

Racism and the Opportunity Divide on Long Island

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Institute on Race and Poverty

June 2002

If you want to know if a society is just, you cannot tell by looking at the attitudes and beliefs of individual citizens. Although this might be relevant, one must look at the situations, structures, practices and material conditions of that society. Indeed, one might say that these in fact impact and help to form the individual beliefs and attitudes of individuals.

John Rawls

The Four Types of Racism

- 1) Individual
- 2) Internalized
- 3) Institutional
- 4) *Spatial*

Major Themes

- People of color have limited access to important opportunity structures on Long Island.
- Racial segregation determines access to opportunity structures.
- Segregation is produced through regional dynamics, particularly local governmental control (fragmentation).
- Regional strategies are needed to remedy structural racism. They hold great potential in a resource-rich region like Long Island.
- Regionalism threatens and has harmed political power bases and community strength.

Disparities on Long Island

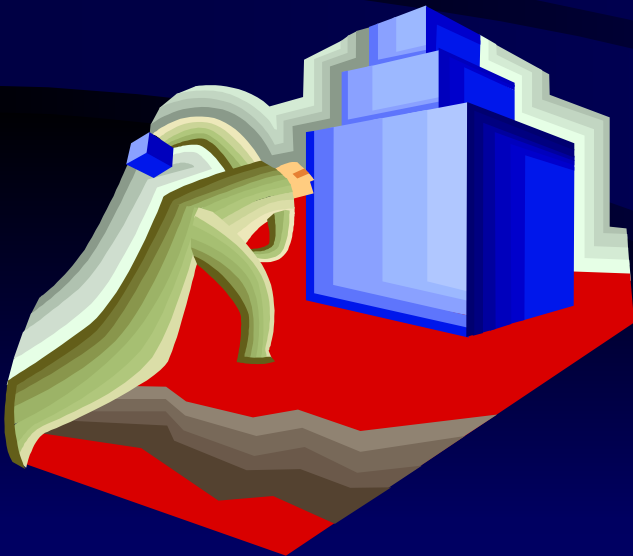
- The poverty rate is more than twice as high for Blacks as for Whites on Long Island.
- The unemployment rate is twice as high for Blacks as for Whites, and nearly three times as high for Hispanics as for Whites.
- Homeownership rates are 84% for Whites, 65% for Blacks, 55% for Hispanics.
- The typical Black child on Long Island attends a school with a student poverty rate two and a half times higher than the poverty rate in the typical White child's school.

Spatial Racism:

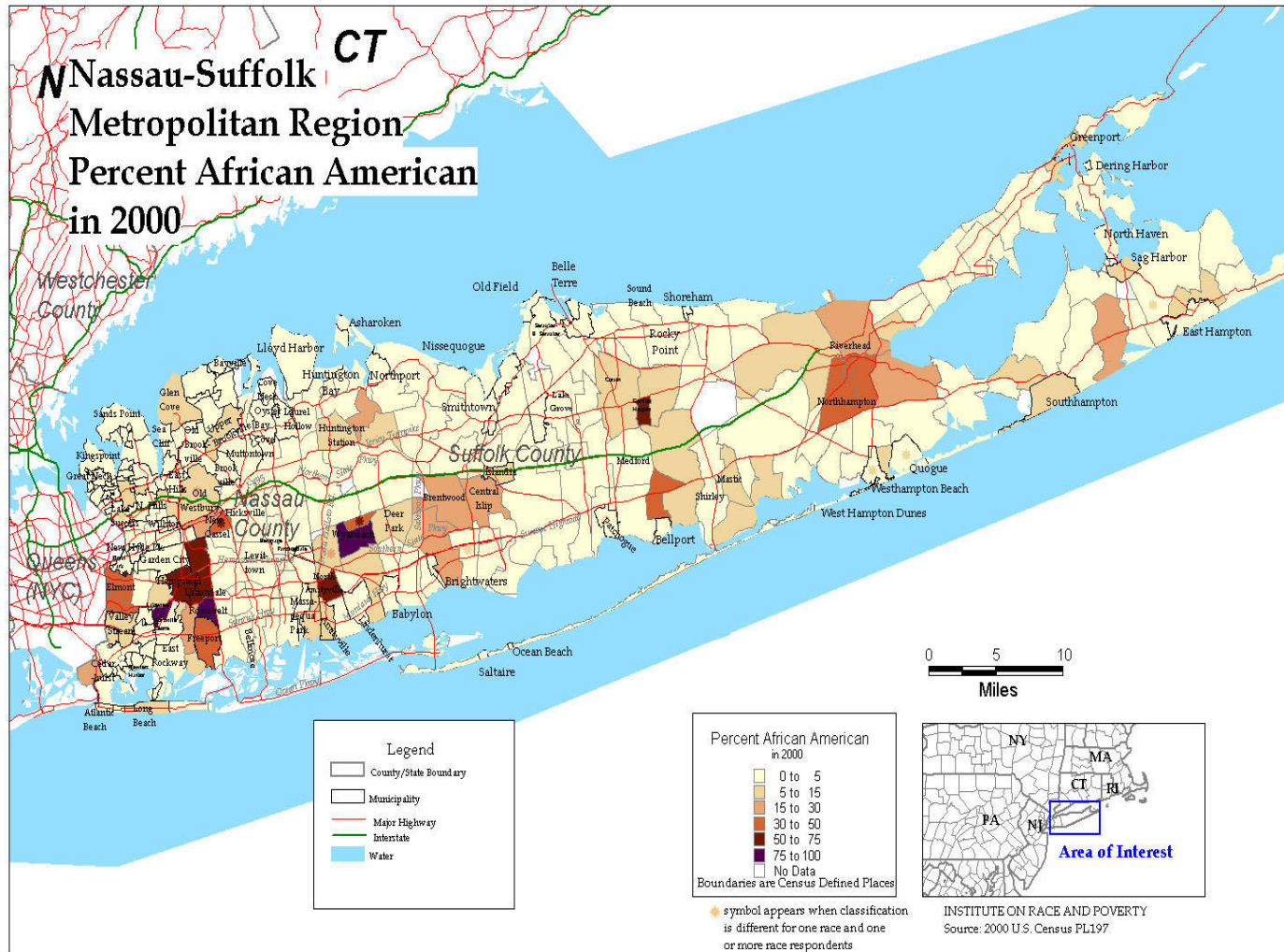
The Civil Rights Agenda for the 21st Century

“Space is how race plays out in American society-and the key to solving inequities in housing, transportation, education, and health care...Sprawl is the new face of Jim Crow.”

