The Geography of Opportunity: The Intersection of Space, Race, and Systemic Disadvantage

National Hispanic Science Network on Drug Abuse
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Modeling a Transdisciplinary Approach to Current Research Agendas
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Today’s Presentation (3 Parts)

- Opportunity and Place – Disadvantage & Place
  - Space, Opportunity and Race
  - Understanding Place Based Systemic Disadvantage
    - Principles
    - Relationship to substance abuse

- A Model of Intervention
  - Building Communities of Opportunity

- Opportunity Mapping - Quantifying spatial disadvantage
  - What is it?
  - What can it be used for?
  - Advocacy and policy intervention applications
More about us...

- Multidisciplinary applied research institute
  - Our mission is to expand opportunity for all, especially for our most marginalized communities
  - [www.kirwaninstitute.org](http://www.kirwaninstitute.org)
  - [www.race-talk.org](http://www.race-talk.org)
- Founded in 2003 by John Powell (executive director)
  - Opportunity Communities Program
    - Opening pathways to opportunity for marginalized communities through investments in people, places and supporting linkages
    - Disrupting systems of disadvantage
    - Opportunity mapping, Regional Equity, Neighborhood Revitalization, Opportunity Based Housing
Opportunity, Disadvantage & Place

Opportunity, Place and Race

Principles of Place Based Systemic Disadvantage

Relationship to Substance Abuse
Systemic Community Disadvantage: View from 1968

- This finding from the 1968 Kerner Commission (“Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders”) is still compelling and applicable to the current challenges facing marginalized communities

  “...the single overriding cause of rioting in the cities was not any one thing commonly adduced – unemployment, lack of education, poverty, exploitation – but that it was all of those things and more...”

This description is repeated nearly 40 years later in a recent study of concentrated poverty released by the U.S. Federal Reserve and The Brookings Institution:

- "Each of the headline issues examined in this chapter – schools and skills, housing, lack of mainstream investment, and limited community capacity – plays a role in perpetuating the disadvantage confronting these high-poverty urban and rural areas today. Together, these issues entangle many high poverty communities in a Gordian knot....

“Opportunity” is a situation or condition that places individuals in a position to be more likely to succeed or excel.

Opportunity structures are critical to opening pathways to success:

- High-quality education
- Healthy and safe environment
- Stable housing
- Sustainable employment
- Political empowerment
- Outlets for wealth-building
- Positive social networks
# 2 - Systems Thinking: We are all situated within “opportunity structures”

These structures interact in ways that produce racialized outcomes for different groups, but also in ways that influence identity.
Five decades of research indicate that your environment has a profound impact on your access to opportunity and likelihood of success.

High poverty areas with poor employment, underperforming schools, distressed housing and public health/safety risks depress life outcomes:
- A system of disadvantage
- Many manifestations
  - Urban, rural, suburban

People of color are far more likely to live in opportunity deprived neighborhoods and communities.
Our understanding of opportunity has shifted with time….from a one-dimensional understanding...

- One variable can explain why differential outcomes.

...to a multi-dimensional understanding....

- Structural Inequality
  - Example: a Bird in a cage. Examining one bar cannot explain why a bird cannot fly. But multiple bars, arranged in specific ways, reinforce each other and trap the bird.
Neighborhoods and Systemic Disadvantage: Interactive

Source: Barbara Reskin. http://faculty.uwashington.edu/reskin/
# 5 - Systems are dynamic and create feedback loops:

E.g. the cycle of school segregation
A growing body of research has documented the impact of various social stressors on traditional public health problems.

- E.g. Social determinants of health
  - The built environment, pollution and asthma
  - Community safety, the built environment, fresh food access and obesity

- Poor neighborhood conditions have also been linked to prevalence of substance abuse and overdose
  - In addition to other factors that may be more prevalent in a community of systemic disadvantage (e.g. social stressors)
Neighborhoods & Substance Abuse: Some Relevant Studies

- **Neighborhood Characteristics and Youth Marijuana Use**, National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Applied Studies


- **Neighborhood environment and opportunity to use cocaine and other drugs in late childhood and early adolescence**, Rosa M. Crum, Marsha Lillie-Blanton, James C. Anthony, Drug and Alcohol Dependence 43 (1996)


- **Income distribution and risk of fatal drug overdose in New York City neighborhoods**, Sandro Galea, Jennifer Ahern, David Vlahov, Phillip O. Coffin, Crystal Fuller, Andrew C. Leon, Kenneth Tardiff, Drug and Alcohol Dependence 70 (2003) 139-148

The risk and prevalence of substance abuse in distressed communities also relates and feeds into mass incarceration, prisoner re-entry challenges and further marginalization.

