Working Toward Health Equity: Understanding How Today’s Landscape of Health Inequity Emerged (Race, Place & History)

Delta Omega Gamma Alpha Lecture
Wright State University, Kettering Ohio

Jason Reece
Senior Associate Director, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity
Lecturer, City & Regional Planning Program, Knowlton School of Architecture
The Ohio State University
November 19th 2015

Business As Usual Will Not Work: Our Changing Economic Landscape
Health Disparities (Health Inequities): Require more than just healthcare solutions.

Focusing on prenatal care as the cause of infant mortality disparities:

-- ignores the socioeconomic context in which women live,

--‘medicalizes’ a problem that is socially and historically complex,

--and thus contributes to the illusion that there is a ‘medical policy bullet’ that can provide a comprehensive and efficacious solution”

K.D. Frick & P.M. Lantz 1999

Wage Trends: How Many People Are Earning wages greater than $15 per hour (Source: PolicyLink Equity Atlas)
Place Matters

What is the life experience in this place?
Our Growing Knowledge of the Relationship Between Community Conditions and Health

Health Disparities: From Birth to Death
Franklin County, OH
Infant Mortality Community Profile: Montgomery County (Dayton)

Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Live Births, 2007-2011

Proportion of Montgomery County Hotspot Infant Deaths in Relation to Population, 2007-2011

Selected Social Determinants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Determinant</th>
<th>Hotspot Tracts</th>
<th>Montgomery County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Non-White</td>
<td>61.95%</td>
<td>27.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Households Receiving SSI</td>
<td>7.98%</td>
<td>5.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Vacant Properties</td>
<td>24.24%</td>
<td>12.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Population in Poverty</td>
<td>36.18%</td>
<td>16.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Population Foreign Born</td>
<td>3.64%</td>
<td>3.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Households without Vehicle Rate</td>
<td>8.50%</td>
<td>3.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Households with Housing Cost Burden</td>
<td>41.81%</td>
<td>39.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>10.05%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$29,129</td>
<td>$45,169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

History Matters

Place Matters: The Importance of Urban Development History

- Understanding today’s environmental landscape and built environment requires historical context
- There were a number of development practices and policies which have shaped our current built environment and human settlement patterns
- Today’s built environment is not a “natural landscape” but is influenced deeply by these development practices
Race matters: Understanding Our Conflicted History of Race, Class & Real Estate

- Racial and social exclusion, and exploitation were primary driving forces in 20th century urban development.
- When we look at today’s landscape of inequality, we must understand the historical drivers which created this landscape.
- These factors have strongly influenced current conditions are have direct policy implications for today.

20th Century Drivers of Racial Segregation and Opportunity Isolation for Marginalized Communities & Communities of Color

- Racial Zoning
- Exclusionary & Expulsive Zoning
- Racial Covenants
- FHA & Suburbia
- Urban Renewal
- Reverse Redlining
- Redlining
- Blockbusting
Baltimore: Passes First Racial Zoning Ordinance in 1911
(Used Public Health Language as Justification)

• "Blacks should be quarantined in isolated slums in order to reduce the incidents of civil disturbance, to prevent the spread of communicable disease into the nearby White neighborhoods, and to protect property values among the White majority."
  • Baltimore Mayor Bary Mahool, 1910

Covenants in Ohio

• Covenants were prolific throughout Ohio’s major urban areas
  • A study of Columbus developments from 1921 to 1935 found 67 of 101 (or 67%) of all subdivisions platted & developed during this time to included restrictive covenants
  • In Cleveland, According to an NAACP branch report:
    • By 1914 Cleveland housing exhibited "a noticeable tendency toward inserting clauses in real estate deeds restricting the transfer of the property to colored people, Jews, and foreigners generally."
      • Source: African Americans and the Color Line in Ohio, 1915-1930.
Redlining: 1930’s to 1970

• The FHA explicitly practiced a policy of “redlining” when determining which neighborhoods to approve mortgages in. Redlining is the practice of denying or limiting financial services to certain neighborhoods based on racial or ethnic composition without regard to the residents’ qualifications or creditworthiness.

• The term “redlining” refers to the practice of using a red line on a map to delineate the area where financial institutions would not invest.

Examples of HOLC Neighborhood Assessments: The Role of Race, Class & Ethnicity
3. FAVORABLE INFLUENCES. Restricted—very high class residential—exceptionally good schools—parks—playgrounds—homogeneous as to development and character of property—transportation good—good fire and police protection.

3. FAVORABLE INFLUENCES. Highly restricted—very high class residential—exceptionally good schools—parks—playgrounds—homogeneous as to development and character of property—transportation good—good fire and police protection.

3. FAVORABLE INFLUENCES. Highly restricted—very high class residential—exceptionally good schools—parks—playgrounds—homogeneous as to development and character of property—transportation good—good fire and police protection.

3. FAVORABLE INFLUENCES. Highly restricted—good schools—good transportation—

3. FAVORABLE INFLUENCES. Highly restricted—partly wooded—high class residential—good schools—playgrounds—library—good transportation—city fire and police protection.

14. CLARIFYING REMARKS: An older residential section retaining good character and desirable inhabitants. Medium blue.
What About Those New Suburbs? Suburban Growth & Race

• New developments restricted to communities of color & African American communities redlined
• In the prime suburb-shaping years (1930-1960)
  • Less than one percent of all African Americans were able to obtain a mortgage
• Formation of “White” America
  • Suburbia becomes the first space in which White ethnic identities dissolve

“If a neighborhood is to retain stability, it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes. A change in social or racial occupancy generally contributes to instability and a decline in values.”

—Excerpt from the 1947 FHA underwriting manual
Understanding the impact of redlining on neighborhoods

Redlining Impacts in Cleveland:
Formerly redlined neighborhoods have infant mortality rates 8X higher, life expectancy 15 years lower, highest rates of lead poisoning, asthma and blight.
http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/researchandstrategicinitiatives/legacy-of-redlining-in-cuyahoga-county/
Historic Redlining & Today’s “Opportunity Ratings” for Neighborhoods in Montgomery County

Historic Redlining & Lead Poisoning Risk
Historic Redlining & Infant Mortality Hot Spots

Transformative Intervention: Beyond Business as Usual
A Different Model for A New Era

- Place Based
- Holistic Approach
- Collective Action & Impact

Restorative Investment & Development

**Short term**
- Improving the built environment (blight removal & investments to promote healthy places)
- Expanding access to quality care
- Crime reduction & public safety enhancement
- Improving/targeting service delivery & programming
- Stabilizing housing
- Asset building
- Improving social capital
- Providing access to fresh food
- Public awareness & targeting educational programming

**Long term**
- Transforming the built environment & attraction of private investment
  - Large scale change, infrastructure development
- Building a civic community (rich in social capital)
  - Strong organizational capital and programming
- Providing for sustainable employment & poverty reduction
- Changing perceptions of crime
- Addressing mass incarceration
- Improving educational structures & systems
Focused & Holistic Place Based Efforts: Example South Side of Columbus

Healthy Homes area

South Side Renaissance area

THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH