

The Negative Health Effects of Redlining/Zoning on Black and Latinx Urban Residents (A Review of Literature)

Author's Name/s: Ihinosen Akhagba

Faculty Mentor's Name: Dr. Judith DeSena, St. John's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Department of Sociology & Anthropology

Introduction

Redlining and discriminatory zoning practices in cities such as NYC have contributed to Black and Latinx urban residents have poorer health outcomes compared to white residents within the same cities.

Study Objective/Aim/Contribution

The objective of this literature review was to highlight the relationship between Redlining/Discriminatory Zoning and the status of health of urban Black and Latinx residents. This paper specifically looked at how access to healthy food, environmental stressors, and poverty can lead to poor health outcomes.

Main Finding. Emphasize its importance and include graphs and pictures if applicable.

Redlining/Zoning: Redlining and other discriminatory zoning practices have resulted in unequal access to healthy food such as full-service grocery stores and a surplus of unhealthy food such as fast food-restaurants. These food options can contribute to poorer health outcomes in life. Exposure to toxins such as waste/garbage and living in hotter neighborhoods was also linked to redlining & discriminatory zoning.

Health Outcomes: In neighborhoods in NYC that were historically redlined, Black and Latinx residents in these neighborhoods were more likely to have worse bills of health. They were more likely to have shorter life expectancies and higher rates of diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and live in poverty. These same populations in the same redlined neighborhoods were also more likely to contract and die of COVID-19 at the height of the pandemic.

Environmental Stressors: Exposure to pollutants from cars in highways built through these neighborhoods, waste dumps placed in these neighborhoods, and factories that release toxic fumes into the air are just a few examples of environmental stressors. Specific cases of the Lead Water Crisis in Flint, Michigan and Refinery Issue in Greys Ferry, Philadelphia highlighted how these stressors disproportionately affect urban Black and Latinx urban neighborhoods. Diseases such as cancer and legionnaire's disease were prevalent among these neighborhoods.

Gentrification: Gentrification is also showed to have a psychosocial impact on Black and Latinx urban residents and can impact their physical health as well. Both physical and social displacement can have negative mental health affects on residents in gentrifying neighborhoods. On the other hand, there is a reduction in neighborhood disadvantage in gentrifying neighborhoods due to the increase presences of healthy food options, green space, etc, which can positively affect their physical health.

Work in the Community: Cities such as NYC are aware of these major health disparities and are attempting to right their wrongs through interventions such as the creation of the Center of Health Equity in the NYCDOMHH to help on the neighborhood level.

Results/Conclusion

Discriminatory zoning practice such as redlining have contributed to the negative health outcomes Black and Latinx residents face. Cities such as NYC have redlined neighborhoods that were disadvantaged systematically by local, state, and the federal government. This neglect has led to the major health disparities we see today. Shorter life expectancies, more exposure to pollutants, higher rates of diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension are just a few of the health issues.

Acknowledgements/About the Author

I would just like to thank Dr. DeSena for mentoring me throughout the process. This was not my original intention I had for my research but due to COVID changes had to be made and Dr. DeSena really helped me work through all my questions and concerns to complete my research.