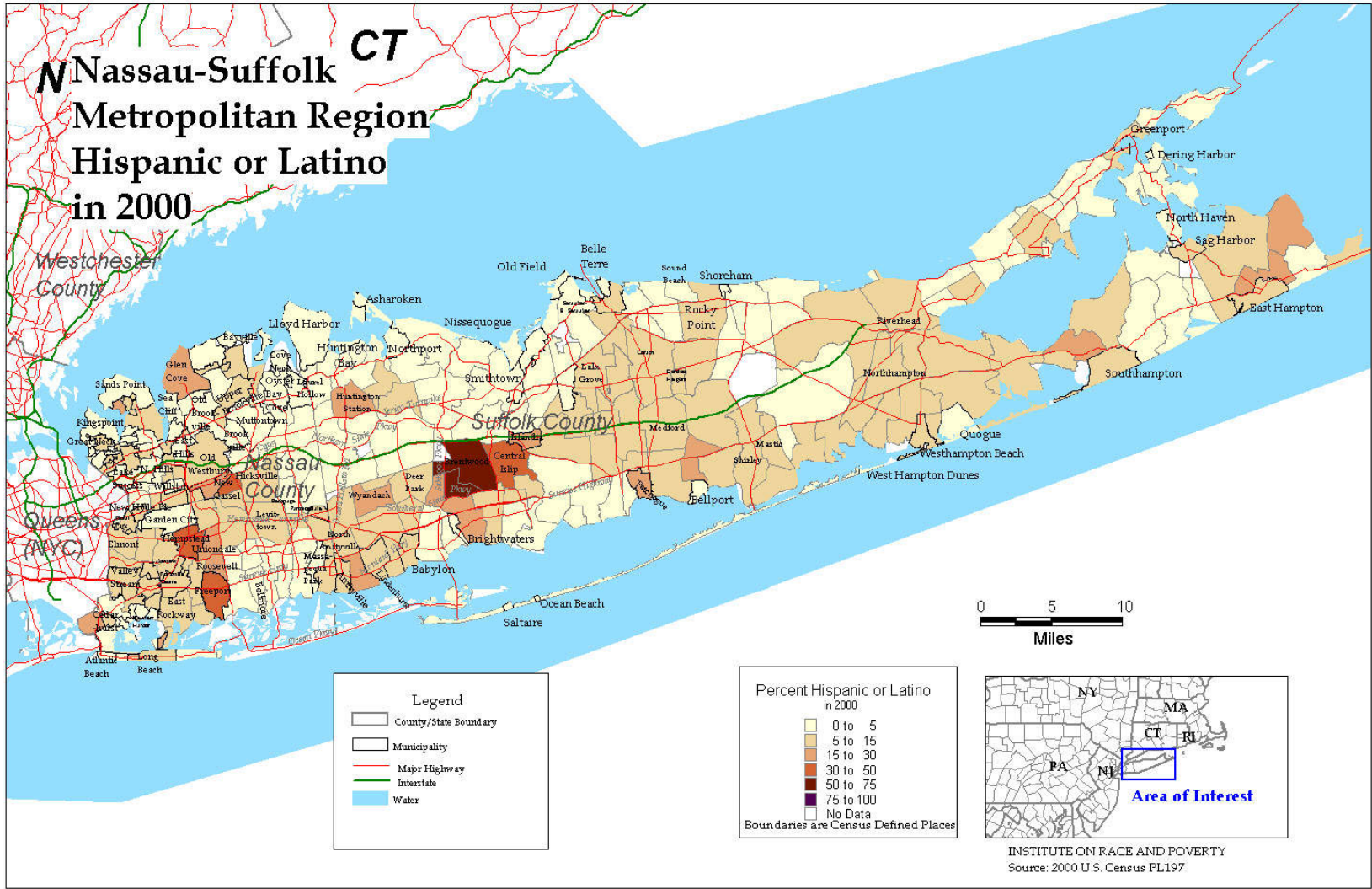
john powell



Segregation on Long Island



N Nassau-Suffolk CT Metropolitan Region Hispanic or Latino in 2000



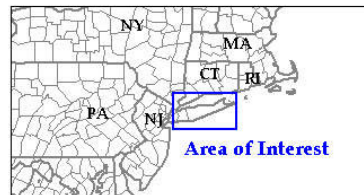
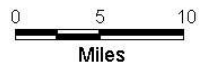
Legend

