

# Seeing Race: Teaching Residential Segregation with the Racial Dot Map

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## Abstract

Students commonly hold erroneous notions of a “post-racial” world and individualistic worldviews that discount the role of structure in social outcomes. Jointly, these two preconceived beliefs can be powerful barriers to effective teaching of racial segregation: Students may be skeptical that racial segregation continues to exist, and abstract statistical representations or other sociological research may not be sufficiently vivid or compelling to dissuade students from their prior beliefs. In this article, we present an exercise that uses an interactive map of racial residence patterns to help students see evidence of racial segregation for themselves. Qualitative and quantitative findings, from testing this exercise in Introduction to Sociology courses at two distinct schools by separate instructors, suggest that this exercise is effective at helping college students grasp the extent of racial segregation in America.

## Keywords

race, residential segregation, inequality, online teaching resources, interactive learning

Neighborhoods in the contemporary United States remain highly segregated by race (see e.g., Quillian 2012), which causes and reproduces many other inequalities (Massey 2016; Pettigrew 1979). Despite the magnitude of the problem, students in Introduction to Sociology courses often arrive only dimly aware that racial residential segregation even continues to exist, much less how widespread it really is. This lack of awareness is not surprising given that these students reside in a historical moment that touts a “post-racial” society and provides highly visible signs of progress such as a black president and the removal of de jure discrimination following the Civil Rights Movement. As Ghoshal et al. (2013:138) point out, some students may be apt to dismiss things like residential segregation as “figments of sociologists’ imagination.” Given these barriers, how can we most effectively educate our students about racial segregation?

“Telling” students that racial segregation is widespread in a class lecture is not an effective teaching strategy. This approach neither recognizes

the preconceived notions that students bring to the classroom nor facilitates an active learning environment that can heighten critical thinking (Bean 2011; National Research Council 2000). Leading students to conclude for themselves that racial segregation exists is a much more powerful teaching and learning strategy, particularly when it is paired with comprehensive, contemporary data on racial segregation that are displayed visually. If students see from these data that the segregation scholars claim to exist actually does, then it becomes much harder for students to retain preconceived beliefs

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about a “post-racial” United States. However, it may not be enough just to demonstrate a concept’s validity using data: As much of the literature on effective teaching and learning has documented, active learning activities that require students to apply, analyze, and evaluate course concepts through hands-on activities tend to provide the best opportunity for students to internalize course material for long-term learning and retention (McKeachie and Svinicki 2006; Prince 2004). We therefore introduce and evaluate an active learning exercise that effectively teaches beginning sociology students about racial segregation in the United States using a real-world data visualization of residential locations in the United States by race.

The exercise is based on the Cooper Racial Dot Map, an online interactive map designed by Dustin Cable and hosted at the University of Virginia. The map uses color-coded data from the 2010 census to plot the race of households by address to create an accurate map of racial geography for the entire United States that can be viewed almost down to the household level. We encourage readers to familiarize themselves with the Racial Dot Map found at <http://demographics.coopercenter.org/DotMap/> before reading further. In the following, we present evidence showing that students identified higher levels of segregation in the United States immediately following this exercise and approximately one month later. We also present qualitative evidence demonstrating the ways students’ perceptions of segregation changed. We first briefly review research on racial segregation, colorblind ideology, and active learning theory.

## RACIAL SEGREGATION AND “COLORBLIND” STUDENTS

Teaching students about racial segregation in the United States is recognized as a challenging task for sociology faculty (Khanna and Harris 2015; Mueller 2012). If students are even aware of racial segregation, our exercise showed us there is a tendency to minimize its existence or believe that it stems from individual choices and preferences for particular neighborhoods. Yet, sociologists routinely document the structural forces that are key to understanding the complex history of residential segregation in the United States. Institutionalized discrimination in lending and real estate practices (Jackson 1985; Massey and Lundy 2001), as well as a variety of informal exclusionary practices ranging from intimidation with violence to exclusion from neighborhood social networks (e.g., Loewen 2006), have left a persistently racially segregated landscape across

the country. This segregation creates or reproduces durable inequalities in exposure to violence, police protection, access to education, physical and mental health, and future life trajectories (Fiel 2013; Massey 1995; Massey and Denton 1993; McCoy, Raver, and Sharkey 2015; Quillian 2012; Sharkey et al. 2014).

