Census Tract 505; Hurting or Healthy?

Marisa Johnson

MAT 115H, MWF 9:00-9:50

 When thinking about whether or not a community is hurting or healthy, there are many measurable and immeasurable metrics to be considered. Measurable variables such as high school diplomas, amount of lead in soil, and obesity rates are all great places to start. However, the immeasurable variables would be harder to grasp and make into a metric, such as happiness in and among members of the community, mental health, and relationships between family members and friends. A combination of these values would help draw a conclusion on whether or not Census Tract 505 is healthy or hurting.

 Starting with measurable factors, one tends to be more striking than others: the amount of lead. When we went to Sis’s, Monica Remmy informed us on a bit of the history of Newport and how there were many lead mills in the area. Lead is known to contribute to developmental problems in children and lead to more serious diseases like cancer. To see if the levels of lead are contributing to problems in children, it might be useful to look at grades and high school graduation rates and see if there is a correlation to the lead pollution in Census Tract 505 and then even compare it to the East side of Newport and places like Alexandria and even Boone County.

 Looking at and comparing obesity rates is another indicator of whether or not Census Tract 505 is healthy or hurting. Monica Remmy also touched on this subject at Sis’s about how the children of Newport don’t have access to fresh fruit and vegetables and how some children had never even seen a raspberry before.

 When it comes to immeasurable factors, one way to go about “measuring” these would be by a survey. Asking question about mental health, relationship stability, and overall satisfaction of life are good starting points. Compiling survey data like this will help determine the amount of health and hurt in 505.

 Once again alluding to Monica Remmy, her statement about Census Tract 505 being a “poor neighborhood, not a bad neighborhood” really stuck in my mind. Looking at the poverty rates can also correlate with things like obesity and college graduates because a lack of money contributes to food insecurity (not being able to be certain where your next meal is coming from and choosing cheaper, less healthy options) and not being able to afford the high costs of college.

 It’s important to compare factors of Census Tract 505 with other census tracts like it, such as 504 or 506. But it may be beneficial to look at some tracts and areas that are drastically different, such as Erlanger in Kenton County or where I’m from in the suburbs of Burlington in Boone County.