- County/State Boundary
- Municipality
- Major Highway
- Interstate
- Water

Percent Hispanic or Latino in 2000

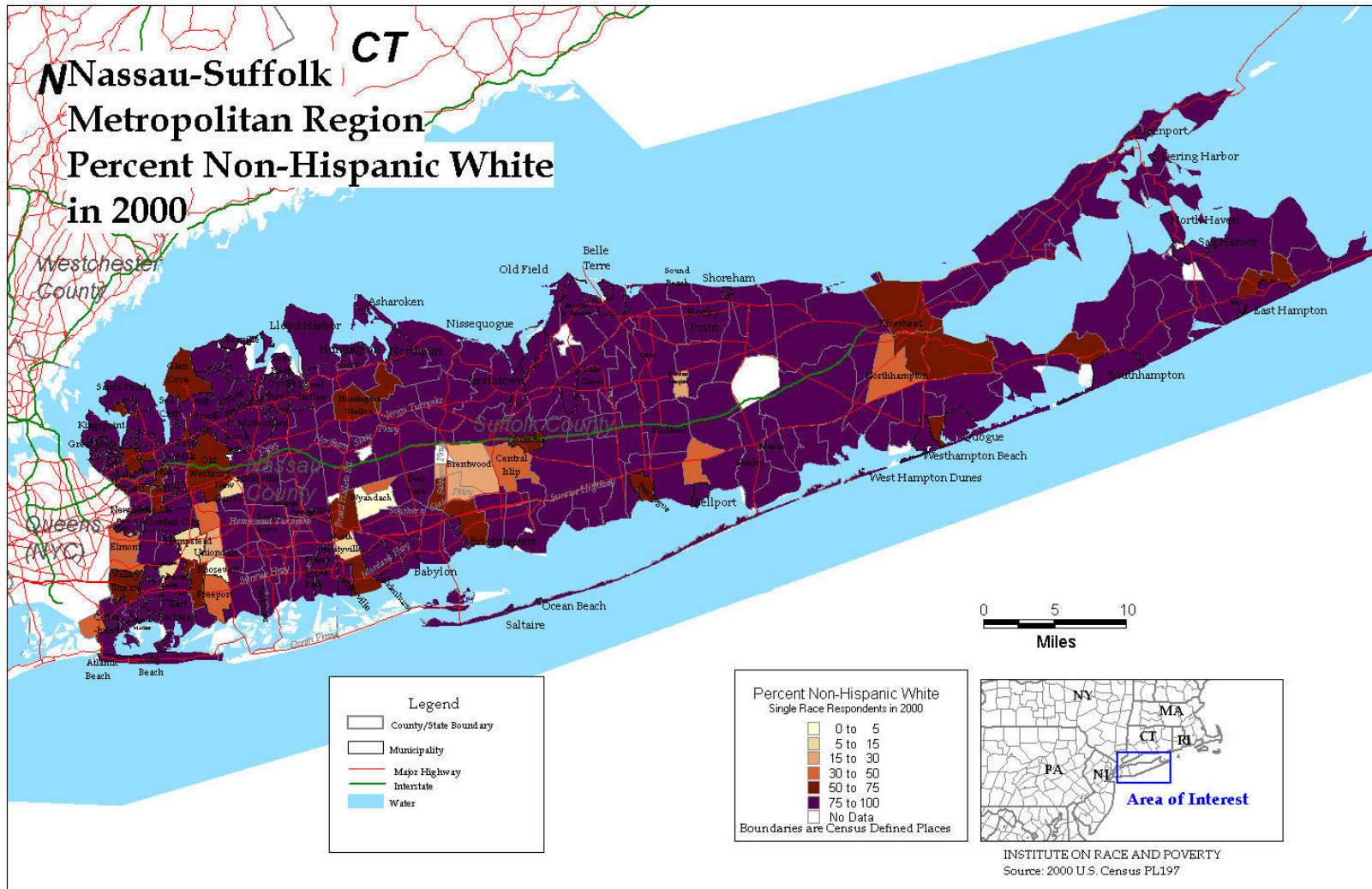
- 0 to 5
- 5 to 15
- 15 to 30
- 30 to 50
- 50 to 75
- 75 to 100
- No Data

Boundaries are Census Defined Places



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Source: 2000 U.S. Census PL197

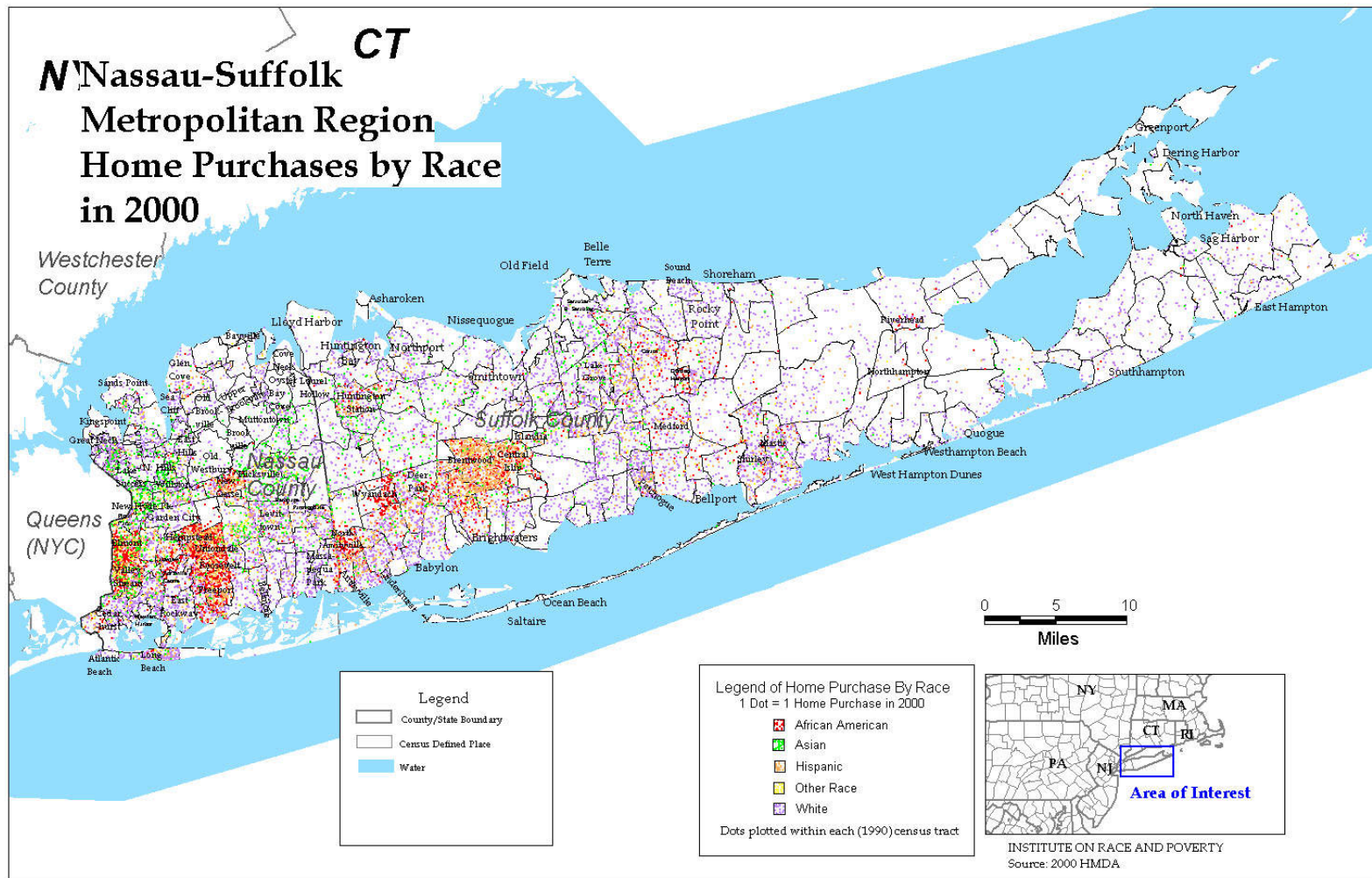
Nassau-Suffolk CT Metropolitan Region Percent Non-Hispanic White in 2000