Many students grew up in racially segregated spaces and as a consequence had limited exposure to racial others. When students are racially segregated (regardless of whether they come from advantaged segregated communities or disadvantaged ones), they are less likely to identify or perceive social injustice stemming from inequality than when they come from racially integrated spaces (Shedd 2015). As a result, beginning sociology students may be unlikely to recognize how racially segregated the United States is or the degree of inequality associated with it.

Racial inequality may be difficult to teach to beginning sociology students because they have grown up in a culture of “colorblind” ideology. The “colorblind” perspective suggests that because legal discrimination against people of color ended in the 1960s, racial inequality either no longer exists or reflects individual failings rather than continuing social or institutional discrimination (McArdle 2008). Indeed, recent U.S. polls show that about 38 percent to 50 percent of white Americans believe white and black Americans are treated equally in society or even that white Americans face more discrimination in society than black Americans (Jones et al. 2015; Pew Research Center 2016). Coupling these polls with the highly visible success of token individuals, such as President Obama or Oprah Winfrey, it is easy to see why some students might come to class believing that racial inequality, including residential segregation, no longer exists despite overwhelming sociological evidence to the contrary.

While students across the United States likely subscribe to these colorblind, individualistic assumptions, students from the northern region of the United States may be particularly susceptible to such assumptions about racial progress. Since before the Civil War, northerners have been viewed as more racially progressive than U.S. southerners, and the south’s history of Jim Crow segregation and the Civil Rights battles that took place there often supersedes students’ knowledge of racism that occurred in the north. Nevertheless, racial segregation has been higher in the north throughout most of the twentieth century (Loewen 2006; Massey and Denton 1993). Many students are therefore likely to have considerable misperceptions of northern racial

inequality, particularly as it relates to residential segregation.

## TEACHING ABOUT RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION WITH ACTIVE LEARNING

Merely *telling* students about racial inequality is not likely to be an effective teaching strategy for beginning sociology students, particularly when we have to overcome entrenched misperceptions (Ghoshal et al. 2013; Grauerholz and Settembrino 2016; Pelton 2013). For this reason, we introduced an activity for teaching residential segregation into our Introduction to Sociology classes that draws on three best teaching practices. First, the activity makes use of active learning. Active learning strategies engage students in hands-on exercises, requiring individuals to take control of their own learning rather than being passive recipients of new information (McKeachie and Svinicki 2006). Compared to traditional instructional methods such as lectures, active learning facilitates a deeper understanding of complex subject matter. As a result, students retain information longer and are better able to transfer that learning to new problems and domains (McKeachie and Svinicki 2006; National Research Council 2000; Prince 2004).

Second, our activity is based on a visual representation. When we incorporate multiple senses into the learning process, we tend to understand and retain information better (Zull 2002). Using color-coded visual representations of residential segregation, our activity requires students to visually examine for themselves the racialized residential landscape of the United States, allowing for both short-term learning and long-term retention.

Finally, because our activity requires students to examine their own hometowns and neighborhoods in addition to their college community, they can connect the map to their concrete lived experience. Thus, rather than just reading words written about the nature of segregation in the United States, students examine personally relevant data that make it much harder to argue that residential segregation is just a “figment of sociologists’ imaginations” (Ghoshal et al. 2013:138).

## DESCRIPTION OF THE EXERCISE

The exercise was designed for an Introduction to Sociology class, but it can easily be used in any course that examines racial inequality or residential

segregation, such as Race and Ethnicity, Urban Sociology, Social Problems, or Social Stratification.

The activity required students to examine patterns of residential racial segregation using the Cooper Racial Dot Map. On a map of the United States, this online tool superimposes over 308 million dots, “one for each person residing in the United States at the location they were counted during the 2010 Census” (Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service 2013).<sup>1</sup> Each dot is color-coded for an individual’s race: white is coded as blue, black as green, Asian as red, and Hispanic as orange; all other racial categories are coded as brown. The map thus provides a visualization of residence by race across the entire United States at an unprecedented level of spatial detail.

