Rental deserts, Zoning, and Segregation

Evidence from the 100 largest metro areas

Whitney Airgood-Obrycki, PhD

Magda Maaoui, PhD

Sophia Wedeen
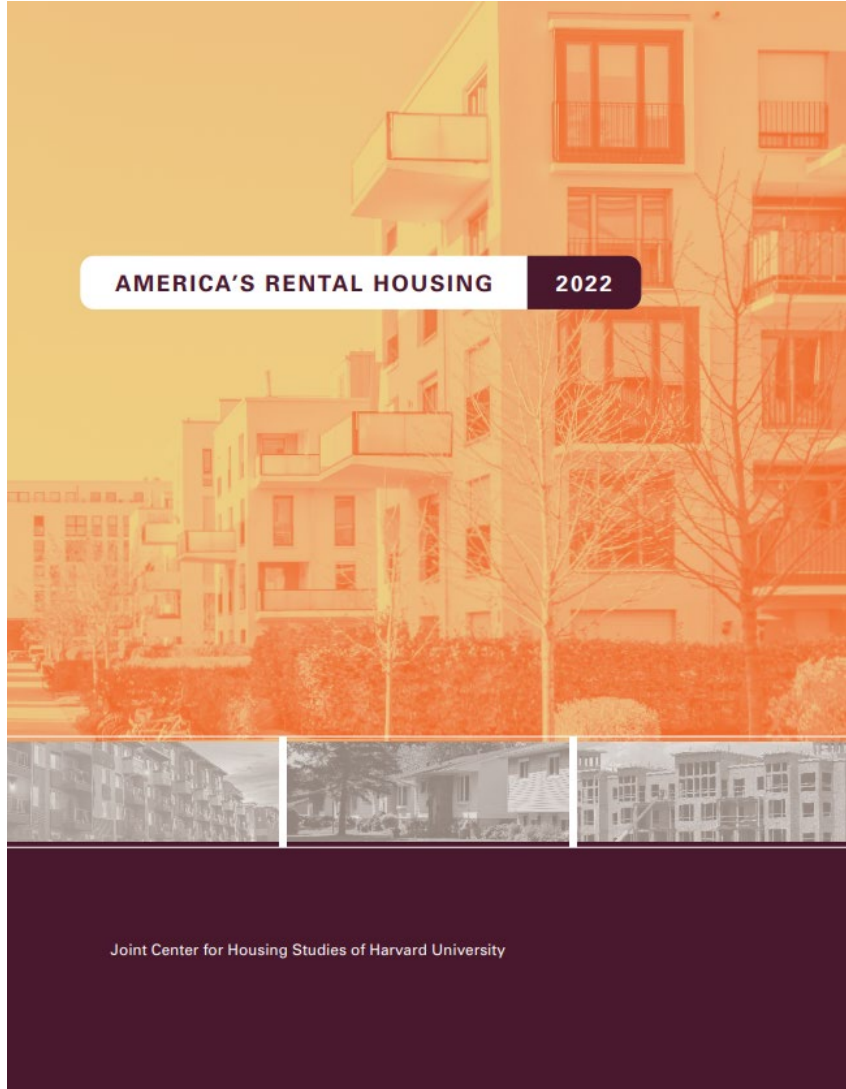
JCHS

JOINT CENTER FOR HOUSING STUDIES OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY

What are rental deserts?

What are rental deserts?

"Invisible House" in Joshua Tree National Park, CA, 2022 - Engel & Volkers Santa Monica / Petr Masek
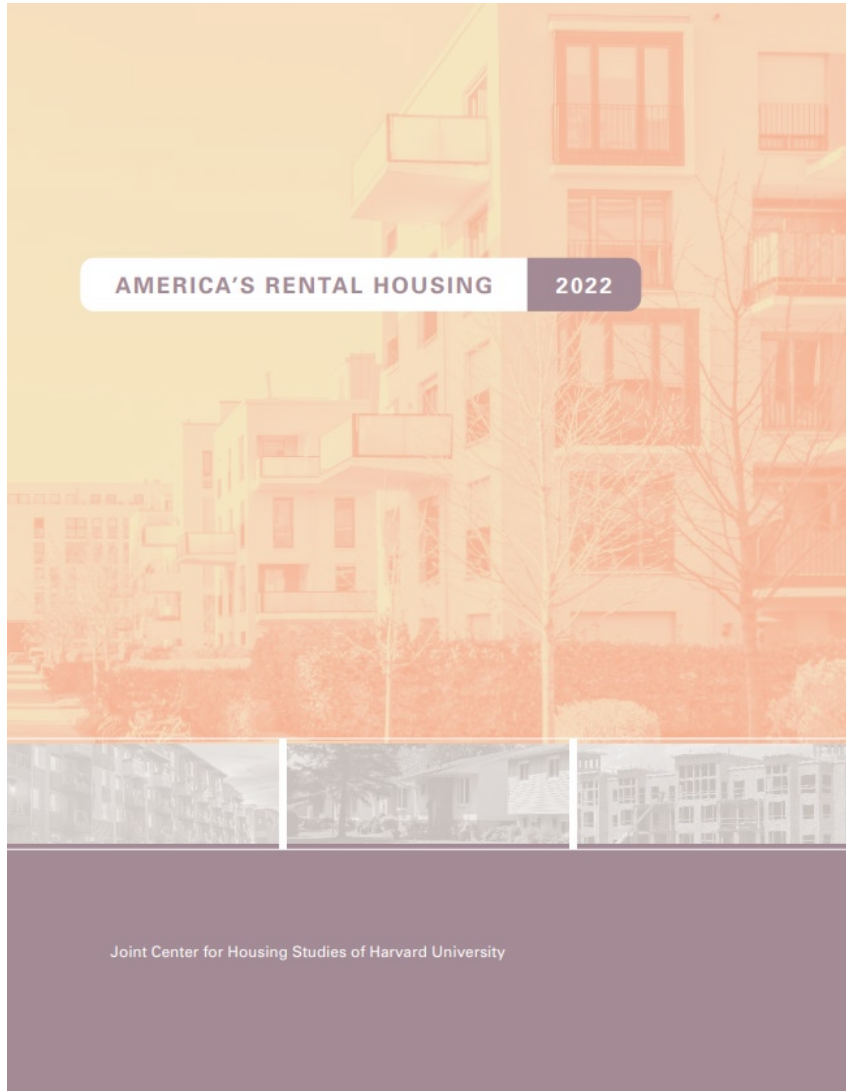
Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University   JCHS

What are rental deserts?

AMERICA'S RENTAL HOUSING 2022

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Search jchs.harvard.edu   SEARCH

ABOUT   RESEARCH   CALENDAR   STUDENTS   NEWS & MEDIA   BLOG

HOUSING PERSPECTIVES

Research, trends, and perspective from the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies

SUBSCRIBE

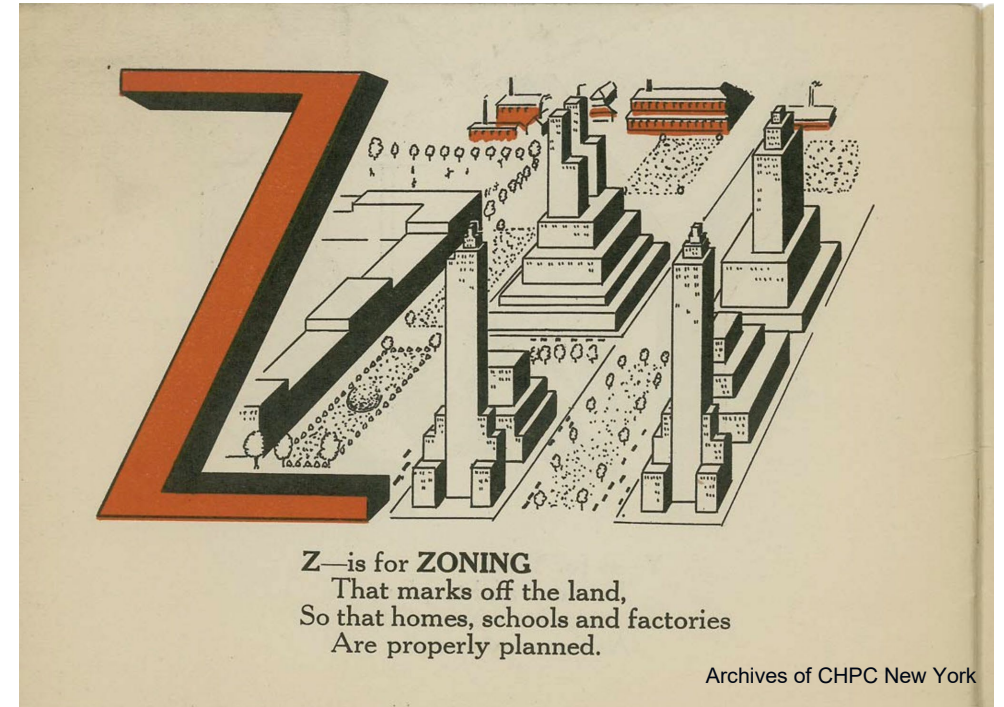### RENTAL DESERTS PERPETUATE SOCIOECONOMIC AND RACIAL SEGREGATION

Thursday, August 4, 2022 | Whitney Airgood-Obrycki, Sophia Wedeen

What are rental deserts?

- **Rental deserts** *(35% of tracts)*:

  less than **20%** housing units occupied by a renter or vacant for rent

- **Extreme rental deserts** *(14% of tracts)*:

  less than **10%** housing units occupied by a renter or vacant for rent

Hypothesis: there is a link between the geography of rental deserts, restrictive zoning, and neighborhood segregation levels

Suburban housing development in Philadelphia – LIFE – Margaret Bourke-White

Joint Center for Housing Studies

432 Park Avenue, NYC - Arturo Pardavila - Dezeen

Houses in the Hamptons, NY– Cameron Davidson

Hypothesis: there is a link between the geography of rental deserts, restrictive zoning, and neighborhood segregation levels

Janna Morton – Curbed

Z—is for ZONING
That marks off the land,
So that homes, schools and factories
Are properly planned.

Archives of CHPC New York

Research Questions

1. **What share of neighborhoods are rental deserts, and how do the characteristics of these neighborhoods differ from mixed-tenure and high-rental neighborhoods?**

Research Questions

1. **What share of neighborhoods are rental deserts, and how do the characteristics of these neighborhoods differ from mixed-tenure and high-rental neighborhoods?**

2. **How does restrictive zoning contribute to the limited geography of rental options?**

Research Questions

1. What share of neighborhoods are rental deserts, and how do the characteristics of these neighborhoods differ from mixed-tenure and high-rental neighborhoods?

2. How does restrictive zoning contribute to the limited geography of rental options?

3. How are rental deserts distributed spatially in the largest 100 metropolitan areas?

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University   JCHS

Research Questions

1. **What share of neighborhoods are rental deserts, and how do the characteristics of these neighborhoods differ from mixed-tenure and high-rental neighborhoods?**

2. **How does restrictive zoning contribute to the limited geography of rental options?**

3. **How are rental deserts distributed spatially in the largest 100 metropolitan areas?**

4. **What is the relationship between the spatial distribution of rental deserts and patterns of racial and socioeconomic segregation?**

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University   JCHS

Outline

Step 1

- **Defining and mapping rental deserts**

Outline

Step 1

- **Defining and mapping rental deserts**

Step 2

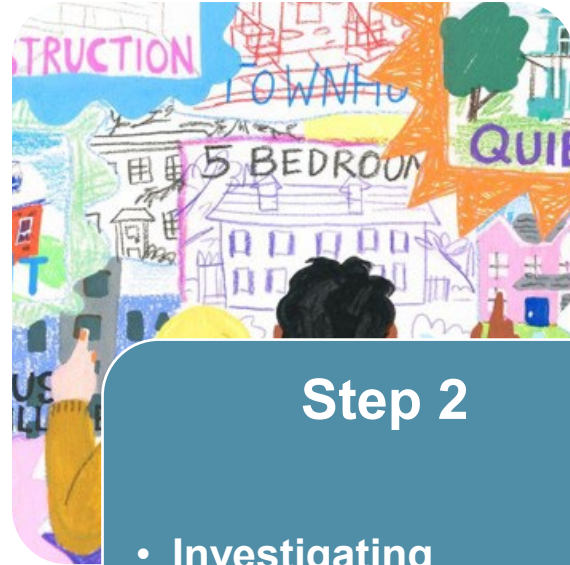- **Investigating associations with restrictive zoning, and resulting variations in the spatial distribution of rental deserts**

