# **Exploring Patterns of Environmental Justice: Redlining and Biodiversity**

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# EDS-223 Homework Assignment #2

#### **Objective**

In this project, I investigated the Homeowner's Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) or *redlining* in Los Angeles County. I am tasked with producing a map of HOLC grades in LA county as well as looking at the relationship between redlining and environmental justice. In addition, I investigated biodiversity observations by HOLC grade to see the relationship between community science and redlined regions.

#### **Environment Set-up**

```
# Load relevant libraries
library(sf) # For vector data
library(stars) # For raster data
library(tmap) # For static and interactive maps
library(here) # For importing data
library(tidyverse) # For data cleaning
library(dplyr) # For filtering data
library(paletteer) # For pretty colors
library(testthat) # For efficient workflows
```

#### Load in Data

```
#|output: false
# Load in EJSCREEN data for data on census blocks
ejscreen <- sf::st_read(here::here("data", "ejscreen","EJSCREEN_2023_BG_StatePct_with_AS_CNM
Reading layer `EJSCREEN_StatePctiles_with_AS_CNMI_GU_VI' from data source
  `/Users/isabellasegarra/Documents/MEDS/EDS-223/HW-assignments/eds-223-hw-2/data/ejscreen/E
  using driver `OpenFileGDB'
Simple feature collection with 243021 features and 223 fields
Geometry type: MULTIPOLYGON
Dimension:
                XY
Bounding box: xmin: -19951910 ymin: -1617130 xmax: 16259830 ymax: 11554350
Projected CRS: WGS 84 / Pseudo-Mercator
# Load in HOLC Redlining data
redlining <- sf::st_read(here::here("data", "mapping-inequality", "mapping-inequality-los-angular redlining <- sf::st_read(here::here("data", "mapping-inequality", "mapping-inequality")
Reading layer `mapping-inequality-los-angeles' from data source
  `/Users/isabellasegarra/Documents/MEDS/EDS-223/HW-assignments/eds-223-hw-2/data/mapping-in-
  using driver `GeoJSON'
Simple feature collection with 417 features and 14 fields
Geometry type: MULTIPOLYGON
Dimension:
                XY
Bounding box: xmin: -118.6104 ymin: 33.70563 xmax: -117.7028 ymax: 34.30388
Geodetic CRS: WGS 84
# Load in Bird Observations data
bird_obs <- sf::st_read(here::here("data", "gbif-birds-LA", "gbif-birds-LA.shp"))</pre>
Reading layer `gbif-birds-LA' from data source
  `/Users/isabellasegarra/Documents/MEDS/EDS-223/HW-assignments/eds-223-hw-2/data/gbif-birds
  using driver `ESRI Shapefile'
Simple feature collection with 1288865 features and 1 field
Geometry type: POINT
Dimension:
```

Bounding box: xmin: -118.6099 ymin: 33.70563 xmax: -117.7028 ymax: 34.30385

Geodetic CRS: WGS 84

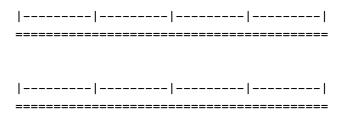
#### Part 1: Legacy of redlining in current environmental (in)justice

#### Objective:

Explore historical redlining in Los Angeles and its legacy on present-day environmental justice.