Students were tasked with using the map to identify residential racial segregation patterns in a variety of U.S. cities. Some locations we selected are geographically situated to the north: Detroit, Michigan (Figure 1); Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Chicago, Illinois; and Cleveland, Ohio. We selected these cities because the Racial Dot Map reveals stark divides between black and white residences in these cities. Other locations we selected are situated to the south: Orlando, Florida; Richmond, Virginia; and Raleigh, North Carolina. We chose these cities because they visually appear to be less segregated than their northern counterparts and thus challenge students’ preconceived notions about north/south differences in racial segregation. Students were also invited to examine segregation patterns in another city or area of their own choosing. In class, during a session guided by the professor, students displayed their findings to classmates. Two chapters from *American Apartheid* (Massey and Denton 1993) were assigned as reading to accompany the class exercise. In these chapters, “The Missing Link” and “The Construction of the Ghetto,” students learned how, in what context, and why residential racial segregation emerged in addition to historic patterns in the spatial distribution of whites and African Americans within the United States.

Two groups of students completed the assignment in the 2015 fall term/semester. One group was enrolled in an Introduction to Sociology class at Carleton College, a private liberal arts college located in rural Minnesota that follows a trimester system. Carleton enrolls approximately 2,000 undergraduate students who come from across the United States and as many as 34 additional countries. Approximately 8 percent of the student body are international students, and another 22 percent identify as persons of color (Carleton College 2016).



**Figure 1.** Screenshot (in grayscale) of the Racial Dot Map in Detroit.

Twenty-eight students, 5 male and 23 female, were enrolled in the Introduction to Sociology class in which the assignment was administered. Approximately 75 percent of these students identified as white, 11 percent as Asian, 7 percent as black, and another 7 percent as two or more races. Twelve of the students were first-years, 14 were sophomores, and 2 were juniors. Some of these students self-defined as “pre-med” and thus took the class because it is required for the MCAT. Others were enrolled either because they were considering

a major in sociology and anthropology, a combined major at Carleton, or they simply wanted to know more about the discipline. None of the students enrolled were sociology and anthropology majors. All 28 of the students completed the assignment, in addition to both the pre- and posttests.

The second group of students were enrolled in a section of Introduction to Sociology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). UNC-CH is a flagship state university and one of the top ranked public universities in the

United States. UNC-CH enrolls approximately 18,500 undergraduate students, of which approximately one-third identify as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or as having multiple racial identities (UNC-CH 2016). UNC-CH follows a semester system where students typically take four courses per term. A total of 39 students, 14 male and 25 female, were enrolled in the Sociological Perspectives (SOCI 101) class in which the assignment was administered. Thirty-eight of these students completed the in-class assignment in addition to both the pre- and two posttests. Approximately 76 percent of the students identified as white, 3 percent as Asian, 10 percent as black, 3 percent American Indian or Alaska Native, and another 8 percent as two or more races.

Students were mostly sophomores and juniors. Many of these students were also pre-med and thus took the class because it was required for the MCAT; others were pre-law or majoring in sports sciences. Like the students in the Carleton class, none were sociology majors.

At both schools, Introduction to Sociology is organized to emphasize the history of the discipline, core theories and methods, the micro/macro divide, and social stratification by race, class, gender, and sexuality. The class is taught with a combination of lecture, discussion, and in-class exercises. The 10-week academic term at Carleton moves quickly, and so only three class periods were devoted to the study of race. At UNC-CH, about 2 weeks of the 16-week term were dedicated to studying race alone. At Carleton, these classes took place in weeks 5 and 6 of the 10-week term, and at UNC-CH, these classes also took place in the middle of the term, around weeks 8 and 9. In this time span, each student read more than 160 pages of academic material that prepared them to discuss the topic of race in the United States, including the first two chapters from *American Apartheid* (Massey and Denton 1993).

The activity itself required students to answer the questions listed in the following in small groups of about three to five. At Carleton, students prepared answers to these questions as a homework assignment prior to class. At UNC-CH, students conducted the activity without having completed the questions before class. In both cases, students shared answers to the six questions in small groups for 10 to 30 minutes. Then, we discussed students' findings and analysis as a large class.