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Source: 2000 U.S. Census PL197

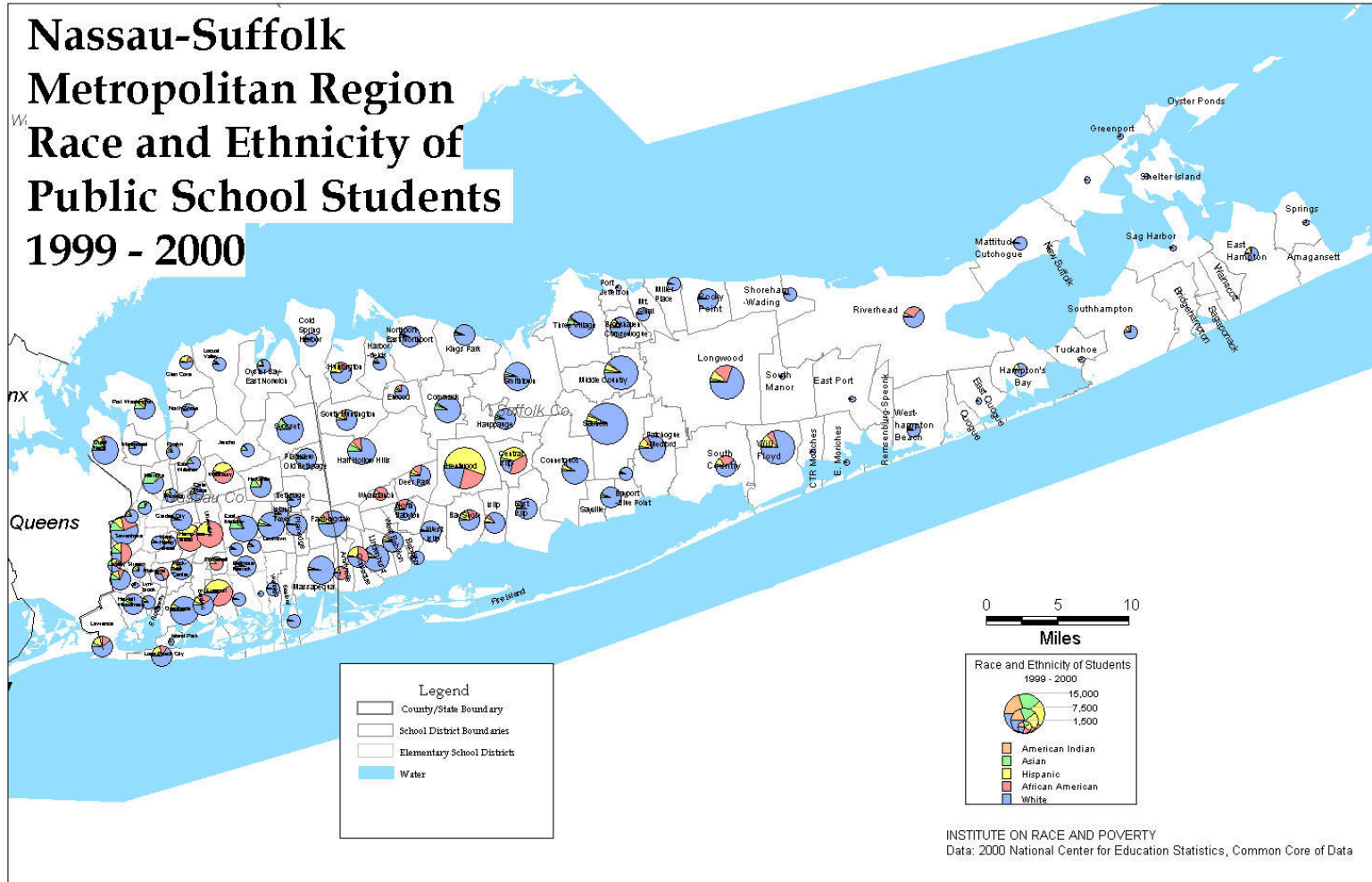


Disparate Access to Opportunities



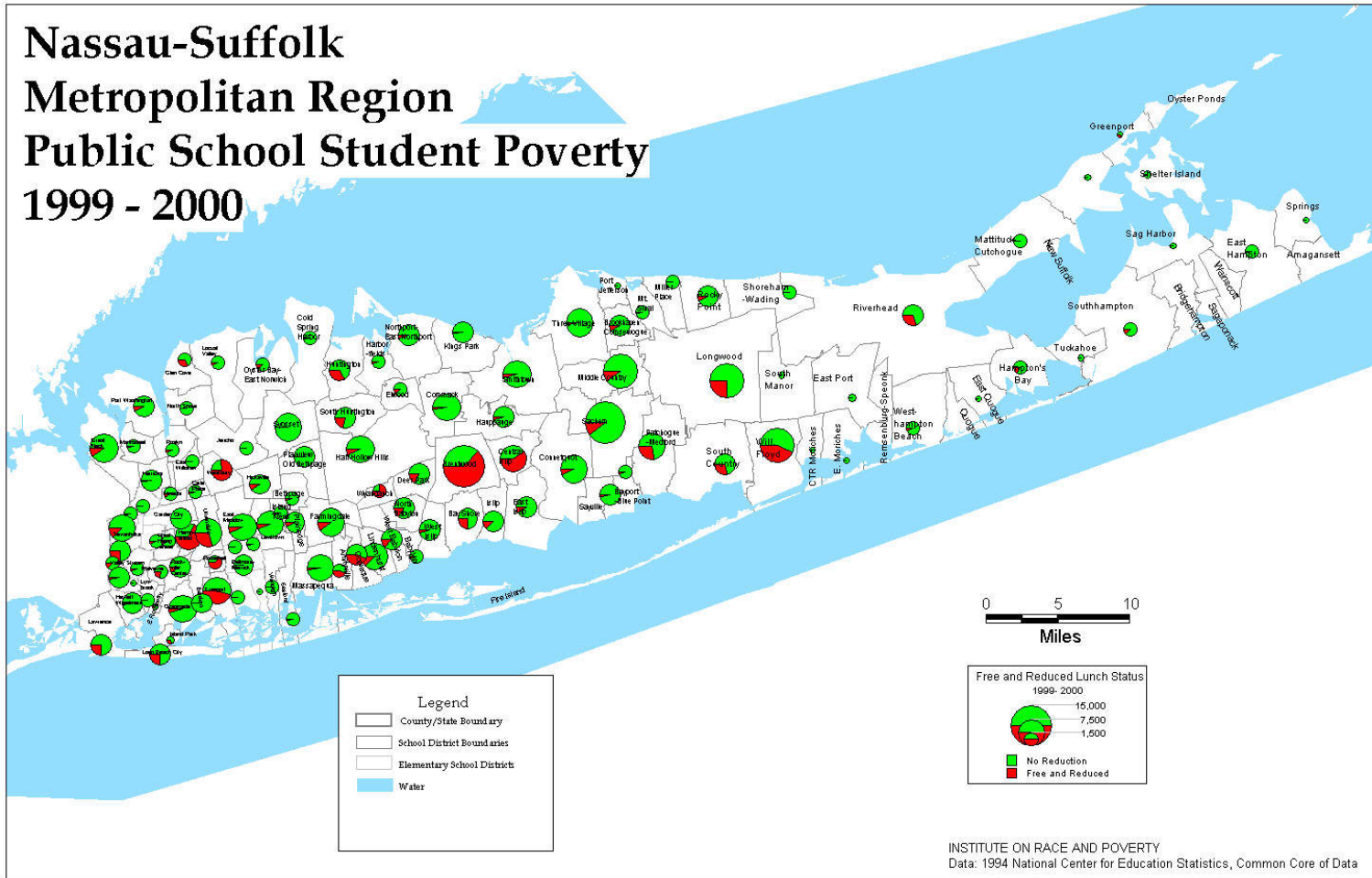
Disparate Access to Opportunities

Nassau-Suffolk Metropolitan Region Race and Ethnicity of Public School Students 1999 - 2000