Outline

Step 1

- Defining and mapping rental deserts

Step 2
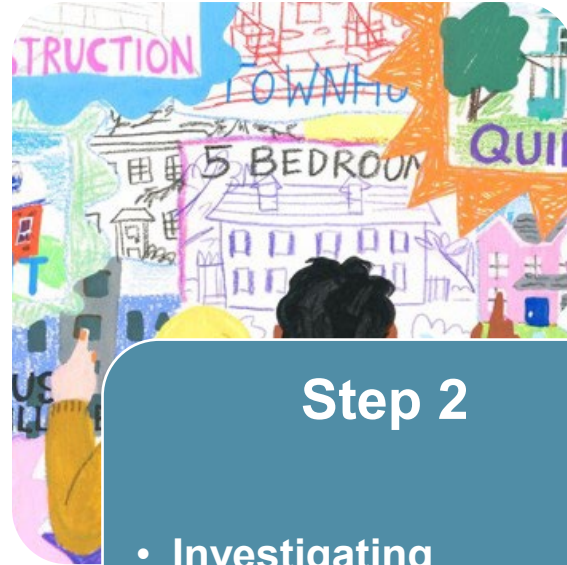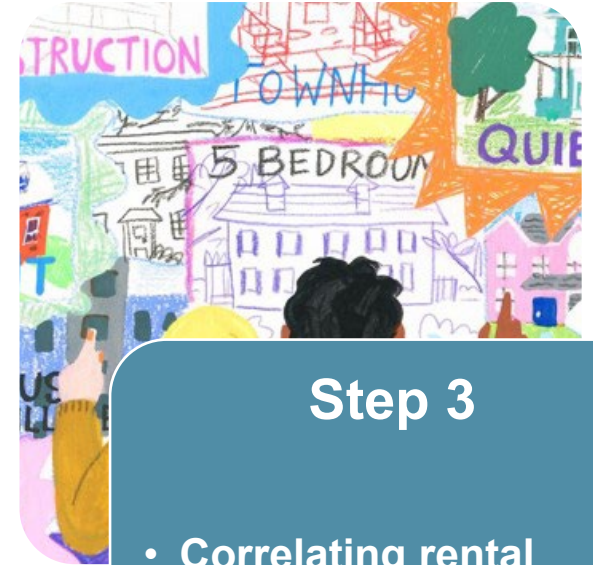
- Investigating associations with restrictive zoning, and resulting variations in the spatial distribution of rental deserts

Step 3

- Correlating rental housing segregation with socioeconomic and racial segregation

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University   JCHS

Context: places that say no to rental housing and do not meet a growing demand

- Restrictive communities have long blocked the construction of multifamily housing, the provision of affordable rental options, and housing for communities of color (Mickloz and Warner, 2014)

- Suburbs have largely been shaped by a traditional separation of uses and a preference for single-family housing, but demographics and needs are changing (Maaoui, 2018)

Library of Congress, Siegel, Arthur S., "
Detroit, Michigan. Riot at the Sojourner Truth homes..." February 1942

| Policy context + Literature | Research design | Results | Policy implications + future research |

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University   JCHS

No study to date provides a national overview of the impact of zoning barriers to *rental housing* access

- Studies on location, clustering, and features of multifamily housing are specific to a few cities or neighborhoods
  - Chakraborty et al., 2009
  - Atkinson-Palombo, 2010
  - Caine et al., 2017
  - Walter and Caine, 2019

Built During 1980s

Built During 1990s

Built During 2000s

Built During 2010s

Mutlifamily Housing Density

■ Indicates Areas of Greatest Development During the Decade

▢ City of San Antonio

0   25   50   100 Miles

Walter and Caine, 2019

| Policy context + Literature | Research design | Results | Policy implications + future research |
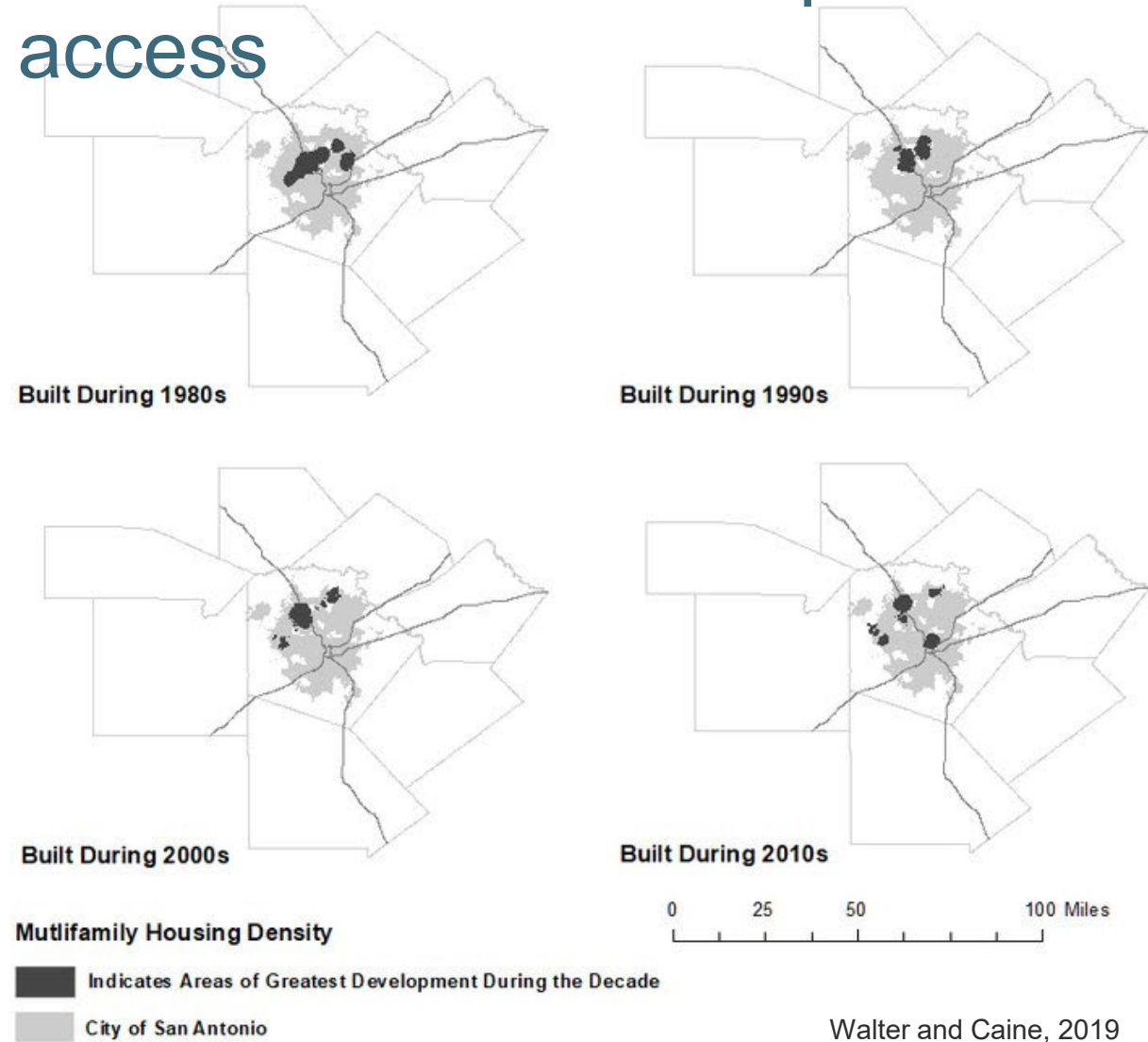
And yet there are strong links between exclusionary zoning and the lack of housing options

- Cities with least new construction have most restrictive land use (Godinez-Puig et al., 2023; Pendall, 2000; Schuetz, 2009)

- Zoning accounts for 40.6% of the cost of multifamily development (National Multifamily Housing Council, 2022)

- Slow + steady reform is changing that, allowing for more housing typologies and increased social mix (Monkkonen, Manville & Friedman, 2019; Maaoui, 2021)

| Policy context + Literature | Research design | Results | Policy implications + future research |

 Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University JCHS

A geography of opportunity and distress

- Almost 70% of low-income households live in rental housing

- Restrictiveness is linked with higher levels of income and racial segregation, particularly of affluent households (Lens and Monkkonnen, 2016; Owens, 2019)

- The lack of affordable housing in amenity-rich neighborhoods impacts household trajectories, including health, school, or job access (Chetty et al., 2016; Sportiche, 2023)

ASA, 2021

| Policy context + Literature | Research design | Results | Policy implications + future research |

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University   JCHS

Results – Part One: Characteristics of rental deserts

A third of neighborhoods are rental deserts, and they're in the suburbs

Rental deserts by geography (Census tracts)
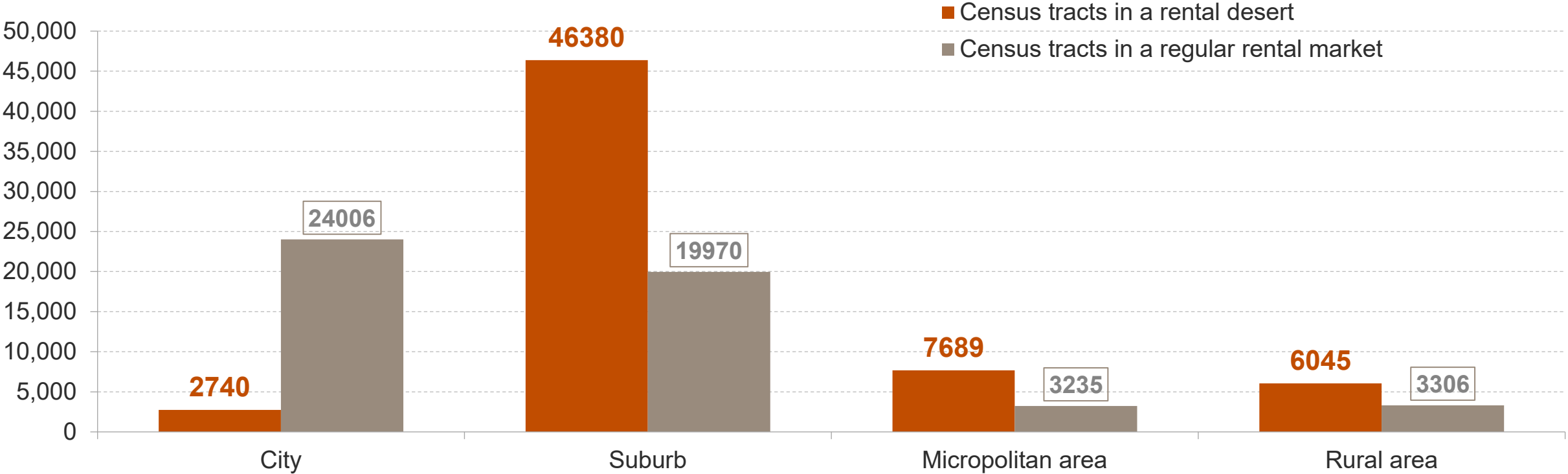
- ■ Census tracts in a rental desert
- ■ Census tracts in a regular rental market

Chart values:
- City: 2740 (rental desert), 24006 (regular rental market)
- Suburb: 46380 (rental desert), 19970 (regular rental market)
- Micropolitan area: 7689 (rental desert), 3235 (regular rental market)
- Rural area: 6045 (rental desert), 3306 (regular rental market)

Notes: Urban and suburban tracts fall within metropolitan statistical areas. Micropolitan areas have populations between 10,000 and 50,000. Non-metropolitan tracts fall outside of metropolitan or micropolitan areas.
Source: Author tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2017-2022 American Community Survey Estimates.