1. Based on this sample of U.S. cities, are cities in the north more, less, or about equally racially segregated than cities in the south?
2. Based on this sample of cities, rank the following groups in terms of their likelihood of living near whites (1 being most likely to live near whites, 2 being less likely, and 3 being least likely): Asians, blacks, and Hispanics. Why do you think some groups are more likely to live by whites than others?
3. Using a city or area you have personal knowledge of, find some geographical feature (could be a road, river, railroad tracks, etc.) that serves as a dividing line between distinct racially segregated neighborhoods. If you don't have personal knowledge of such a feature, find one on the map and Google it. Explain your relationship with this place and how you see it as a divider. If you don't have personal knowledge of a place, explain what you found in your Google search.
4. Find [City/town of our local college/university] on the map (this may require some serious zooming and inference if the map doesn't label the town). Is [City/town of our local college/university] racially segregated? Where, if at all, is the dividing line in [City/town of our local college/university]? Which groups are divided by the line?
5. *American Apartheid* was published 23 years ago. The authors claim racial segregation is a durable phenomenon. The map suggests that racial segregation is still around today. Why? Don't provide an entire history of racism in the United States in your answer but please list some reasons why racial segregation persists. In doing so, reference the work of Massey and Denton.
6. Based on the *American Apartheid* reading, how do you think racism/prejudice contributes to segregation? How do you think segregation contributes to racism/prejudice?

While students at both schools discussed answers to these questions in class, after completion of the activity, Carleton students wrote a short paper<sup>2</sup> that required them to report their research findings from these six questions.

## RESULTS

Because we wanted to assess how the assignment would impact student views of residential racial segregation, a survey style pretest was distributed a few classes prior to the distribution of the assignment (see e.g., Messinger 2015 on the use of pre- and posttests for pedagogy assessment). The pretest asked students to report their age, race, home state (or country of origin for international students), and classification of their home community (rural, suburban, or urban). Then, using a five-point Likert scale, students estimated how much residential racial segregation they believe exists in the United States: none at all, slightly segregated, mostly segregated, very segregated, and extremely segregated. Finally, students were asked to reflect on a personal experience with racial residential segregation if they had one to share. To ensure students did not perceive the survey to be mandatory, graded, or otherwise influence interactions with their instructor or peers, we anonymized the surveys by having students identify themselves by their first pet's name, followed by the last two digits of their phone number. Responses such as "dickjuicer69" suggest students indeed perceived these surveys to be anonymous.

After completing the pretest and the assignment, a survey style posttest was delivered, which consisted of three questions. The first question asked students how much residential racial segregation they now believe exists in the United States with the same responses categories provided as in the pretest. The final two questions asked students whether this exercise changed their views on residential racial segregation in the United States (five categories: not at all, somewhat, moderately, or greatly) and if so, how? Similar to Mueller's (2012) requirement that students journal their reflections on a family research project, this last question encouraged students to reflect on how their consciousness may have been raised by examining residential segregation patterns at home and across the United States. Both the pretest and posttest were approved by the respective Institutional Review Boards of our home institutions, Carleton College and UNC-CH.

Figure 2 displays how students answered the question "How racially segregated would you say U.S. neighborhoods are?" at Carleton and UNC-CH, both on the pretest and the first posttest. Students generally reported perceiving higher levels of segregation after the exercise. A paired *t* test confirms the visual impression from Figure 2: Students report greater racial segregation in the posttest ( $p < .001$  at both schools).<sup>3</sup> These results accord with our expectations

that students will come to class systematically underestimating the extent of racial residential segregation. In fact, only 1 student reported a decreased perception of racial segregation following the exercise, while 46 students (70 percent) reported increased perceptions of racial segregation.

