

Contested Spaces: Socio-economic Factors

Race and Gentrification in the USA: Evidence from Chicago

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My research on gentrification has run so often into the issue of race that interviewees often refer to it as "whitening." In this paper, I draw on the study of neighborhoods in Chicago to examine the role that race plays in gentrification. Based on the assumption that in Chicago, land values are associated with the race of residents, I argue that the presence of whites not only is considered an early symptom of gentrification but is at the forefront of gentrification. Indeed, my research in Bronzeville, an area explicitly developed around the theme of black culture, suggests that the black majority of the area has been perceived as a deterrent to its advance. Analysis will take into consideration the intersection of race and class.

An Assessment of the Houston Region's Most Severe Environmental Justice Census Tracts

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Most cities, counties and metropolitan planning organizations undertake various transportation planning activities and projects. A critical component of these plans requires transportation agencies to determine which, when, and where projects are needed; next, these agencies determine how to prioritize the projects. Although transportation investments represent positive changes, negative impacts can result which disrupt community cohesion, limit access to public facilities, and increase noise levels. In an effort to mitigate the negative impacts on minority and low-income communities and to ensure that all people were given an opportunity to participate in federally funded projects, federal environmental justice guidelines, like Title VI and Executive Order 12898 were created. For the past few decades, metropolitan planning organizations have conducted environmental justice analysis. These agencies must identify low-income and minority communities in their planning regions. Federal guidelines also allow agencies to use additional indicators to better understand the needs in their region. This study uses race and low-income, but adds five additional variables to obtain a more complete picture of area residents. This process formed the basis which determined the environmental justice zones (EJZs) for the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) metropolitan planning organization. Of the 1,062 census tracts studied in H-GAC region, eight were noted as most severe/extreme

EJ. This research focuses on these most severe/extreme EJ census tracts. The study consists of two steps: 1) a descriptive analysis of each census tract using census data, and 2) and a transportation mobility analysis. The research shows that these severe areas consist of low-income African Americans and Hispanics. These groups have limited access to vehicles and use public transit. While transit options exist, some tracts experienced long travel times to reach important destinations, e.g. work, shop when using public transit.

Stories that Validate the Need for Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)

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Abstract: Maori researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith, who wrote the book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research & Indigenous People* (1999), suggests that sometimes when we frame research within a specific scientific or disciplinary approach, we forget that all of it, for indigenous people across the globe, is deeply embedded in complex and multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices (Smith 1-18). These same research practices unfold in US urban neighborhoods with researchers who seem stuck on discovering the deficits of students and families of color, living in poverty. This propensity has created a sense in indigenous and urban communities that research is a dirty word (Smith, p. 1). In this paper, I will use stories from African American and indigenous people's history, people who have been pushed to the margins, as a backdrop for examining youth participatory action research as an ethical alternative to "colonial research practices." After offering a scenario of where deficit theories can lead us, I will introduce the work of two young scholars who, in spite of the risks to their academic careers, are developing youth as participant action researchers. And through those stories, look beyond deficit thinking and toward the young people who are leading education for liberation in their communities.