Policy context + Literature	Research design	Results	Policy implications + future research

Rental deserts by geography

Rental deserts by geography (Census tracts)

Legend:
- Census tracts in a rental desert
- Census tracts in a regular rental market

City: 2740 (rental desert), 24006 (regular rental market)
Suburb: 46380 / 68% (rental desert), 19970 / 55% (regular rental market)
Micropolitan area: 7689 (rental desert), 3235 (regular rental market)
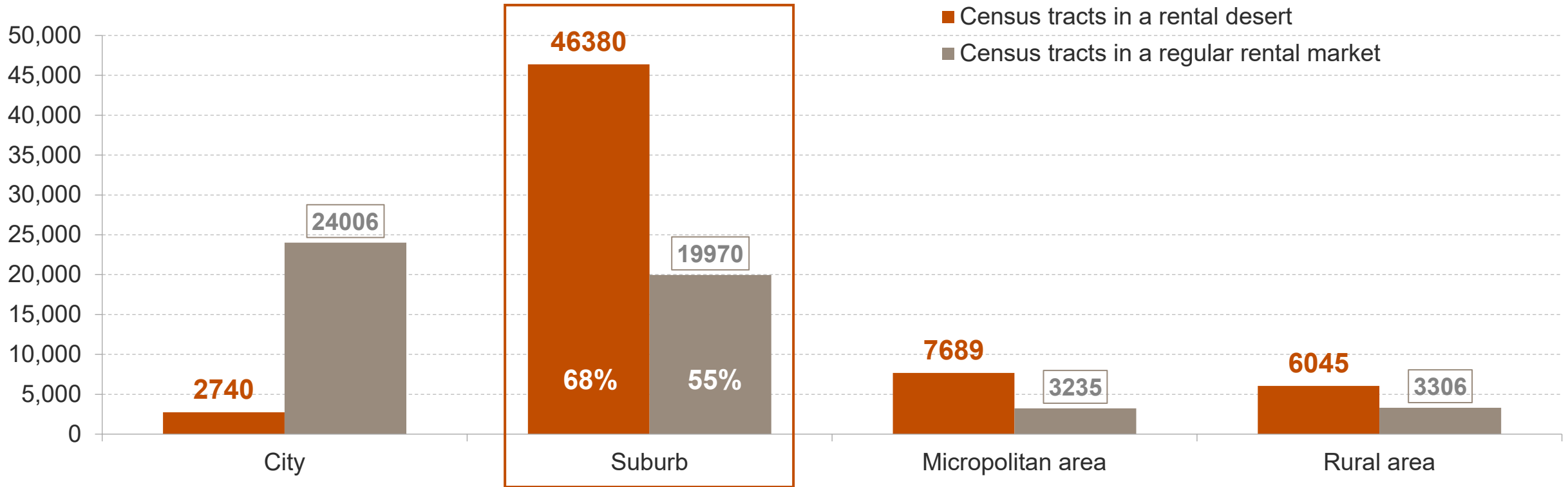Rural area: 6045 (rental desert), 3306 (regular rental market)

Notes: Urban and suburban tracts fall within metropolitan statistical areas. Micropolitan areas have populations between 10,000 and 50,000. Non-metropolitan tracts fall outside of metropolitan or micropolitan areas.
Source: Author tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2017-2022 American Community Survey Estimates.

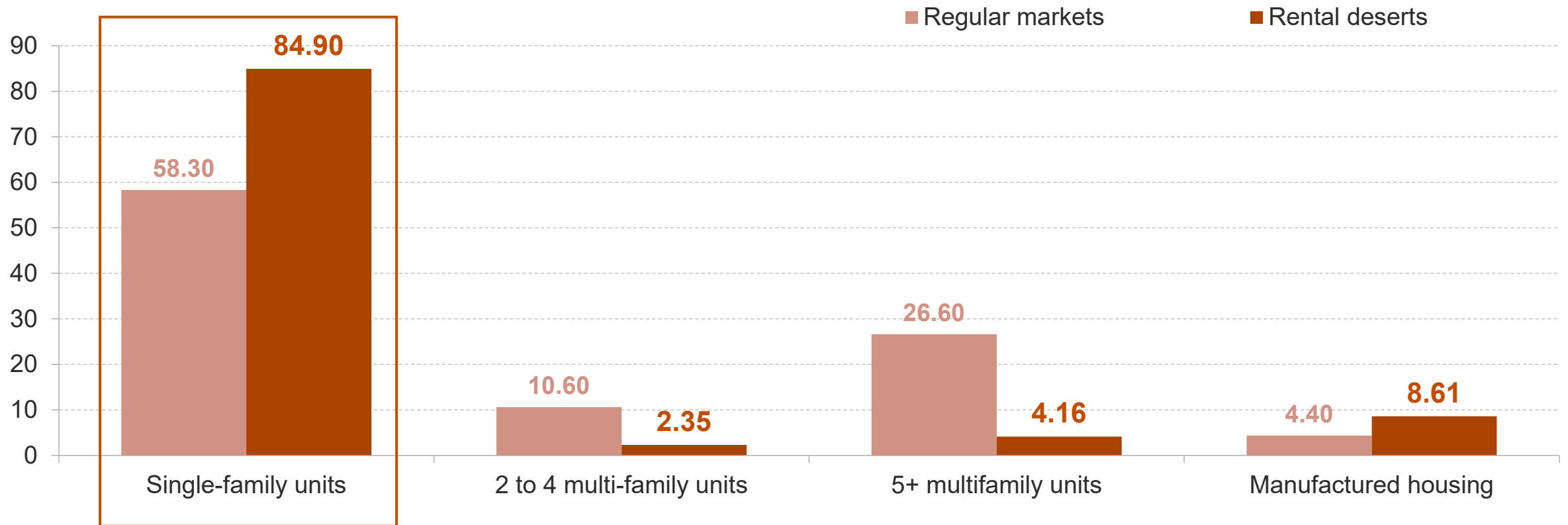| Policy context + Literature	Research design	Results	Policy implications + future research

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University   JCHS

Single-family homes are more common in rental deserts

Legend: ■ Regular markets ■ Rental deserts

Single-family units: Regular markets 58.30, Rental deserts 84.90
2 to 4 multi-family units: Regular markets 10.60, Rental deserts 2.35
5+ multifamily units: Regular markets 26.60, Rental deserts 4.16
Manufactured housing: Regular markets 4.40, Rental deserts 8.61

Sources: Author tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2017-2022 American Community Survey Estimates.

Policy context + Literature	Research design	Results	Policy implications + future research

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University   JCHS

Meanwhile, multifamily housing is scarce in rental deserts
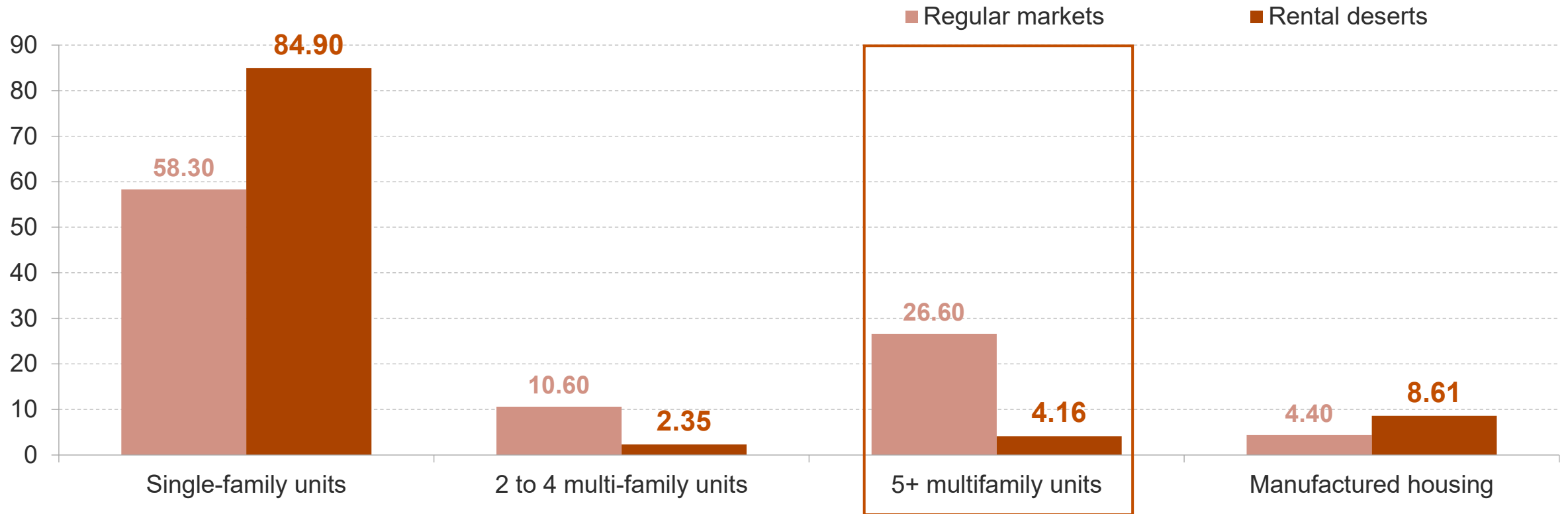
Legend: ■ Regular markets   ■ Rental deserts

Single-family units: Regular markets 58.30, Rental deserts 84.90
2 to 4 multi-family units: Regular markets 10.60, Rental deserts 2.35
5+ multifamily units: Regular markets 26.60, Rental deserts 4.16
Manufactured housing: Regular markets 4.40, Rental deserts 8.61

Sources: Author tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2017-2022 American Community Survey Estimates.

Policy context + Literature	Research design	Results	Policy implications + future research

Mean number of units by project, by rental market

Source: Author tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2017-2022 American Community Survey Estimates.

| Policy context + Literature | Research design | Results | Policy implications + future research |

Mean number of units by project, by rental market

Source: Author tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2017-2022 American Community Survey Estimates.
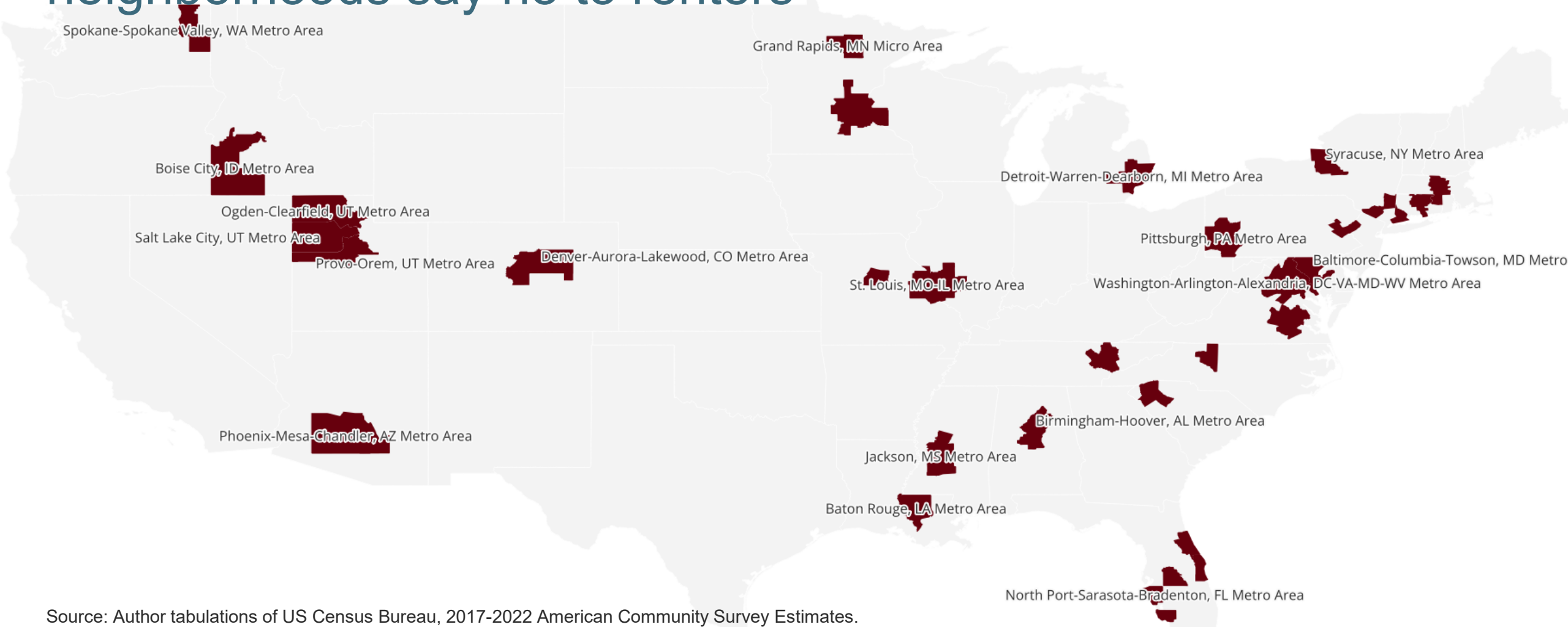
| Policy context + Literature | Research design | Results | Policy implications + future research |
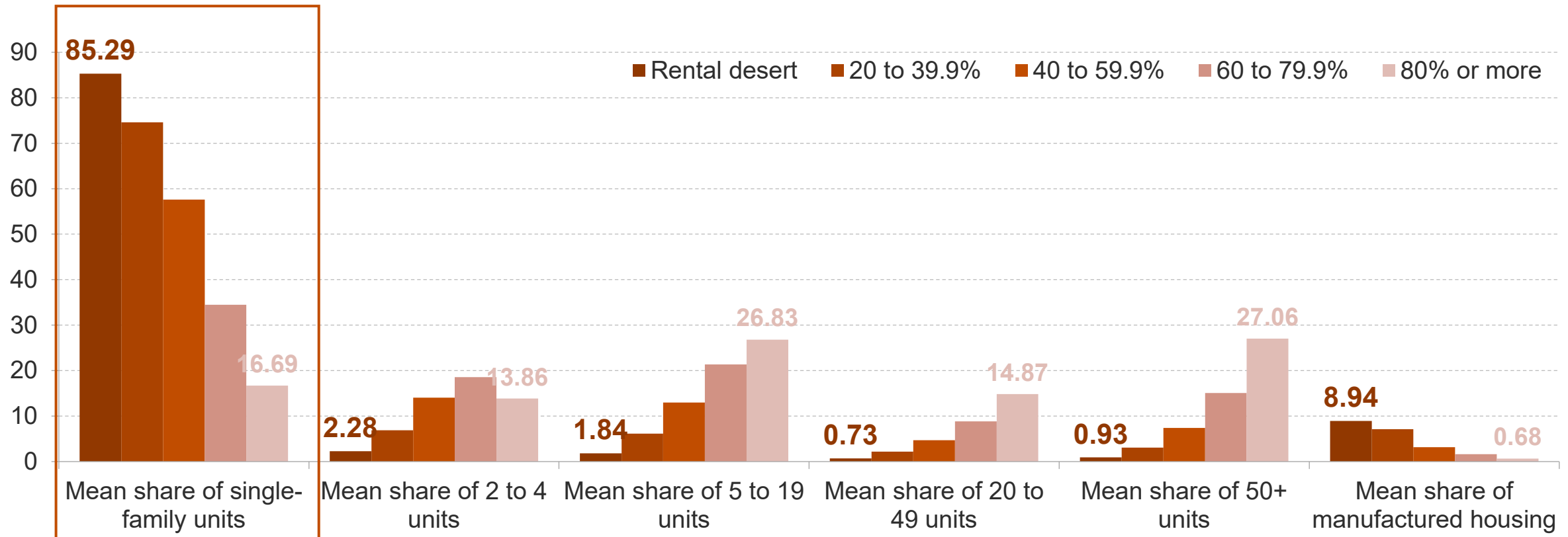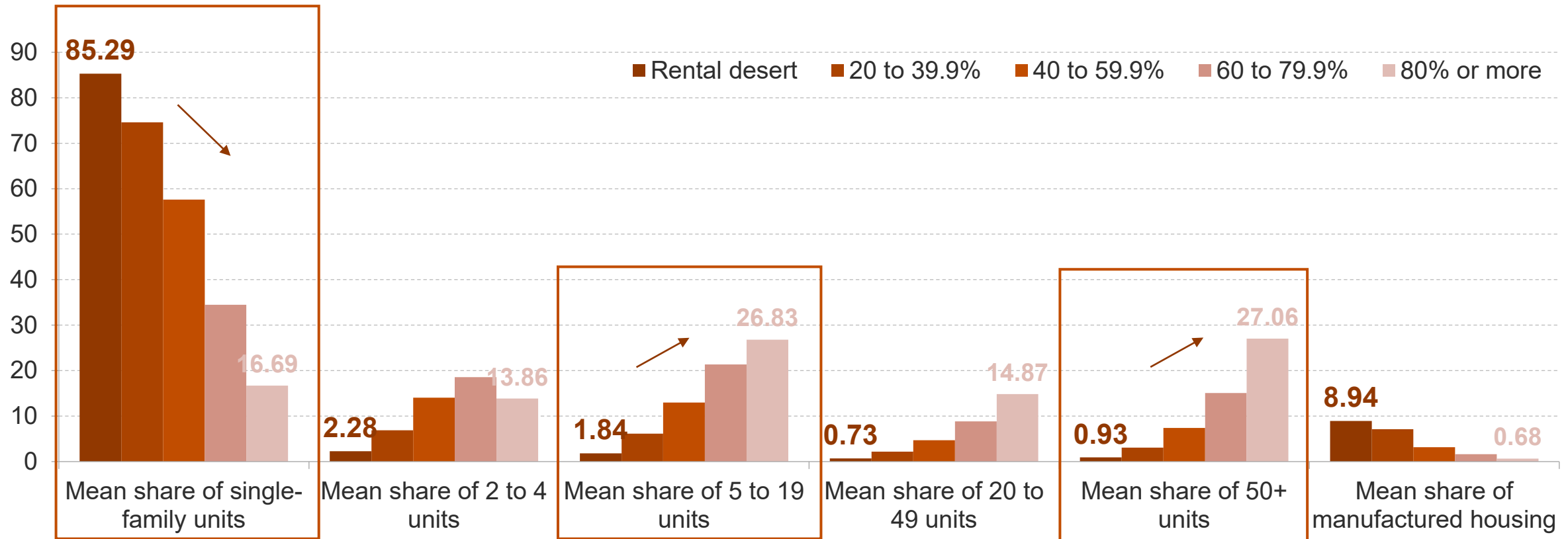
Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University   JCHS

