Leadership in Building Community
Teaching Note
A Social Analysis of the Dayton Metropolitan Region:
"A Divided City" and "The Hidden Violence of Poverty"
Introduction

The question examined in this Note is "Are there individuals and groups in our Metropolitan Region that lack opportunities to develop their capabilities and to reach their fulfillment more fully and easily?" Put another way, "Are their deep patterns of racial and economic injustice in our Metropolitan Regions?'

This Note examines the patterns of racial and economic segregation that characterize the Greater Dayton Metropolitan Region. These patterns of segregation lead to different neighborhoods in the Region – Disadvantage Neighborhoods in the urban centers of Dayton and Xenia and Affluent Neighborhoods on the periphery of the urban centers. Examining the social structures and cultures of the two neighborhoods illustrates a significant difference in opportunities available to children, parents and families. Analysis of date from each of the neighborhoods will illustrate that Affluent Neighborhoods are neighborhood are "High Opportunity Neighborhoods" and the Disadvantage Neighborhoods are "Low Opportunity Neighborhoods." Low Opportunity Neighborhood do violence to the human development of children and make very difficult for parents. This violence is "hidden violence" because many people in other neighborhoods are not familiar with people in the Low-Opportunity Neighborhoods and unaware and often indifferent to their plight. The Region as a Divided City makes it very difficult to have a Regional public conversation on how to address the deep issues of racial and economic injustice in Metropolitan Region

What City are You Form?

When you ask people what city they are from, they will often give you the name of a specific city, such as St. Louis or Cincinnati. When you inquire further and ask them were they shop or where they work they provide a wide description of travels within the metropolitan region. Some may live in a suburban neighborhood but go to the center city of the region to work or to visit a theater. Another may live in a center city neighborhood but go to a suburban mall in another county to shop and see a movie. For most people their City or "polis" is in fact their metropolitan region.

Patterns of Sprawl in Metropolitan Regions

Urban sprawl occurs when the amount of urbanized land in a region grows at a significantly faster rate than the population growth of the region. Almost all urbanized areas in the United State have experienced

urban sprawl.[1] The case of the Greater Dayton, Ohio metropolitan region is used as a case of urban sprawl and its consequences. This metro region has the City of Dayton as its urban center. It contains three Counties. Montgomery, which contains Dayton as the County seat, and the Counties of Miami to the north and Greene to the east.

Table No. 1.1 summarizes changes in the urban population and the changes in the urbanized areas from 1950 to 2010. Urban sprawl is clearly evident. Urban population has doubled from 1950 to 2010 and the amount of urbanized land has grown by more than 5 times.

Table No. 1.1: Urban Sprawl in Greater Dayton Region								
	1950	**1960**	**1970**	**1980**	**1990**	**2000**	**2010**	**% Change**
Urban Population	346,864	501,694	606,549	596,134	613,147	723,955	720,393	208%
Urban Area Sq. Miles	66.2	149.0	185.9	253.7	274.1	327.6	340.4	514%
Data from Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission								

Table No. 1.2 (next page) shows the trends for total population in each of the Counties of the Dayton Metropolitan Region and illustrates where the population changes have occurred. The population of the Greater Dayton Region peaked in 1970 and has decreased by 2% in 2010. During this period of time both Greene and Miami Counties have gained population (29.20% and 21.54% respectively) and Montgomery County has lost population (-11.71%).

Table No. 1.3 (next page) shows the impact of urban sprawl on the City of Dayton. While Montgomery County lost 12% of its population since 1970, the City of Dayton lost 42% of its population and the population of the suburbs of Montgomery County has grown by 8%. A major cause of this change in population was a 53% loss of manufacturing jobs within Dayton Metropolitan Region from 2000 to 2009. During the 40 years (1970 to 2010) the racial mix of the City of Dayton saw a loss of 57% of its White population, a loss of 18% of its Black population and a 720% gain in other populations, mainly Hispanics. The suburbs saw a 9% loss of White population, 448% gain in Black population, and 2020% in other

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[1] See for example. Robert D Putnam, Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2015) and David Rusk, Inside Game/Outside Game: Winning Strategies for Saving urban America (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001) and the extensive work of the Brooking Institution at https://www.brookings.edu/topic/cities-regions/

population, again mainly Hispanic. Clearly, the Dayton metropolitan region has experience urban sprawl. This sprawl has brought about major changes in the composition the neighborhood of the Metropolitan Region.

