Mapping Displacement: The Application of Geographic Thought in Eviction Research

Thursday, October 26, 2023 4:00 PM (20 minutes)

Twenty years ago, Chester Hartman and David Robinson (2003) urged scholars to focus their attentions on the "hidden housing problem" of eviction, at the time under-studied and attended to in comparison to home-owner issues. Since, social science research on eviction has exploded, with special issues being drafted entirely around the subject (Howell and Immergluck, 2021). National databases of eviction, like the Princeton Eviction Lab, provide large levels of quantitative data, while scholar-activist endeavors, such as the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, provide place-based, participatory research at the local level. Geographic thought has had strong influence on this research, even outside the formal bounds of the discipline, through methodological approaches, like spatial analysis and participatory methods, and theoretical applications, such as critical, urban, and feminist thought. This paper has two aims. First, I will evaluate the ways in which geographic thought has been applied to scholarship and activism on eviction and contributed to the understanding and prevention of displacement. Secondly, I will present a case study of community-engaged analysis in Syracuse, New York as one example of eviction research through a geographic lens.

Hartman, C., & Robinson, D. (2003). Evictions: The hidden housing
problem. Housing Policy Debate, 14(4), 461–501. https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2003.9521483

Howell, K., & Immergluck, D. W. (2021). Evictions: Shedding Light on the Hidden Housing Problem. Housing Policy Debate, 31(3–5), 374–376. https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2021.1929342

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Session Classification: Paper Presentations

Track Classification: Justice