

Historical Redlining and Its Modern Impact on Neighborhood Safety and Educational Attainment in Cleveland, Ohio

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Background

The Cleveland Health Survey represents a collaborative effort between the Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods and the Cleveland Department of Public Health and provides insights into the health and well-being of residents to guide the development and tailoring of programs, policies, and resources to serve better the unique health needs that exist within Cleveland's many communities via a hybrid sampling approach focusing on neighborhood geography

Learning Objectives

1. Develop the ability to evaluate and appraise differences observed between populations based on health disparities that may emerge as it pertains to determinants of health
2. Development of the ability to analyze the composed data and recall concepts learned with previous courses. By applying these concepts and using them within my own research, I will be able to further enhance my understanding of these topics.
3. Development of the ability to apply findings in creative ways to devise potential recommendations on how such disparities and adverse determinants can be addressed and potentially resolved.

Activities

- Accepting phone calls over WebEx and conducting the survey in a timeframe of 25-40 minutes for 15 shifts lasting 4 hours November-December 2025
- Qualitatively coded open-ended question regarding the issues of most importance and ideas of how these issues could be addressed
 - Categorized based on thematic area of concern
 - In developing the codebook, information regarding employment and perception of safety was highlighted
 - With this highlighted information, a data brief template was developed to illustrate the key themes related to safety and educational attainment

Professional Development

- Overall, the work done with the Cleveland Health Survey alongside the Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods and the Cleveland Department of Public Health was very meaningful and insightful when it comes to doing the necessary research to be informed when making decisions related policies and programs that affect entire communities
- In addition, working on this project allowed for first-hand experience in coding data
- Strengthening of collaborative skills and community engagement

“If people had a better economic and educational experience, less crime would happen...”

