

THE GOAL OF THE CITY: DID THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NORTHEAST EXPRESSWAY LEAD TO MORE INTEGRATION IN EVANSTON?

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“People who thus set their lives against destruction have necessarily confronted in themselves the absurdity that they have recognized in their society. They have first observed the tendency of modern organizations to perform in opposition to their stated purposes... methods of transportation that, as Ivan Illich says, have ‘created more distances than they... bridge.’¹ Once we understand that our society is steeped in absurdity, that our systems of organization and power have created and perpetuated systems of discrimination and exclusion, we can then recognize the importance of cities that strive for inclusion. While the goal of the city has been dynamic over time, one thing has remained the same; cities are spaces where society gathers, where decisions are made. The absurdity strikes when our cities are no longer accessible to everyone. When the city is manufactured to serve consumerism and capital gain, decisions are made by financial stakeholders, not the people.

Jurgen Habermas describes the public sphere as the “sphere of private individuals assembled into a public body.”² The public sphere exists in the space between private individuals and the sphere of “officialdom.” The officialdom represents the bureaucracy which carries out legislative and executive function. The members of Habermas’ public sphere were exclusively members of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie had the time, wealth, and education to be able to freely debate the issues of the time. Before the rise of the bourgeoisie, public was defined in a substantially different way. Public only referred to the aristocracy and their actions. In pre-bourgeoisie societies, any power came from the aristocracy, their power was “before the people” not “for the people”³ With the transition to more democratic societies, the private citizen is able to gain more power and influence, but not all private citizens were able to wield their power equally. Those with wealth and influence consolidated their individual power into the public sphere in order to have greater control over public opinion. They utilized the medium of daily newspapers and the introduction of the editorial staff to influence public opinion.⁴ The same holds true today, in that the mass media has power and influence over the public sphere. Habermas’ public sphere was essential to the development of democracy after the fall of aristocracy. The public sphere provided a space for the sharing of ideas and the ability for private citizens to come together for the collective good. This is in stark contrast to the feudal governments where the powerful few control the public, leading to vast group inequities.⁵

Inequity has persisted throughout history as a way to service those in power. The ruling class, Habermas’s “officialdom,” thrives on the ability to exude power over the marginalized. That power, justified in various ways, allows for systemic oppression. Cities are spaces used to

¹ Wendell Berry, *Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture* (ZULU: Counterpoint, 2015), 21

² Jurgen Habermas, Sara Lennox, and Frank Lennox, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article,” *New German Critique* 3, (Autumn, 1974): 49

³ Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article,” 51

⁴ Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article,” 53

⁵ Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article,” 54

not only implement their own legislation, but that of the state and federal government as well. The city and its neighborhoods are the level at which the public sphere works in our country. The city provides private individuals not only the space to come together, but the common experiences needed to move debate within the public sphere. As a result, cities are filled with a rich legacy of the policies of years past. In order to successfully govern and direct our cities, we must recognize that cities do not exist in a vacuum. American cities are a product of decades of racist public policy. From slavery, to Jim Crow and mass incarceration, society has been dominated by racist policies which were implemented, and often designed, at the city level. Dialogue within the public sphere is formational for public policy. Our public policy is invariably shaped by dominant narratives in the public sphere. If the general public has racial bias, and they do, then it follows that the policies that disproportionately disservice marginalized racial groups will be at the top of the docket.

In order to create an ideal city in our current society, we have to recognize the history of our nation, and give reparations where they are due. There is an important distinction to make between equity and equality. Equality often comes down to numerical values. When working on improving equality, those in charge provide an equal number of things for every community, without an evaluation of that community's needs. Equity takes into account the reality of the situation before acting. Equity ensures the results of an action lead to the same payoff for each community no matter any difference in the process. An example of a policy that can be equitable or equal is a city providing new playgrounds. The equality approach would ensure that all ten city neighborhoods got one new park. An equity approach would recognize that 5 of the neighborhoods already have two playgrounds each, while the other five have none. The equitable approach would be to give out the ten playgrounds to the neighborhoods that don't have playgrounds, ensuring that in the end, every neighborhood has the same proportion of playgrounds. This is a very simplified example, but the premise applies to more complex issues as well. Equity provides the ability to not only handle current issues, but also address past injustices.

Our society is not just, we must deal with the current injustices in our world to create something better. We must recognize the problem before we have any idea what the solution will be. When looking at American history, one of the most glaring inequalities in our society is the legacy of racism and its different manifestations. In her work, *The Imperative of Integration*, Elizabeth Anderson uses non-ideal theory to argue that racial integration is the only way to truly create a more just society. Anderson believes that “segregation of social groups is a principal cause of group inequality.”⁶ In order to address these past inequalities, equity is necessary. By simply providing an equal amount of resources and investment, one does not address the unequal footing that the groups start on. The only way to address the group inequality is through equitable public policy. For Anderson, these equitable policies need to acknowledge past failures and lead to greater integration.