Table No. 1.2: Changes in Total Population 1950 to 2010								
Geographical Area	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	% Change 1970 to 2010
Greene	58,892	94,642	125,057	129,769	136,731	147,886	161,573	29.20%
Miami	61,309	72,901	84,342	90,381	93,182	98,868	102,506	21.54%
Montgomery	398,441	527,080	606,148	571,697	573,809	559,062	535,153	-11.71%
The Region	518,642	694,623	815,547	791,847	803,722	805,816	799,232	-2.00%

Distribution of Median Family Income in the Dayton Metropolitan Region

Figure No. 1.1: High, Medium, and Low Median Family Incomes in the Region (next page) illustrates that over time both the upper income and lower income brackets are growing and the middle-income bracket is shrinking. One of the results of urban sprawl is a growing in income inequality within the Region

Figure 1.2: Distribution of Median Family Income by Neighborhood (next page) illustrates urban sprawl has resulted in increased segregation by family income. There is a growth of low median family income neighborhoods in the urban center and the movement of more affluent neighborhoods to the periphery of the region.

| Table No. 1.3: Changes in Montgomery County Population			
	1970	2010	% Change
Montgomery			
Total	600,148	535,153	-12%
White	520,748	395,272	-24%
Black	83,510	111,874	34%
Other	1,890	28,007	1382%
Dayton			
Total	242,523	141,527	-42%
White	168,346	73,193	-57%
Black	74,177	60,705	-18%
Other	930	7,629	720%
Suburbs in Montgomery County			
Total	363,625	393,626	8%
White	352,408	322,079	-9%
Black	9,333	51,169	448%
Other	960	20,378	2023%
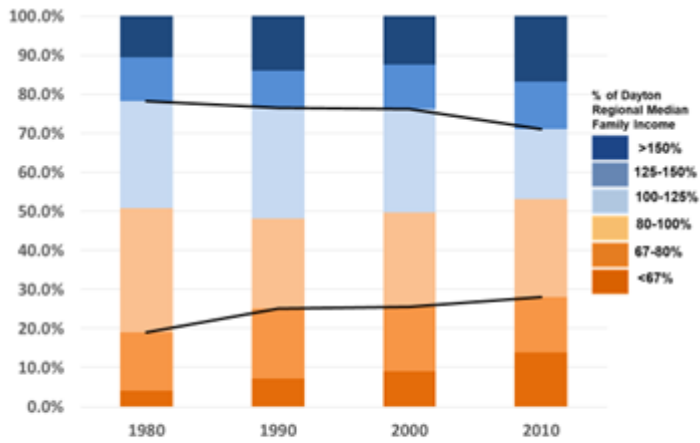
Figure 1.1 High, Middle and Low Median Incomes in the Dayton Metropolitan Region
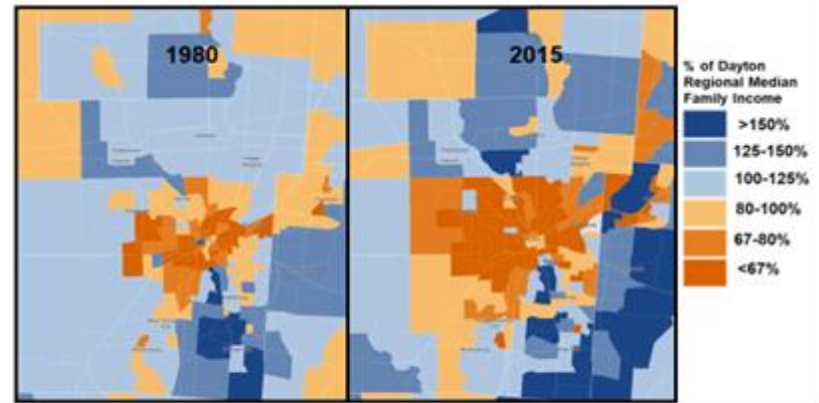

