Testing Segregation Measurements in Milwaukee: Reality vs. Perception

Joseph H. Kelly - University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire - Department of Geography & Anthropology
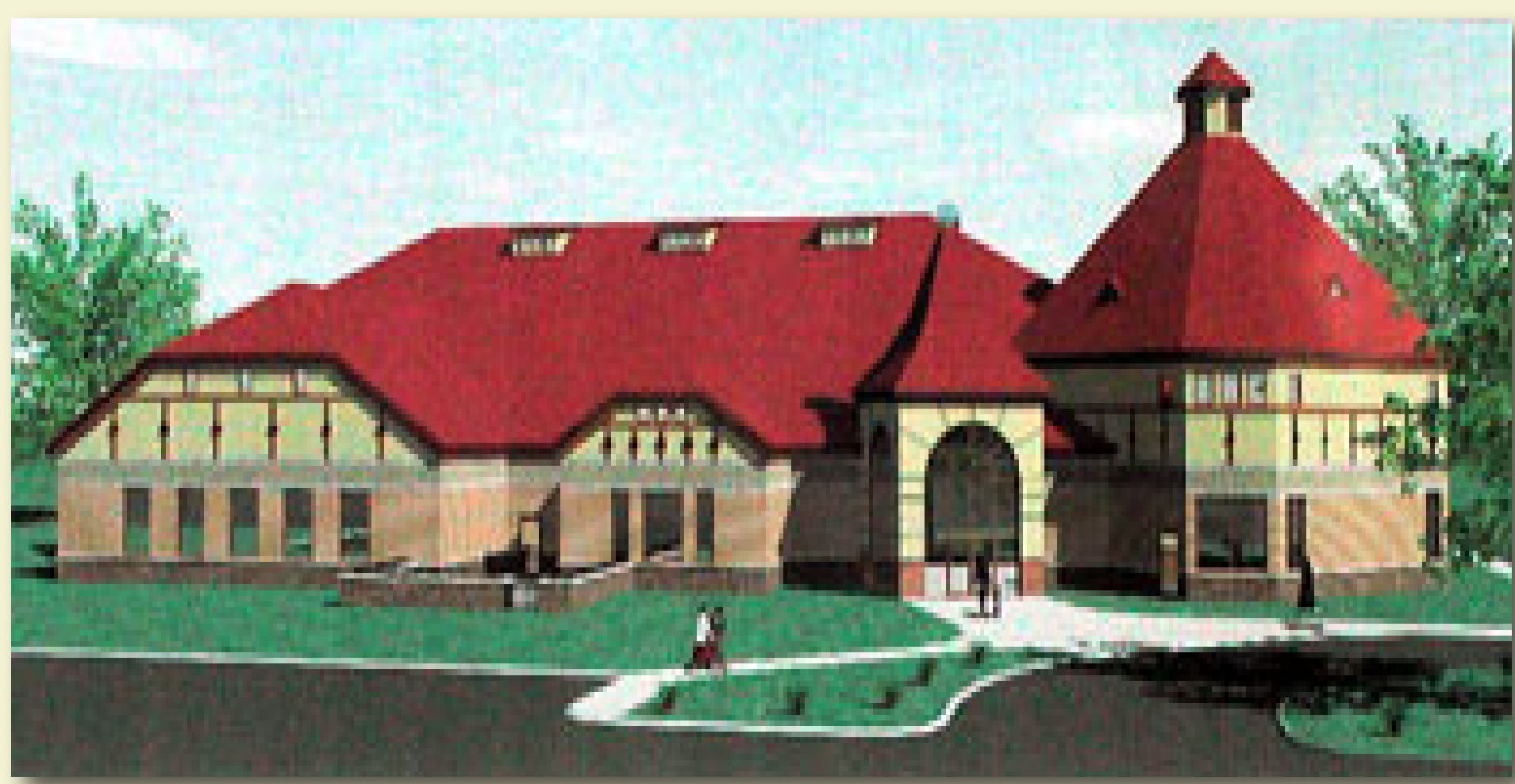

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Personal Interest

Growing up outside of Raleigh, North Carolina, I was fortunate to have experienced a very well integrated educational atmosphere. However, when I moved to Germantown, Wisconsin my junior year of high school, I quickly realized that having an almost equal proportion of Caucasian to African American students was not the norm throughout our nation. The intense feeling of segregation overcame me within a few days of attending my new high school. Realizing the intense concentration of African American students attending the high schools within the Milwaukee Public School System, the majority of our very few African American students were bussed in to the suburbs, where the theory of "white flight" was all too evident. My observations of the school systems, evolved into the residential segregation that is plaguing the Milwaukee metropolitan area, and I now have the opportunity to attempt to explain why this outdated social illness is still affecting one of the largest cities in the Midwest.