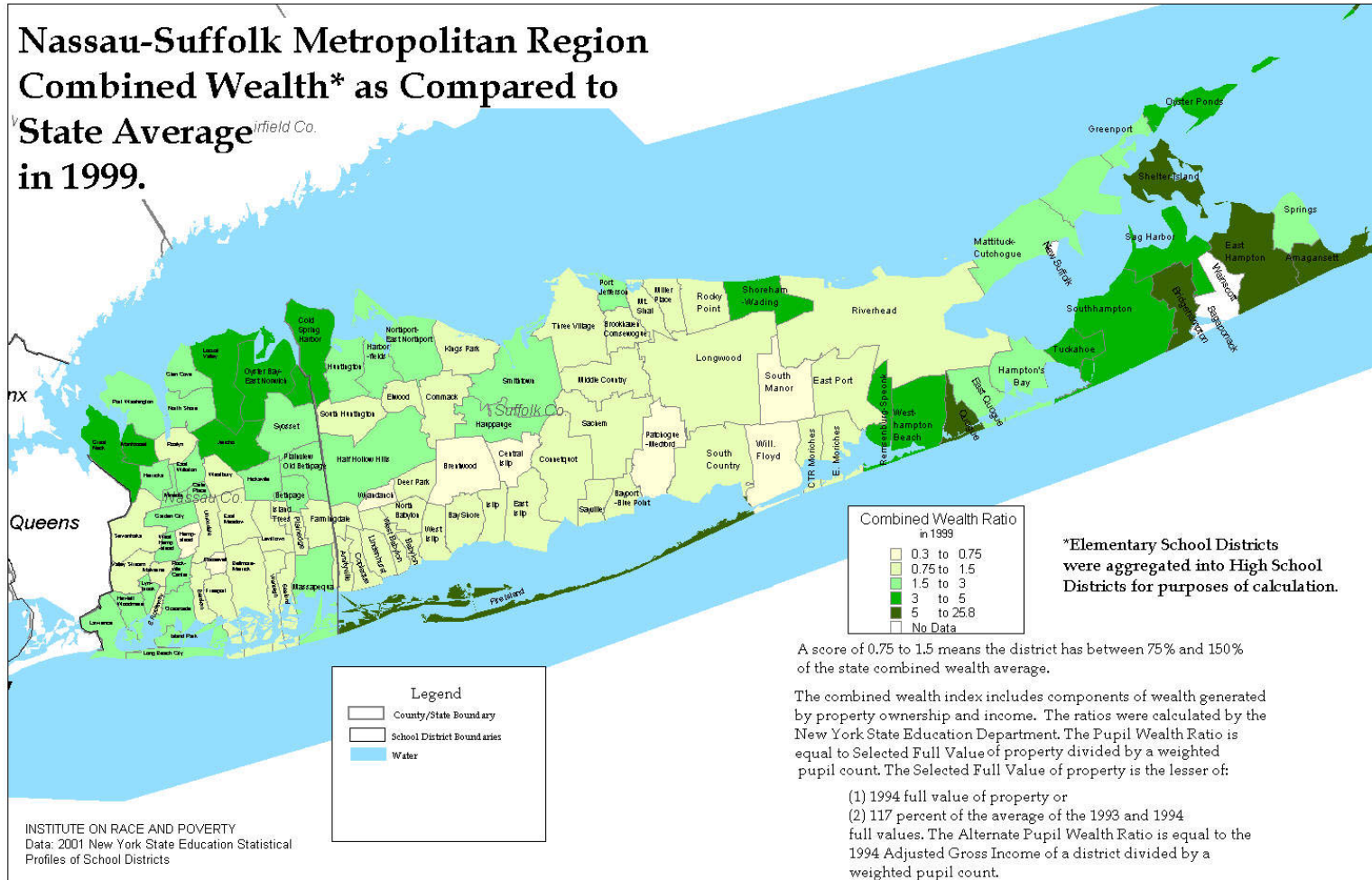
Disparate Access to Opportunities

Nassau-Suffolk Metropolitan Region Public School Student Poverty 1999 - 2000



Disparate Access to Opportunities

Nassau-Suffolk Metropolitan Region Combined Wealth* as Compared to State Average in 1999.



