

TH10.50.14 The Enduring Significance of Race in Urban Policy

Race and the Production of Extreme Land Abandonment in the American Rust Belt

Presenter: Jason Hackworth, University of Toronto (jason.hackworth@utoronto.ca)

Authors: Jason Hackworth, University of Toronto

Most studies of land abandonment privilege the economic dimensions and causes of the process. In particular, land abandonment is largely derived from some combination of the following: housing obsolescence, municipal fiscal stress, or deindustrialization. When race is mentioned (and in most cases it is not), it is rarely situated in a meaningfully-causal way. This study explores the relative role of economic and racial factors on land abandonment in 151 Midwestern cities. It finds that percent Black is a far more significant correlate of extreme housing abandonment in the American Rust Belt than any of the aforementioned economic variables. I conclude from this, that past and present institutional (and interpersonal) discrimination best explains this association. Moreover, I suggest that existing theories of land abandonment be broadened to include group threat approaches to account for this relationship.

The Role of Race and Ethnicity in Seniors' Economic Outcomes in Multigenerational Households

Presenter: Deirdre Pfeiffer, Arizona State University (deirdre.pfeiffer@asu.edu)

Authors: Deirdre Pfeiffer, Arizona State University

Seniors are increasingly living in multigenerational households in the U.S., particularly in urban areas. Living in a multigenerational household may lead seniors to experience economic benefits and costs. Multigenerational households may offer economic benefits to seniors if they allow for resource sharing. However, multigenerational households may also impose economic costs on seniors if relatives do not contribute their fair share to household expenses. Little is known about the role that race and ethnicity may play in seniors' economic outcomes in multigenerational households.

This research helps to answer this question by using about 17 years of data from the 1996 to 2008 panels of the U.S. Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)—a nationally representative, longitudinal sample that widely reports information on economic wellbeing. We use descriptive statistics, such as t-tests of differences of means and proportions, and econometric modeling to examine differences in the economic outcomes of racially and ethnically diverse seniors living and not living in multigenerational households. Of particular interest are how moving into and living in a multigenerational household affects diverse seniors' assets, debt, income, and social welfare program participation. We triangulate our findings with existing research on cultural and structural differences in the formation and maintenance of multigenerational households among racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. to build theory on the role that race and ethnicity play in seniors' economic outcomes in multigenerational households.

Comparing Black Tenant Activism In and Out of Atlanta's Public Housing Developments

Presenter: Akira Rodriguez, University of Pennsylvania School of Design (akirad@upenn.edu)

Authors: Akira Rodriguez, University of Pennsylvania School of Design

With demolition, divestment, and disinvestment as the status quo in public housing policy, welfare state preservationists must make stronger cases for public housing developments as spaces of "more than shelter" (Howard, 2014). In Atlanta, public housing developments have long functioned as political

spaces for marginalized blacks, by both actively shaping the politics and political identity of its inhabitants, while also being actively shaped by the political activities of its tenants. However, tenant activism is not just limited to public housing developments, and this paper traces the political campaigns of two black tenant organizations threatened by Atlanta's many Urban Renewal programs: The Vine City Council and the Perry Homes Tenant Association. In the face of an aggressively pro-real estate local government, marginalized tenants inside and outside public housing developments were at risk of swift and violent displacement from their homes in an effort to manage the growing city's rigidly segregated land use patterns. The independently organized campaigns used local and national press, rent strikes, protests, and lawsuits to demand their right to safe, sanitary housing and their right to assemble (and thus, have political visibility). While both campaigns were able to attract local and national attention, this paper shows that both the institutional structure of the public housing development (including the mandated tenant association), and the sociospatial arrangement of the development (including the segregated concentration of residents in underdeveloped, isolated areas of the city) provide the conditions to maintain a more "legitimate" and powerful tenant activism.