Anderson also believes that segregation undermines democracy. *The Imperative of Integration* describes three types of democracy: A membership organization, a mode of government, and a culture. As a membership organization, democracy includes universal and

⁶ Elizabeth Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 2

equal citizenship for all members of the society. As a mode of government, it involves a government by the people, among equals. As a culture, “democracy consists in the free, cooperative interaction of citizens from all walks of life on terms of equality in civic society.”⁷ Anderson believes that all three are important but focuses her work on the cultural aspect of democracy. As the Supreme Court once recognized, citizenship is the charter of equality.⁸ Citizenship ensures not only equal legal rights but also equal standing in society. Equal standing means that each person is able to freely associate with their fellow citizens. For Anderson, “Equality is thus a cultural norm, not only a legal status.”⁹ Therefore, she believes that the “democratic ideal holds that justice requires equality in social relations.”¹⁰ Segregation works in direct opposition to this ideal. Segregation impedes on the citizens ability to build true intergroup coalitions and enables decision makers to make decisions that will directly hurt those marginalized groups and continue the cycle of segregation.¹¹

From these two assumptions Anderson concludes that “if segregation is a fundamental cause of social inequality and undemocratic practices, then integration promotes greater equality and democracy. Hence, it is an imperative of justice.”¹² Anderson has provided the reader with her own definition of justice and thus a goal for the city. Throughout her work, Anderson uses the word equality rather than equity. This is because she is imaging the end results of a project. In order to reach the goal of equality in social relations and integration, equitable policies need to be implemented. Anderson recognizes this in other chapters of her book about equitable policies such as affirmative action which works against past inequalities in the educational system.¹³ In order to reach the end goal of equality, equitable policies are needed to work against the history of policies which have created the inequalities people experience today. The city is the perfect place to study the past inequalities. The city as it exists today has been a vehicle of public policy that has created segregation. Historically cities have led to segregated housing, segregated businesses, and segregated education. Whether the discrimination was explicitly written into law as it was Jim Crow south, or implemented more discreetly through the process of redlining, the outcome remained same, segregation. The just goal for the city must be the opposite, integration.

For Habermas, access to the public sphere does not simply mean to be present, it means the ability to freely participate. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was created by the United Nations in 1948 and signed by the United States at its composition.¹⁴ The document aims to be an outline of basic rights for people across all nations. The Declaration highlights the basic rights, both tangible and conceptual, that every person should be guaranteed. Because the United States, like all member nations, signed the UDHR, on a fundamental level our nation agrees that these basic needs should be met. Article 25 of the Declaration is “everyone has the right to a

⁷ Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*, 89

⁸ Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*, 102

⁹ Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*, 102

¹⁰ Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*, 89

¹¹ Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*, 2

¹² Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*, 2

¹³ Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*, 135

¹⁴ “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>

standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services.”¹⁵ This guarantees that everyone has access to the basic things they need in life. Article 25 outlines the minimum for survival. Although the basics are included, and citizens have a claim to equal opportunity to achieve higher than sufficient resources. Article 23 states “Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.”¹⁶ This article aims to ensure that people have the right to work for dignified pay, but beyond that, it ensures that our communities have the right to be supported by “social protections,” in the wake of undignified work. To strive for equity does not mean to be able to survive, its means to be able to thrive. This ensures that black communities are not simply guaranteed to live paycheck to paycheck, but given the opportunity for wealth accumulation.

One large scale example of public policy enacted in cities across the country is the building of the interstate system. It is difficult to imagine what life would be like without the interstate system. Interstates have become integral to the way our country understands public life. Debates in the 21st century are over whether or not to repave interstates or rebuild bridges, but only seventy years ago, these highways were first being built and discussion centered around if and where to build the interstate system. City planners and engineers drew maps and developed plans for the super-highways of the future. These expressways would allow people to reach their destinations through urban centers safely and efficiently with all highways culminating in the Central Business District (CBD) of a city.¹⁷ City planners and other policy implementers created and implemented their plans across the country in cities like Cincinnati.