A score of 0.75 to 1.5 means the district has between 75% and 150% of the state combined wealth average.

The combined wealth index includes components of wealth generated by property ownership and income. The ratios were calculated by the New York State Education Department. The Pupil Wealth Ratio is equal to Selected Full Value of property divided by a weighted pupil count. The Selected Full Value of property is the lesser of:

- (1) 1994 full value of property or
- (2) 117 percent of the average of the 1993 and 1994 full values. The Alternate Pupil Wealth Ratio is equal to the 1994 Adjusted Gross Income of a district divided by a weighted pupil count.

Regional Dynamics at Play on Long Island

- Political fragmentation. Nassau-Suffolk's 1,199 square miles are home to over 1,000 separate governmental units.
- School fragmentation. Nassau-Suffolk's 452,067 public school students are distributed among 125 separate school districts, with an average of only 3,616 students per district.
- Revenue collection and distribution. Per-pupil spending varies widely among school districts, from \$20,696 in Bridgehampton, to \$5377 in Wyandanch.

3 Types of Regionalism

- **Efficiency-oriented regionalism**

Flows from a business agenda oriented toward facilitating business transactions

- **Environmentally-oriented regionalism**

Focuses on open space, urban growth boundaries and compact development strategies

- **Equity-oriented regionalism**

Stresses concentrated poverty and abandonment of the inner city

NOT ALL REGIONALISM MODELS REFLECT SOCIAL JUSTICE CONCERNS

4 Types of Equity-Oriented Regionalism

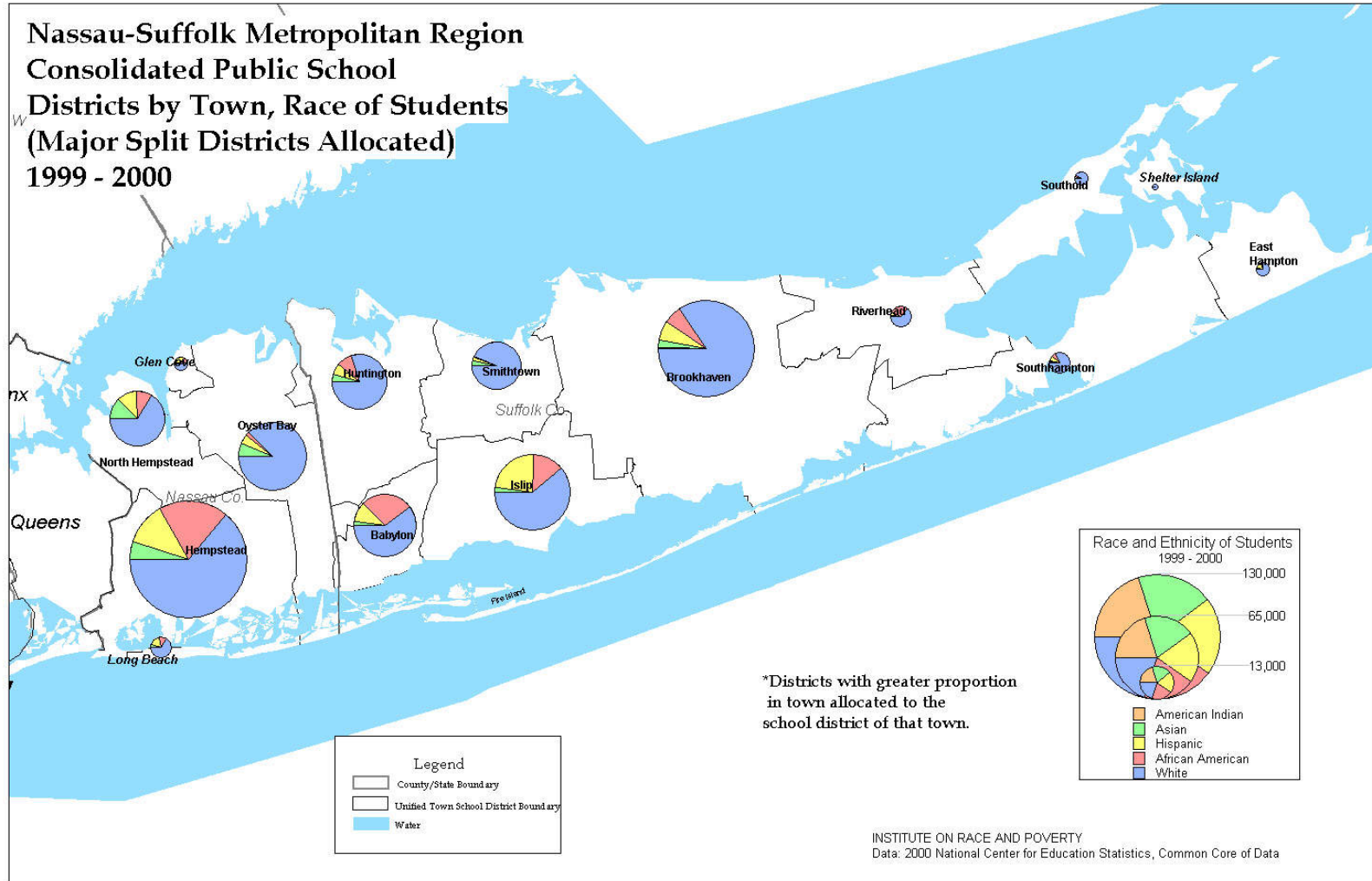
- **Government-based regionalism**
- **Community-based regionalism**
- **Labor-based regionalism**
- **Faith-based regionalism**

Disparities in key life areas are regional in scope. To be effective, strategies must be regional in their reach.

- Inclusionary zoning.
- Regional revenue sharing.
- Annexation of unincorporated areas.
- Merger of the 125 school districts into a smaller number of school districts.

