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HONORS 232
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Week 1 Make-Up Reaction Essay

Redlining, the harmful and now illegal practice of segregating neighborhoods by race, has had a long and widespread impact on the racial diversity and ensuing inequality of major cities in the United States. In "The Lasting Legacy of Redlining", Professor LaDale Winling defines redlining maps to be "like the Rosetta stone of American cities" (Best et al). Just as the Rosetta stone's decrees provided great insight into ancient Egyptian culture, redlining maps drawn nearly a century ago are key to understanding how race-based housing inequities persist across the United States today.

Although I already knew of some of the negative impacts of redlining, such as racially homogeneous neighborhoods and housing inequality, I was appalled to learn of the significant environmental impacts that redlining could have on Black and Latino communities. The inexpensive real estate of redlined areas proves to be a strong draw for "freeway projects or site-polluting industries that wealthier residents would manage to resist" (Fears). This positive feedback loop of having more land available for pollution-causing industrial development keeps generations of low-income people in the same place, exposing them to extremely harmful concentrations of nitrogen dioxide particles and placing them at higher risks of developing conditions such as asthma. In south Seattle, residents of the Duwamish Valley - due to their proximity to airports and freeways, as well as a lack of green space - die eight years younger than other Seattleites, on average (Turner). This disparity is alarmingly high, and speaks to the extreme environmental, social, and economic challenges that have cascaded even after redlining was officially outlawed.

It takes action from both within and outside of communities to make long-term changes. In Seattle, I found it interesting and encouraging that property tax measures such as the Transportation and the Parks for All Levies were passed to improve transportation and parks, respectively. These two aspects are critical to lessening the environmental stressors on redlined communities, as they can reduce the amount of traffic on the freeway, provide greater access to large cities, spur local development, and give community members a green space to live and grow. Although there is plenty that still needs to be done, these efforts, along with community and education levies, are slowly remediating the generational harm caused by redlining.

However, as technology progresses and landscapes change, it is necessary to reevaluate plans for expansion to ensure that they are culturally relevant, equitable for diverse populations, and sustainable given today's climate and environment. How can cities meet ambitious growth targets while still ensuring that they can maintain natural resources? How can cities create more job opportunities in redlined zones while avoiding displacement by gentrification? And how can people outside of redlined zones contribute to a more equitable future while amplifying the voices of residents? I am excited to explore and answer these questions further through this course, and I am looking forward to the rest of the quarter!