Highway planning began to reshape cities in the wake of World War II. Prior to the war, much of mass transportation within cities happened on privately owned streetcar lines. During the war, ridership on streetcars increased while automobile ridership decreased because of gas and tire rationing for the war effort.¹⁸ At the same time, the streetcars and the system of tracks deteriorated. The war effort limited the amount of steel and capital investment available for many necessary repairs. After the war, in an effort to fulfill wartime promises to increase wages and avoid labor stoppages, transit companies were forced to hold off on performing necessary system improvement. With increased wages and labor concerns, streetcar companies were left wondering how to make the necessary improvements to their systems. The response that many of the companies took was raising fares.¹⁹ With the rising streetcar fares, the ending of the rationing on gasoline and tires, and the lowering cost of cars, many Americans made a seamless transition from public transportation to private methods of transport. Those Americans who were not wealthy enough to afford a car were forced to continue to rely on public transportation, even as their options dwindled, and the transportation they relied on in the past became less and less accessible to them. Although access to public transportation decreased, many residents were

¹⁵ “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights”

¹⁶ “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights”

¹⁷ Joseph DiMento and Cliff Ellis, *Changing Lanes, Visions and Histories of Urban Freeways* (Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2013), 26

¹⁸ David Jones, *Mass Motorization and Mass Transit* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 98

¹⁹ Jones, *Mass Motorization and Mass Transit*, 100

still able to live their daily lives because of the composition of the neighborhoods around them. The neighborhoods served as the center of life for a majority of the public. Neighborhoods are essential for Habermas' public sphere; they are the place where public dialogue develops.

In 1958, Congress agreed to cover 90% of all construction costs for highways, with state and local governments covering the rest. With the increase of cars on the roads, American cities lacked an effective system to move cars around the city, and the country. Cities individually developed plans for highways that fit their local capacity and needs, but no local entity had enough money to fully fund the projects.²⁰ With the funding secured for the highway projects, the heavy work of planning and constructing all the highways was now up to city planners and engineers. These planners and engineers represent Habermas' sphere of officialdom. They are unelected officials who have a substantial amount of power over policy. The sphere of officialdom extends past the local planners. The federal employees who helped write and would implement the funding passed by Congress were also members of the sphere of officialdom. Within the sphere of officialdom, though, there were differing opinions on cities and how policy should be implemented. City planner Harland Bartholmew hated the modern city and wanted to do everything in his power to get rid of the city as it was known. Bartholmew considered the average American city to be "the most wasteful of all the creations of man."²¹ Bartholmew was one of many in the school of thought that cities were bad for society, but he differed from his colleagues in one key way. Even with his disdain for the city, Bartholmew still recognized the human dignity of the people living in between the Central Business District (CBD) and the suburbs. Bartholmew knew those living in the just outside the city center needed and deserved access to every amenity that those living in the suburbs had at their disposal. The people living in these older neighborhoods just outside of the urban core were still members of the public but sadly, there were few that agreed with Bartholmew. In fact, most city planners saw a wealth of merit in the destruction of blight around the CBD of a city, to ensure the property values in the business district were unaffected. This consensus is reflected in Toll Roads and Free Roads, a government document produced by the Bureau of Public Roads published in 1939 at the request of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.²²

The thought process for the officialdom became more specific and codified in the Interregional Highways report produced from 1941 to 1944.²³ While generally the views reflected in the new report were the same as those in Toll Roads and Free Roads, there were exceptions. In the new report, the committee recognized that going through urban centers could be very costly, because of the cost of rights of way. The fear of the officialdom was simply the cost of using eminent domain, not a fear of the detrimental effects to the communities in the path of the planned highway. This indicates very clearly that the sphere of officialdom was primarily focused on the health of the CBD, and those who could accrue wealth there.

The Interregional Highways report made two major recommendations about the exact routes the interstates would take. The first recommendation was that the Federal Government should help in the creation of "metropolitan authorities," which would create cooperation between

²⁰ Jones, *Mass Motorization and Mass Transit*, 103

²¹ DiMento and Ellis, *Changing Lanes, Visions and Histories of Urban Freeways*, 28

²² Jones, *Mass Motorization and Mass Transit*, 109

²³ DiMento and Ellis, *Changing Lanes, Visions and Histories of Urban Freeways*, 53

multiple local entities to give input on the process of planning out the highways that were to be built. In this instance, like many others, the city acted as a vehicle for public policy. The second recommendation made by the report was to advise that the highways be built in the undeveloped areas that often divide communities from one another. The report outlines the thought that the building of the highway would encourage development in those areas as well as keep land and rights of way costs low.²⁴ The undeveloped areas between neighborhoods would provide a great way for highways to serve neighborhoods without threatening them. The reality was and remains to be that in any developed city, there is a lack of enough undeveloped areas to construct a highway without harming a community. In cities, there is not enough undeveloped land to avoid any conflict with neighborhoods. Because of the lack of undeveloped land, the officialdom must become comfortable with developing over communities. This land to be developed over was to be decided by the officialdom and the officialdom only.