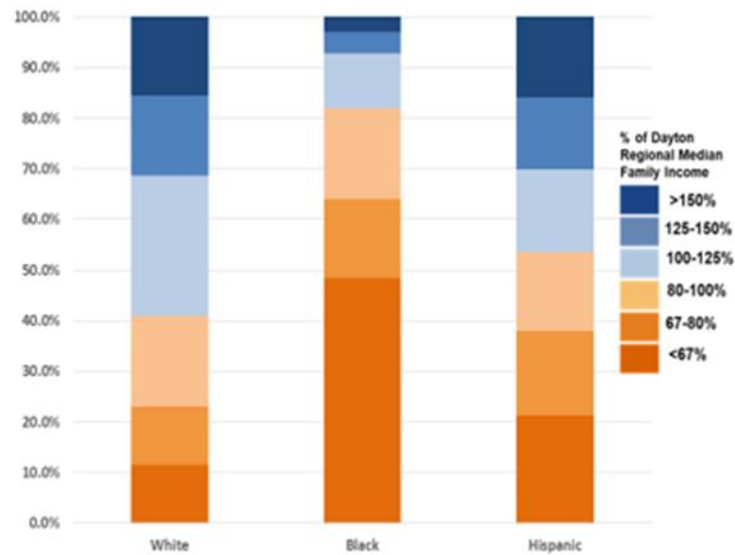**Figure 1.2: Distribution of Median Family Income by Neighborhood**

Figure 1.3: Distribution by Median Income in the Region by Race

Distribution of Race in Neighborhoods

Figure 1.3: Distribution of Family in the Region by Race (previous page) illustrates another pattern in regional change. The Figure shows that 60% of the White population is in neighborhoods where the median family income is in the upper three brackets. Also, 80% of the Black population are in neighborhoods where the median family income is in the lower three brackets. Over 40% of the Black population lives in neighborhoods where median family income is in the lowest income bracket.

At this point, three conclusions can be drawn:

- there is a growing gap between high median income families and low medium income families,
- for the most part, the low median family neighborhoods are clustered in the urban center of the metropolitan region, and
- a large percentage of the Black population live in neighborhoods of the lowest median income family bracket.

For most of us, the metropolitan region is our city or polis. This analysis provides an image of the Greater Dayton Metropolitan Region as a "Divided City" where the high median family income neighborhoods are in the suburbs and low median family income neighborhoods are in the urban core. Also, a high percent of the Black population lives in the low familymedian income neighborhoods.

The Opportunity Gap in the Divided City

A number of studies have examined the impact of the Divided City on opportunities for children and defined "the opportunity gap." [2] In this section, an analysis of "the opportunity gap" in Montgomery County (the urban center of the Dayton metropolitan region) is presented by contrasting the opportunities available to children and families in low opportunity neighborhoods (a low median income neighborhood) with high opportunity neighborhoods (a high median income neighborhood). This contrast will illustrate the injustices suffered by people in low opportunity neighborhoods.

The Neighborhood Experience: Neighborhoods provide an ecology for families and can enhance or detract from the opportunities for children. The ecology of low opportunity neighborhoods presents numerous roadblocks to children's development (See Table 1.4 next page If we examine the demographics of low opportunity neighborhoods, we see a high percentage of single-parent families, many of whom lack a post-secondary credential. Parents often do not earn sufficient wages to support

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[2] See for example. Robert D Putnam, *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2015).

their families and must rely on different programs in the welfare system to provide for their children. These neighborhoods experience higher rates of crime, especially violent crimes. In low opportunity neighborhoods, there are fewer adult role models who demonstrate the habits and character traits required for employment and supporting a family. These neighborhoods often lack supportive networks of neighbors and friends, who help families and look out for children. Amenities, such as playgrounds and recreational activities, are lacking. With a high number of renters and abandoned properties, there is often a lack of pride in the upkeep of the neighborhood.