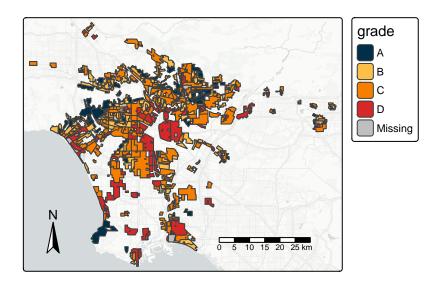
#### Map 1: Historical Redlining of Neighborhoods in Los Angeles, CA

```
#.....Create a map of historical redlining neighborhoods.....
redlining map <- tm shape(redlining) + # Map layer of redlined neighborhoods
  tm_borders() +
  tm_polygons(fill = "grade",
             palette = c("#003049", "#fcbf49", "#f77f00", "#d62828")) + # Fill in polygons
  tm_legend(title = "HOLC Grade", size = 0.5) + # Add map legend
  tm_title(
    "Historical Redlining of Neighborhoods in Los Angeles, CA",
    size = 1,
   fontface = "bold"
  ) + # Add title and subtitle
  tm_title("Data source: Digital Scholarship Lab (University of Richmond)") +
  #tm graticules() +
  tm_scalebar() + # Add scalebar
  tm_compass(position = c("left", "bottom")) + # Add compass
  tm_basemap("CartoDB.PositronNoLabels") # Add basemap
redlining_map # View map
```



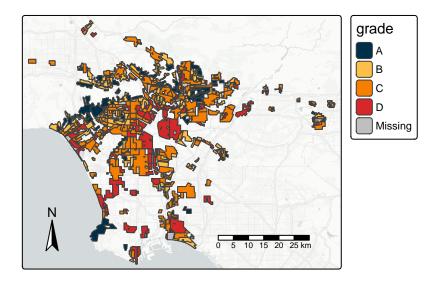
#### Historical Redlining of Neighborhoods in Los Angeles, CA

Data source: Digital Scholarship Lab (University of Richmond)



# Save map
tmap\_save(redlining\_map, here("redlining\_map.png"))

# **Historical Redlining of Neighborhoods in Los Angeles, CA**Data source: Digital Scholarship Lab (University of Richmond)



#### **Data Wrangling**

#### **CRS Matching**

In order to work with the EJ Screen and Redlining/HOLC dataset as one dataset, I need to first check if the coordinate refrence system (CRS) match.

```
# Check that the CRS for 'ejscreen' and 'redlining' match
st_crs(ejscreen) # EPSG 3857
st_crs(redlining) # EPSG 4326

# Another way to check CRS
st_crs(ejscreen) == st_crs(redlining) # FALSE

# Transform the CRS of ejscreen to match redlining
ejscreen_transform <- st_transform(ejscreen, crs = st_crs(redlining))

# Check CRS of ejscreen
st_crs(ejscreen_transform) == st_crs(redlining) # TRUE

# Check is CRS of `bird_obs` match
st_crs(bird_obs)</pre>
```

- [1] "CRS Match!"
- [1] "CRS Match!"

#### **Filtering**

For the purposes of this assignment, the EJ Screen data only needs to show Los Angeles County.

```
#.....Filter EJ Screen data.....

# Filter to all data from Los Angeles County

la_ejscreen <- ejscreen_transform %>%
   dplyr::filter(CNTY_NAME == "Los Angeles County") %>%
   janitor::clean_names()
```

#### **CRS Matching**

# Check if it worked

In order to combine the EJ Screen and the Redlining data, I need to make sure there are no invalid geometries that can prevent the joining of the data.

```
#.....Checking for invalid geometries in 'la_ejscreen'.....
# Check for 'la_ejscreen' invalid geometries
st_is_valid(la_ejscreen)
which(!st_is_valid(la_ejscreen))
# Make geometries valid
la_ejscreen <- st_make_valid(la_ejscreen)</pre>
# Check if it worked
test_that("All geometries in la_ejscreen are valid", {
  expect_equal(which(!st_is_valid(la_ejscreen)), integer(0))
})
#.....Checking for invalid geometries in 'redlining'.....
# Check for 'redlining' invalid geometries
st_is_valid(redlining)
which(!st_is_valid(redlining))
# Make geometries valid
redlining <- st_make_valid(redlining)</pre>
# Check if it worked
test_that("All geometries in redlining are valid", {
  expect_equal(which(!st_is_valid(redlining)), integer(0))
})
#.....Checking for invalid geometries in 'redlining'.....
# Check for invalid geometries in 'bird_obs'
st_is_valid(bird_obs)
which(!st_is_valid(bird_obs))
bird_obs <- st_make_valid(bird_obs)</pre>
```

test\_that("All geometries in bird\_obs are valid", {

```
expect_equal(which(!st_is_valid(bird_obs)), integer(0))
})
```