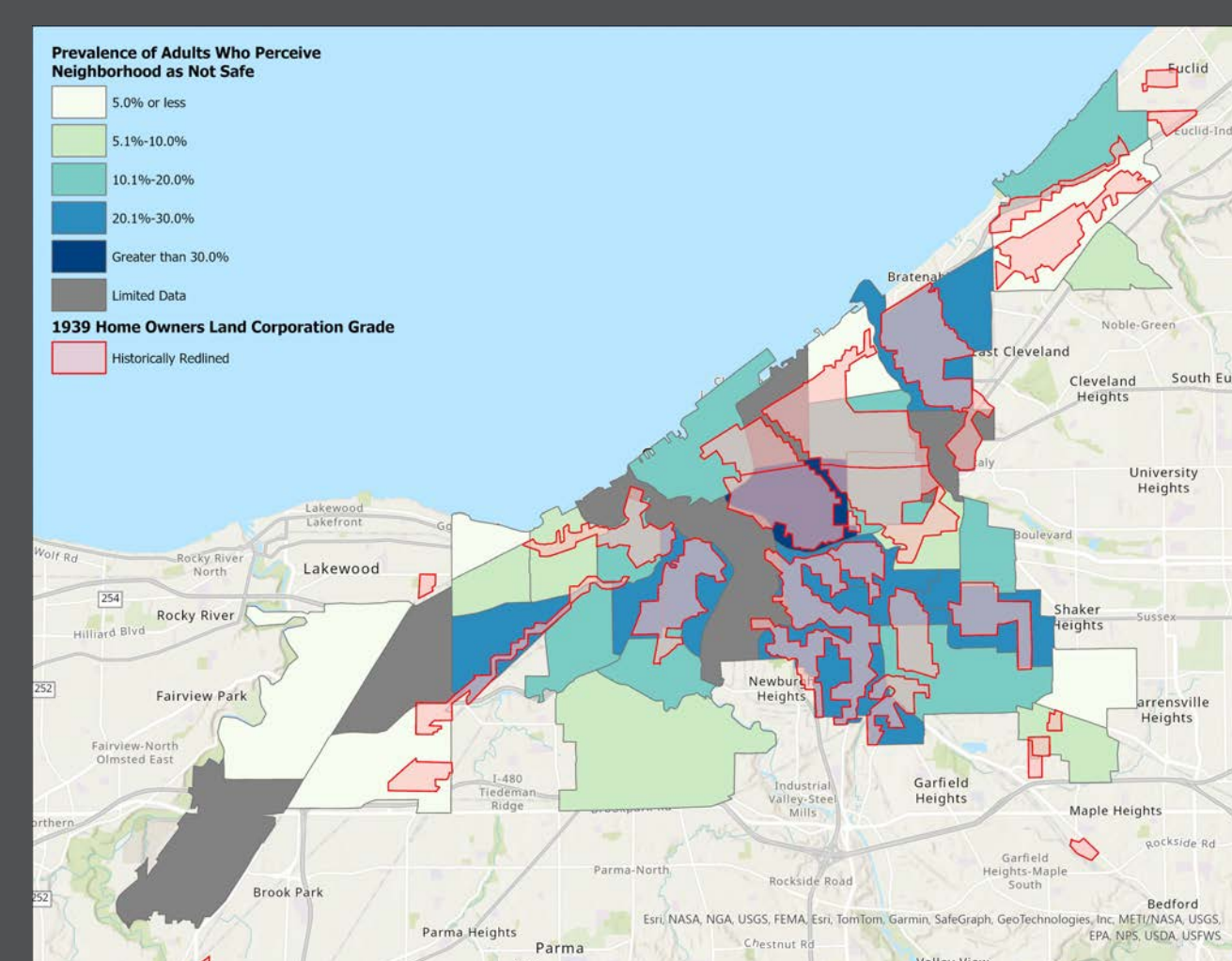


Figure 1: Map overlaying 1939's historically redlined regions across neighborhoods that are by resident perception of safety.