Share of rental deserts in the 100 largest metro areas

Lower share (15-30%)

30 to 36%

Higher share (36 to 54%)

Spokane-Spokane Valley, WA Metro Area

Grand Rapids, MN Micro Area

Rochester, MN Metro Area

Boise City, ID Metro Area

Madison, WI Metro Area

Syracuse, NY Metro Area

Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI Metro Area

Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH Metro Area

Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI Metro Area

Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA Metro Area

Toledo, OH Metro Area

Ogden-Clearfield, UT Metro Area

Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA Metro Area

New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA Metro Area

Salt Lake City, UT Metro Area

Pittsburgh, PA Metro Area

Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD Metro Area

Provo-Orem, UT Metro Area

Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO Metro Area

Kansas City, MO-KS Metro Area

Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area

Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD Metro Area

Sacramento-Roseville-Folsom, CA Metro Area

Colorado Springs, CO Metro Area

St. Louis, MO-IL Metro Area

San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley, CA Metro Area

Stockton, CA Metro Area

San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA Metro Area

Fresno, CA Metro Area

Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV Metro Area

Tulsa, OK Metro Area

Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC Metro Area

Bakersfield, CA Metro Area

Albuquerque, NM Metro Area

Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA Metro Area

Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA Metro Area

Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR Metro Area

Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta, GA Metro Area

Birmingham-Hoover, AL Metro Area

Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ Metro Area

Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX Metro Area

San Diego-Chula Vista-Carlsbad, CA Metro Area

Jackson, MS Metro Area

Tucson, AZ Metro Area

El Paso, TX Metro Area

Baton Rouge, LA Metro Area

Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown, TX Metro Area

New Orleans-Metairie, LA Metro Area

San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX Metro Area

Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX Metro Area

Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL Metro Area

Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL Metro Area

North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton, FL Metro Area

Source: Author tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2017-2022 American Community Survey Estimates.

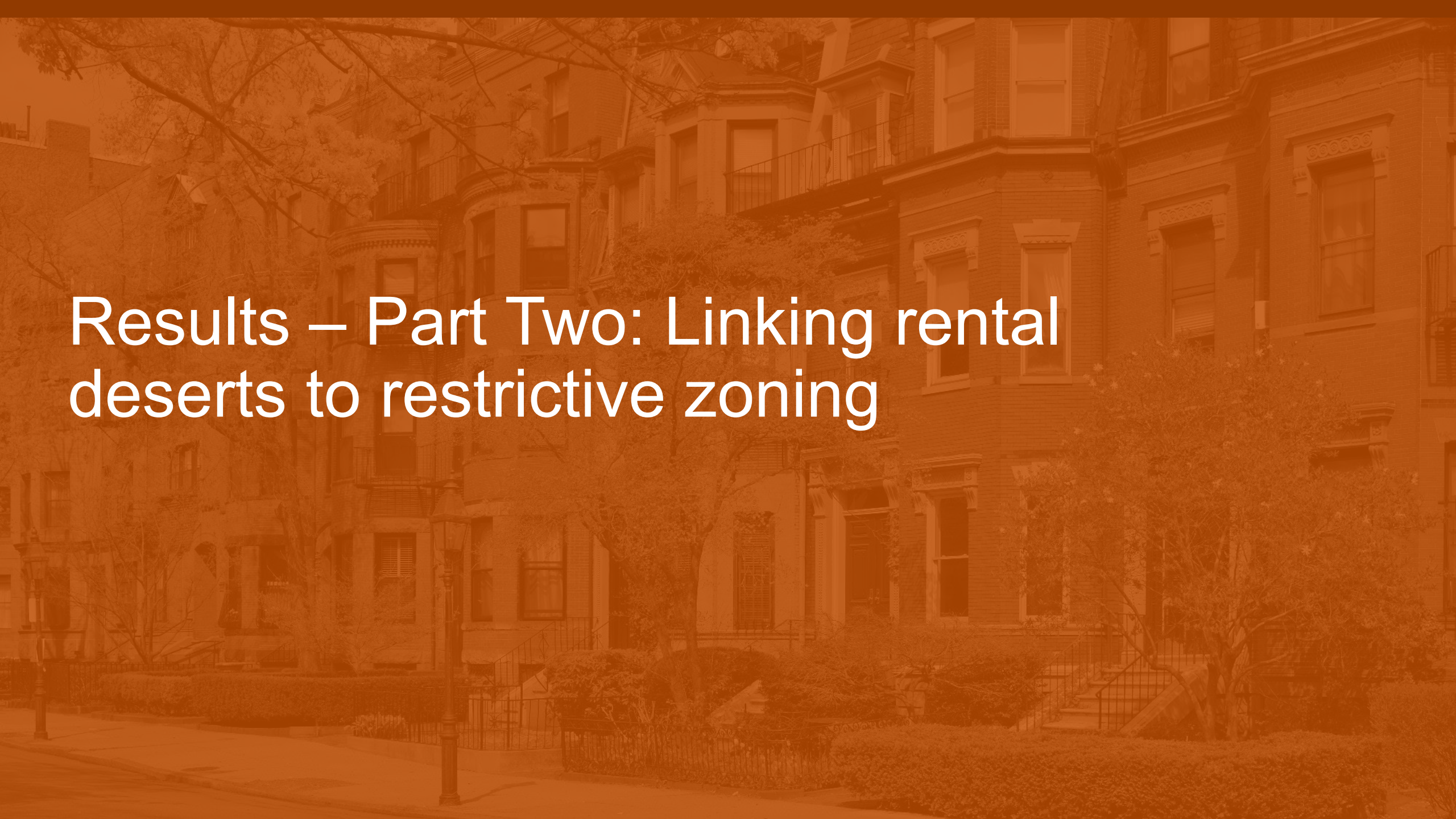| Policy context + Literature | Research design | Results | Policy implications + future research |

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University   JCHS

Rental desert hotspots: where more than a third of neighborhoods say no to renters

Spokane-Spokane Valley, WA Metro Area
Grand Rapids, MN Micro Area
Boise City, ID Metro Area
Ogden-Clearfield, UT Metro Area
Salt Lake City, UT Metro Area
Provo-Orem, UT Metro Area
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO Metro Area
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI Metro Area
Syracuse, NY Metro Area
Pittsburgh, PA Metro Area
Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD Metro
St. Louis, MO-IL Metro Area
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area
Birmingham-Hoover, AL Metro Area
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ Metro Area
Jackson, MS Metro Area
Baton Rouge, LA Metro Area
North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton, FL Metro Area

Source: Author tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2017-2022 American Community Survey Estimates.

| Policy context + Literature | Research design | Results | Policy implications + future research |