#### Join Data

Now, finally join the data!

```
#.....Join Los Angeles ejscreen with redlining data.....

# Use 'st_join()' because you want to utilize the geometries of redlining while keeping the la_redlining <- st_join(x = redlining, y = la_ejscreen, join = st_intersects) %>%
    st_drop_geometry()

# View the new dataframe head(la_redlining)
```

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area_id city_id grade
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1.2 [ [ 34.13696999999999, -118.46807 ], [ 34.153350000000003, -118.42031 ] ]
1.3 [ [ 34.13696999999998, -118.46807 ], [ 34.153350000000003, -118.42031 ] ]
1.4 [ [ 34.13696999999999, -118.46807 ], [ 34.153350000000003, -118.42031 ] ]
1.5 [ [ 34.13696999999998, -118.46807 ], [ 34.153350000000003, -118.42031 ] ]
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1.3 0.2889005 3.540514 11.801294 5.368539 13.300712 4.618418 13.300712 4.618418
1.4 0.3086742 5.368964 9.622310 4.256178 8.856031 4.947419
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     d2_dslpm d5_dslpm d2_cancer d5_cancer
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    19.751265 7.229949 13.167510 4.819966 18.183704 6.656143
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1.1 12.130435 4.119658 8.217391 2.790736 11.347826 3.853873
                                                                  12.521739
1.2 14.360755 6.284986 9.728254 4.257571 13.434255 5.879503
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1.3 12.686833 4.405260 8.594306 2.984208 11.868327 4.121049
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1.5 19.178247 10.155496 11.344879 6.007476 15.666737 8.296039
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    d5_rsei_air d2_ptraf d5_ptraf d2_ldpnt d5_ldpnt
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       7.344710 12.226974 4.475683 20.064777 7.344710 19.437753 7.115188
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       4.252550 9.391304 3.189412 15.652174 5.315687 11.347826 3.853873
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       6.487727 16.445381 7.197323 8.570128 3.750717 13.202630 5.778132
       4.547365 9.822064 3.410524 9.003559 3.126313 12.072954 4.192102
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1.1 11.934783 4.053212 7.434783 2.524951 18.78261 6.378825 17.80435
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    b_pm25 b_ozone b_dslpm b_cancer b_resp b_rsei_air b_ptraf b_ldpnt b_pnpl
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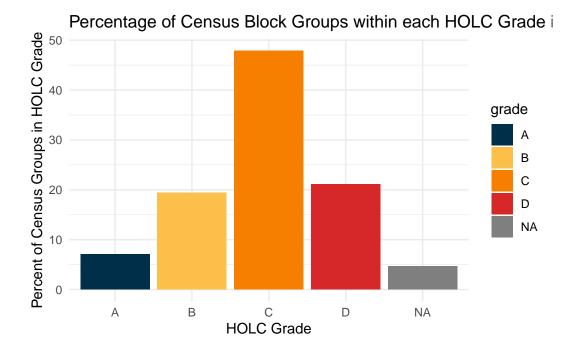
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7
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    b_prmp b_ptsdf b_ust b_pwdis b_d2_pm25 b_d5_pm25 b_d2_ozone b_d5_ozone
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    b_d2_dslpm b_d5_dslpm b_d2_cancer b_d5_cancer b_d2_resp b_d5_resp
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    b_d2_rsei_air b_d5_rsei_air b_d2_ptraf b_d5_ptraf b_d2_ldpnt b_d5_ldpnt
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    b_d2_pnpl b_d5_pnpl b_d2_prmp b_d5_prmp b_d2_ptsdf b_d5_ptsdf b_d2_ust
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    b_d5_ust b_d2_pwdis b_d5_pwdis t_demogidx_2 t_demogidx_5 t_peopcolorpct
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```
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    t_ldpnt t_pnpl t_prmp t_ptsdf
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    t_d2_ozone t_d5_ozone t_d2_dslpm t_d5_dslpm t_d2_cancer t_d5_cancer
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                  39 %ile
                             25 %ile
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       40 %ile
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                         83 %ile
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                                                           494282
                                                                           0
       25 %ile
                77 %ile
                         77 %ile
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    npl_cnt tsdf_cnt exceed_count_80 exceed_count_80_sup shape_length
```

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1
        0
                  0
                                                      0
                                                            4219.665
                                  1
1.1
                  0
                                  0
                                                      0
                                                            4170.983
         0
1.2
         0
                  0
                                  0
                                                      0
                                                            2506.184
1.3
         0
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                                                      0
                                                            3096.982
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1.4
         0
                                  0
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                                                            3619.952
1.5
                  0
                                  0
                                                      5
                                                            2851.479
   shape_area
1
     723466.8
1.1 504513.6
1.2
     233033.8
1.3
     287278.3
1.4 645960.2
1.5
     392602.9
```