Table 1.4 Contrast Between Two Neighborhoods In Montgomery County		
	A High Opportunity Neighborhoods	**A Low Opportunity Neighborhoods**
Race		
White	94.3%	2.8%
Black	0.0%	88.1%
Hispanic	1.3%	4.7%
Family Structure		
Married Couple Family	82.4%	11.2%
Single-Mother Families	5.4%	78.9%
Single-Father Families	12.2%	9.8%
Education		
Less than High School	1.9%	20.9%
High School Graduate	7.4%	35.1%
Some College	24.7%	34.0%
Bachelor's Degree or More	66.0%	10.1%
Employment*		
Employed	96.7%	41.3%
Unemployed	1.6%	8.4%
Housing Structure		
Occupied	97.1%	65.8%
Vacant	2.9%	34.2%
Poverty		
Under 1.00 (Doing Poorly)	6.2%	28.9%
1.00 to 1.99 (Struggling)	4.0%	38.6%
Doing Poorly and Struggling	10.2%	67.5%

Learning in the Neighborhoods: Multiple research studies have demonstrated that the quality of a child's early learning environments — in the family, in childcare, and in pre-school — have a major impact on the early brain development.[3] High-quality childcare and early learning opportunities are mostly absent from low opportunity neighborhoods. When parents work multiple jobs just to keep food on the table and a roof overhead, they do not have the resources for quality early learning and must rely on relatives or friends to provide childcare. There are fewer opportunities for enrichment in schools in low opportunity neighborhoods. For a multitude of reasons, parents in low opportunity neighborhoods are disengaged and/or discouraged from participating in their

Table 1.5 Educational Outcomes by Race		
	White	**Black**
Kindergarten Readiness – Girls	*49%*	31%
Kindergarten Readiness – Boys	42%	21%
3rd Grade Reading – Girls	71%	37%
3rd Grade Reading – BoА ys	63%	34%
8th Grade Math – Girls	67%	31%
8th Grade Math –Boys	64%	27%
Graduating HS – Girls	93%	72%
Graduating HS – Boys	87%	68%
Table 1.6 Behavior Related to Educational Outcomes by Race		
	White	**Black**
Chronically Absent – Girls	12%	23%
Chronically Absent – Boys	12%	27%
Out of School Suspensions – Girls	4%	29%
Out of School Suspensions – Boys	12%	59%

children's school. Because of declining property values and high tax-delinquency rates, urban school systems have less money to invest in improving the quality of education. The systems, administrators, and the teachers are often not equipped to handle many of the roadblocks to learning that their children face.

In high opportunity neighborhoods, high-quality childcare and early learning opportunities are readily accessible, and families can afford these opportunities. School districts in high opportunity neighborhoods have the finances needed to provide high-quality early learning opportunities. The culture of schools in high opportunity neighborhoods reinforces college participation, and persistence rates (the percentage of students who return to college for a second year) are among the highest in the region.

Tables 1.5 and 1.6 illustrate that Black children, who live in predominately low opportunity neighborhoods have poorer educational outcomes.

Parenting in the Neighborhoods: Parents are the first teachers of their children, and parents in low opportunity neighborhoods face severe disadvantages in carrying out this task. Parenting in a low

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[3] For a good summary, see Poverty in Early Childhood, https://www.cssp.org/policy/2016/Poverty-in-Early-Childhood-Fact-Sheet.pdf (Accessed on June 6, 2018).

opportunity neighborhood, especially if you are single, is highly stressful because you focus on making sure your family has food and shelter while coping with a difficult work schedule. A parent in a low opportunity neighborhood experiences many roadblocks in accessing welfare benefits. As their income increases, parents often experience the "cliff effect" — a decrease or loss of a benefit such as childcare, which lessens the family's overall financial resources. Parents often cannot afford health insurance for themselves or their children. A major illness often means a major financial setback. Managing this stress gives parents little time to engage in activities that could enhance their children's intellectual and social-emotional development. Managing the dynamics of a family in poverty puts a great deal of stress on parents in low opportunity neighborhoods and makes it difficult to handle the many roadblocks in caring for their children. This can lead to a sense of hopelessness, depression, and sometimes, substance abuse.