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University JCHS

Results – Part Two: Linking rental deserts to restrictive zoning

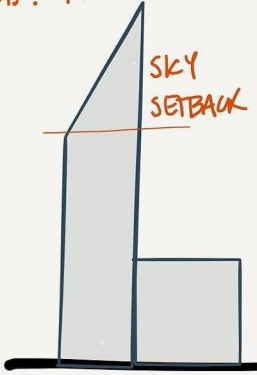# Why zoning matters
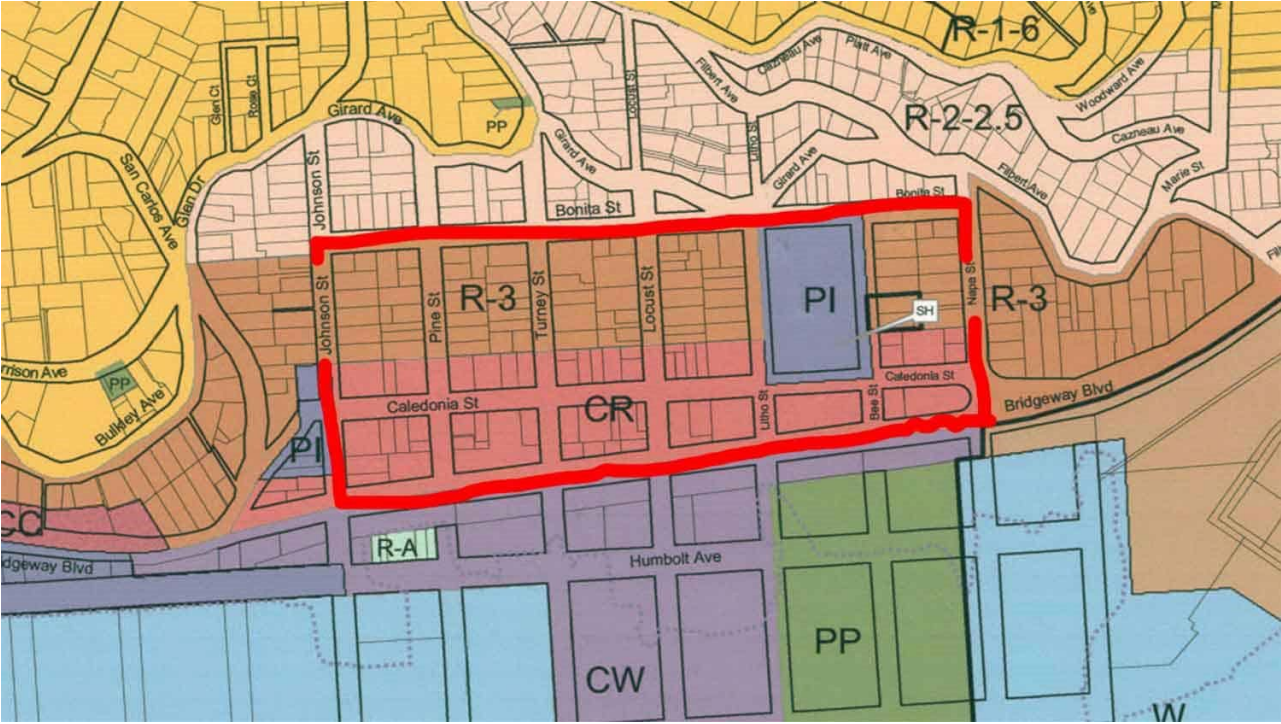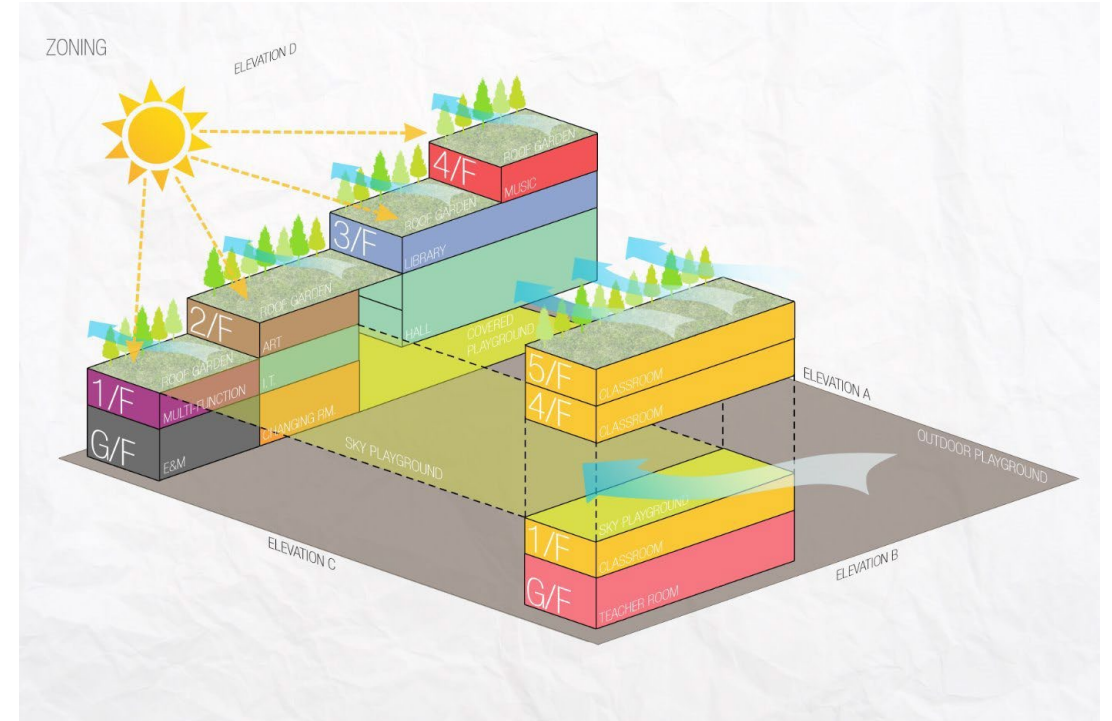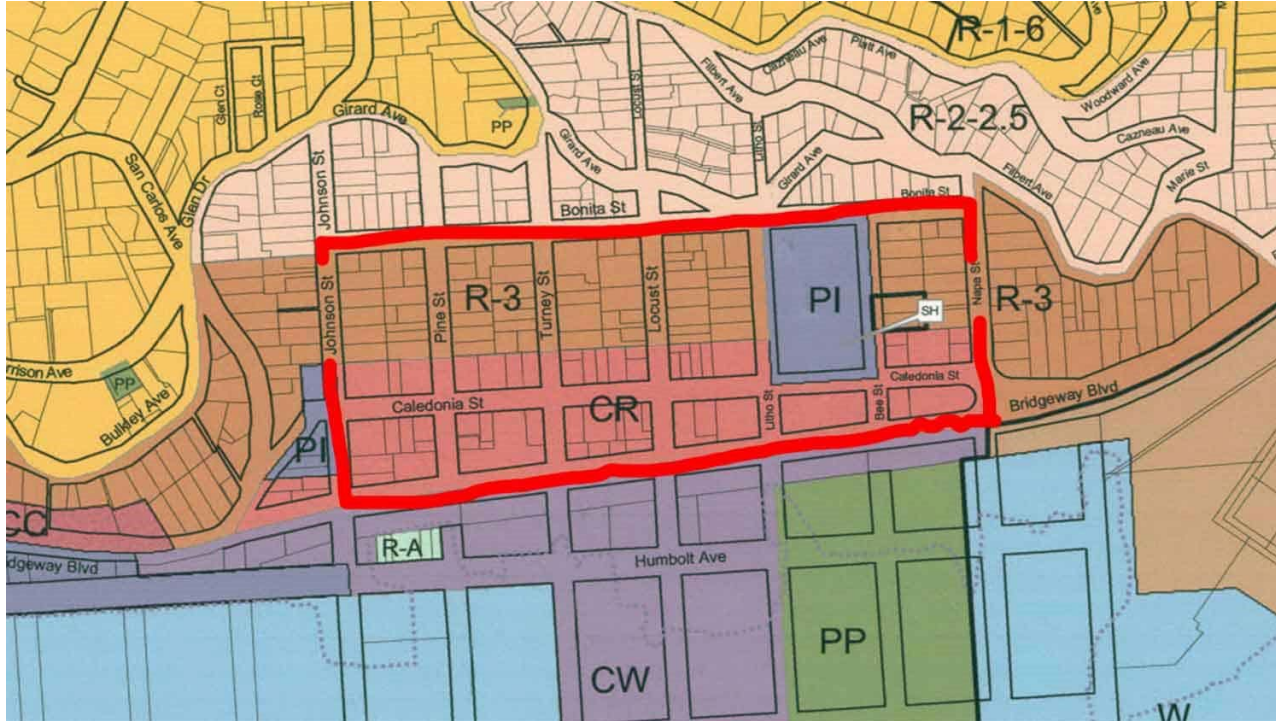
Why zoning matters

Why zoning matters
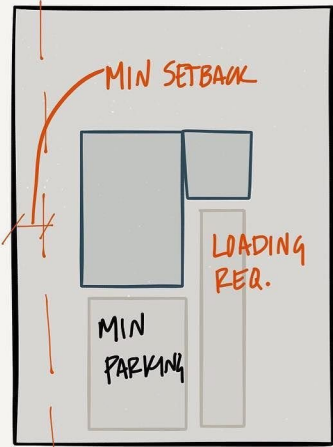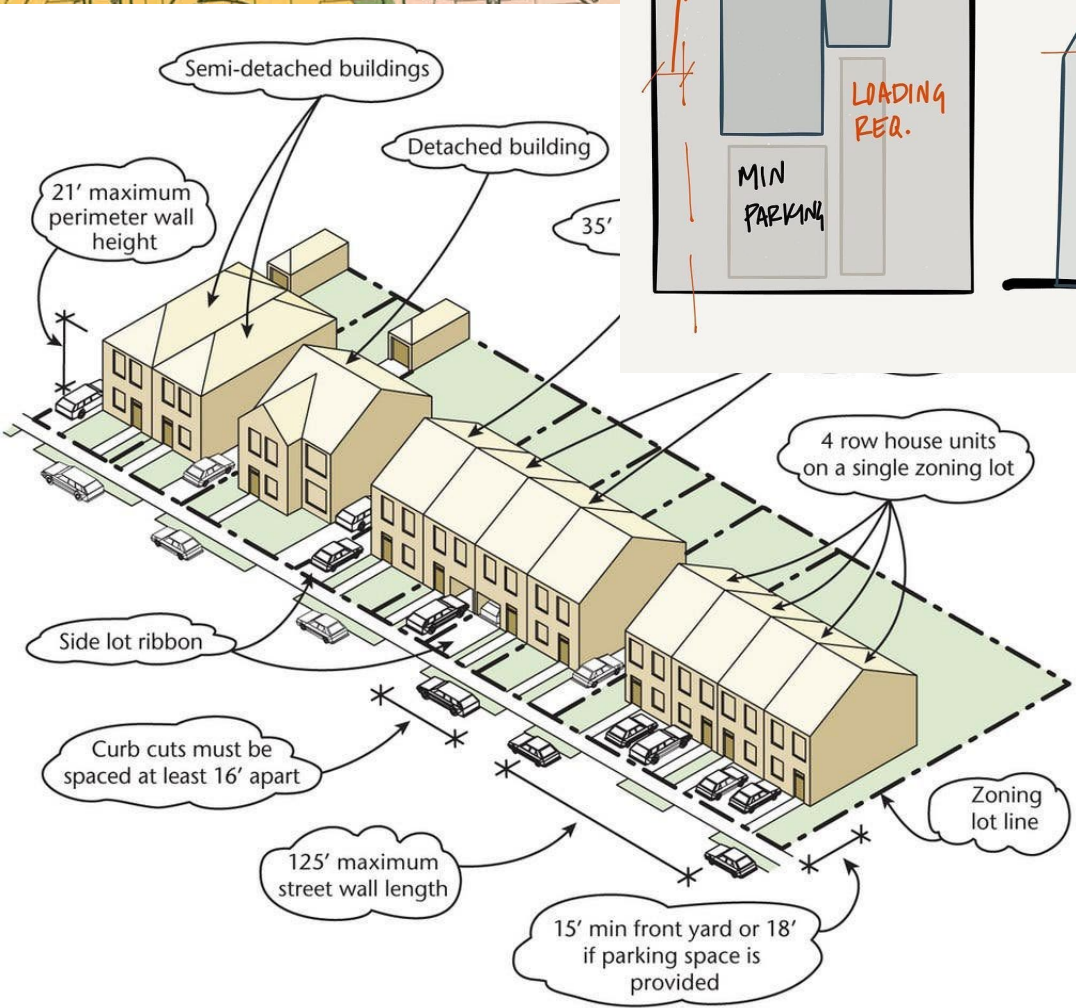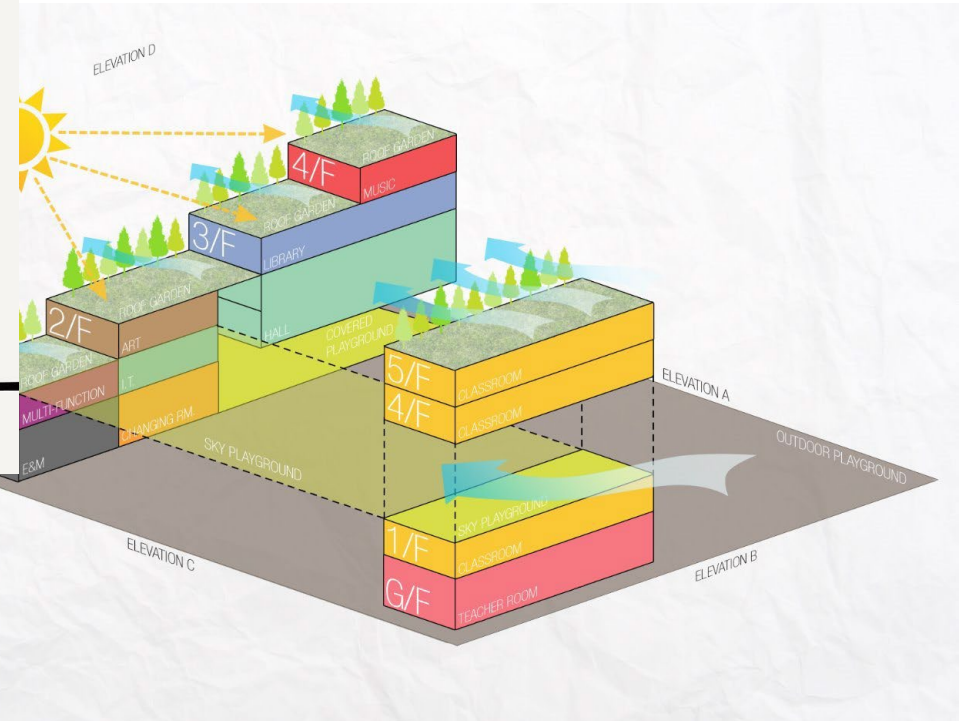
A research design linking rental deserts and zoning

