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Dataset

For this project, I am using a dataset on school desegregation orders from ProPublica. This dataset describes school districts that operated in violation of federal desegregation laws, and were placed under court orders to desegregate. This dataset includes two different files: one that describes orders for schools to desegregate from US federal courts (`invol_data`), and another that describes instances where schools voluntarily segregated in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (`vol_data`). For `invol_data`, there are five columns denoting agreement ID number, state, date of initial investigation, date of desegregation agreement, and school district name. For `vol_data`, there are also five columns, but they denote district name, state, city, year when the initial desegregation order was first placed, and year when the desegregation order was lifted. The `invol_data` file spans from 1955-2014, but the `vol_data` file only spans from 1996-2014.

Motivation/Research Questions

This topic is particularly pressing and culturally relevant, considering that the American history of white supremacy and systematic oppression have had impacts on social issues that have lasted until today. Because of the discrepancies in the two files, I think it would make the

most sense to investigate the invol_data file, since it includes the majority of the Civil Rights movement throughout the 1950's-1960's. Some research questions I have in mind revolve around geographic data and time. For example, are court desegregation orders more likely to occur in rural areas or urban areas? This question would require more data that would correspond to the "city" and "state" variables, and would also require some sort of detrending to account for the higher number of schools in urban areas.

References

1. Qiu, Yue, and Nikole Hannah-Jones. "School Desegregation Orders." *A National Survey of School Desegregation Orders*, 23 Dec. 2014, projects.propublica.org/graphics/desegregation-orders.
2. ProPublica. "School Desegregation Orders Data." *ProPublica Data Store*, U.S. Department of Justice; Stanford University, 19 Mar. 2019, www.propublica.org/datastore/dataset/school-desegregation-orders-data.

[side note: one of the authors for the first reference is Nikole Hannah-Jones, who is now nationally recognized for her 2019 creation, the New York Times' *1619 Project*, which has been the recipient of criticism from President Trump and other prominent Republicans in America.]