

ROOT SHOCK

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Root Shock is the traumatic stress reaction to the destruction of all or part of one's emotional ecosystem. It has important parallels to the physiological shock experienced by a person who, because of injury, suddenly loses massive amounts of fluids. Such a blow threatens the whole body's ability to function.

Just as the body has a system to maintain its internal balance, so too, the individual has a way to maintain the external balance between himself and the world. Through trial and error, the individual experiences how to manipulate the maze and survive. However, when the maze way is destroyed the external system of moving is destroyed, the individual will go into root shock

The experience of root shock – like the aftermath of a severe burn- does not end with the emergency treatment but will stay with the individual for a lifetime. In fact, the injury from root shock may even be more enduring than a burn, as it can affect generations and generations of people.

Root shock, at the level of the individual, is a profound emotional upheaval that destroys the working model of the world that had existed in the individual's head. Root shock undermines trust, increases anxiety about letting loved ones out of one's sight, destabilizes relationships, destroys social, emotional and financial resources and increases the risk for every kind of stress related disease from depression to heart attack. It leaves people chronically cranky.

Root shock at the level of the local community disperses people to all directions of the compass. People who were near are too far and people who were far are too near. The elegance of the neighborhood, each person in his social and geographic slot is destroyed and even if the neighborhood is rebuilt exactly as it was it won't work. The repaired geography is not enough to repair injuries to the multiple maze ways that make up a community.

This Article is the first in the legal literature to explore in depth the racial equity concerns and opportunities raised by modern highway redevelopment. It also builds on the work of legal scholars who advocate for addressing systemic racial inequality by requiring that policymakers conduct a thorough and comprehensive analysis of how a proposed action, policy, or practice will affect racial and ethnic groups. The Article concludes by proposing a way forward for highway redevelopment projects: requiring jurisdictions to complete comprehensive racial equity impact studies prior to any construction. Racial equity impact studies have been used or proposed in various contexts to reform racialized institutions and structures. This Article argues that highway redevelopment projects should join this growing list.