Racial and Socioeconomic Inequity in the Spatial Distribution of LGBTQ Human Services in Chicago
Feb. 2019
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INTRODUCTION

Due to overlapping forms of marginalization, LGBTQ people of color and low-income LGBTQ people often face worse outcomes in health, employment, education, housing, and the criminal-legal system. Nevertheless, previous research suggests many LGBTQ organizations have historically prioritized white, wealthier LGBTQ people while overlooking communities of color and low-income people. Using mapping technology, our Chicago-based study explored whether this misalignment in LGBTQ services extended to the geographic locations of these organizations as well.

FINDINGS

- Chicago’s LGBTQ service organizations were disproportionately located in majority white (71.0%) and upper-income areas (63.7%) but underrepresented in majority black (9.8%), majority Latinx (6.2%), middle-income (12.4%), and lower-income areas (16.1%).
- Black (28.7%) and Latinx (31.9%) residents in Chicago are more likely to live in areas without LGBTQ services than white (9.9%) and Asian residents (7.7%).
- Poor to lower-income residents (26.8%) are more likely to live in areas without LGBTQ services than middle- to upper-income residents (18.9%).
- Racial and income differences in access were most pronounced for legal services, recreational and arts programs, career services, and mental health services.

IMPLICATIONS

These patterns in the spatial distribution of LGBTQ services may impede efforts to address inequities in health and other aspects of social well-being among the LGBTQ community. First, the landscape of services may prevent many LGBTQ people of color and low-income individuals from accessing resources they need. Second, it may necessitate that some individuals of color and lower socioeconomic status travel to white, wealthier neighborhoods that have a high number of LGBTQ service providers. This includes neighborhoods such as Boystown and Andersonville, Chicago’s two gayborhoods, where many individuals report experiencing racial and class discrimination. Ultimately, developing city-wide strategies to create a more equitable distribution of LGBTQ services and improve the inclusivity of existing services’ surrounding communities may be of the utmost importance.

Read the full article here: https://rdcu.be/biKxn
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