Families in high opportunity neighborhoods have more resources for nurturing and educating their children. With the predominance of two-parent families, with one or both having a post-secondary degree, there is a strong expectation that their children will go to college. At least one of the parents has employment with a family-supportive wage and health care benefits, enabling them to provide high-quality childcare and early learning. Many of the parents grew up in traditional family households, where supportive and developmental approaches to parenting were modeled. Often a supportive network of family and friends can provide advice on parenting skills. While family life in high opportunity neighborhoods presents occasional stressful situations, the parents have the resilience to cope. Parents have more leisure time and can read to their children, assist them in their schoolwork, and provide enrichment activities like music education, travel and athletics.

Childhood in the Neighborhoods: Figures 1.4 and 1.5 illustrate the social ecology of the two neighborhoods, one low opportunity and the other high opportunity. All the above factors contribute to a lack of academic success for children in low opportunity neighborhoods. The stress of poverty negatively affects the early development of those parts of the brain (executive function and impulse control) affecting early academic and emotional learning. Low opportunity neighborhoods have a higher percent of children who are not kindergarten ready, have higher levels of chronic absenteeism, greater drop-out rates, and a lower percentage who are proficient in third-grade reading and fourth-grade mathematics. Young children in low opportunity neighborhoods have heard markedly fewer words than children in high opportunity neighborhoods. Children raised in single-parent families, as compared to intact families, are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused, smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent, delinquent, and criminal behavior; and have developmental delays. Only a few highly resilient students from low opportunity neighborhoods will persist in school to obtain a college degree or a post-secondary credential.
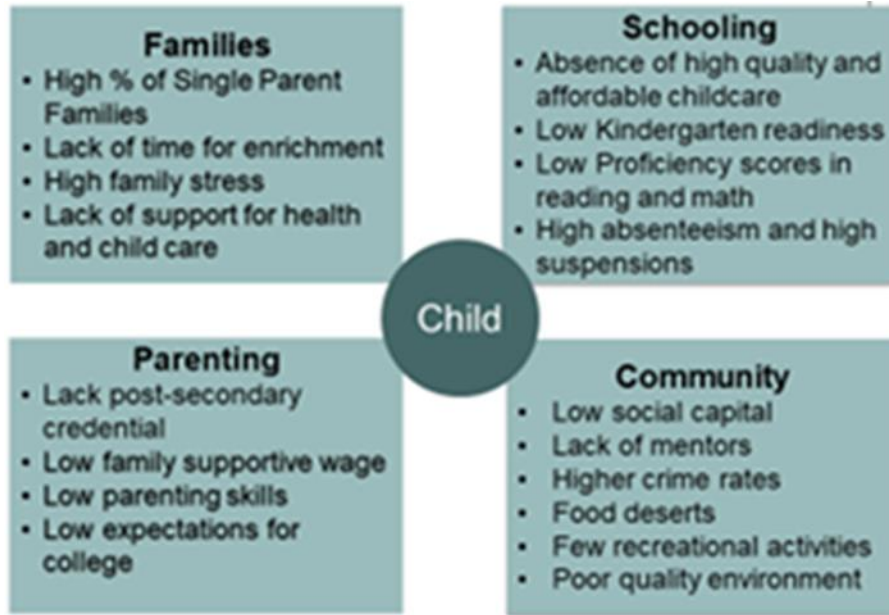
Families
- High % of Single Parent Families
- Lack of time for enrichment
- High family stress
- Lack of support for health and child care

Schooling
- Absence of high quality and affordable childcare
- Low Kindergarten readiness
- Low Proficiency scores in reading and math
- High absenteeism and high suspensions

Child

Parenting
- Lack post-secondary credential
- Low family supportive wage
- Low parenting skills
- Low expectations for college

Community
- Low social capital
- Lack of mentors
- Higher crime rates
- Food deserts
- Few recreational activities
- Poor quality environment

Figure 1.4: A Child in Low Opportunity Neighborhood

Families
- High % of Married Families
- Time and resource for enrichment
- Lower family stress
- Availability of good health and child care

Schooling
- High quality and affordable childcare
- High Kindergarten readiness
- High proficiency scores
- Low absenteeism and alternatives to suspensions

Child

Parenting
- Post-secondary credential
- Family supportive wage
- Experience of parenting skills
- High expectations for college