#### Summary tables

```
#.....Summary tables.....
# The percentage of census block groups that fall within each HOLC grade
tot_grade <- nrow(la_redlining["grade"])</pre>
census_block_grade <- la_redlining %>%
  group_by(grade) %>%
  summarize(percent_grade_HOLC = n()/tot_grade * 100)
# Add visualization
percent_grade_census <- ggplot(census_block_grade, aes(x = grade, y = percent_grade_HOLC, file</pre>
  geom_col() +
  scale_fill_manual(values = c( "A" = "#003049", "B" = "#fcbf49", "C" = "#f77f00",
                                "D" = "#d62828")) +
  labs( x = "HOLC Grade",
       y = "Percent of Census Groups in HOLC Grade",
       title = "Percentage of Census Block Groups within each HOLC Grade in LA County") +
  theme_minimal()
# View figure
percent_grade_census
```



# Save figure

# View table
sum\_holc

```
ggsave(here::here("figs", "percent_grade_census.png"))
#......Summary tables......
# The percent of census block groups that don't fall within a HOLC grade
# Use 'st_joint()' in the 'st_join() argument to return features in 'la_ejscreen' that don't
la_redlining_disjoin <- st_join(la_ejscreen, redlining, join = st_disjoint) %>%
    st_drop_geometry()

tot_no_grade <- nrow(la_redlining_disjoin["grade"])
census_block_no_grade <- la_redlining_disjoin %>%
    group_by(grade) %>%
    summarize(percent_not_HOLC = n()/tot_no_grade * 100)
```

sum\_holc<- full\_join(census\_block\_grade,census\_block\_no\_grade, by = "grade")</pre>

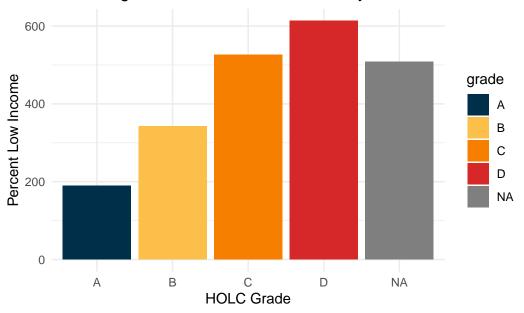
# Combine the 'census\_block\_grade' and 'census\_block\_no\_grade'

```
# A tibble: 5 x 3
  grade percent_grade_HOLC percent_not_HOLC
  <chr>
                     <dbl>
                                      <dbl>
1 A
                     7.03
                                     13.7
2 B
                                     29.0
                     19.4
3 C
                     47.9
                                     40.0
4 D
                     21.1
                                     17.0
5 <NA>
                     4.63
                                      0.230
```