Abstract

This study, employing an index developed from each of Massey and Denton's five categories of Hypersegregation (evenness, exposure, concentration, centralization and clustering), evaluates residential segregation in the city of Milwaukee, WI. Aimed at aiding public policy development, this study expands the Massey and Denton model by adding variables besides race, namely education, income, home ownership, distance to public transportation, and unemployment.

Dimensions & Measurements

Evenness - Measures segregation by comparing the spatial distributions of different groups among units in a metropolitan area.

Dissimilarity Index - Measures the percentage of a group's population that would have to change residence for each neighborhood to have the same percentage of that group as the metropolitan area overall.

Exposure - Measures segregation by determining the degree of potential contact, or possible interaction, between minority and majority group members.

Interaction & Isolation - Reflect the probabilities that a minority person shares a unit area with a majority person or with another minority member

Concentration - Measures segregation by referring to the relative amount of physical space occupied by a minority group in the metropolitan area.

Delta - Computes the proportion of minority members residing in areal units with above average density of minority members.
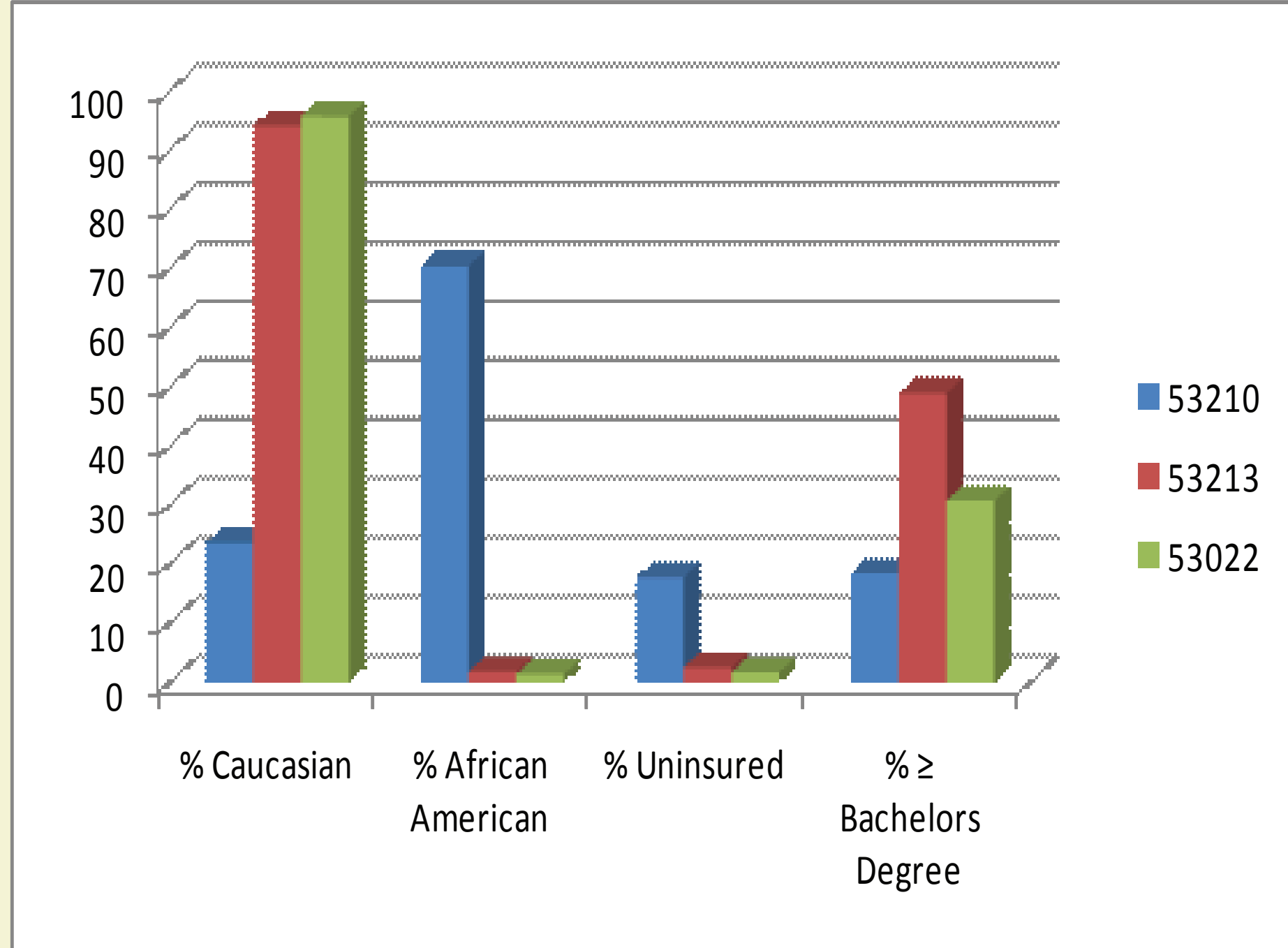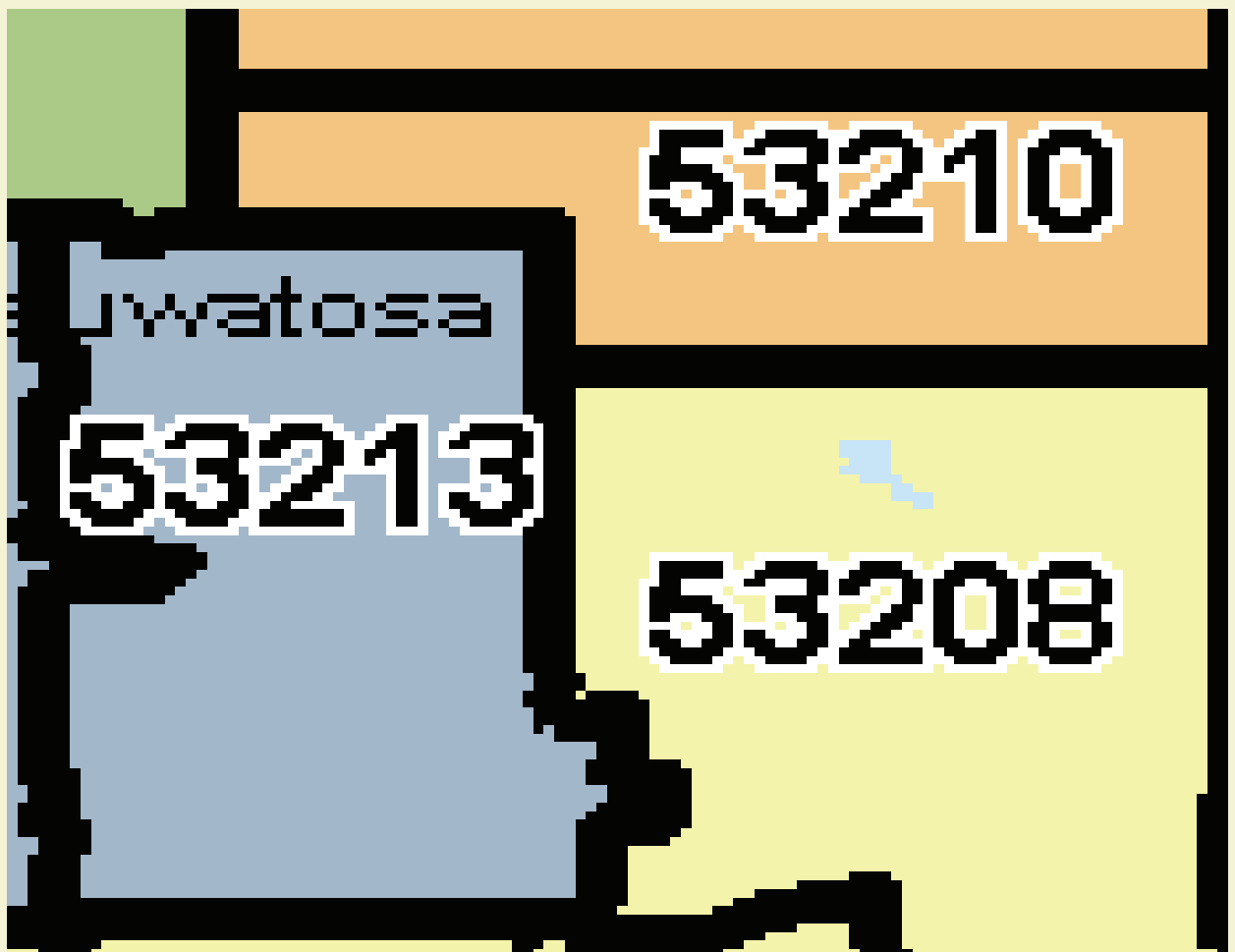
Centralization - Measures segregation by determining the degree to which a group is spatially located near the center of an urban area.

Relative Centralization - Interpreted as the relative share of the minority population that would have to change their area of residence to match the centralization of the majority.

Clustering - Measures segregation by showing the extent to which areal units inhabited by minority members adjoin to one another, or cluster in space.

Relative Clustering - Compares the average distance between minority members with the average distance between majority members.