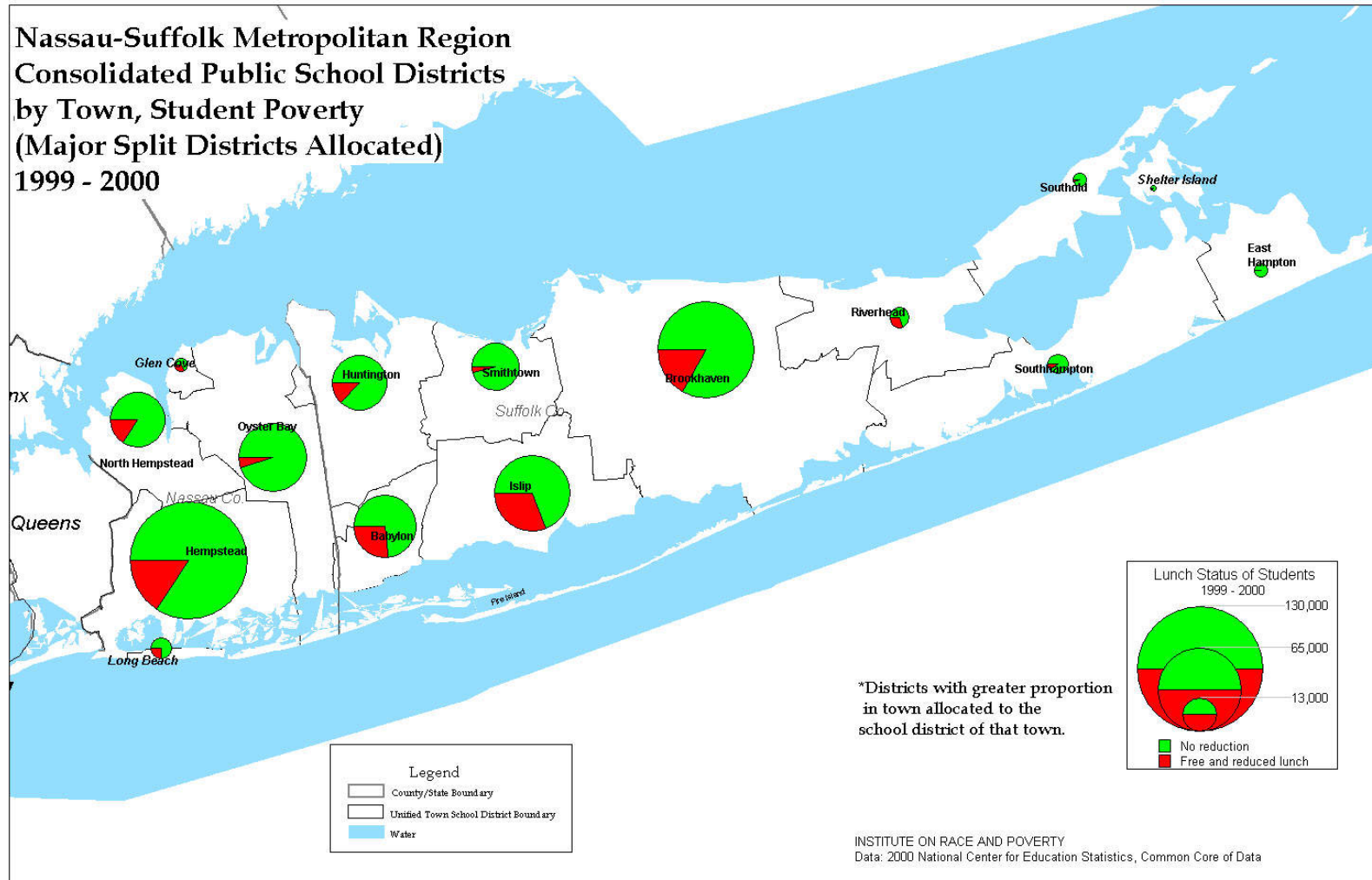
A Picture of School Merger, by Race

**Nassau-Suffolk Metropolitan Region
Consolidated Public School
Districts by Town, Race of Students
(Major Split Districts Allocated)
1999 - 2000**



A Picture of School Merger, by Economics

**Nassau-Suffolk Metropolitan Region
Consolidated Public School Districts
by Town, Student Poverty
(Major Split Districts Allocated)
1999 - 2000**



Lenses for Making Progress on Access to Opportunity

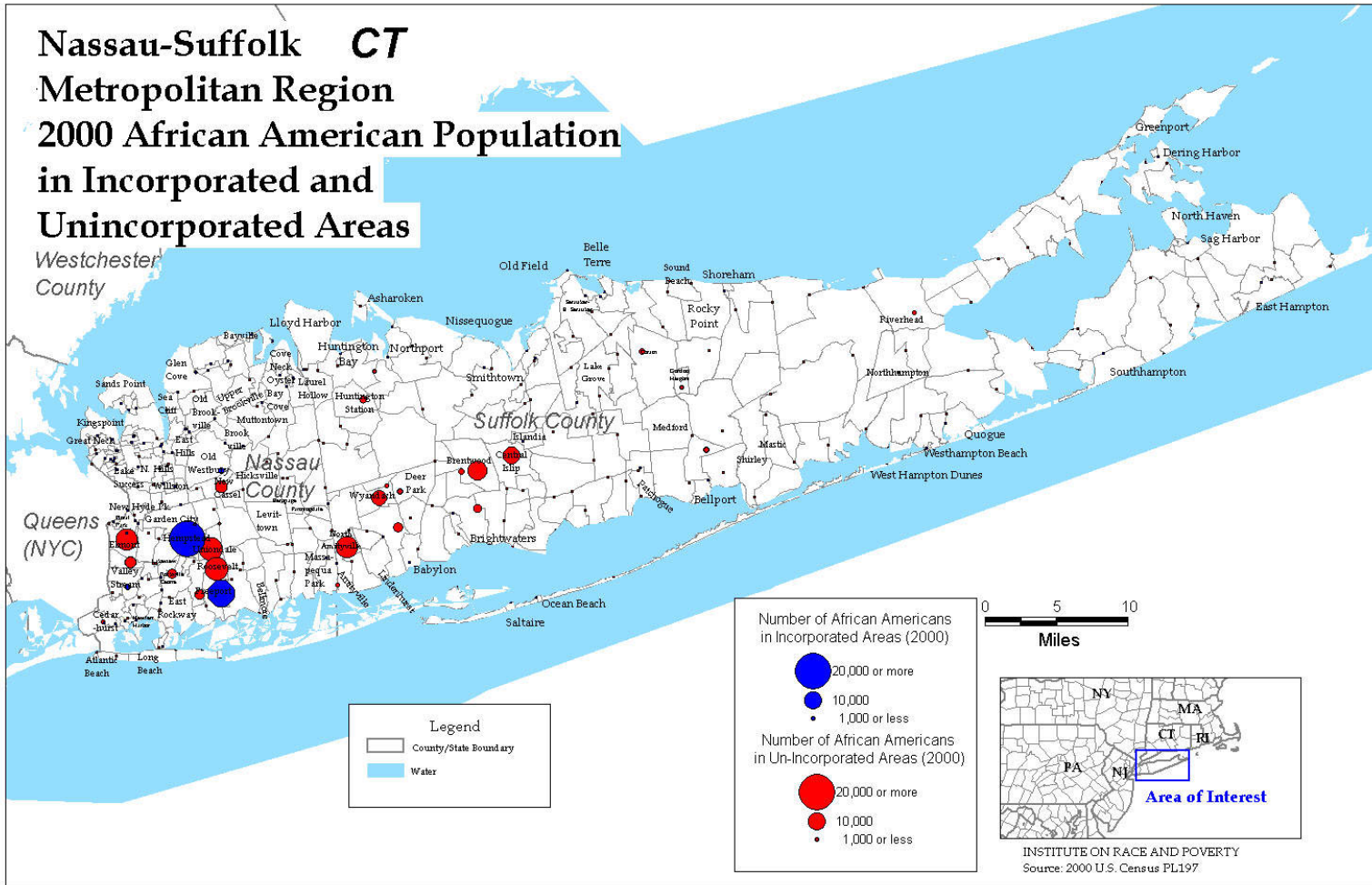
- Structural racism must be confronted.
- Structural racism is rooted in region-level dynamics (such as fragmentation).
- Equity-based, regional solutions that link opportunities hold the most promise.