Concerned about how durable the immediate effect of this exercise was on students, we conducted a second posttest during the last day of class. We do not display these data visually in a figure since student responses were remarkably similar to their initial posttest answers. In the combined Carleton and UNC-CH sample, we were able to retest 59 out of 66 students (89 percent). Out of those students, 46 had no change, 7 reported a one-category drop, 5 reported a one-category increase, and 1 student reported a three-category decrease from extremely to slightly, suggesting that perceptions of racial segregation did not change significantly in the weeks following the first posttest.<sup>4</sup>

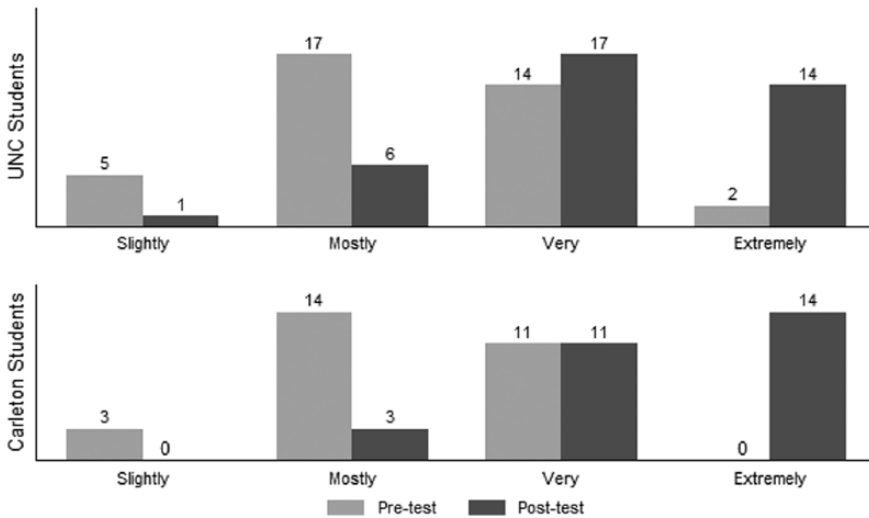
Student demographics and their prior experiences did not seem to materially affect responses on either the pre- or posttest. We found no statistically significant differences in responses between students based on race, gender, rural/urban/suburban, or region/nationality of origin. We also found no significant differences in responses between students who reported personal experience with racism and those who did not. The lack of significant differences across these demographics could be an artifact of our sample, but they do suggest that the exercise may be useful for teaching students from a number of different backgrounds.

### Qualitative Reactions

When asked if this exercise changed their views on residential racial segregation, students at both colleges consistently reported being surprised by what they saw. Several students ( $N = 15$ ) noted the exercise taught them residential racial segregation was more common across cities than they had previously believed, as illustrated in this quote: "I didn't realize how segregated cities were. . . . There is generally a clear dividing line in most cities" (Jessie, Chapel Hill).

Another group of students ( $N = 12$ ) reported the level of segregation in northern states was not what they expected to see, as illustrated in this quote: "I didn't think cities in the north would be as clearly divided as they were" (Flash, Chapel Hill). Several students mentioned that the findings challenge conventional beliefs regarding the nature of racial relations, as experienced through residential segregation, in northern versus southern states, as the following

## How Racially Segregated Would You Say US Neighborhoods Are?



**Figure 2.** Pre- and posttest survey results.

Note: The numbers above the bars indicate the number of students giving each response. N = 38 students at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and N = 28 students at Carleton.

quote illustrates: “It is . . . interesting to see how the North is more segregated when we are taught throughout school that the South has always been the racial problem of America” (Spookie, Chapel Hill).

The largest proportion of students (N = 19) reported the exercise taught them that residential racial segregation is a national phenomenon. Additionally, while discussing national patterns within residential racial segregation, some students drew comparisons to their own neighborhoods. For example, two students who had grown up in mixed-race neighborhoods assumed such diversity was more common than what the data revealed: “I didn’t realize how heavily segregated the U.S. is. I assumed, based on my experiences, that neighborhoods were mostly integrated. However, after this exercise I realize how untrue that is and how segregated the U.S. continues to be” (Bob, Chapel Hill) and “My neighborhood is very integrated, so it is eye opening to see how rare that is in America” (Spookie, Chapel Hill). Another student did not consider the single-race neighborhoods in which she grew up to be characteristic of a larger national pattern. This exercise transformed her perspective: “I haven’t lived in very diverse neighborhoods but I thought it was coincidence and thought nothing of it. This exercise has changed my views drastically on how segregated residential areas in the U.S. are” (Maggie, Carleton).