Rental Share by CT (ACS data)	Portion of Rental Deserts by CT (ACS data)	Zoning Restrictiveness Index (NZLUD data)
Min. : 0.00	Min. :0.0000	Min. :-3.17
1st Qu.: 15.24	1st Qu.:0.0000	1st Qu.:-0.15
Median : 28.40	Median :0.0000	Median : 0.37
Mean : 33.60	Mean :0.3508	Mean : 0.42
3rd Qu.: 48.00	3rd Qu.:1.0000	3rd Qu.: 1.10
Max. :100.00	Max. :1.0000	Max. : 3.51
Observations: 84,415	**Observations: 84,415**	**Observations: 36,581**

EVICTION LAB

NATIONAL ZONING AND LAND USE DATABASE

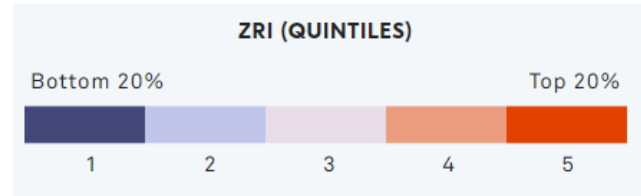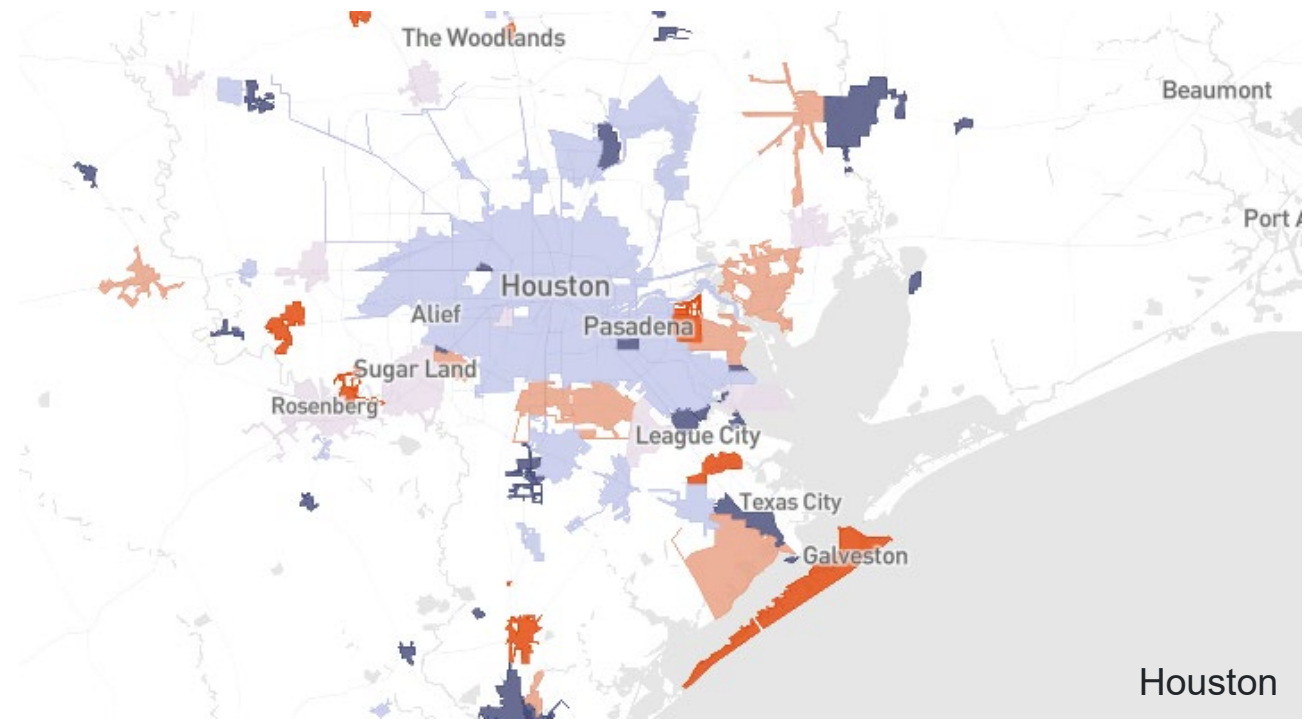| Policy context + Literature	Research design	Results	Policy implications + future research

```
116    qnum = 1
117    for row in list(reader):
118        keywords = {}
119        for kw_pair_s in row[1:]:
120            if (kw_pair_s != ""):
121                kw_pair = kw_pair_s.split("*")
122                if len(kw_pair) > 1:
123                    k = kw_pair[0]
124                    weight = kw_pair[1]
125                    keywords[k] = weight
126        keyword_dict[qnum] = keywords
127        qnum += 1
128    if len(keyword_dict) == 0:
129        print("WARNING: No keywords found.")
130    values = []
131    keywords = keyword_dict
```


Houston

ZRI (QUINTILES)

Bottom 20% — Top 20%

1 2 3 4 5

EVICTION LAB

NATIONAL ZONING AND LAND USE DATABASE

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University JCHS

Rank	Metropolitan area Zoning	Restrictiveness Index score
1	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	2.05
2	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	2.01

A research design linking rental deserts and zoning

	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	trimmed	mad	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Skew	Kurtosis	se
Explicit Growth Controls Index	36581	1.60E-01	7.00E-01	0.00E+00	0.00E+00	0.00E+00	0.00E+00	6.00E+00	6.00E+00	6.47	47.68	0
Maximum Permitted Density Index	36581	1.45E+00	8.00E-01	1.00E+00	1.26E+00	0.00E+00	1.00E+00	5.00E+00	4.00E+00	2.03	4.22	0
Accessory-Dwelling Unit Index	36581	6.10E-01	4.90E-01	1.00E+00	6.40E-01	0.00E+00	0.00E+00	1.00E+00	1.00E+00	-0.46	-1.79	0
Maximum Height Index	35947	3.67E+01	1.19E+01	3.50E+01	3.61E+01	7.41E+00	1.00E+01	1.00E+02	9.00E+01	1.28	5.11	0.06
Minimum Required Parking Index	36503	1.76E+00	7.70E-01	2.00E+00	1.68E+00	3.70E-01	0.00E+00	1.00E+01	1.00E+01	3.31	22.51	0
Permitted multi-family housing index	36447	4.80E-01	2.10E-01	5.00E-01	4.80E-01	2.00E-01	0.00E+00	1.00E+00	1.00E+00	0.09	0.07	0
Zoning Restrictiveness Index	36581	4.20E-01	9.60E-01	3.90E-01	4.30E-01	9.40E-01	-3.17E+00	3.51E+00	6.68E+00	-0.09	-0.18	0

Policy context + Literature	Research design	Results	Policy implications + future research

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University JCHS

Restrictive zoning is positively associated with rental deserts

	Estimate	Standard Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)
Explicit Growth Controls Index				
	8.397e-03*	2.993e-03	2.791e-03	6.7e-11
Maximum Permitted Density Index				
	1.822e-02*	2.791e-03	6.530	6.7e-11
Minimum Required Parking Index				
	7.664e-03	2.752e-03	2.784	-11.5

Significance codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Policy context + Literature	Research design	**Results**	Policy implications + future research

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University JCHS

Restrictive zoning is positively associated with rental deserts

	Estimate	Standard Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)
Explicit Growth Controls Index				
	8.397e-03* **	2.993e-03	2.791e-03	6.7e-11
Maximum Permitted Density Index				
	1.822e-02* **	2.791e-03	6.530	6.7e-11
Minimum Required Parking Index				
	7.664e-03 **	2.752e-03	2.784	-11.5
Accessory-Dwelling Unit Index				
	-3.657e-02* **	4.322e-03	-8.463	<2e-16
Permitted Multi-Family Housing Index				
	-5.809e-02* **	1.036e-02	-5.605	2.1e-08

Significance codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Policy context + Literature	Research design	**Results**	Policy implications + future research

Restrictive zoning is positively associated with rental deserts

	Estimate	Standard Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)
Explicit Growth Controls Index				
	8.397e-03***	2.993e-03	2.791e-03	6.7e-11
Maximum Permitted Density Index				
	1.822e-02***	2.791e-03	6.530	6.7e-11
Minimum Required Parking Index				
	7.664e-03**	2.752e-03	2.784	-11.5
Accessory-Dwelling Unit Index				
	-3.657e-02***	4.322e-03	-8.463	<2e-16
Permitted Multi-Family Housing Index				
	-5.809e-02***	1.036e-02	-5.605	2.1e-08
Zoning Restrictiveness Index				
	-0.008001**	0.002604	-3.073	0.00212
Maximum Height Index				
	-1.659e-04	1.809e-04	-0.917	0.00537

Significance codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Policy context + Literature	Research design	**Results**	Policy implications + future research

Rental/Ownership Housing Segregation

Quartiles of divergence indexes for the top 100 MSAs

Least divergent quartile (0 – 0.1)

Second divergent quartile (0.1 – 0.12)

Third divergent quartile (0.12 – 0.13)

Most divergent quartile (0.13 – 0.2)

Source: Author tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2017-2022 American Community Survey Estimates.

Policy context + Literature	Research design	Results	Policy implications + future research

Rental/Ownership Housing Segregation

Quartiles of divergence indexes for the top 100 MSAs

Legend:
- Least divergent quartile (0 – 0.1)
- Second divergent quartile (0.1 – 0.12)
- Third divergent quartile (0.12 – 0.13)
- Most divergent quartile (0.13 – 0.2)

Map labels:
- Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA
- Spokane-Spokane Valley, WA
- Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI
- Madison, WI
- Milwaukee-Waukesha, WI
- Rochester, NY
- Syracuse, NY
- Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH
- Providence-Warwick, RI-MA
- Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI
- Toledo, OH
- Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT
- Dayton-Kettering, OH
- Columbus, OH
- New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA
- Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO
- Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV
- Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD
- Sacramento-Roseville-Folsom, CA
- Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC
- Durham-Chapel Hill, NC
- Albuquerque, NM
- Oklahoma City, OK
- Greenville-Anderson, SC
- Raleigh-Cary, NC
- Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR
- Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta, GA
- Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ
- Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX
- Tucson, AZ
- San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX
- McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX
- Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL

Source: Author tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2017-2022 American Community Survey Estimates.

| Policy context + Literature | Research design | **Results** | Policy implications + future research |

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University **JCHS**

New York, NY

Divergence Indexes between the share of renters versus owners at the census tract, relative to the level of divergence of the metro area

■ Most Divergent, High Rental

■ Less Divergent, High Rental

■ Most Divergent, High Owner

■ Less Divergent, High Owner

Source: Author tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2017-2022 American Community Survey Estimates.
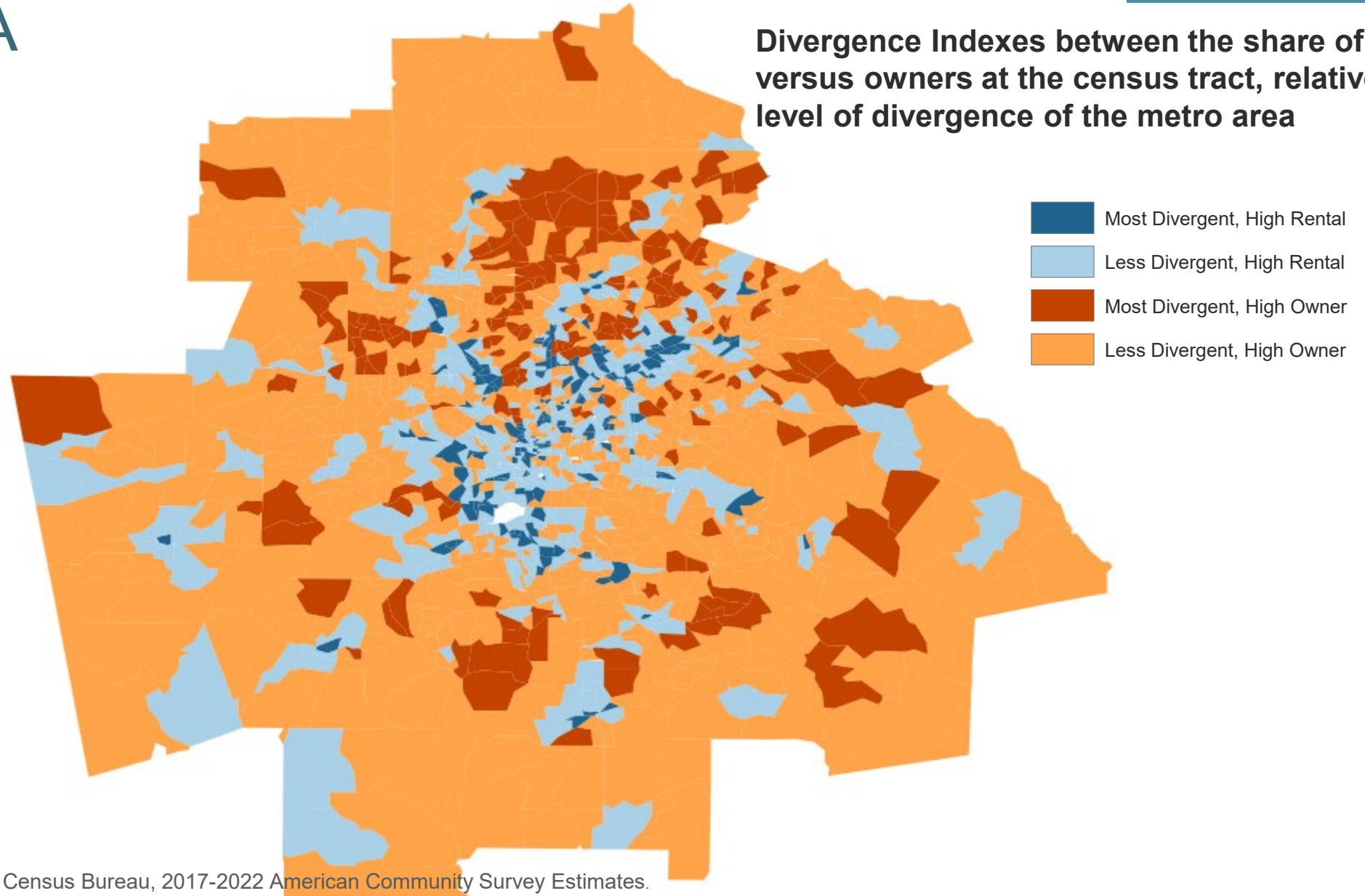
| Policy context + Literature | Research design | Results | Policy implications + future research |