- Dynamic systems: Creating a reinforcing “feedback loop”

### Diagram:
- **Neighborhood Disadvantage**
- **Concentrated Prisoner Re-Entry and Recidivism (Relapse)**
- **Social Stressors**
- **Increased Risk for Incarceration**
- **Increased Risk for Substance Abuse**
A Model of Policy Intervention

Building Communities of Opportunity

People, Places and Linkages
Forming a New Narrative: The Opportunity Framework

- Everyone should have fair access to the critical opportunity structures needed to succeed in life.
- Low Opportunity neighborhoods limit the development of human capital
- A Community of Opportunity approach can develop pathways that result in increased social and economic health, benefiting everyone
  - Looking at people, places and linkages
    - Linkages = building connections to areas of opportunity
    - Example: Opportunity based fair housing
People, Places and Linkages: Deliberate, coordinated, and regional investments in people, places, and linkages

Investing in People:
- Community organizing and leadership development
- Asset and wealth building strategies
- Improving educational opportunities and investments
- Labor force development and worker training
- Support for early childhood education and development
- Family supportive services

Investing in Places:
- Vacant land redevelopment and land banking
- Developing anchor institutions
- Strategic collaborative investments
- Infrastructure investments
- Foreclosure mitigation and prevention activities
- Supporting minority owned and small businesses
- Public health investments

Supporting Linkages:
- Regional fair housing strategies
- Policies to support inclusionary housing development
- Opportunity based subsidized housing investments
- Strengthening professional and social networks for businesses and residents in low opportunity areas
Addressing Substance Abuse, Incarceration and Re-entry

How do you break the cycle of neighborhood disadvantage, substance abuse, incarceration and re-entry?

A multi-faceted response
- Recommendations from the Council of State Government’s 2005 Report
  - Education and job training
  - Safe and stable housing
  - Treatment for addiction
  - Treatment for other physical or mental illness
  - Relationship development, family/victim treatment and services
- A Geographic Lens of Analysis to Inform this Approach?
Opportunity Mapping: Quantifying Systemic Neighborhood Disadvantage

What is it?

What can it be used for?

Outcomes?
Mapping Opportunity: Why and How

- The Kirwan Institute has conducted “opportunity mapping” for states and metropolitan regions across the US
  - Projects in at least a dozen states
    - Full State Analysis: MA, CT, OH, FL
    - Regions: Seattle, San Francisco, Chicago, Atlanta, Baltimore, Washington D.C., Detroit, Austin, Sacramento, Los Angeles, New York, Houston, New Orleans

- Why identify the “State of Opportunity”
  - How are low-income groups situated in the State?
  - How are racial and ethnic groups situated?
  - How does housing intersect with race, class and opportunity?
  - What can be done to improve the opportunity landscape?
Mapping Communities of Opportunity: Methods and Indicators

How do you map opportunity?

- Data representing community conditions was gathered for neighborhood (census tracts) across the state or region
  - Data for all indicators of community conditions was aggregated to the Census Tract level and analyzed to create a comprehensive opportunity index for the census tracts (neighborhoods) throughout the state or region
- The opportunity index is then mapped and census tracts are broken into quintiles based on their opportunity score
  - Very Low, Low, Moderate, High, Very High
Sample Indicators: From Recent King County Opportunity Mapping Analysis

**Education**
- Student poverty rates
- Reading/Math test scores
- Adult educational attainment
- Teacher qualifications
- Graduation rate

**Housing & Neighborhood Health**
- Home ownership rates
- Crime incidence
- Vacancy rates
- Home value appreciation
- Neighborhood poverty rates
- Population change
- Proximity to parks/open space
- Proximity to toxic waste release sites

**ECONOMIC HEALTH**
- Proximity to employment
- Commute times
- Job growth trends
- Business start trends
- Unemployment rate
- Public assistance rate

All indicators grounded in social science research literature, also indicators can be more narrowly tailored to meet the needs of particular populations (e.g. public housing residents).
MA Legal Services and Opportunity Communities

- **Background**
  - Originated from effort to incorporate mapping analysis into legal services

- **Partners**
  - Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, MA Legal Assistance Corp (foundation) and other Legal Services Entities
  - Year long process of meeting with stakeholders to understand mapping needs and issues
  - Training with service providers & agencies (using mapping for programming)
Map 1A: Comprehensive Opportunity Map

GREATER BOSTON

This map displays the spatial pattern of distribution of opportunity based on Education, Economic & Mobility, and Housing & Neighborhood indicators.

Source: US Census 2000; County Business Pattern; ESRI; EPA; Massachusetts Department of Education; MA State Police Date: July 17, 2008
Map 3A: Comprehensive Opportunity Map with non-White population overlay

GREATER BOSTON

This map displays the spatial pattern of distribution of opportunity based on Education, Economic & Mobility, and Housing & Neighborhood indicators overlaid with non-White population.