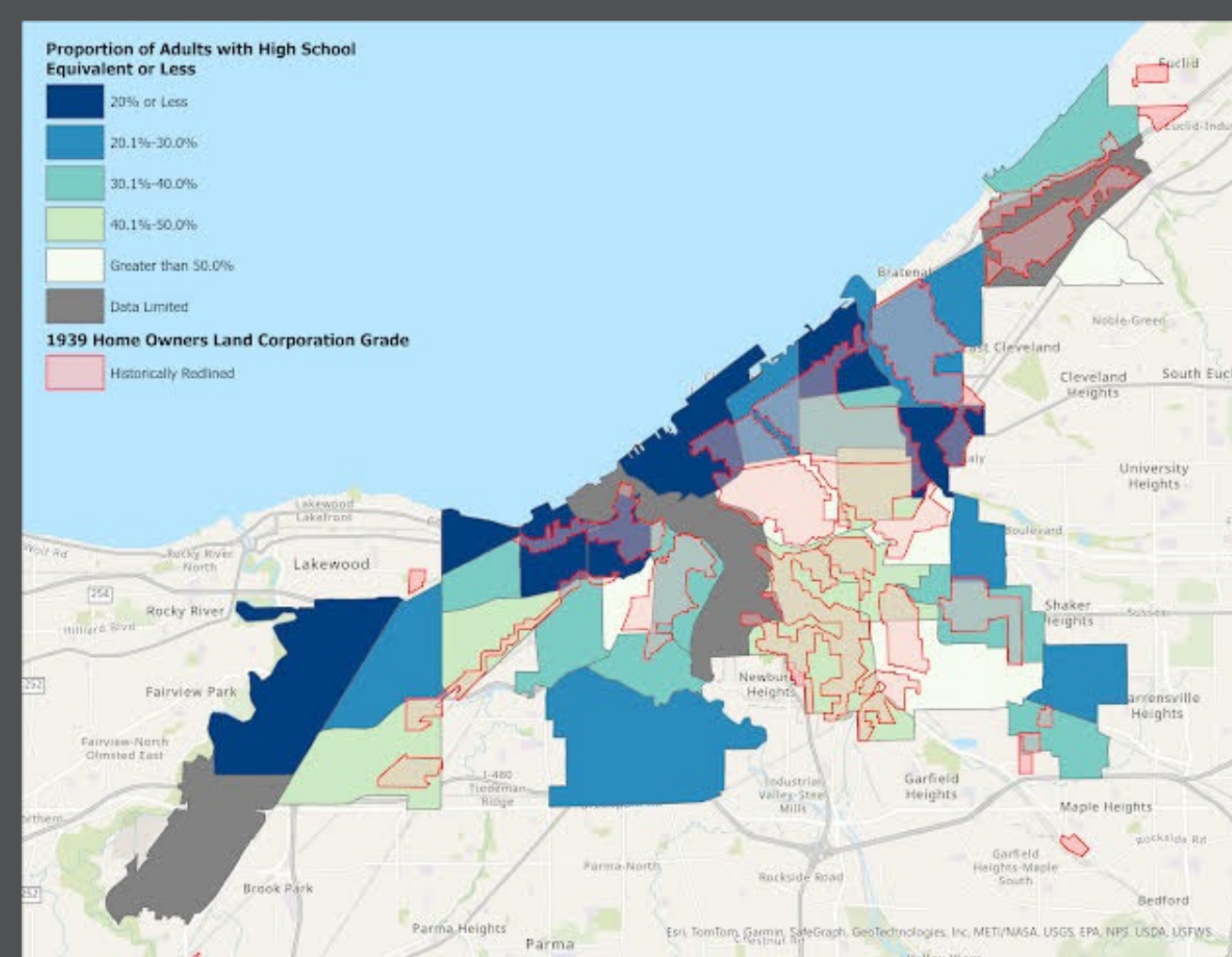


Figure 2: Map overlaying 1939's historically redlined regions with the prevalence of the population who reported having completed high school (or equivalent) or less

