



## Alma and Karl Taeuber: Residential Segregation in U.S. Cities, 1965

### By Nina Brown

#### *Background*

Alma F. Taeuber (1933–) and Karl E. Taeuber (1936–)

Sociologists Alma and Karl Taeuber were married in 1960 and collaborated on numerous projects throughout their careers. Alma Taeuber earned a Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Chicago and held research positions at the University of Chicago, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Institute for Research on Poverty in Madison, WI. Karl Taeuber, the son of sociologist Conrad Taeuber and demographer Irene Taeuber, completed his Ph.D. at Harvard University. Karl Taeuber taught for more than 31 years at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

#### Residential Segregation in Selected United States Cities

Fort Lauderdale, FL	98.1
Dallas, TX	94.6
Columbia, SC	94.1
Salt Lake City, UT	68.9
Ann Arbor, MI	64.3
San Jose, CA	60.4

From: *Negroes in Cities*, 1965

#### *Innovation*

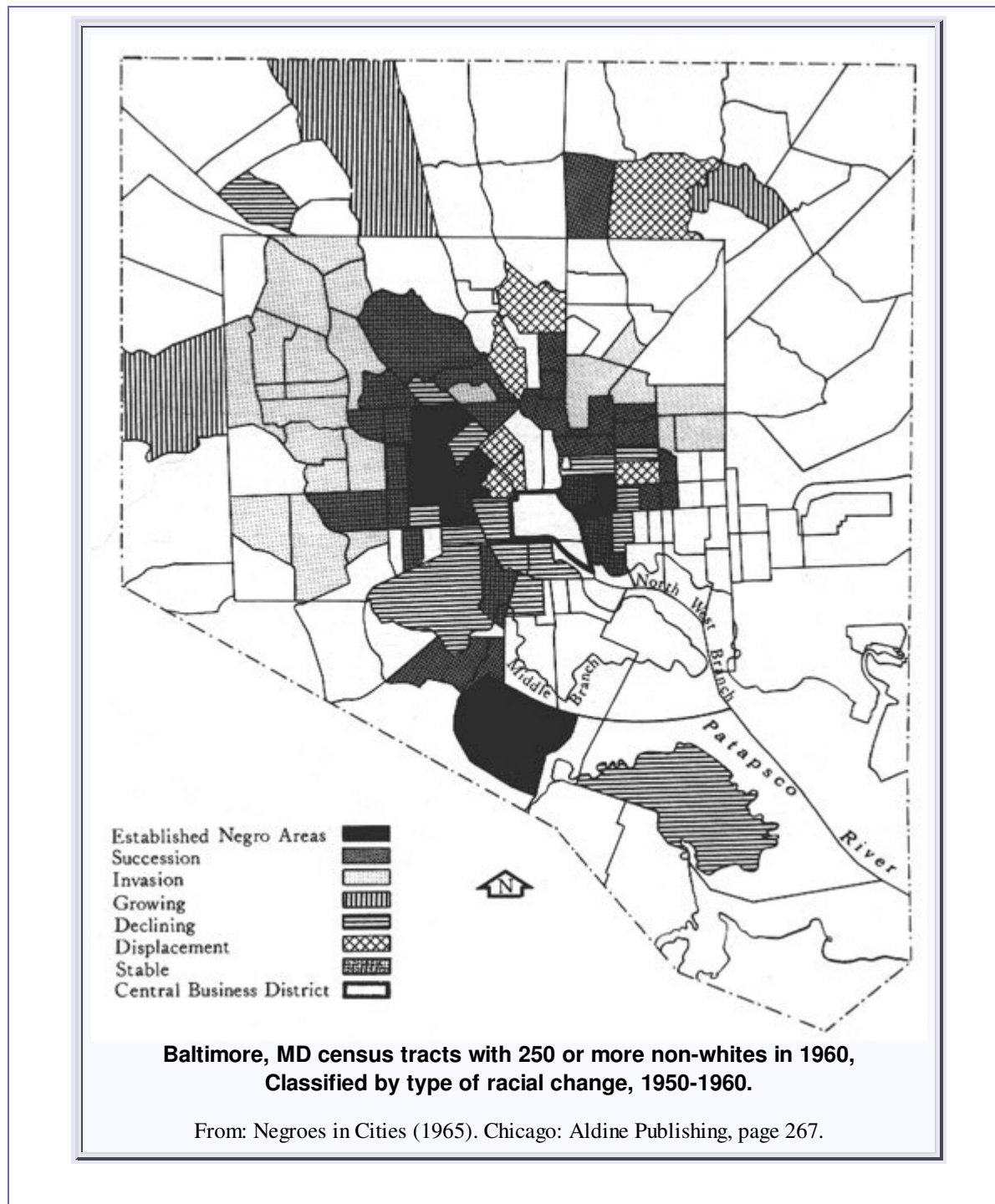
In the early 1960s, the Taeubers collaborated on a large-scale survey of racial segregation in cities across the United States. At the time, the migration of African Americans to northern cities was attracting the attention of many American sociologists, just as the gradual withdraw of *de jure* segregation was increasing racial tension within cities. Sociologists were responding to these developments with energetic attempts to create quantitative indices of segregation (Duncan and Duncan 1955).

