

WEEK 8

Segregation in Illinois



“Racism is still with us, but it is up to us to prepare our children for what they have to meet and hopefully we shall overcome.”

ROSA PARKS

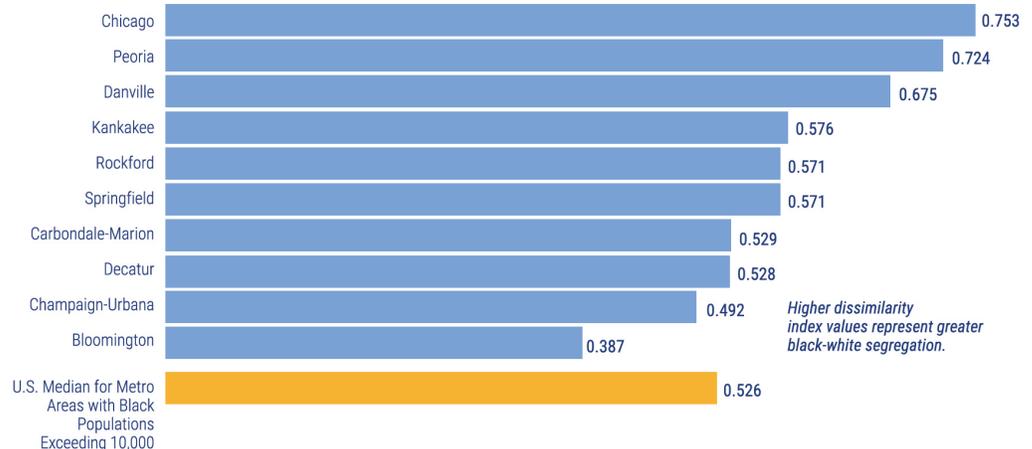
Institutional Racism is defined as “the systematic distribution of resources, power and opportunity in our society to the benefit of people who are white and the exclusion of people of color.” ([Solid Ground](#))

When you hear the word segregation, what do you think of? Many of us think back to the Civil Rights Movement. Yet, American cities continue to be highly segregated. Using U.S. Census Bureau data, [Governing Magazine](#) found Chicago ranks as the third most segregated metro area in the nation. Illinois downstate cities are also being disproportionately segregated, with Peoria being the most segregated city when it comes to schools and sixth most segregated metro area in the nation in terms of Black and White residential segregation.

To assess current levels of residential segregation, [Governing](#) analyzed the latest 2017 five-year American Community Survey estimates from the Census Bureau. Our primary measure is what’s known as the index of dissimilarity, with higher values (on a scale of 0 to 1) representing higher levels of segregation between blacks and whites.

HOW SEGREGATION IN ILLINOIS COMPARES NATIONALLY

Nearly all downstate Illinois metro areas have higher black-white segregation than most other areas with black populations exceeding 10,000, as measured by their dissimilarity index. This is also generally true of many other parts of the industrial Midwest.



Present-day racism was built on a long history of racially distributed resources and ideas that shape our view of ourselves and others. It is a hierarchical system that comes with a broad range of policies and institutions that keep it in place. Policies shaped by institutional racism that enforce segregation include redlining, predatory lending, the exclusion of veterans from the G.I. bill, and the forced segregation of neighborhoods by the Federal Housing Authority. As a result of institutional racism, inequities persist in employment, housing, education, healthcare, government and other sectors.

Week 8 Challenge

Please **choose one or two** of the below activities to engage with for 15 minutes this week, and if you have time, we encourage you to complete more.



ACTIVITY A

Explore the [Racial Dot Map](#) created by the University of Virginia, which uses colored dots to visualize how racial segregation appears in our communities. We encourage you to zoom into Illinois and your city to see how it plays out in our backyard. **Read** more about the methodology [here](#).



ACTIVITY B

Read stories in Governing Magazine series [“Segregated in the Heartland: An Investigative Series”](#) surrounding issues of segregation in Illinois.



ACTIVITY C

Why are cities still so segregated? **Watch** this quick video where [NPR’s Code Switch](#) looks at the factors contributing to modern day segregation.



ACTIVITY D

Fifty years after Martin Luther King Jr.’s death, our nation is still divided. **Read** more from [The Economist](#) about how segregation exists today in cities across America and the costly impact it has on the future of our communities.

Share your reflections and any resources that helps further the discussion on today’s topic on social media using the hashtag [#UWIEquityChallenge](#).

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