

Equity in Aging: The Infrastructure of Care

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About me

- Urban planner by training
- Faculty at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada
- Previously based out of Boston/MIT 2013-2023
- Research focus on the intersection between urban planning and community health
- Emphasis on participatory, community-based research approaches

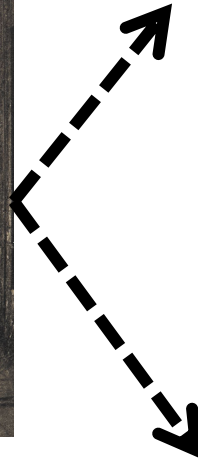


Equity in aging: At the intersection of urban planning and public health



Photo credit: WalkBoston

Urban planning and public health: A simplified history

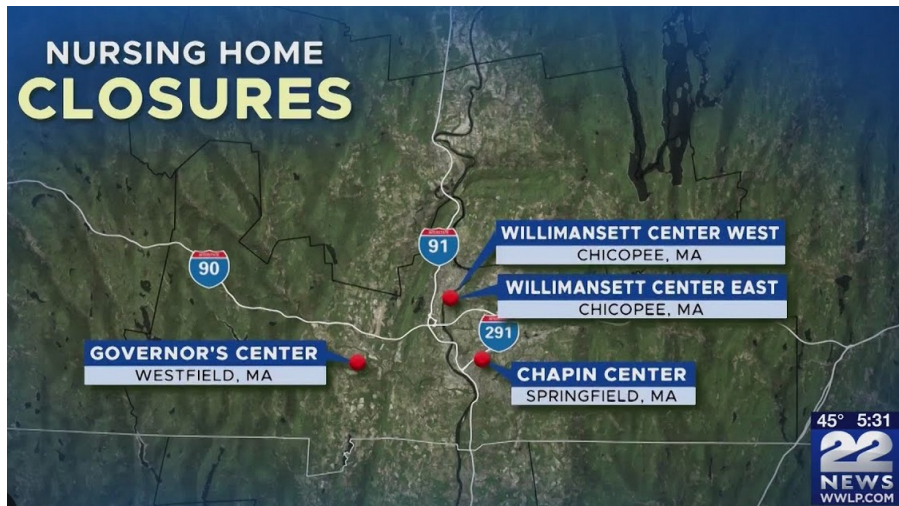


Care: The missing piece of the puzzle

Care is “a species activity that includes everything we do to maintain, continue, and repair our world so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment.”

Joan Tronto and Berenice Fischer, *Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring*, 1993

Our society faces a “crisis of care”



THE WHITE HOUSE

APRIL 18, 2023

FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Announces Most Sweeping Set of Executive Actions to Improve Care in History

[BRIEFING ROOM](#) [STATEMENTS AND RELEASES](#)

This crisis of care is built in to our cities



***If the crisis of care is built in to our cities,
does that mean we can use urban planning
as a way to address the crisis of care?***

