REDLINING AND DE FACTO SEGREGATION

A Web-based, Geospatial Visualisation

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Joe Steele
Parsons School of Design
Data Visualization MS

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Abstract

There persists in America an embedded network of institutional factors contributing to unequal social outcomes. Before and beyond any specific instances of explicit, personally-directed hate, are historically-defined patterns of disenfranchisement, operating outside the purview of the public sphere. Nowhere is the historic character of such institutions more apparent than in the context of wealth accumulation and distribution. A single arc can be traced from 19th century land endowment to ensuing 20th century credit discrimination, and forward to the perverse contemporary state of de facto segregation.

Compounding the issue of discursively challenging institutional structures are broad misconceptions on their character and import. When conversations are allowed to focus around only the most explicit and literal instances, it enables all else to be hand-waved away with only vague dismissals; premises are hidden and rhetoric is elevated. In public discourse, then, value can be added through direct, concise, and easily-interpretable representations of typically oblique content.

The particular case of historic redlining is a distinct candidate for such visual representation; the practice itself involved systematically denying both public and private services to neighbourhoods, based on their racial profiles. Given the clear geospatial nature of redlining and the relevant data, an opportunity exists for a graphical argument to be made on its sustained impact[1].

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