#### **Visualizations**

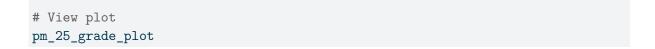
#### % Low Income

### Percentage of Low-Income Residents by HOLC Grade in Los

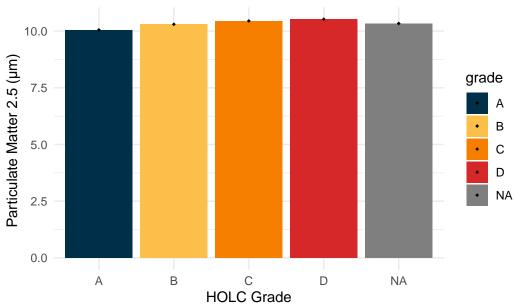


```
# Save figure
ggsave(here::here("figs", "low_income_grade_plot.png"))
```

#### Percentile Particle Matter 2.5







```
# Save figure
ggsave(here::here("figs", "pm_25_grade_plot.png"))
```

#### My results

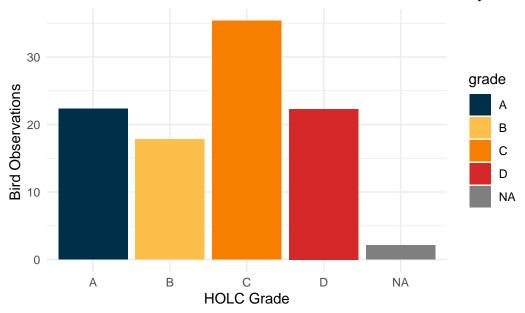
In the graph "Percentage of Low-Income Residents by HOLC Grade in Los Angeles County", we see that HOLC grades C-D have more low-income residents. This coincides with the Home Owners'Loan Corporation zoning that led to reduced investments in grades C and D (University of Richmond, 2023). This reducing in investments and subsequent "redlining" led to a reduced income for residents in those regions of Los Angeles county. In addition to reduced income and limited community resources, these communities also face environmental injusticies. In the graph "PM2.5 Concentrations by HOLC Grade in Los Angeles County", we see that all Los Angeles counties had an average of 10 µm of particulate matter 2.5 (PM 2.5) pollution. This reflects the present-day pollution issue within Los Angeles county. In the context of the HOLC grade, those in grades C and D show a slightly higher average of PM 2.5, displaying once again, the relationship between environmental justice and limited resources in communities that are within the redlining districts.

#### Part 2: Legacy of redlining in biodiversity observations

# View plot
bird\_grade\_plot

```
#.....Join redlining with birds......
# Filter 'bird_obs' to 'redlining' extent
bird_obs <- bird_obs[redlining, ]</pre>
# 'st_join()' the redlining and 'bird_obs'
bird_redlining <- st_join(bird_obs, redlining, st_intersects) %>%
   st_drop_geometry() # Drop geometry
#.....Find the percentage of bird observations within each HOLC grade.....
grade bird <- bird redlining %>%
 mutate(total_rows = n()) %>%
 group_by(grade) %>%
  summarise(perc_grade = n()/first(total_rows) * 100)
# Plot 'grade_bird' data
bird_grade_plot <- ggplot(grade_bird, aes(x = grade, y = perc_grade, fill = grade)) +</pre>
  geom_col() +
 scale_fill_manual(values = c( "A" = "#003049", "B" = "#fcbf49", "C" = "#f77f00",
                               "D" = "#d62828")) +
 labs( x = "HOLC Grade",
      y = "Bird Observations",
      title = "Bird Observations within each HOLC Grade in LA County") +
 theme minimal()
```

## Bird Observations within each HOLC Grade in LA County



```
# Save figure
ggsave(here::here("figs", "bird_grade_plot.png"))
```

The graph above shows that HOLC grade C has the most bird observations, which contradicts the statements in Ellis-Soto et.al 2023 which say less bird observations in historically redlined zones (i.e. zones C-D). This can be due to the other factors that influence biodiversity that were included in Ellis-Soto's study – vegetation, open space, population density, and climate. Although we looked at population density, these other factors can truly reveal how thriving the biodiversity is in these redlined regions.