The Taeuber's contribution, published in the book *Negroes in Cities* (1965), was to develop a sweeping comparison of residential segregation in 207 U.S. cities. Using data taken from the U.S. census, the Taeubers ranked each city on a segregation index that measured dissimilarity in the population of each area. Every city was ranked on a scale from 1, the lowest level of segregation, to 100. A neighborhood would be completely unsegregated if the proportion of African-Americans and whites living in a neighborhood was similar to the

proportion of each group in the population of the city as a whole. The number given to each city on the segregation index was equivalent to the number of non-whites who would have to change the block on which they lived in order to produce an unsegregated distribution. From this effort they concluded that "a high degree of racial residential segregation is universal in American cities" (1965: 2). The segregation index for selected American cities is shown above.

To illustrate the spatial organization of residential segregation, the Taeubers also created maps for each city showing which areas of the city contained African-American neighborhoods, white neighborhoods and neighborhoods that were "transitional," or changing in racial composition [see illustration]. These maps provided a graphic summary of the residential patterns they were describing and helped to give the book a broad popular appeal.

The Taeubers' research project was one of numerous projects undertaken during the 1960s and 1970s to measure residential and educational segregation in the United States. Although attempts to develop more robust indices of segregation are ongoing today, (Massey, White, and Phua 1996), their work represents an important early attempt to integrate quantitative segregation research and cartographic techniques. Today, mapping based on U.S. census data continues to be an important tool for gauging the severity of segregation nationwide. The U.S. Census Bureau has already completed a series of national maps showing the ethnic and racial composition of the United States as based on the 2000 census.



### *Publications*

*Negroes in Cities: Residential Segregation and Neighborhood Change.* Karl E. Taeuber and Alma F. Taeuber. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1965.

*Migration in the United States: An Analysis of Residence Histories.* By Karl E. Taeuber, Leonard Chiazze, Jr., and William Haenszel. Public Health Monograph no. 77. Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1968.

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*Demographic Trends Affecting the Future Labor Force.* Madison, WI: Institute for Research of Poverty, 1977.

*Social Demography.* Karl E. Taeuber, Larry L. Bumpass and James A. Sweet, eds. New York: Academic Press, 1978.

### *Related Works*

Darden, Joe T. *Race, Housing, and Residential Segregation: A Selected Bibliography of Basic References.* Chicago: CPL Bibliographies, 1982.

Duncan, O. and B. Duncan. A Methodological Analysis of Segregation Indices. *American Sociological Review* 20: 210–217, 1955.

James, David R., and Karl E. Taeuber. Measures of Segregation. *Sociological Methodology.* Nancy Tuma, ed. Pp. 1–32. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985.

Massey, D. S., White, M. J., & Phua, V. The Dimensions of Segregation Revisited. *Sociological Methods & Research* 24(2): 172–206. 1996.

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