Community
- Network of mentors
- Low crime rates
- Easily accessible food
- Multiple recreational activities
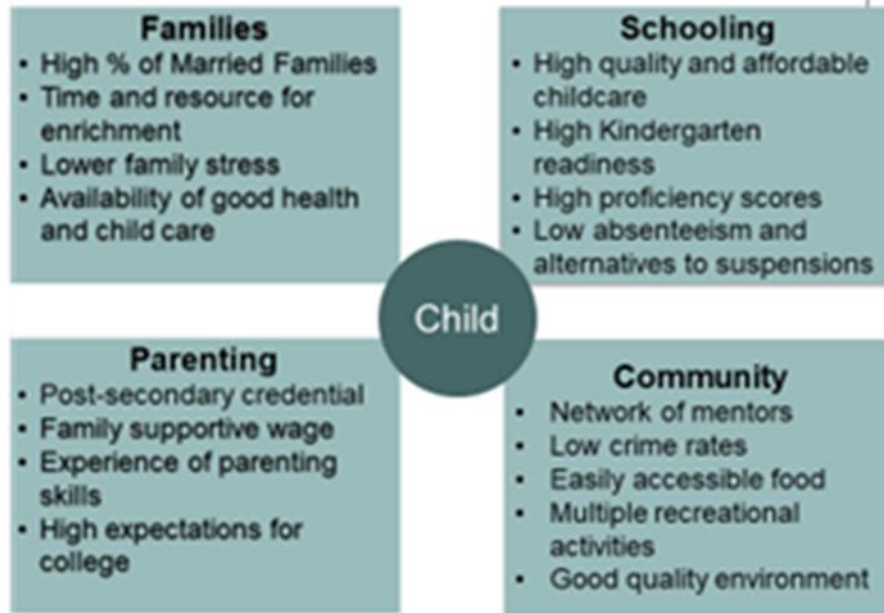- Good quality environment

Figure 1.5: A Child in a High Opportunity Neighborhood

Hidden Violence of Poverty in Low Opportunity Neighborhoods

Clearly, children in low opportunity neighborhoods face multiple interrelated and complex factors that place roadblocks in their journey to realize the "American Dream." Qualitative and quantitative research

methods have helped identify these factors. When you listen to children and families in low opportunity neighborhoods, you hear narratives of suffering and isolation.

- Listen to the story of a mother who eats very little, just so she can provide food for her children: this is a story of both generosity and suffering.

- Consider the story that I heard in a tutoring session where a second grader explained that he could not complete his homework because he hid in fear while his mother's boyfriend was abusing her.

- A colleague tells the story about asking third graders what they want to be when they grow up and hearing one young man say his only future was going to jail. When asked why, he replied, "All the men in my family are in jail or have gone to jail."

- While working on a community Task Force on Child Protection, a social worker and I visited a woman whose child had been taken into custody by Children's Services. She had neglected the child because of her alcohol addiction but told us that she deeply wanted to change so she could be reunited her child. When the social worker called the County's Addiction Services, she was told that this mother could not get services for nine weeks. You could see the pain and suffering in the tears of this mother.

These stories of pain, suffering, and alienation tell me that a better name for the opportunity gap is the "Hidden violence of poverty." It is "silent" because most people in the metropolitan region are indifferent to it, and it is "violence" because it does long-term physical and psychological harm to children, families, and to the structures of neighborhoods. Maps, graphs, and tables can demonstrate the immensity of the injustice of urban poverty and the opportunity gap; but I believe only narratives likes these can help us appreciate the "silent violence of poverty." Sharing experiences and stories like these provide a strong motivation for working for economic and racial justice in our metropolitan regions.

The Divided City and Public Discourse

Excesses of American Individualism and its Consequences:[4] The Declaration of Independence asserted, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain Unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." With these words, the American experiment incorporated a biblically based tradition of a Creator, and republican tradition of citizen rule with the Enlightenment tradition of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Throughout many years of the Republic, these traditions existed in creative tension,

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[4] See especially the "Introduction to the Updated Edition" of Bellah, Robert N., et al. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life.* University of California Press, 1996.

providing a force for both unity and progress. The biblical and the republican traditions focus on the common good; and the Enlightenment tradition focuses on a strong individualism.