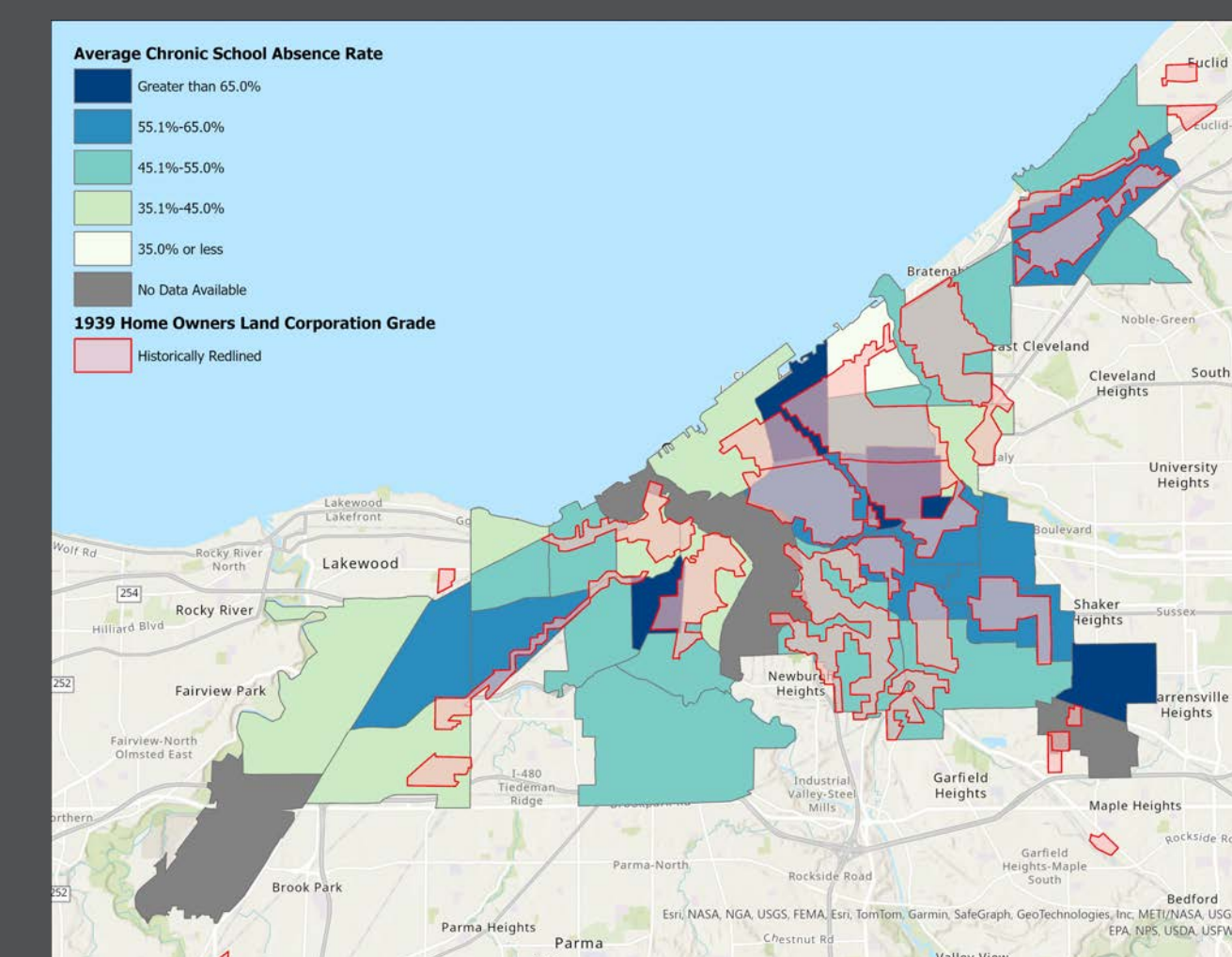


Figure 3: Map overlaying 1939's historically redlined regions with chronic absenteeism rates reported by public schools in each neighborhood during the 2023-2024 school year.

Those who live in an area that was historically designated as declining or hazardous were **4.3x as likely to perceive their neighborhood be unsafe.**

Those who live in an area that was historically designated as declining or hazardous were **72.5% less likely to have some college or more.**

High school students who were absent from school due to safety concerns were **2.3x as likely to be getting D's or F's in school.**

Statistics were obtained from The Ohio Department of Education and The Ohio Department of Health's 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Public Health Implications

The purpose of this project is to better understand the relationship that exists between education and public health outcomes, particularly examining crime and safety within different communities within the City of Cleveland. With Cleveland being one of the major cities in the Midwest—a region where 2020 census data shows segregation is still prevalent—we expected that the data we collected would reflect racial patterns that align with the trends we observed.

When juxtaposing the findings of this project with the map of historically redlined regions within the city of Cleveland, it became clear that many of the effects of redlining continue to persist within modern society. Having never fully recovered from the adverse effects due to persistent segregation, the individuals who continue to live in these regions are worse off not only when it comes to education but safety as well as many other areas of daily life.

Future Directions

Interesting ways to continue the research conducted within this practicum would be to potentially incorporate police records from departments around the city. By doing this, we would be able to paint a clearer picture of the pervasiveness of crime within the city. In response to these findings, government action could take shape in a variety of ways. Viewing the issue from the lens of policy and management; three key paths stand out:

1. Continue to use local data to identify disparities and guide interventions in housing, education, and criminal justice
2. Forge new partnerships with nonprofit organizations, local businesses, academic institutions, and residents with the community to begin and co-create meaningful solutions
3. Ensure that policies are shaped by those who continue to be most affected by participatory planning and budgeting, allowing the proper stakeholders to have an adequate amount of input

Lessons Learned

Through this practicum experience, I gained valuable first-hand exposure to the process of collecting qualitative data and translating it into a more structured, quantitative research project. Conducting interviews over the phone allowed me to hear the passion and emotion in people's voices, adding a powerful layer of human connection to the research. These conversations provided a deeper understanding of how profoundly certain issues impact individuals in their daily lives. In addition to the emotional insight, the interviews also offered rich personal anecdotes and narrative that highlighted the systemic gaps and shortcomings present in many of Cleveland's neighborhoods. These stories brought the data to life, transforming it from abstract numbers into real, lived experiences. As a result, the research became more meaningful — grounded not just in statistics, but in voices and realities of the communities behind them.

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