Austin, Texas
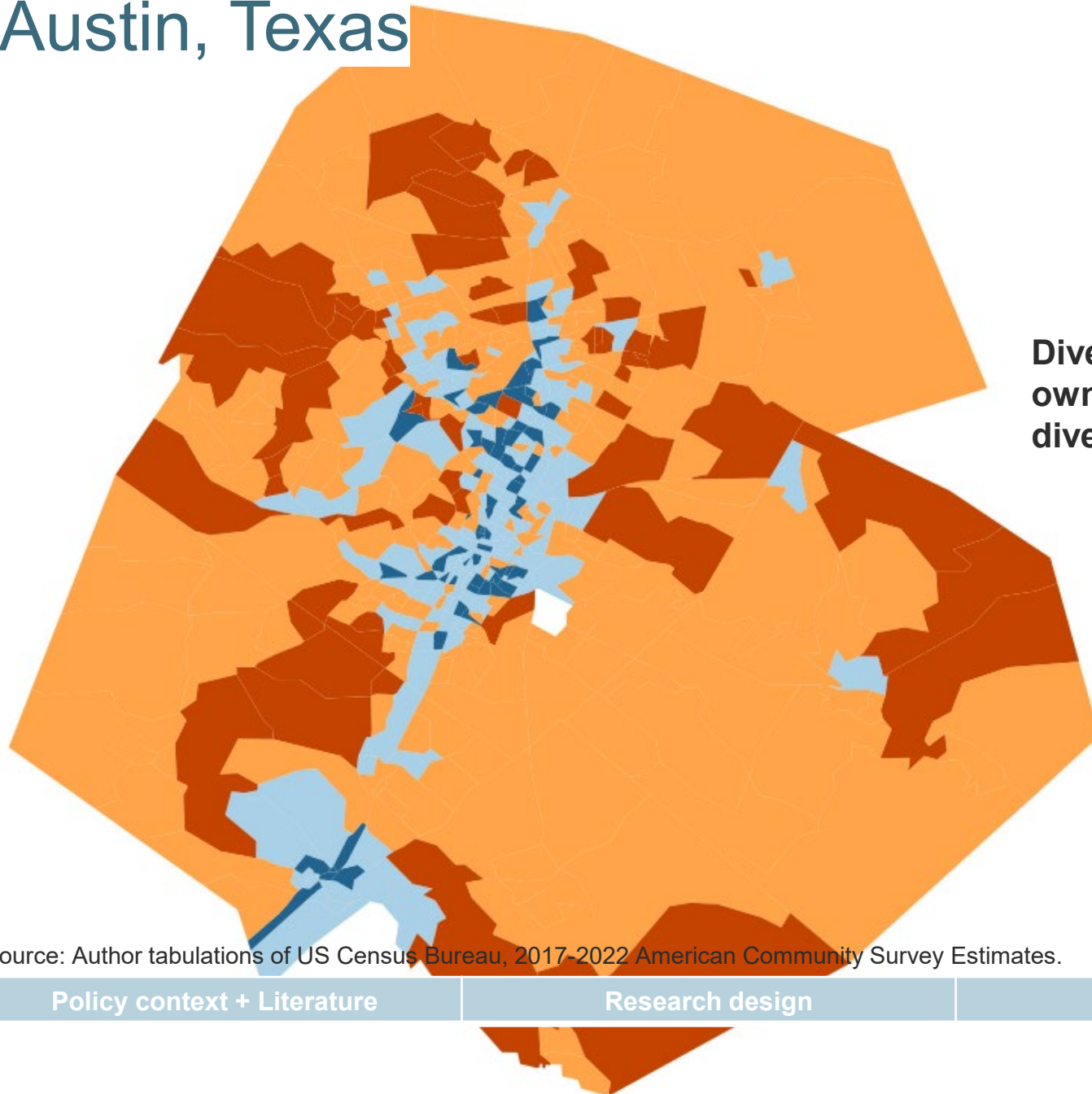
Divergence Indexes between the share of renters versus owners at the census tract, relative to the level of divergence of the metro area

- Most Divergent, High Rental
- Less Divergent, High Rental
- Most Divergent, High Owner
- Less Divergent, High Owner

Source: Author tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2017-2022 American Community Survey Estimates.

Policy context + Literature	Research design	Results	Policy implications + future research

Atlanta, GA

Divergence Indexes between the share of renters versus owners at the census tract, relative to the level of divergence of the metro area

Legend:
- Most Divergent, High Rental
- Less Divergent, High Rental
- Most Divergent, High Owner
- Less Divergent, High Owner

Source: Author tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2017-2022 American Community Survey Estimates.

Policy context + Literature	Research design	Results	Policy implications + future research

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University JCHS

Results – Part Three: Linking rental deserts to neighborhood segregation levels

Linking Housing Segregation to Racial Segregation

- By limiting the number of rental options, neighborhoods effectively exclude lower-income households from their communities.

- The concentration of the rental stock also contributes to segregation by race and ethnicity, as people of color are more likely to be renters.
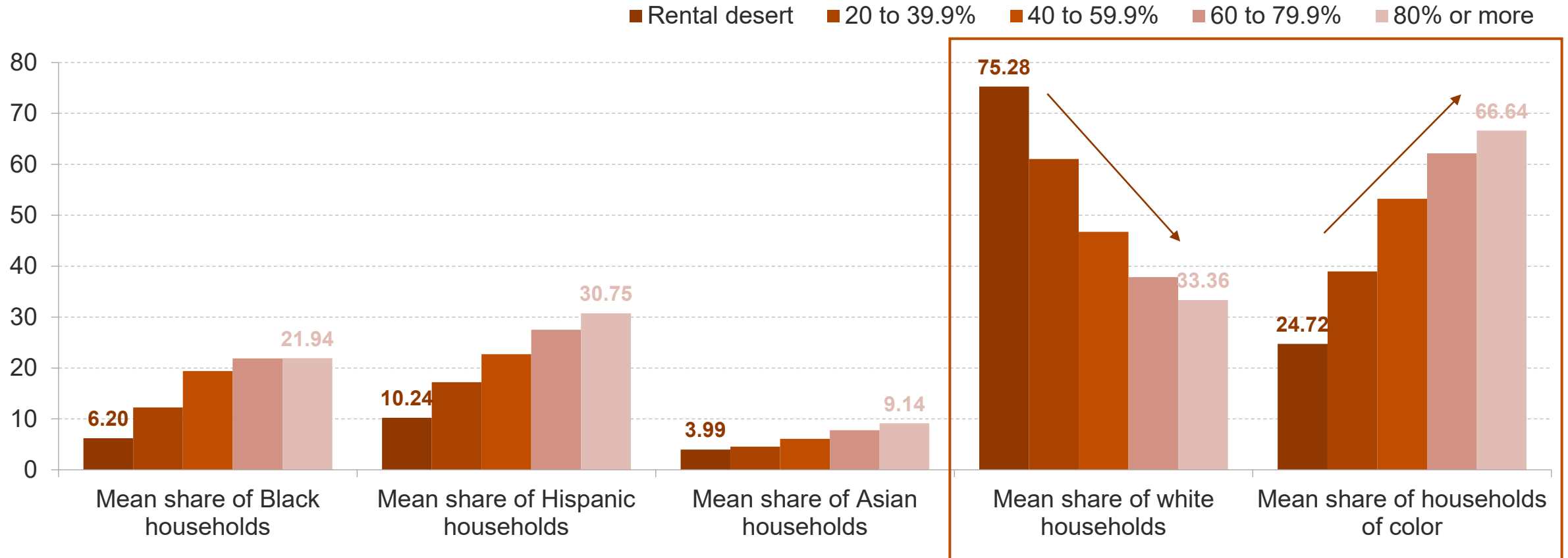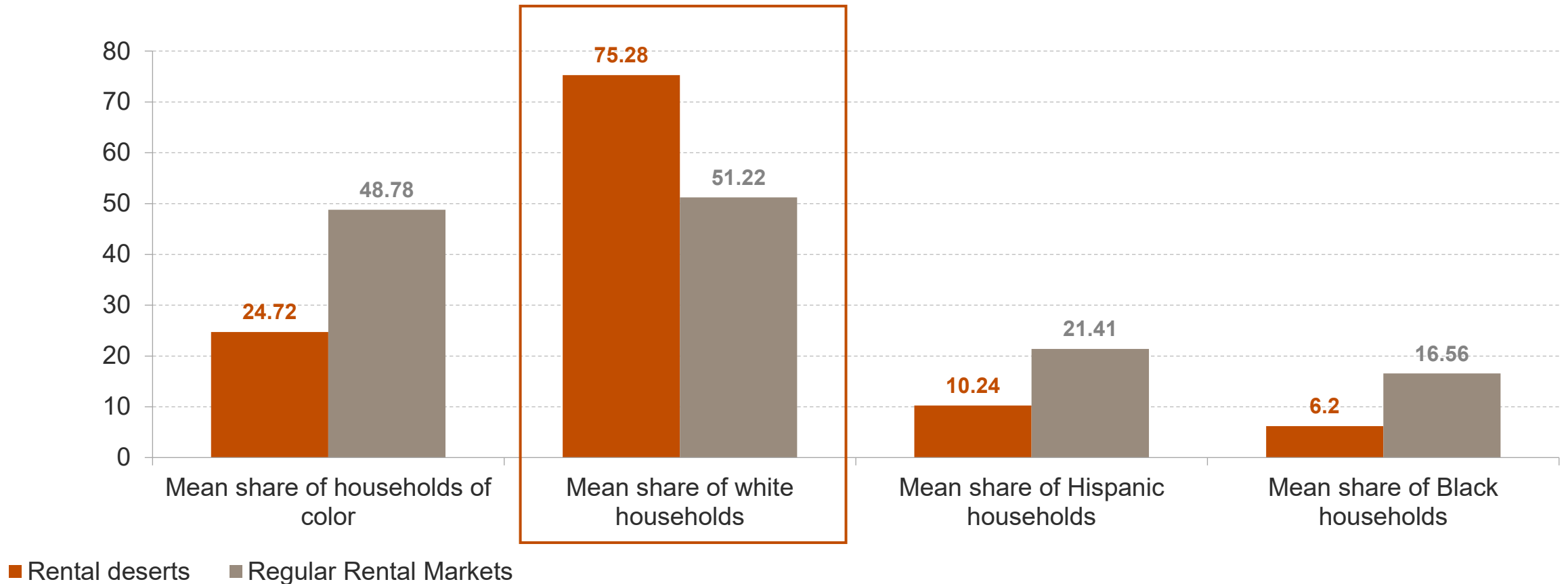
Policy context + Literature	Research design	Results	Policy implications + future research

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University   JCHS

Maxwell - June 25, 2020

| Policy context + Literature | Research design | Results | Policy implications + future research |

# Less than 17% of rental desert households are headed by a person of color

Legend: Rental desert | 20 to 39.9% | 40 to 59.9% | 60 to 79.9% | 80% or more

Chart values:

Mean share of Black households: 6.20 ... 21.94

Mean share of Hispanic households: 10.24 ... 30.75

Mean share of Asian households: 3.99 ... 9.14

Mean share of white households: 75.28 ... 33.36

Mean share of households of color: 24.72 ... 66.64

Source: Author tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2017-2022 American Community Survey Estimates.