For the city planner and the policy makers, the CBD and the wealthy businesses that resided there were the focus for all development. All future development needed to increase productivity and efficiency in relation to the CBD of a city. City planners agreed that most traffic in and out of a city came at morning and evening rush hours as people move in and out of a CBD. These people traveling to and from the city from the suburbs did not have business to attend to in the neighborhoods directly outside of the CBD. Without highways, the streets of those neighborhoods were only causing increased traffic, resulting in a “persistent obstacle to smooth through movement to the CBD.”²⁵ The same streets that allowed the citizens to get to school, work, and the grocery store, were deemed obstacles to economic growth to and for the officialdom.

City planners often refer to the neighborhoods around the CBD as “blight” because they are composed of individuals who are low-income. The officialdom described the constant creation of blight as part of the natural process of urban expansion.²⁶ They believed blight is part of the natural process of the expansion of a CBD, while ignoring the vibrant community life that existed there. Commercial buildings occupied what were once residential spaces, landlords converted single family units to apartments meant for lower-income groups, and landlords deferred maintenance on properties near the edge of the CBD at the promise of a high price to a CBD developer.²⁷ The officialdom believed having the highway clearing these spaces out would increase the progress for the CBD and the economy. They argued that the growth of the economy is good for all people, ignoring the fact that not all citizens are employees, or even consumers, of the major corporations that control the CBD. The officialdom looked at progress and development in a very broad and quantitative way. Because of their perspective, however limited, they planned highways through urban communities because, overall, there would be benefits to the economy and the city. With highways being built through communities, every aspect of life would be negatively impacted. They were able to make the argument because of conflict within the public sphere. The public sphere of our modern mass democracy had evolved from Habermas’ public sphere. With the increase in information and education to the public, more people were

²⁴ DiMento and Ellis, *Changing Lanes, Visions and Histories of Urban Freeways*, 62

²⁵ DiMento and Ellis, *Changing Lanes, Visions and Histories of Urban Freeways*, 55

²⁶ DiMento and Ellis, *Changing Lanes, Visions and Histories of Urban Freeways*, 55

²⁷ DiMento and Ellis, *Changing Lanes, Visions and Histories of Urban Freeways*, 56

free to enter the public sphere. Although mass democracy allows for more people in the public sphere, which is a step in the right direction, Habermas also recognizes the danger that can come along with it. Because people have more access, “conflict hitherto restricted to the private sphere now intrudes into the public sphere.”²⁸ The public sphere is less unified in its goals as the number of people involved increases. As the public sphere fights for power within itself, the sphere of officialdom is able to gain more and more power for itself. This public sphere of mass democracy opens up the ability for the officialdom to leave the public out of decisions by changing the structure of which the public sphere has influence over the officialdom.²⁹ The officialdom is free to create structures that meet their own goals, furthering their own power. They wrote policies and regulations that they assumed would be in the best interest of the public, but never engaged with the entire public sphere to make the decision.

One of the regulations related to the purchasing of land and rights of way. In early highway projects, the land purchasing was often a long drawn out legal process that was the last step before construction. Communities were held together during this process because it allowed people to stay in their homes as long as possible but, unfortunately for the residents, the Federal government did not prioritize their ability to stay in their homes and communities. The Federal government suggested two changes: one in the timing of land purchases, and a separate legal process for the acquisition of land. Because land purchases could often be drawn out, the Federal government suggested land purchase be one of the first steps of the construction process in order to avoid costly delays in construction. The Federal government also suggested a process in which the government makes one offer directly to the land owner and if the offer is rejected, the deal goes directly to a high state court, limiting the amount of appeals, and length of time, possible for land acquisition.³⁰ Neighborhoods, and all members of the public, saw no substantial benefit because of these changes. In fact, the public suffered from the changes that were made. Communities of color were left with destroyed land while waiting for construction. The decision made by the officialdom vastly increased efficiency in the construction process for interstates but went directly against the interests of the public sphere, because it lacked the power to do anything about the regulations.

The Federal government also created guidelines on how much land should be purchased in the right of way. The Federal guidelines suggested that highway projects through urban areas require “the acquisition of a block-wide strip” which results in the purchasing of even more land than required by rights of way restrictions. While the plan gave several justifications for the guideline, it spelled out the more efficient method of dealing with public services and preventing the highway from being on the rear of private property.³¹ This plan values the aesthetic for those driving from the suburbs into the downtown for work rather than the practicality of housing the communities that, like everyone, need to be and should be housed. These decisions were not made by the public sphere that was being affected; they were made by officialdom from the Central Business District using their power to justify the destruction of even more housing for

²⁸ Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article,” 52

²⁹ Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article,” 53

³⁰ Thomas H. MacDonald, “Interregional Highways” (Report by National Interregional Highway Committee, Washington D.C., 1944), 84

³¹ MacDonald, “Interregional Highways,” 85

simple aesthetic reasons. The officialdom was able to view the destruction of neighborhoods as necessary because they did not spend time in the neighborhoods. Communities were not consulted when these plans were being designed. They couldn't be, they did not have access to the public sphere that was so deeply corrupted by the officialdom.