Finally, a sizeable number of students (N = 14) emphasized the impact that a *visual* representation of racial segregation had on them, illustrated in this quote:

I now realize the true extent of residential racial segregation in the US I did not know how clear cut the dividing lines could be (e.g. 8 mile Road in Detroit). The Cooper Racial Dot Map was a great visual to become aware of the true divides. (Frisco, Carleton)

As these latter quotes suggest, lessons about residential racial segregation are all the more powerful when data are displayed visually, a finding supported by Whitley’s (2013) analysis of image-based learning. For one student, the visual image paired with the assigned readings were compelling enough to dispel her own notions regarding why segregation exists in the United States:

I had no idea that the segregation present was as extreme as it is. I also assumed that what did exist was due to personal preference (Asians actively seek out communities with many Asians and maybe African Americans and Hispanics do too?). I learned through this [exercise] that it’s far more intentional and racist than that. (Phoebe, Carleton)

This transformation in personal perspective reported in the posttests suggests that our exercise created a powerful learning moment for students in our respective Introduction to Sociology classes. Further evidence was found in the short papers Carleton students wrote to accompany the exercise. These students were required to connect their findings to the material assigned from *American Apartheid*. In their papers, students consistently demonstrated an understanding of what residential segregation looks like in addition to being able to explain the structural reasons for its existence. Thus, students indeed seemed to realize that individual choices and preferences for particular neighborhoods were not the driving force behind racial segregation.

## DISCUSSION

Both the quantitative and qualitative results suggest that this exercise is effective for teaching racial segregation. Students' self-reported perceptions of residential racial segregation increased substantially, on average increasing one category on a five-point Likert scale following an immediate posttest, and these results endured at least until the end of the semester. This finding suggests that students arrived at a more accurate perception of the extreme racial residential segregation that exists in the United States. The qualitative evidence shows students understanding that their own perceptions of residential racial segregation have changed as a result of this exercise; only 4 students of a combined 66 (6 percent) reported neither an increase in perceptions of residential racial segregation nor a change in their views. Put another way, 94 percent of our students reported a change in perceptions, in some way, of racial segregation following this exercise. Moreover, as the qualitative evidence shows, students were able to point to specific ways in which their views changed.

We think the evidence presented here is compelling. First, we relied not on a single posttest but conducted an additional posttest at the end of the semester, ensuring that knowledge gains are not highly ephemeral. Second, we conducted these tests with two very different instructors (one experienced, one relatively inexperienced; one female, one male) at very different institutions with different student bodies and still obtained very similar and strong results. Third, we find that students of all backgrounds seem to benefit from this exercise. Regardless of where they are from (their neighborhood, town/city, or state), students have a greater

understanding of the degree of racial segregation in their own communities and across the United States.

By itself, the Racial Dot Map only describes racial segregation; it does not educate students about either the causes or consequences of racial segregation. Nevertheless, we believe the Racial Dot Map can be a very effective tool for teaching the causes and consequences of racial segregation when coupled with other materials. We briefly discuss possible extensions to the exercise.

### *Teaching the Causes of Racial Segregation*

The Racial Dot Map can be coupled with other materials that discuss the causes of racial segregation. For instance, the documentary *Spanish Lake* illustrates the dynamics of contemporary white flight from the Spanish Lake area in Missouri, including interviews with white and black residents (Morton 2014). The Racial Dot Map can be used here to give students a better understanding of the racial context of the area.

Another possibility is to couple the Racial Dot Map with historical materials on the roots of racial segregation and exclusion. One such reason is threat of violence and exclusion by white residents. James Loewen describes how African Americans were excluded from what he calls "Sundown Towns" by threat of violence as late as the 1970s and beyond. When coupled with the Racial Dot Map, readings from Loewen (2006) can show how durable racial segregation remains. Additionally, the 2006 documentary *Banished* shows how whites violently cleansed a number of communities in Arkansas, Missouri, and Georgia during the early twentieth century (Williams 2006; see also Harper 2010). The Racial Dot Map demonstrates that these communities remain nearly 100 percent white to this day.

