

# The American Dream and History of Housing Discrimination

Emma Geary, Dr. Rebecca Koerselman

Department of History and Philosophy, Department of Education, Northwestern College

## Argument

The socioeconomic and religious divide between Black and White communities in Kansas City can be traced back to housing discrimination. Housing discrimination in

Kansas City has led to perpetual low socioeconomic status in the Black community, lower ACT scores, and segregation in churches.

## Results of Housing Discrimination

Lower ACT scores in predominately Black communities and schools with the majority of students on free and reduced lunch

Racist real estate practices, while being illegal, still influences communities east of Troost Avenue

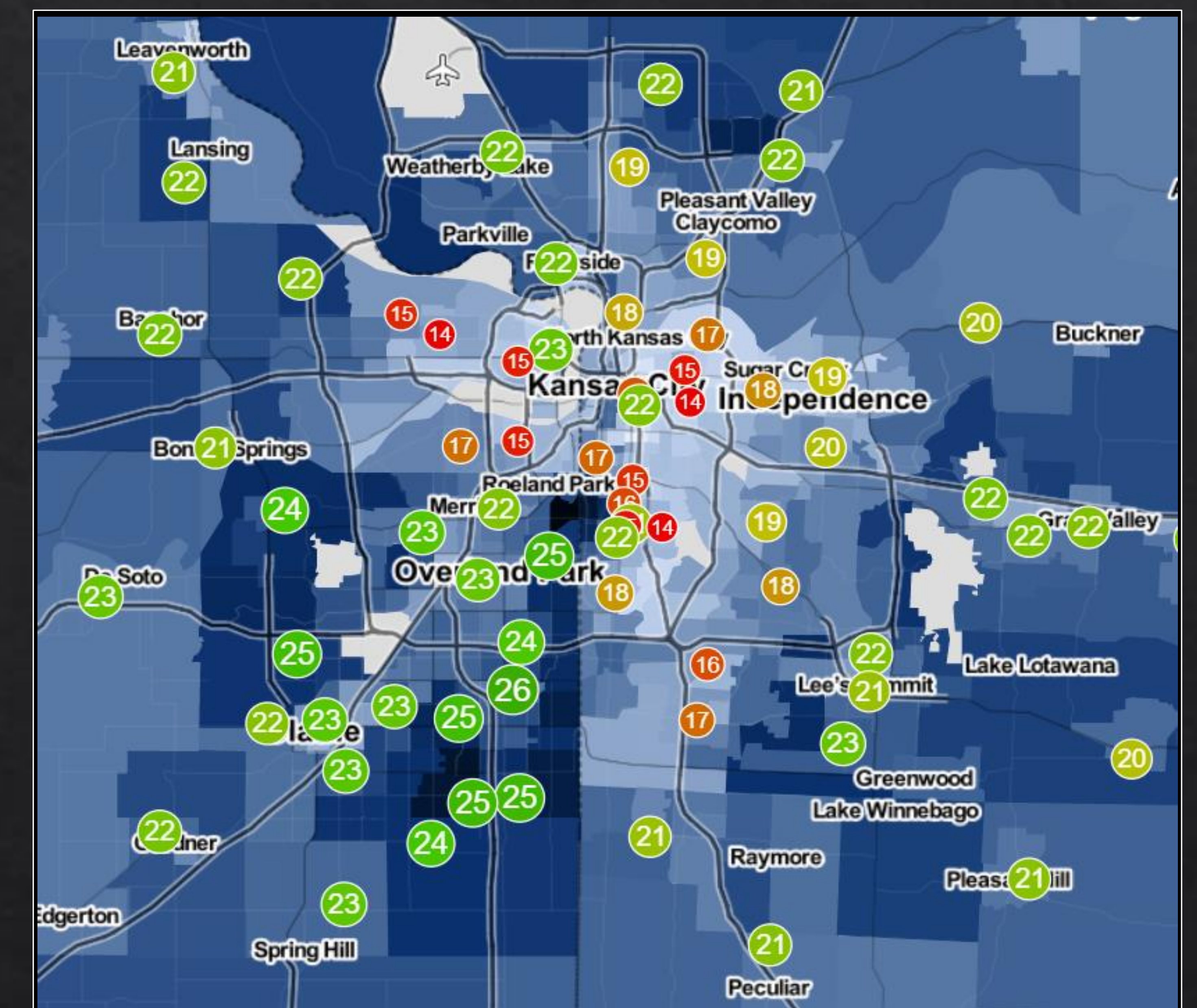
Church congregations are separated by geographical differences not by ideological differences

## Conclusion

The best way for the church to thrive in the United States is to address the institutional issues, especially for those affected by systemic injustices. Nation-building and justice involve dismantling institutions of systemic racism including ideologies like the American Dream. Improvements are needed in schools and the church, and the separations of socioeconomic status should not continue to have a grip on the lives of so many individuals. Racism needs to be treated as material inequality and not one of personal prejudice exclusively.

## Research of Housing Discrimination

On July 27, 1963, the *Kansas City Star* posted listings of residences for sale around Troost Avenue. In 1963, the homes ranged in price from \$10,500 to \$17,750. Accounting for inflation, in 2022, those homes would range from \$94,204.91 to \$159,251.16, respectively. Continually over 60 years, these listing prices were exaggerated. Houses west of Troost could sell for eight times more than homes east of Troost. Today, those same homes range from \$45,017 to \$363,222. There is a clear discrepancy between the price ranges of these homes which suggests a prevalent and ongoing factor. This discrepancy has been named "Troost Wall" in Kansas City because it is the dividing line of race within the city. Jesse Clyde (JC) Nichols was one of the most notable developers of commercial and residential real estate in Kansas City and greatly contributed to this dividing line of race. Nichols built neighborhoods with houses that had deed restrictions. In obedience to the deed restrictions, none of the homes in these neighborhoods could be sold to Black Americans, Jews, and other minorities. What drove the housing segregation even further throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century was blockbusting, racial covenants, real estate practices, and the Kansas City Public Schools.



## Sources

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