The Evanston neighborhood in Cincinnati was one of the communities that was not consulted. The Cincinnati neighborhood originally called itself the town of Idlewild and was incorporated in 1893. The City of Cincinnati annexed the town in 1911³². A middle class, largely Catholic neighborhood, Evanston transitioned into a more racially segregated community in the 1940's and 1950's. Individual prejudice and systemic racism left white residents living east of the neighborhood's main artery, Montgomery Road while black residents clustered on the west side of the road. This all changed during the 1950s when a black minister and his family moved to the "white side" of Montgomery Road. His new white neighbors burned a cross in his yard and from that point on, Evanston would be forever changed. More black Cincinnatians began moving into the neighborhood and more white residents retreated out of Evanston to the new suburban homes being built outside of city limits.³³ When looking at census information for the community of Evanston, the dramatic shift is clear. In 1940, Evanston was 96.4 % white and only 3.6% black, but by 1960, Evanston was 27.3% white and 72.5% black. During that twenty-year period in the 1950's there was an average of one thousand white residents leaving the neighborhood per year. The "white flight" was counteracted by the movement of twelve hundred new black residents into the community per year.³⁴ In 1960, when the debate around the Northeast Expressway was at its height, Evanston's population reached 18,590 people, 72.5% of which were black, higher than the entire population of Evanston only twenty years prior. The white flight from Evanston dramatically began with the Pastor's inaugural move into the white side of Evanston. The exodus of white residents that followed is the perfect example of Anderson's believe that "discrimination is a tool of segregation."³⁵

Evanston had its own business district with neighborhood shops like a Dow Pharmacy, Voss' Grocery, Foltz's Grocery and Bakery and Froelicher and Son's Blacksmith and Auto Repair. In addition, Evanston enjoyed its own Building and Loan along with real estate offices.³⁶ Most of the housing stock with the neighborhood consisted of single-family units with a majority owner-occupied. Slum lords played less of a role in Evanston than in neighborhoods such as Avondale and Walnut Hills.³⁷ Evanston had tennis courts, parks, social clubs and a great neighborhood feel that made people proud to be from Evanston. This was Evanston's reality during the 1940's and 1950's.

In 1947, the City of Cincinnati produced a report entitled *Motorways: Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan Study*. The plan discussed in detail the exact locations of planned highways. The Cincinnati plan follows the guidelines laid out by *Interregional Highways* in the

³² Geoffrey Giglierano and Deborah Overmyer, *The Bicentennial Guide to Greater Cincinnati: A Portrait of Two Hundred Years* (Cincinnati: Cincinnati Historical Society, 1988), 402

³³ Mike Kelly, "Much of Life in Evanston is as it Always Was." *Post* (Cincinnati, Ohio), Aug. 15, 1986

³⁴ Cincinnati Planning Commission, "Evanston Recreation Plan" (Cincinnati: City of Cincinnati, 1972), 6

³⁵ Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*, 64

³⁶ Giglierano and Overmyer, *The Bicentennial Guide to Greater Cincinnati: A Portrait of Two Hundred Years*, 402

³⁷ Giglierano and Overmyer, *The Bicentennial Guide to Greater Cincinnati: A Portrait of Two Hundred Year*, 401

commission efforts to build highways through the undeveloped areas that separate communities. The study states that “the best location for expressways is in the separator belts between communities.”³⁸ The plan hoped to give communities access to the new highways without disrupting them. The commission did acknowledge that the construction would have consequences for neighborhoods like Evanston, but lacked a clear plan on how to address the needs of the community.

The damage done by construction is hard to quantify because the expressway not only directly affected an area of land to create a right of way, but it severed a community as well. It is estimated that Evanston lost a quarter of its housing stock to the construction of Northeast Expressway.³⁹ Because of the federal policies around right of way acquisition, a large amount of land was acquired for the expressway. The neighborhood was not only affected by the loss of homes, but also by the process by which the houses were demolished and put the neighborhood at risk. Many homes were destroyed early on in the land acquisition process than was necessary for the construction process. Too frequently were there holes left where homes used to be. Evanston residents were left to deal with the dust and illegal dumping of cars and furniture that resulted.⁴⁰ In fact these holes continued to become a problem after the initial home demolition. There was a rat problem within several of the holes and construction areas in the neighborhood. The problem got so bad that local students wrote to Cincinnati City Council about the problem and had their efforts published in a newspaper.⁴¹ Because many of the streets where homes were destroyed ran perpendicular to the Northeast Expressway, Evanston was left with a lot of dead-end streets that simply stopped, overlooking the interstate. This made it much more difficult for residents to travel within their own neighborhood and weakened neighborhood cohesion.⁴²

