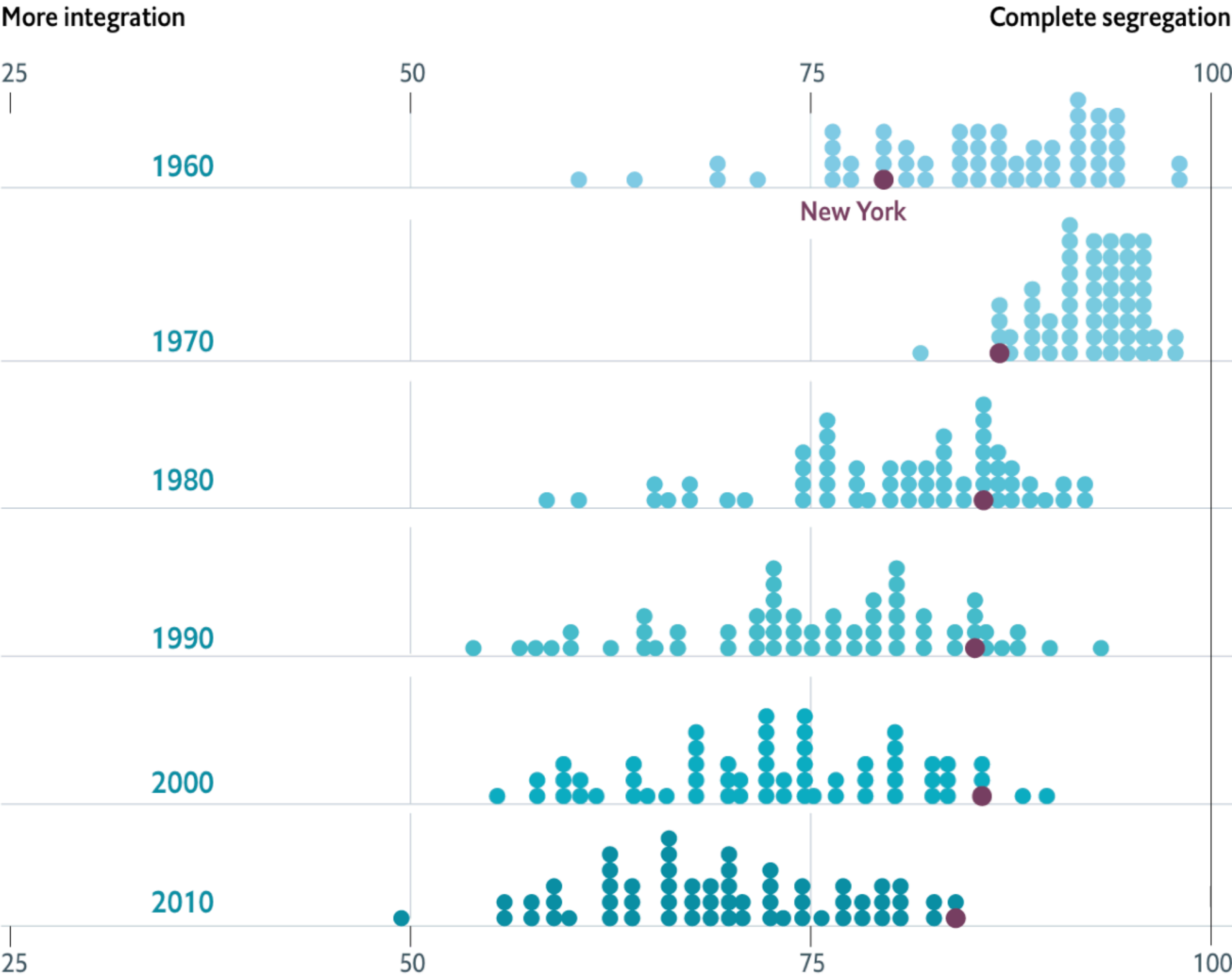


2010 Census Block Data

1 Dot = 1 Person

- White
- Black
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Other Race / Native American / Multi-racial

Distribution of black-white segregation in 60 largest metro areas



The **index of dissimilarity** is a [demographic](#) measure of the evenness with which two groups are distributed across component geographic areas that make up a larger area. The index score can also be interpreted as the [percentage](#) of one of the two groups included in the calculation that would have to move to different geographic areas in order to produce a distribution that matches that of the larger area. The index of dissimilarity can be used as a measure of segregation.

The basic formula for the index of dissimilarity is:

$$\frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^N \left| \frac{a_i}{A} - \frac{b_i}{B} \right|$$

where:

- a_i = the population of group A in the i^{th} area, e.g. census tract
- A = the total population in group A in the large geographic entity for which the index of dissimilarity is being calculated.
- b_i = the population of group B in the i^{th} area
- B = the total population in group B in the large geographic entity for which the index of dissimilarity is being calculated.

The index of dissimilarity is applicable to any [categorical variable](#) (whether demographic or not) and because of its simple properties is useful for input into multidimensional scaling and clustering programs. It has been used extensively in the study of [social mobility](#) to compare distributions of origin (or destination) occupational categories.