

## Week 7 Reflection

### Prompt

- Why, in your opinion, does segregation remain an enduring characteristic for most American cities, despite efforts to address it?
- How can visualization of segregation (and its consequences) make a difference?
- What can segregation measures capture well? What aspects of segregation are more challenging to measure?

### Reflection

I think segregation remains an enduring characteristic for most American cities, despite efforts to address it, for various reasons. Underlying all of them, I think, is that our relationship to land and development is rooted in colonial, white-supremacist thought. There are a number of inseparable factors that play a role in segregation and I think our efforts to address it have failed because they've only attempted to tackle one side of it, when the only solution is systemic change. Segregation, then, remains an enduring characteristic for most American cities because successfully addressing it would require us to radically reimagine how our cities look and function.

Visualizing segregation (and its consequences) can make a difference in that it allows us to better see the disparities between different parts of a city. One concern that I have with visualization is that it suggests segregation is something that could be solved through integration – if we place low-income earners in high-income areas, or black people in white neighborhoods, we'll have a more equal society. And, on the other hand, if we invest more money in low-income neighborhoods or encourage more white people to live in black neighborhoods, we'd also have a more equal society. So, in some ways, I think visualizing segregation and its consequences diminishes our ability to think of it as a multi-dimensional issue that can't be solved solely by the redistribution of people or wealth.

The dissimilarity index and other tools for measuring residential segregation can capture various disparities and access to opportunity well. They are useful for understanding *how* segregated different neighborhoods are. Yet, there are other aspects of segregation that are more challenging to measure. For me, I think the most challenging aspect of segregation is measuring its systemic nature. Even though there are clear disparities between this neighborhood and that one, how do we close those gaps? What are our motivations for closing those gaps, and will they lead to systemic change?