Mathematics and Redistricting

Trinity College, Spring 2021 (Kyle Evans)
The Color of Law

By Richard Rothstein (2017)

• details the systematic policies that led to residential segregation by race through the history of the United States

• Fair Housing Act (1968) part of Civil Rights legislation (along with Voting Rights Act of 1965) that have a relationship with redistricting and racial gerrymandering
Policies that contributed to housing discrimination:
• Public Housing
• Racial Zoning
• Banking/Loans
• Restrictive Covenants
• Blockbusting
• Interstate Highways
• Schools
Fair Housing Act & Impacts today

• Fair Housing Act (1968) prohibited private discrimination in housing
• More *de facto* school segregation today than 40 years ago
• Hard to undo the damage of residential segregation:
  • Generational wealth
  • Suburban homes appreciated in price (furthering racial wealth gap)
  • “Low-income” housing built in already segregated neighborhoods
  • African-Americans already missed opportunity for low-cost housing that became valuable
• Affordability remains the biggest issue today
  • Whites more often homeowners, African-Americans more often renters
On The Line

• Open-source book by Jack Dougherty (Educational Studies) plus student collaborators on history of Hartford-area housing

https://ontheline.trincoll.edu/
Hartford’s evolution

• In the late 1800s, Hartford known as “richest city in the nation"
  • Insurance companies (The Hartford and Aetna)
  • Colt’s Arms Manufacturing
  • Culture – Mark Twain, Harriet Beecher Stowe, schools

• By 2000, Hartford known as second-poorest city yet surrounding metropolitan area one of top 10 richest in the country
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• Why? Housing opportunities, new attractive schools, white flight, interstate highways, job migration, etc. all contributed to pushing money to suburbs
“Redlining”

Residential Security map of Hartford in 1930’s – mortgage risk rated based on race/ethnicity/social class of each neighborhood

Area D-1

INHABITANTS:

a. Occupation Laborers & domestics

b. Estimated annual family income $ 1,000

c. Foreign-born families 34 %; Italians predominating; d. Negro Yes; 66 %

e. Infiltration of Some; f. Relief families Many
The size of each circle represents the area in that city that HOLC graded, with each color representing the proportion of the city graded and colored.

A "Best"
B "Still Desirable"
C "Definitely Declining"
D "Hazardous"
The case of Oakwood Acres Housing Tract in West Hartford

Wartime housing in the 1940s
Housing Policy in CT Today

• Wealth barriers supported by government policies

• Exclusionary zoning
  • Minimum lot size for multifamily buildings
  • Maximum density of units per acre
  • Connecticut Zoning Initiative
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• Zoning Reform
  • Desegregate Connecticut
  • Increase equity and diversity in communities
  • Increase supply to meet demand, want to increase state's population
  • Protect environment by reducing sprawl and carbon emissions
Housing Policy in CT Today

- SB 1024 – Bill in current session about zoning policies in CT
  - Allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) anywhere and for anyone to live in them
  - Standardizing design codes for buildings and streets
  - Limit parking space requirements
  - More training for land use commissioners
  - Explicit definition of “character” in zoning codes
  - Modernize sewer and traffic standards

- In original bill
  - Allow 2–4 family housing units built in “Main Street” areas of towns
  - Transit-oriented development – multi-family housing units within area of public transit stations

- Zoning reform across the country
  - MA passed Housing Choice – multi-family housing allowed within area of T stations
Connection to Redistricting

• Zoning laws naturally shape the way political districts are drawn
  • More multi-family housing units = more people in a compact area

• History of segregation through zoning shaped locations of minority communities
  • Racial gerrymandering and majority-minority districts

• Housing and zoning reform plus new construction could lead to more diverse communities, naturally impacting composition of districts

• Zoning laws and population shifts can also impact legislators serving the needs of their constituents