Policy context + Literature	Research design	Results	Policy implications + future research

Rental deserts count more white households than people of color

Source: Author tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2017-2022 American Community Survey Estimates.

| Policy context + Literature | Research design | Results | Policy implications + future research |

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University JCHS

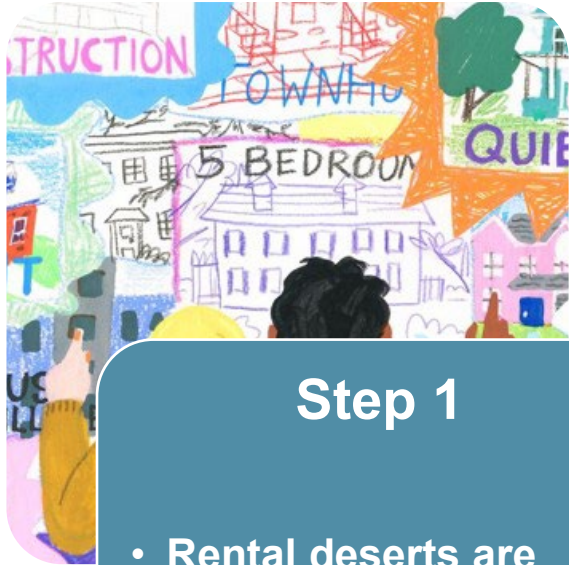# In the rental deserts of the 100 largest metro areas, housing and racial segregation are positively correlated

JCHS
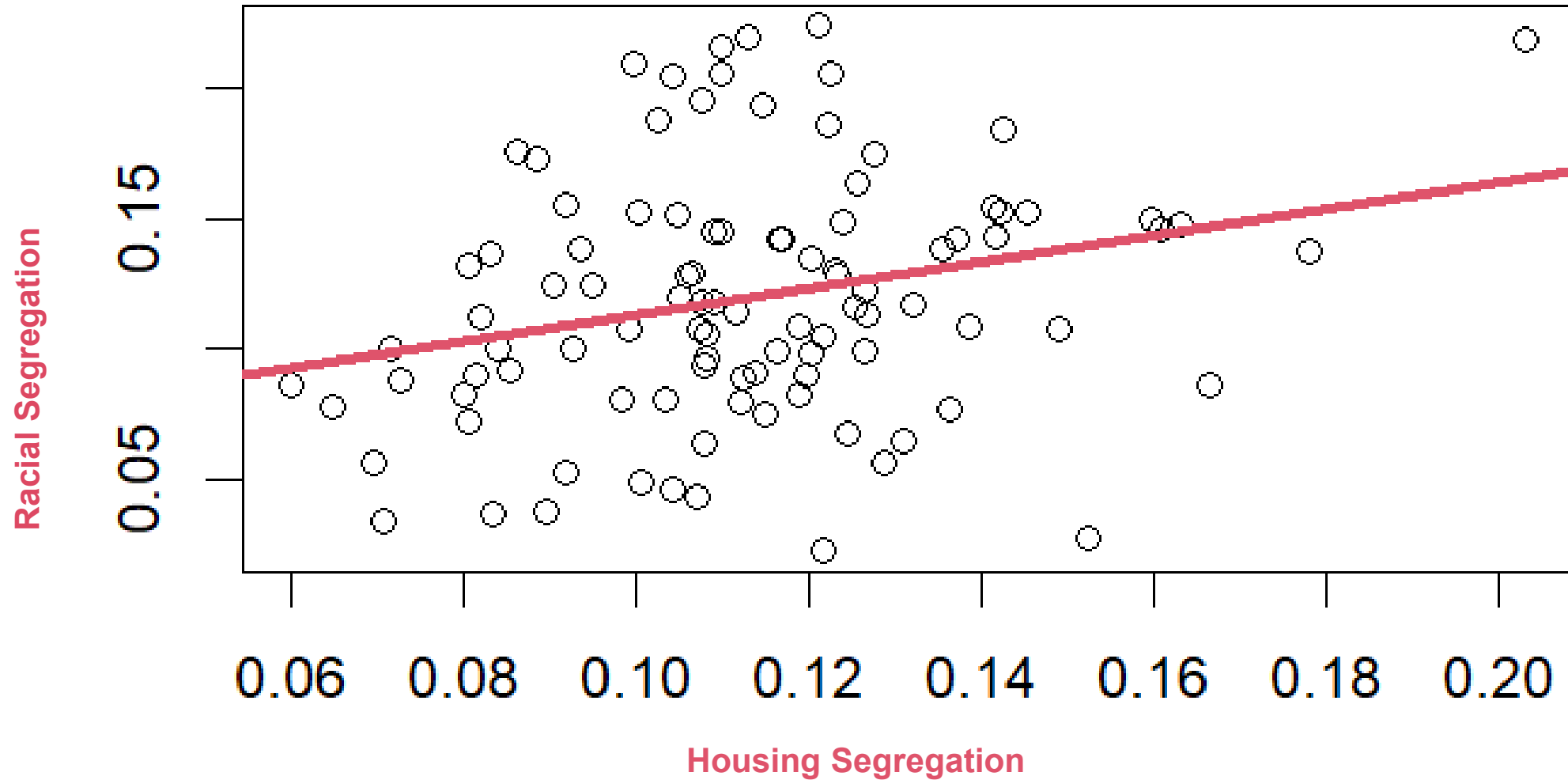
In the rental deserts of the 100 largest metro areas, housing and racial segregation are positively correlated

Conclusion

Share of neighborhoods with less than 20% of rental units in Top 100 Metros

Legend:
- Lower share (15-30%)
- 30 to 36%
- Higher share (36 to 54%)

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University   JCHS
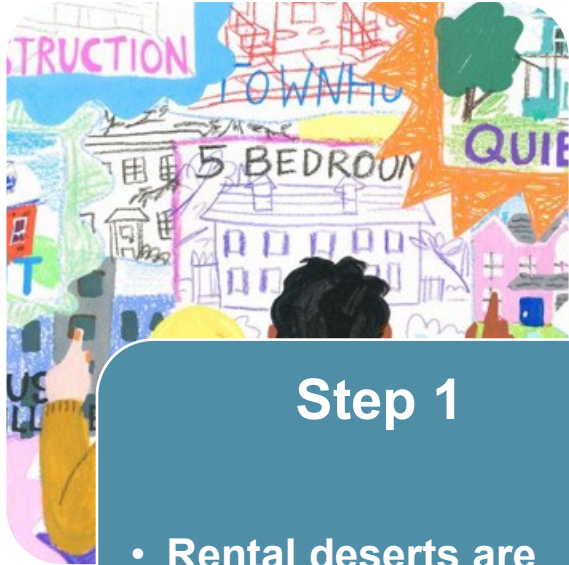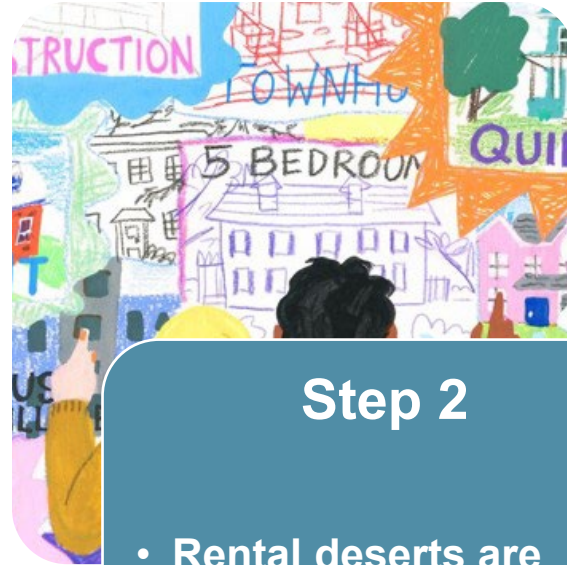
Conclusion

Step 1

- **Rental deserts are wealthier, whiter, and more suburban**

Conclusion

Step 1

- **Rental deserts are wealthier, whiter, and more suburban**

Step 2

- **Rental deserts are associated with restrictive zoning, and this results in housing segregation by tenure**
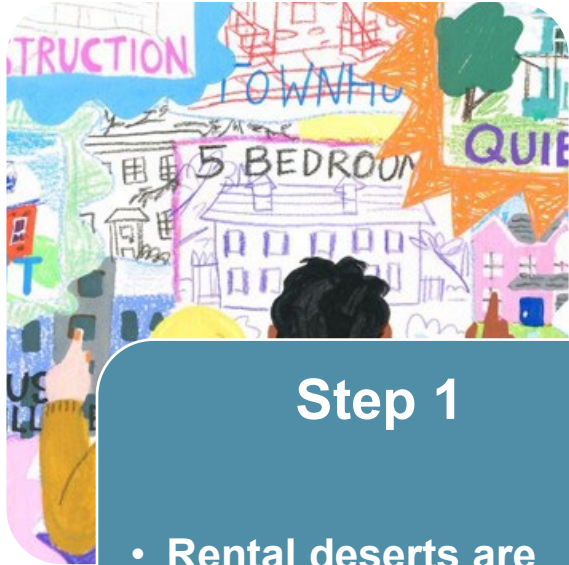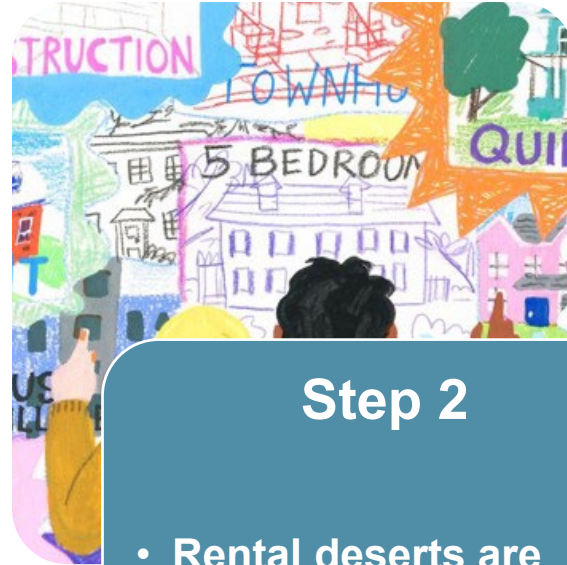
Conclusion

Step 1

- **Rental deserts are wealthier, whiter, and more suburban**

Step 2

- **Rental deserts are associated with restrictive zoning, and this results in housing segregation by tenure**

Step 3

- **Housing segregation is correlated with racial segregation in rental deserts**

Policy recommendations

Policy Recommendations

- Zoning reform is a first step to expand geographic options for renters

Policy context + Literature	Research design	Results	Policy implications + future research

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University JCHS

Policy Recommendations

- Zoning reform is a first step to expand geographic options for renters

2024

AMERICA'S RENTAL HOUSING

JOINT CENTER FOR HOUSING
STUDIES OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Policy context + Literature	Research design	Results	Policy implications + future research

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University   JCHS

Policy Recommendations

- Zoning reform is a first step to expand geographic options for renters

- Some "successful" strategies

  - Zoning reform for multifamily development
  - Policy and design toolkits addressing NIMBY opposition
  - Shifts to by-right approval processes

State may deny grants to communities that don't comply with new MBTA housing law

The grants combined provide tens of millions of dollars to communities for an array of local planning and development programs

By Andrew Brinker Globe Staff, Updated August 17, 2023, 3:22 p.m.

Oregon tweaks restrictive land use law to address housing shortage

The bill will allow cities to acquire new land for development purposes

March 11, 2024, 3:28 pm By Sarah Marx

The Salt Lake Tribune

New housing proposal in Utah would focus on encouraging mother-in-law apartments and more residential buildings along transit corridors

Los Angeles Times

Cambridge's Landmark Affordable Housing Policy, Explained

CALIFORNIA

Don't be fooled: California's new housing laws make significant changes to zoning

The Harvard Crimson

Policy context + Literature	Research design	Results	Policy implications + future research

Policy Recommendations

- That takes work from the local to the federal level

Policy context + Literature	Research design	Results	Policy implications + future research

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University   JCHS

Policy Recommendations

- Zoning changes and increased multifamily housing alone are not enough

- Building homes at lower price points

- Expanding housing subsidies in a range of neighborhoods

Policy context + Literature	Research design	Results	Policy implications + future research

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University   JCHS

Next Research Steps

Next Research Steps

1. **Rental deserts and neighborhood opportunity, from divergence indexes to Gini indexes**

Next Research Steps

1. **Rental deserts and neighborhood opportunity, from divergence indexes to Gini indexes**

2. **A longitudinal look at rental deserts, zoning restrictiveness, and supply/affordability**

Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University   JCHS

Next Research Steps

1. **Rental deserts and neighborhood opportunity, from divergence indexes to Gini indexes**

2. **A longitudinal look at rental deserts, zoning restrictiveness, and supply/affordability**

3. **Rental deserts and neighborhood outcomes**

Thank You!