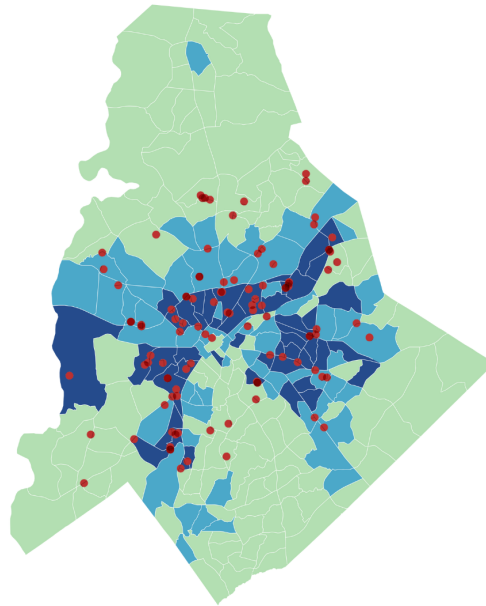


Isn't That Shocking?

Charlotte

2022 homicides layered over rate of poverty

■ < 10% ■ 10% - 20% ■ > 20%



This is an example of the work I do for the Shared Humanity Project. My name is Ning and I'm a senior at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, double majoring in political science and sociology, with a minor in data sciences. Set at the intersection of social sciences and data analysis, this background is what initially drew me to the Shared Humanity Project, a non-profit that is truly data-based.

I came on as a research assistant for one of Mark's projects, intending to stay for a semester and get some experience in creating compelling data visualizations. As such, my job was to create images that would get people to stop and look. However, as I began to produce images, I found myself the one that stopped in my tracks.

Back to the image above: Mark asked me to make a map of Charlotte poverty data and compare it to homicides. **After I made it, I looked at it, really looked at it, and was shocked.** Look at that top area, a swath of low-poverty communities, unbroken by red bullet holes.

It's one thing to know that poverty, every day in the US, is hurting communities. It's another to stare an image in the face and see that people are *dying* because of poverty, to realize that everyday our neighbors in the communities we live in are dying and we aren't doing anything for them.

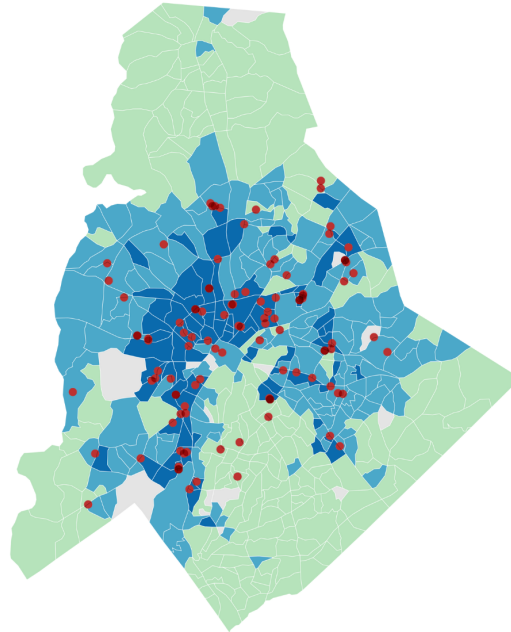
All of those **red dots** represent a death, a murder of somebody who was somebody else's parent, offspring, aunt, uncle, friend, are concentrated in impoverished communities.

But that's what we have to do – **open our eyes and look at the realities of poverty straight in its face.** That's what I joined to do, and it's what I understand now is absolutely critical.

Charlotte

2022 homicides layered over 2019 percentage of elementary schoolers proficient in End-of-Grade testing

■ < 30% ■ 30% - 50% ■ > 50%



Another thing I love about data visualization is it can allow for intuitive *connections* between what could otherwise seem like disparate data points. Here, we look at 3rd grade proficiency and homicides—and again, we look at the same concentration of violence in underserved communities, the same destructive connection between poverty, education, and violence. And this is just one map, of one city, out of many cities.

But another type of *connection*, an enlightening type, can be **what changes the map of our nation and our communities.** Working at the Shared Humanity Project hasn't just opened my eyes to the horrible extent of poverty, but also the power of connection, community outreach, and personal commitment.

As we go into a new year, I'm excited to keep working with Mark and the Shared Humanity Project for one more semester. I hope you'll see my data visualizations floating around, either online or maybe on an upcoming project. And I hope when you see them, your eyes will widen, you'll stare, looking at poverty in its ugly truth, and then you'll look, really look at what you can do to end it.

Ning Soong

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