Other key historical practices leading to residential segregation include discrimination by public and private entities in nearly every step of the housing acquisition process. One documentary that details some of these historical roots of residential segregation is *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, Episode 3 "The House We Live in" (Pounder et al. 2003). In this episode, legal experts, historians, and sociologists track the institutionalized discrimination built into federalized neighborhood risk assessment (including redlining), mortgage lending, and real estate practices (Pounder et al. 2003). When this documentary is presented alongside the Racial Dot Map, students can see how choices made by policy makers, lenders, developers, and



real estate agents in the twentieth century have led to durably segregated spaces today.

The practice of redlining is discussed by many of the materials presented here, including readings assigned prior to the Racial Dot Map activity (*American Apartheid* by Massey and Denton) and documentaries like *Race: The Power of An Illusion*. To further reinforce students' understanding of the legacy of redlining, another interactive map<sup>5</sup> created by the Mapping Inequality project provides students a view of Home Owners' Loan Corporation redlining maps from the 1930s and 1940s in major U.S. cities. When students click on the redlining maps, they are presented with original historical records detailing *why* particular neighborhoods are assigned certain risk values. When, for example, neighborhoods classified as "best negro area" and "contains best type of negro residents" are still classified as red, or "hazardous" (Nelson et al. 2016), it becomes clear to students that race mattered considerably to the construction of segregated spaces—patterns that, as the Racial Dot Map illustrates, clearly endure today.

### Teaching the Consequences of Racial Segregation

In addition to examining the causes of racial segregation, the Racial Dot Map can be coupled with other interactive maps to show its consequences. The Social Explorer website,<sup>6</sup> for instance, provides a platform for mapping demographic variables, such as household income, which could be coupled with the Racial Dot Map. Other mapping programs, such as Google's Street View,<sup>7</sup> allow students to "walk" through neighborhoods of interest that they locate on the Racial Dot Map to see what kinds of resources or amenities are available (or not) in different racialized spaces.

The Racial Dot Map can also provide students with geographic context for contemporary race-related events. For example, recent media reports of police brutality against people of color and the riots that have subsequently erupted might be better understood if students saw levels of segregation in places where particular events have happened. In doing so, students may also gain deeper insights into the origins of protests and social movements like Black Lives Matter.

Finally, our exercise required students to examine seven U.S. cities we purposely selected to challenge preconceived notions about north/south differences. We encourage requiring students to examine an even larger selection of cities in both northern and southern states so as to see exceptions. Atlanta, Georgia, for example, shows high

levels of residential segregation despite being a southern city. By having students examine outliers to the north/south differences that form the basis of Massey and Denton's argument, we can critique, complicate, or add nuance to this now classic understanding of residential segregation.

## CONCLUSION

Racial segregation in the United States is a difficult topic, so how can we best teach it? In this article, we presented an exercise to teach racial residential segregation combined with evidence from quantitative pre- and posttests and qualitative analysis of students' reactions to the exercise. The exercise made use of available data; it was not particularly time-consuming, and the data we collected suggest the exercise had significant and durable impacts on students' understanding of racial segregation. We discussed a few possible extensions to our exercise, but our hope is that sociologists will adapt and extend this exercise to fit their own course goals.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Reviewers of this manuscript were, in alphabetical order, Raj Ghoshal and Nikki Khanna.

## NOTES

1. The map introduces some limited random variation in individuals' locations to protect anonymity in sparsely populated areas.
2. Papers were restricted to six pages in length.
3. The *t* test assumes that responses are continuous when in fact they are ordinal. Concerned about this and other aspects of our original scale, we replicated the study asking students to rate racial segregation on a 1 to 10 scale during the spring 2016 semester at the University of North Carolina with substantively identical results.
4. Using a paired *t* test, we were unable to reject the null hypothesis that the true mean change between posttests was zero ( $p = .28$ , two-tailed).
5. Available here: <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/>.
6. [www.socialexplorer.com](http://www.socialexplorer.com)
7. [www.google.com/streetview/](http://www.google.com/streetview/)

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