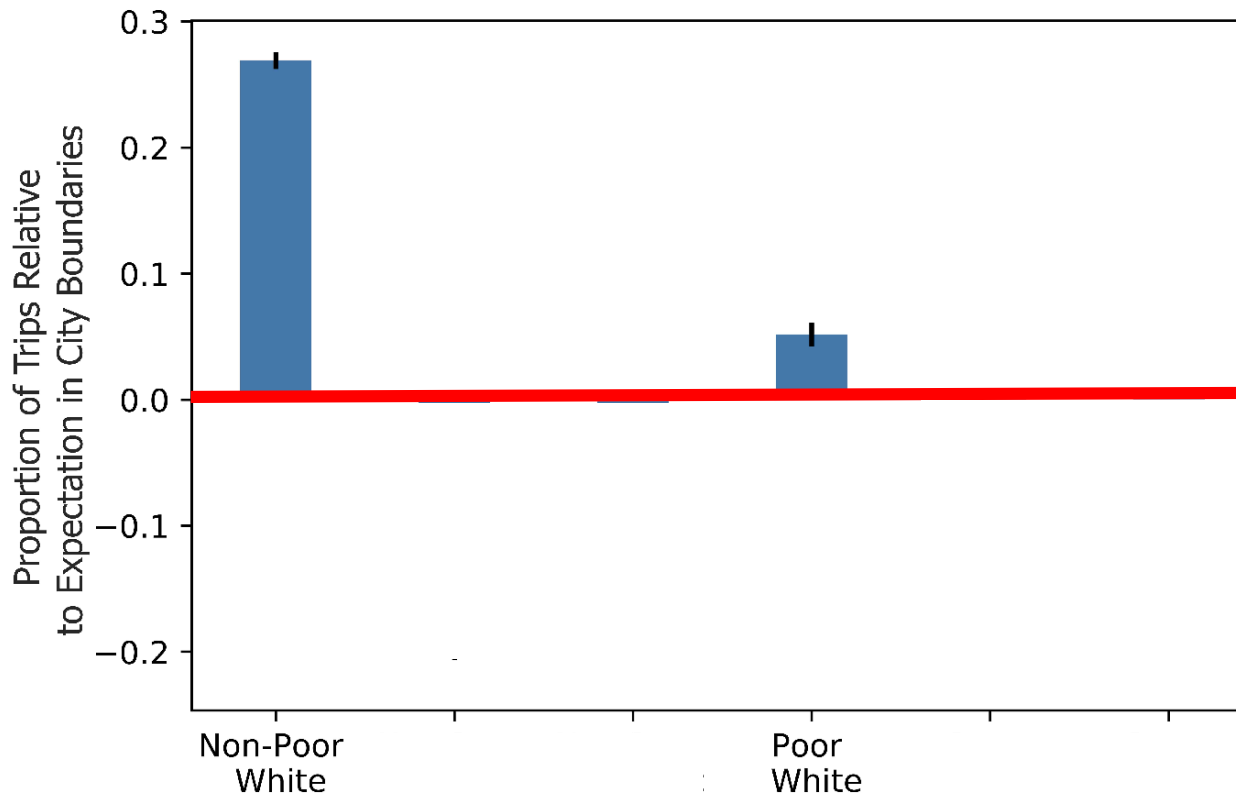
Twitter users



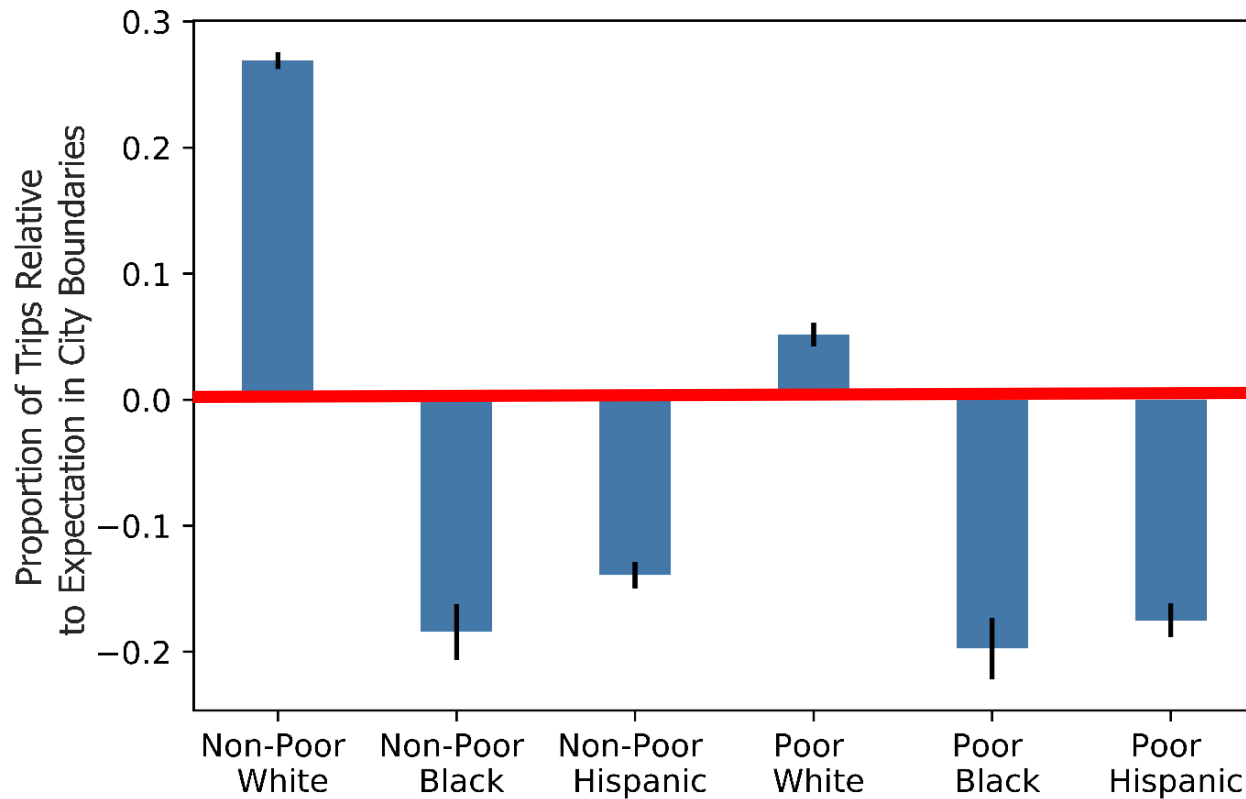
Connected and  
relatively youthful,  
educated population

# Similar Patterns by Race and Class in Distance Traveled (Mean Radii) & Number of Neighborhoods Visited (“Spread”)

**BUT: Race Trumps Class in Exposure to White Nonpoor or Middle-Class Neighborhoods (“Mainstream”)**



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# Policy Implications: “Third Way” of Kerner Commission

- **Law and Governmental Action**
  - “Ghetto Enrichment” (Place-Based)
  - “Encourage Integration” (Person-Based)
- **Why Still Needed?**
  - Cumulative and Compounded Deprivation
  - “Counterfactual” Dilemma that Black Children Face
- **Affirmative Action for Neighborhoods?**
  - Combine person- and placed-based interventions:
  - Formal support to *poor persons in poor neighborhoods*

# Chicago's Abandoned City: Where the Robert Taylor Homes Once Stood



# “Dantrel Davis Way” in Chicago, site of the former Cabrini Green Homes



# To Also Get There: Collective Efficacy

- **Criminal Justice Reform**
  - “Black Lives Matter;” Prison Decarceration
- **Continued Violence Reduction**
  - Power of Community-Based Efforts (Unsung Heroes)
- **Environmental Reform**
  - Demand Regulatory Action (e.g., EPA)
- **Inequality by Design can be Re-Designed!**