Our goal of integration requires not only physical resources like homes, but also social resources. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right to social resources is guaranteed. Article 27 of the Declaration states “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.”⁴³ This article ensures that all people have the ability to interact in and within their community but it must be taken farther than simply access. Social capital dominates many aspects of daily life. It governs access to jobs, business connections, and political influence. In order to truly have equity, the city must address the lack of equality in access to capital. Social capital affects all parts of life, including economic concerns and community health. Social capital requires strong social infrastructure. Parks and business districts are essential for neighborhood success because they allow for people to talk to one another and form informal connections that are essential for success. Social infrastructure can help create vital social capital for communities that are historically lacking. In his book *Palaces for the People* Erik Klinenberg analyzes the impact social infrastructure can have on communities. Klinenberg defines social infrastructure

³⁸ Sherwood Reeder, “Motorways: Cincinnati Metropolitan Master Plan Study” (Government Document, Cincinnati Ohio, 1947), 39

³⁹ Tom Brink Moeller, “Residents Try to Heal Rift Cause by Expressway,” (Cincinnati Enquirer, August 14, 1978)

⁴⁰ Interview with Ms. Anzora Adkins, Evanston Resident, April 2015

⁴¹ Enquirer Staff, “Students Deplore Rats,” (Cincinnati Enquirer, September 21, 1968)

⁴² Interview with Ms. Adkins

⁴³ “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights”

as the “physical conditions that determine whether social capital develops. When social infrastructure is robust, it fosters contact, mutual support, and collaboration among friends and neighbors.”⁴⁴

When there is a lack of social infrastructure, social activity is made much more difficult, leaving families and individuals to fend for themselves. Klinenberg believes that social infrastructure, whether it be the school, playground, or corner store, is the building block of public life. With social infrastructure, people are not on a mission to build community, but because of sustained reoccurring contacts, relationships are bound to be formed. Klinenberg believes that access to all types of social infrastructure including libraries, schools, playgrounds, parks, pools, sidewalks, community gardens, churches, community organizations, cafes, barbershops, and neighborhood businesses among others are essential for healthy life in a city.⁴⁵ Access to social infrastructure is often very limited because of opportunity hoarding. Anderson believes that enables groups in power to hoard opportunities without actively discriminating. Because black communities are often spatially separated from white communities, they live in different jurisdictions which have less opportunities for “human, social, and cultural capital formation needed to compete on par with whites.”⁴⁶

The social infrastructure of Evanston was deeply impacted by the construction of the Northeast Expressway. The neighborhood’s business district was almost completely destroyed. Over two and a half blocks of the business district were directly taken for the construction of the Northeast Expressway.⁴⁷ The buildings that remained were separated by a large and looming man-made canyon. Over time, the businesses that had called Evanston home for years, their grocery store, their bank, their hardware store, and many others were closed. Evanston residents were now forced to use public transportation to simply get groceries. Using Klinenberg’s understanding of social infrastructure, this is extremely detrimental to the health of the neighborhood. Because people have to travel outside of their own community for basic needs, they are not forming important social connections among their neighbors. The city proposed a new business development in Evanston to ensure residents had access to food. Unfortunately, Surrey Square Shopping Center was built in Norwood a little over one and a half miles down Montgomery Road. The city’s attempt to help the neighborhood rebuild through the building of fast food and grocery stores was seriously limited by the construction of the Surrey Square Shopping Center as Evanston’s own revitalizing neighborhood business district would be forced to compete.⁴⁸ The intent for the officialdom is clear, but once the project showed any kind of hardship, it was abandoned. This is because of anxious affective discrimination.⁴⁹ The members of the officialdom were not willing to risk their own status for the advancement of the Evanston residents.

