Week 1 Journal

Week 1 in neighborhood analysis was overwhelming yet refreshing. It was overwhelming because of the stress of looking at the syllabus. R is a language on its own. I never quite saw myself learning a new language at this age, however, I can see the importance of learning it and how it will help me in the future when analyzing data. I have some experience with R but did not understand it. Knowing that we were going to learn R from scratch was refreshing because I know that I will have a group of people to learn with.

Week 2 Journal

Finally starting R proved to be less overwhelming than I though it would be. Professor Greenlee has set up a workbook format for teaching R that explains how to do things step-by step. Initially, I did not understand the logic behind R and how it works in general. However, after the last two labs I understand the logic!! Its very exciting to understand the logic behind it because I feel like I can READ the functions as they are being explained. While I know that I am not at pro at R yet, I think its very exciting to know that with practice I will be able to understand the language. The workbooks that Greenlee prepared have made R feel very intuitive and easy to use. While I am not over the intimidation of coding with R, I am still comforted by the fact that we have a group of people eager to learn and a professor patient enough to teach us what the language means. During the quiet room time for labs, I have taken advantage and made some friends to work with outside of class so that we may help each other when things get confusing. It is great to know that we are in an environment where people will be using this skill to advance their own projects.

One of the limitations with representing neighborhood quantitively is that data does not tell the entire story. Having background research on particular subjects and historical background of people and neighborhoods is imperative to tell the story in the best way possible. However, the advantage of using quantitative data is being able to show relationships that may not be evident through simply walking through or reading about a neighborhood. Using quantitative data is a great supplement for data analysis when portrayed properly. I think that when we look at data, we can learn that it can be the best supplement to validate arguments and frame stories. However, we can also learn that reading about communities and their histories is imperative for understanding what we are learning about.