Potential Pitfalls of Regionalism

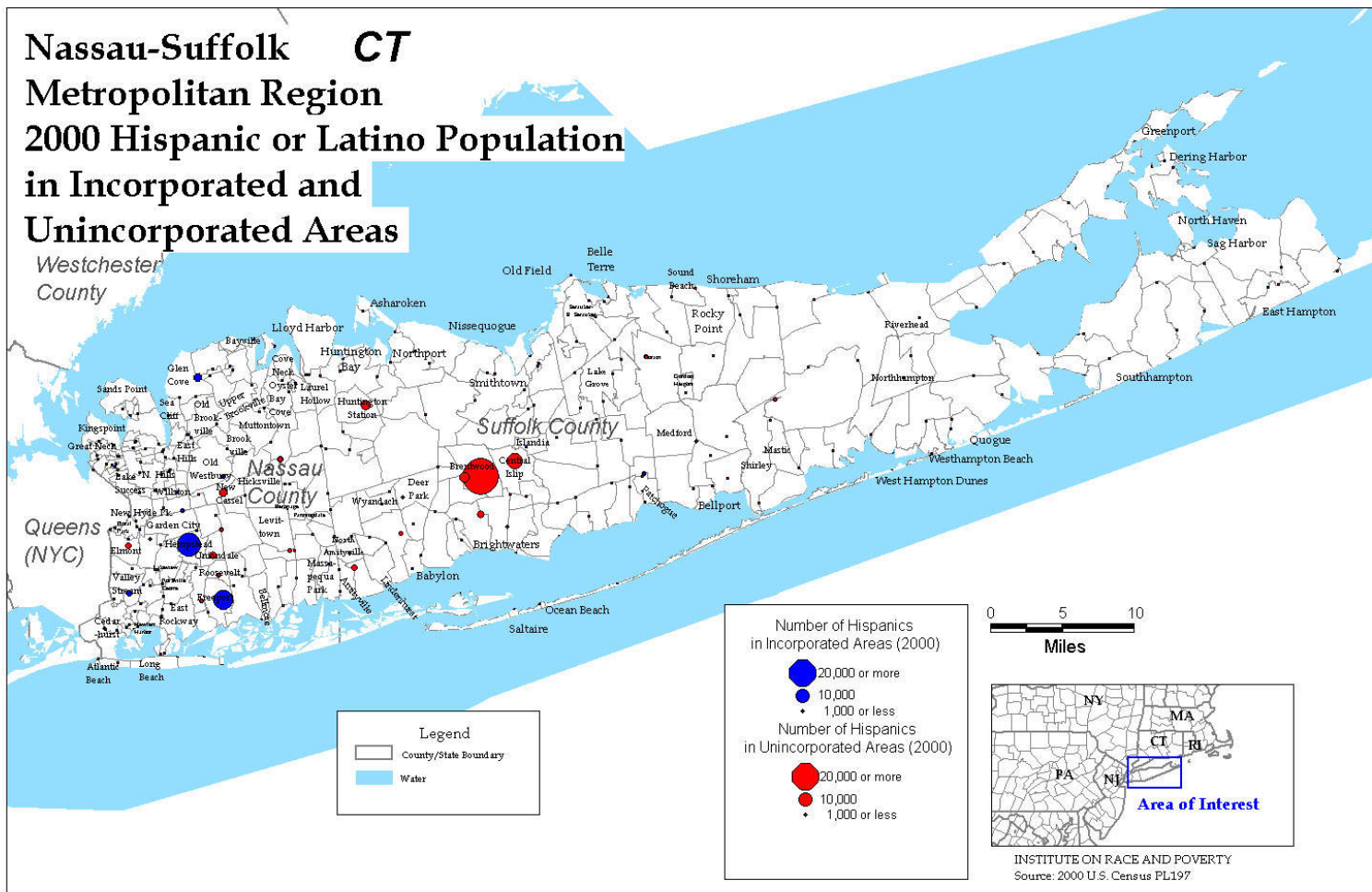
- 1) Dilution of the political power bases of communities of color
(e.g., the case of unincorporated areas)
- 2) Destruction of community strength

African American Population Incorporated and Unincorporated Areas

Nassau-Suffolk CT Metropolitan Region 2000 African American Population in Incorporated and Unincorporated Areas



Hispanic or Latino Population Incorporated and Unincorporated Areas



Elements of Racially Just Regionalism

- Racial equity focus
- Regional power over opportunity distribution
- Democratic representation
- Democratic decision-making processes
- Protection of local decision-making powers
- Preservation of community strength



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