⁴⁴ Eric Klinenberg, *The Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life* (New York: Crown Publishing, 2018), 5

⁴⁵ Klinenberg, *The Palaces for the People*, 23-24

⁴⁶ Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*, 64

⁴⁷ Jon Newsberry, “Community Revives Despite Problems,” (Cincinnati Enquirer, September 17, 1989)

⁴⁸ Tom Brink Moeller, “Residents Try to Heal Rift Cause by Expressway,” (Cincinnati Enquirer, August 14, 1978)

⁴⁹ Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*, 58

Even with the developments of Surrey Square, Evanston residents still did everything in their power to protect what was left of their business district. In 1972, Mobil Oil proposed plans for a gas station at Northeast corner Montgomery Rd and Brewster Ave. The plan called for the razing of four existing buildings which contained nine stores and thirty-six residents.⁵⁰ The Community Council in Evanston was able to prevent this from happening. In fact, those buildings still stand today and are the home to Community Blend, one of the first neighborhood owned businesses to be opened in the business district in years.⁵¹

Another essential aspect of social infrastructure ruined by the construction of the Northeast Expressway is parks and access to recreation. Over 20 acres of recreation were taken for the construction of the Northeast Expressway. Those 20 acres contained tennis courts, miniature golf courses, shelters, baseball fields and other recreational land that was lost. In fact, recreation in Evanston was so poor in the aftermath of the interstate, the City conducted a study about how recreation could be improved throughout the neighborhood. In the report produced in 1972, one cause directly linked to the loss of recreation was the interstate.⁵² Without adequate facilities, residents lack the ability to not only exercise, and enjoy public space, but also the ability to build community with one another. Public parks provide spaces for social groups to gather and not only bond, but expand their social networks.⁵³

Social clubs do not only exist in parks, they provide residents with formal and informal connections outside of their normal professional networks. There are several examples of social clubs in Evanston that were dramatically impacted by the Northeast Expressway. In the nearby area of Walnut Hills one example is the Women's Club which was right in the path of the interstate. The organization had over 1000 members and the group had been in that building since it was built for them in 1910.⁵⁴ The building was destroyed, and the organization was forced to move elsewhere. Churches were another form of social infrastructure ruined by the highway in Evanston. Evanston Christian Church was directly in the path of the Northeast Expressway. The state purchased the land from the congregation. Instead of using the money to open another location within the neighborhood Evanston, the money went to creating two new churches of the same denomination in the eastern suburbs. The church has raised over \$100,000 for missionary work in its fifty-seven years of operating.⁵⁵

The loss of a community of faith is detrimental to Evanston. People in the community will now be forced to leave the neighborhood if they wish to practice their faith with the people they always have. Churches are often key to social infrastructure according to Klinenberg. They not only provide weekly Sunday worship, but often offer bible study and other weekday events, as well as providing meeting space for other social groups.⁵⁶ The difference in these two stories is important to highlight. The Cincinnati media covered the destruction of the Woman's Club several times throughout their legal struggle. The stories were often large features and included

⁵⁰ Enquirer Staff, "Plans for Gas Station Get Cool Reception," (Cincinnati Enquirer, November 23, 1972)

⁵¹ Interview with Ms. Adkins

⁵² Cincinnati Recreation Commission, 2

⁵³ Cincinnati Recreation Commission, 1-4

⁵⁴ A.H Huneke "Woman's Club Lawyer Fights Northeast Expressway" *Cincinnati Times Star*, October 13, 1960

⁵⁵ Post Staff, "Last Service in Old Church," (Cincinnati Post, June 23, 1962)

⁵⁶ Klinenberg, *Palaces for the People*, 171

pictures. The Evanston Christian Church destruction was only mentioned once in a small article, after its fate has already been decided. This is an example of what Anderson calls an evidence gap.⁵⁷ This evidence gap comes from the media disproportionately covering one story over another.⁵⁸ It is the continued portrayal and prioritization of white narratives and experiences, while refusing to recognize communities of color experiencing the same thing. This lack of media coverage leads to further stigma and racial bias, and may reinforce ideas that the experiences of the black community matter less than those of white people.⁵⁹

While this highlights three major aspects of social infrastructure that were negatively impacted by the construction of the Northeast Expressway, it does not stop there. Evanston lacks several key parts of social infrastructure notably a library and post office. While these are not directly related to the interstate, they are related to the conditions of the neighborhood after construction. In fact, Evanston used to have its own small post office, which now sits as a vacant lot near the intersection of Clarion and Montgomery. Its location adjacent to the business district led to decreasing foot traffic as well as its location on the opposite side of the interstate from most of the residents in the neighborhood.⁶⁰

When we relate the lives of the people in Evanston to the goals of the city, it's plain to see that no one would choose the circumstances. The proponents of the policy may be able to argue that highways connected urban and rural areas allowing for a more connected country. Those who designed the highways did achieve their goal of increasing and easing access to the CBD. No matter what the highway achieved for the city, the story of Evanston can not be excluded. As Anderson says, "A colorblind story is always available to rationalize the policy."⁶¹ No one chooses to be failed by their representation. That is the basis of John Rawl's concept of the Veil of Ignorance, wherein the goal is to "nullify the effects of specific contingencies which put men at odds and tempt them to exploit social and natural circumstances to their own advantage."⁶² If all of us are in the original position, that is, we are ignorant not only to the society around us, but our own genetic composition, humanity, and positionality. In the original position, the residents of Evanston would have never had to endure the ill-fated policy of the 20th century. Rather, it would have never been considered as feasible, given that in the original position you make the choice with the consequences you would reasonably choose.⁶³ If you do not know your own privilege, you'd never strip away your own well-being for the gamble of genetic luck.