Zip Code	53210	53213	53022
Municipality	Milwaukee	Milwaukee	Germantown
Total Population	30,509	26,141	17,507
% Caucasian	23.6	94.1	95.7
% African American	70.4	1.8	1.4
% Uninsured	17.74	2.53	1.7
Median Income	32,340	51,951	60,099
Median House Value	66,700	130,300	170,300
% ≥ Bachelors Degree	18.5	48.9	30.7

The above map, chart, and graphs are showing different demographic representations of three different zip codes in the greater Milwaukee MSA. The zip codes of 53210 and 53213 border each other on two sides and are located within the City of Milwaukee border. It is remarkable to see the extremely distinct differences between the two. From the racial make up, education level, and economic status of these two geographically adjacent areas. The data for Germantown (53022) is an average depiction of what the demographic make up of a Milwaukee suburb looks like, with high proportions of Caucasian residents compared to African American, high property values, and well educated. An interesting anomolie of the data however is the twenty percent higher education rate for the inner Milwaukee zip code of 53213 compared to Germantown. Perhaps this is showing that Germantown still has a fairly significant farming population.

Effects on the Public School Systems

The Milwaukee Public School System runs on a voucher system, which allows for students to choose which schools in the Milwaukee Public School System they would like to attend, also including certain parochial and private schools. Instead of students being assigned to their designated schools, this program is helping to allow segregation to occur within the Milwaukee Public School System. Many of the private schools that are offered to MPS students are way below normal or acceptable academic standards as shown in the pictures above. Therefore, what is occurring in Milwaukee is that most African American students are going to the Milwaukee Public Schools and the low quality private schools while the Caucasian students are typically going to the much more expensive private schools in the area, or are heading out to the predominantly white, middle class suburban schools. The main point at the heart of this matter is that it will be difficult to improve the quality of the schools that are offered in the MPS Voucher Program, until the quality of life is improved for the inner-city residents of Milwaukee. In order to try and alleviate the heavy disproportionment of white students in the suburban schools, the 220-Bussing System was implemented. This system busses students from inner city Milwaukee into the suburbs daily to attend school.

Results

While these are still our initial findings, from our research thus far we have begun to see trends emerging as to which measurements of segregation may have the greatest effect as to why the Milwaukee metropolitan area is so racially segregated.

Dissimilarity Index - On a scale of 0.0 to 1.0, with 0.0 being complete integration and 1.0 being complete segregation, we found that from the data we have collected thus far that Milwaukee falls at a 0.67.

Interaction & Isolation - At this point, we have only looked at the segregation of African Americans and Caucasians, therefore with only two groups being being represented in this study thus far, the isolation and interaction indices sum to 1.0, with lower values of interaction and higher values of isolation indicating higher segregation. We have found that the interaction was a 0.34 and the isolation was a 0.66, showing a relatively high rate of segregation.

Relative Centralization - This index varies between -1.0 and 1.0, with positive values indicating that minority members are located closer to the center than majority, and negative values the reverse. This index of segregation was not as strong for us in indicating segregation in Milwaukee, with a value of 0.11. Milwaukee is an interesting city in regards to the fact that there is not one distinct part of the city that is labeled "inner city" where the majority of minorities reside, rather a few distinct neighborhoods throughout the city.

Relative Clustering - This index equals 0.0 when minority members display the same amount of clustering as the majority. Our initial calculations have shown a result 0.38. When we finish our calculations of all of the surrounding Milwaukee suburbs we expect this number to steadily grow closer and closer to the 0.0 marker showing a high result of relative clustering.

Conclusions

While our research is still not fully completed, we feel that interaction and isolation have shown to be the two most influential measurements of segregation when looking at the Milwaukee metropolitan area. However, we feel that when we factor in the calculations of the four surrounding counties of Ozaukee, Washington, Waukesha, and Racine, which are all included within the Milwaukee MSA, that relative clustering will become our most effective measurement, considering the high disproportion of Caucasians and African Americans in the surrounding Milwaukee counties. Regarding the school systems, we feel that the voucher system has enabled segregation to occur within the Milwaukee Public School system, as well as the expensive suburban housing which many Milwaukee minorities are unable to afford. In turn this makes it almost impossible for them to send their children to the higher quality schools located in the suburbs.

Images

Figure 1 - A freshly constructed house in a new Germantown subdivision. This housing is typical of the mid - upper class housing being built in the Milwaukee suburbs today. Houses in the area are regularly being sold around the $300,000 range.

Figure 2 - The new Germantown public library that was recently constructed. The village of Germantown has a public policy that all public buildings in certain parts of the town must have the same type of German architecture in order to maintain a common village theme.

Figure 3 - A map of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Statistical Area. The area encompasses Milwaukee as well as many surrounding middle and upper class suburbs.

Figure 4 - These photos are showing some of the private and parochial schools being offered through the MPS Voucher System. As you can see, many of them are simply old retail stores within strip malls.

Figure 5 - A current house located in the heart of Milwaukee. The house is being sold for a mere $23,000 and would be considered substandard living by most people.