Caregivers depend on the urban environment

Private space



Public spaces



Economic security



Resources



Social support



Safety

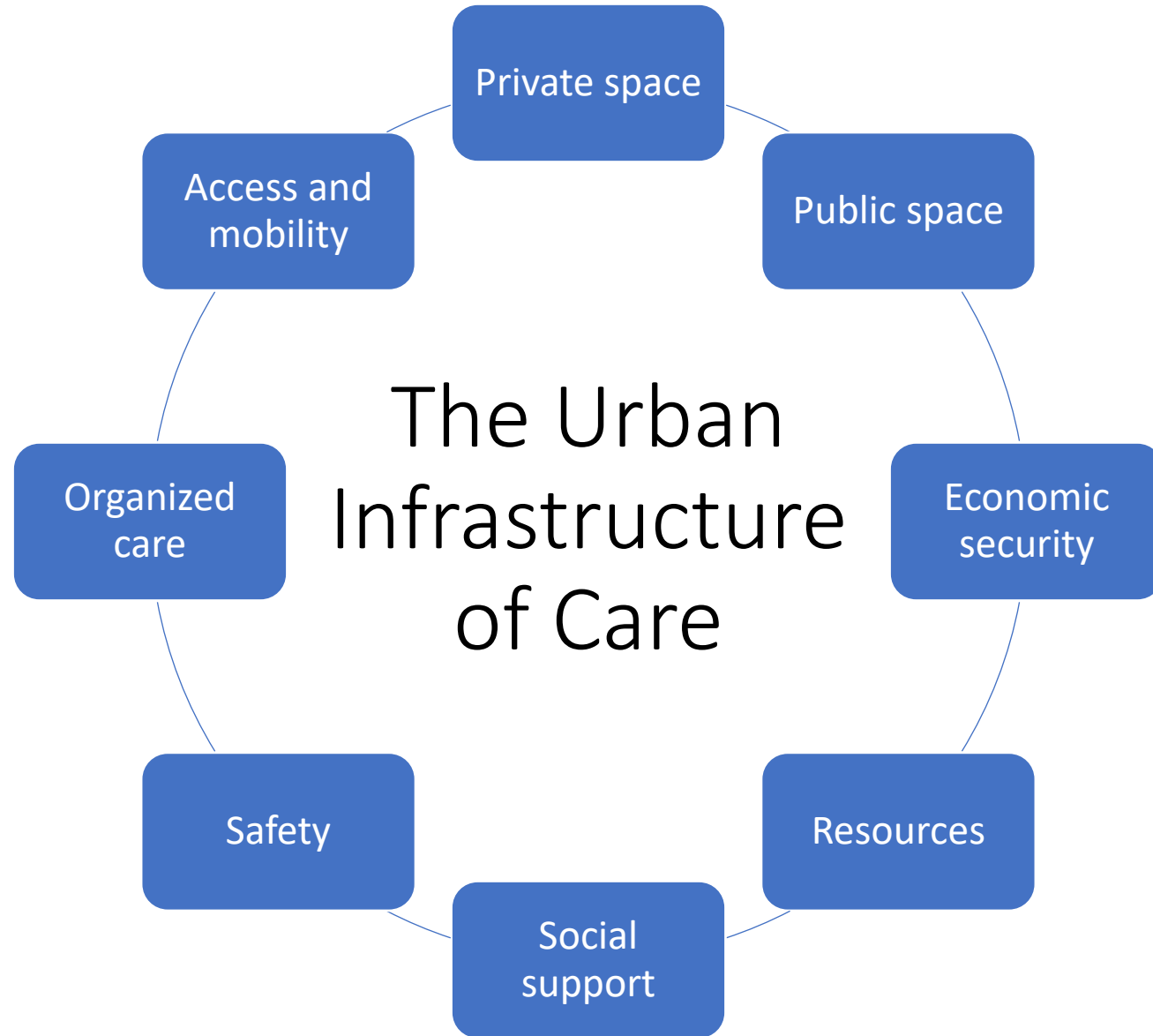


Organized care and activities



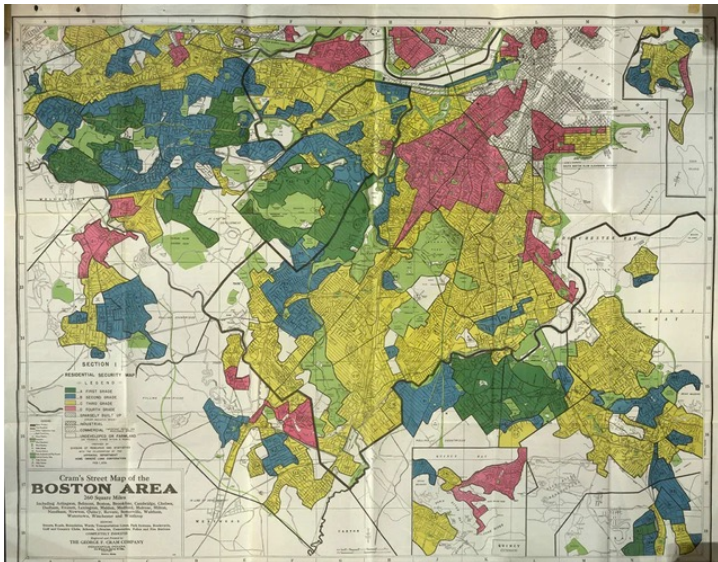
Access and mobility





The urban infrastructure of care...

- ... Combines **physical and social** elements (“hard” and “soft” infrastructure)
- ... Is **uneven across places** for historical and structural reasons
- ...Shapes **what care is possible** and how **easy or hard** caregiving is
- ...Shapes **costs and rewards** (physical, mental, financial) of caregiving



The Infrastructure of Care and Equity in Aging

- The infrastructure of care shapes
 - The demands on aging caregivers
 - The demands on people who care for us as we age
 - The care we receive over the life course
- How does this matter for equity?
 - Differences across communities/places
 - Differences in who bears the burdens/tolls
 - Different foundations for health



Building robust urban infrastructures of care

- **Integrate** care into problem-framing, priority-setting and policy analysis
- Develop ways to **evaluate** the quality of infrastructures of care
- **Collaborate** on comprehensive, outcome-focused approaches
- **Shift burdens** from caregivers to the urban environment
- **Prioritize investments** where the infrastructure of care is weakest
- **Center the experiences, insight and visions of caregivers throughout**

Take-home questions...

- What's the infrastructure of care like in your community?
- How does it shape giving and receiving care?
- How could the infrastructure be strengthened?
- What is your vision for a care-full community?
- How do you build the right "table" for collaborative initiatives? Whose voices need to be involved, and how?
- How might we need to re-think and re-value the place of care in our policies, budgets, advocacy, programs, etc.?



Thank you!

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