Source: US Census 2000; County Business Pattern; ESRI; EPA; Massachusetts Department of Education; MA State Police Date: July 17, 2008
Map 4A: Comprehensive Opportunity Map with Subsidized Housing overlay

GREATER BOSTON

This map displays the spatial pattern of distribution of opportunity based on Education, Economic & Mobility, and Housing & Neighborhood indicators overlaid with subsidized housing locations.

Source: US Census 2000; County Business Pattern; ESRI; EPA; Massachusetts Department of Education; MA State Police Date: July 17, 2008
Map 5A: Comprehensive Opportunity Map with Foreclosure overlay

GREATER BOSTON

This map displays the spatial pattern of distribution of opportunity based on Education, Economic & Mobility, and Housing & Neighborhood indicators, overlaid with the number of foreclosures.

Source: US Census 2000; County Business Pattern; ESRI; EPA; Massachusetts Department of Education; MA State Police; HUD Date: January 7, 2009
Access to Opportunity: Race

Proportion of total households by race in 2000, and by neighborhood opportunity analysis ranking

- **Asian**
  - High and Very High Opp.: 14.4%
  - Moderate Opportunity: 29.8%
  - Low and Very Low Opp.: 55.8%

- **Latino**
  - High and Very High Opp.: 2.2%
  - Moderate Opportunity: 4.1%
  - Low and Very Low Opp.: 93.7%

- **African American**
  - High and Very High Opp.: 3.5%
  - Moderate Opportunity: 4.3%
  - Low and Very Low Opp.: 92.2%

- **White (Non Latino)**
  - High and Very High Opp.: 23.4%
  - Moderate Opportunity: 45.8%
  - Low and Very Low Opp.: 30.7%
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Income Households (Earning Less than $30K in 2000)</th>
<th>White (Non-Latino)</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Asian</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low and Very Low Opp.</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate Opportunity</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>High and Very High Opp.</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
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<th>Middle Income Households (Earning $30K to $60K in 2000)</th>
<th>White (Non-Latino)</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Asian</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low and Very Low Opp.</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>92.3%</td>
<td>92.0%</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate Opportunity</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>High and Very High Opp.</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
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<th>High Income Households (Earning $60K or More in 2000)</th>
<th>White (Non-Latino)</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Latino</th>
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<tr>
<td>Low and Very Low Opp.</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>90.1%</td>
<td>89.6%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate Opportunity</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High and Very High Opp.</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
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Table 2: Proportion of total households by race and income, by neighborhood opportunity analysis ranking
A View Across Opportunity Mapping Projects: Latino Segregation and Opportunity

% in Low Opportunity Neighborhoods

35% 45% 55% 65% 75% 85% 95%

Chicago  MA (State)  CT (State)  OH (State)  Seattle  Detroit  Austin  Cleveland  FL (4 MSA)

% in Low Opportunity Neighborhoods
“Million Dollar Blocks” and Low Opportunity Neighborhoods

Million Dollar Blocks Map Produced by Columbia University and the Justice Mapping Center

http://www.justicemapping.org/

New York Opportunity Map Produced by the Kirwan Institute

http://www.spatialinformationdesignlab.org/projects.php?id=16
Applications and Impact: From the MA Initiative

- **Program design and use within legal services**
  - New programming – proposed “Adopt A Zip Code” program
  - Use in exploring client concerns/challenges

- **State level program design (public sector)**
  - New $5 million state affordable housing program, targeted to high opportunity communities (see press release)
  - Targeting of $21 million in NSP funds to low opportunity communities by the MA Department of Housing and Community Development

- Implementation still unfolding
Other Projects Impacts & Activities

- **Connecticut**
  - State embraces model as a strategic planning principal

- **Baltimore**
  - Remedial proposal in Thompson v. HUD

- **Chicago (Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities)**
  - Use in advising voucher holders in neighborhood selection

- **Austin**
  - Use in evaluating city’s affordable housing investments

- **Related Project: Washington County, OR**
  - Advised on opportunity map created by the County included in recent consolidated plan for County
    - Exploring application in planning activities for the broader Portland region

- **Child Development**
  - Jacksonville, FL & the Duvall County children’s commission

- **Evaluation of stimulus/NSP activities**
  - Florida

- **Minnesota**
  - Utilized framework to help faith based community organizers educate and frame an advocacy agenda
Concluding Thoughts

- Think about the intersection of opportunity and community
  - Place based, racialized, multi-factor and interactive, dynamic
  - Direct application to the substance abuse challenge

- Using spatial analysis as a tool
- Providing a holistic response
  - Informed by place, space and multidisciplinary

- Thank you
Thank You!

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