As a nation, we work against the concept of the veil of ignorance by promising the American dream. If someone believes they can pull themselves up from their bootstraps because of the promise of a better future, they'll also believe that someone else can as well. It does not highlight the flaws within the system we have created, and causes a false sense of possibility. It relies on the myth that in the face of systems of power and discrimination, you can succeed. But the question should never be whether someone can succeed in their environment despite their

⁵⁷ Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*, 56

⁵⁸ Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*, 56

⁵⁹ Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*, 51

⁶⁰ Interview with Ms. Adkins

⁶¹ Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration*, 62

⁶² Michael Sandel, *Justice: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 219

⁶³ Sandel, *Justice: A Reader*, 207

circumstances, but rather, should they have to? To have a public sphere that promotes equitable policies for everyone, we must understand that if there are members of the community living a life we would never choose in the framework of Rawls, then we are doing them a disservice by not leveling the playing field. We did the residents of Evanston a disservice by not considering the lives of the people who would be most negatively affected by the highway.

Under the requirements of non-ideal theory, we have taken into account historical conditions as well the repercussions from the policy to determine whether or not the policy to construct the Northeast Expressway in Evanston met the goal of the city. To meet the goals of the city, the policies must address the legacy of racial discrimination and segregation, which they have not. The highway construction only further encouraged segregation among residents. After the publication of the Motorways report in 1947, the Northeast Expressway was not the priority. Construction and controversy surrounded the Millcreek Expressway and the razing of Cincinnati's West End. While construction was focused across the city, Evanston's fate had already been decided. Because of the effects of politics like the GI bill and the racial wealth gap, it was easier for white families to move freely around the cities. Interestingly, Evanston has an exceptionally high home ownership rate. In 1979, 51.8% of Evanston residents lived in owner-occupied housing.⁶⁴ This number is impressively high, but the homeowners were living in a segregated neighborhood, many without access to the loans which would allow them to leave the neighborhood that was soon to be destroyed. Instead of encouraging racially integrated neighborhoods and social circles, highway construction created a more segregated neighborhood.

The second goal of a city, to create an accessible public sphere, is to ensure communities have equal access to resources. The construction of the Northeast Expressway also fails this test. Evanston residents used to have their own thriving business district., with a grocery store, hardware store, a bank, and other things necessary for daily life. After the construction of the expressway, they lost these vital resources. The residents were forced to travel outside of their own community, many on public transportation, to gain access to fulfill their basic needs. This is not true of every neighborhood in the city. Many neighborhoods across Cincinnati still benefit from their own local business district. Denying some Cincinnati's easy access to food while Cincinnati's in other neighborhoods retained their access is inherently unequal.

Cities must also, in their creation of the public sphere, ensure that there is access to social infrastructure and social capital. Again, the policy of the construction of the Northeast Expressway failed to provide such infrastructure and access to capital. Evanston's social infrastructure was destroyed. The neighborhood lost churches, social clubs, and their general sense of community. Residents speaking almost fifty years after the razing say the thing that changed the most was the sense of community in the neighborhood.⁶⁵ It is hard to stay connected when there is a six-lane canyon between you and your former neighbors.

We have been able to argue that the construction of the Northeast Expressway did not meet the goal of the city and could not reasonably create a public sphere with equal access. The interstate program had many goals but in general it aimed to bring people together and allow people to have easier access to one another. In reality, the policy has created more distances than

⁶⁴ Carol Sanger, "The End of the Road for Cincinnati's Freeways," (Cincinnati Post, January 19, 1974)

⁶⁵ Interview with Ms. Carolyn Sebron, a former Evanston resident, March 2015

it had bridged.⁶⁶ The policy led to more segregation, not racial integration. It is important to remember that integration may have been our goal for the city but for Anderson it is so much more. Anderson believes that segregation “is an imperative of justice.”⁶⁷ Anderson makes integration a moral issue and the policy has failed the test. The policy of constructing the Northeast Expressway through Evanston was an immoral act. It cannot be treated as anything less. Not only is the project immoral, it adds to the non-ideal world in which we live. Any further policy will have to take into account the wrong that happened in Evanston. The residents of Evanston deserve more.

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