The individualistic strand of American culture insisted that a person had the freedom to define his or her own identity, as opposed to an outside entity, such as the government or church, defining that identity for them. Individuals had the freedom to pursue their interests using their own talents, abilities, and ambitions. In many respects, this strand of individualism enabled generations to settle the vast expanses of the American frontier. Individualism was responsible for making the United States, in later eras, a leader in innovation on many fronts.

As the biblical and republic traditions faded in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, so did the focus on the common good. Individualism became the predominate strand of American culture, and excessive individualism has shaped contemporary American life. Financial success, security, and status in society became the drivers that provide purpose for one's life. The shared concern for the common good of neighborhood and city began to fade.

Excessive individualism was a major cultural cause of the regional trends of economic and racial segregation. Families experiencing the financial security of the post-World War II period were free to choose where they would like to live. Spurred by government policies that provided low-cost loans and expanded highways, for example, families could choose larger houses with bigger yards in safer and more secure neighborhoods, populated by people very much like themselves.

Polarization in the Region: As we have seen, the evolution of the social architecture of the metropolitan region has reinforced patterns of isolation and disconnection between neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and affluent neighborhoods. Each of these neighborhoods has developed its own culture, i.e., shared convictions, beliefs, attitudes, and practices. In each of these neighborhoods, residents encounter people just like themselves — people who often use the same media for information and share the same political convictions. In addition, the neighborhoods of the region have become isolated from one another and have few opportunities to share common experiences and stories. Through a variety of media, the poor know about the lives of the more affluent, and the more affluent know about the lives of the poor, often through the reports of failing schools or TV coverage of violence in poor neighborhoods. These stereotypes of each neighborhood keep them isolated from one another. Persons in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and persons in more affluent neighborhoods have become "strangers" to one another.

As Bill Bishop indicated in 2008:

> As people seek out the social settings they prefer—as they choose the group that makes them feel the most comfortable—the nation grows more politically segregated—and the benefit that ought to come with having a variety of opinions is lost to the righteousness that is the special entitlement of homogeneous groups. We all live with the results: balkanized communities whose inhabitants find other Americans to be culturally incomprehensible; a growing intolerance for political differences that has made national consensus impossible; and politics so polarized that Congress is stymied, and elections are no longer just contests over policies, but bitter choices between ways of life.[5]

Breakdown of Public Dialogue: This sorting of neighborhoods has led to polarization in regional governance and public conversations. In this climate of polarization, neighborhoods and political jurisdictions focus on self-interest and not the mutual interests of the whole region, contributing to the Divided nature of the region. Overcoming the silent violence of poverty and advancing justice requires a public space for conversations that can address complex problems and social evils and develop a shared vision for the future, characterized by equitable opportunities for human flourishing by all people and groups within the region. While some metropolitan regions have made progress, isolation and the protection of self-interest have made it difficult to create the necessary public spaces for conversations to promote the region's common good. As David Brooks notes, "The greatest challenge of our moment is the crisis of isolation and fragmentation, the need to rebuild the fabric of society that has been torn by selfishness, cynicism, distrust and autonomy."[6]

Conclusion

This Note examines the patterns of racial and economic segregation and illustrated how the Dayton Metropolitan Region has evolved into a "Divided City" with distinct neighborhoods, some of which are high opportunity neighborhoods and some are low opportunity neighborhoods. Examining the characteristics of low opportunity neighborhoods illustrates that children and families experience the silent violence of poverty. The stress of poverty is violent because does physical, psychological, and social damage to many children and adults. It is silent because many people in the region are unaware or indifferent to this violence. The divided nature of the metropolitan region and the individualism of much

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[5] Bill Bishop. *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America is Tearing Us Apart*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, New York, New York. 2008.
[6] David Brooks, "The Death of Idealism." *New York Times*, September 30, 2016, A27, accessed May 1, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/30/opinion/the-death-of-idealism.html.

of contemporary culture makes it very difficult to mobilize people and groups to create a region that allows all people in the region have an opportunity for human flourishing, especially those families and children at the margins.

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