Framing Racially Disaggregated Data for Housing Policy

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About the Urban Institute

The Urban Institute is the trusted source for unbiased, authoritative insights that inform consequential choices about the well-being of people and places in the United States. We are a nonprofit research organization that believes decisions shaped by facts, rather than ideology, have the power to improve public policy and practice, strengthen communities, and transform people’s lives for the better.

OUR MISSION IS TO OPEN MINDS, SHAPE DECISIONS, AND OFFER SOLUTIONS THROUGH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH.
Why housing?
Learned and lived expertise shows:

Housing is central to life opportunities and outcomes.
Housing problems are life problems.

Short-term outcomes

- Less savings
- Financial insecurity
- Residential churning
- Eviction filing or judgment
- Homelessness
- Labor-market instability
- Unhealthy neighborhood
- Less spending on kids’ education
- Less access to well-funded public schools
- Less family time
- Exposure to health hazards

Indirect outcomes

- Lower educational attainment for self and children
- Worse mental and behavioral health
- Missed medical care
- Reduced sense of belonging and autonomy
- Harassment or arrest for homelessness crimes
- Reduced future housing options

Lifetime outcomes

- Lower lifetime earnings
- Lower retirement assets
- Higher health costs
- Shorter lifespan

For the research, see: http://housingmatters.urban.org/
Pressure to Sell: Gentrification as “Reverse Blockbusting”

EQUITABLE PLACES

December 02, 2020 / Research Summary

A case study of predominantly Black neighborhoods in Nashville, Tennessee, explores whether home sellers ultimately benefit from gentrification.

Are Subsidized Housing Residents More Vulnerable and More Exposed to Extreme Heat?

EQUITABLE PLACES

November 18, 2020 / Research Summary

The Many Meanings of “Aging in Place”

STABILITY & OPPORTUNITY

November 04, 2020 / Research Summary
Framing Disaggregated Data
Applying a Racial Equity Lens to Housing Policy Analysis

August 05, 2020

Gabriella Velasco, Martha Fedorowicz
The importance of racially-disaggregated data

- Disaggregated data helps articulate the need for varying investments across scales united under a common goal of racial equity (and what racial equity looks like for a particular community)
The importance of framing

- Equity-focused public policy work extends beyond the mere inclusion of racially disaggregated data. Meaningful work in this space requires **significant power shifts** and **critical reevaluations** of racist assumptions and systems.
“Disaggregated data that is shared within a robust racial equity frame, acknowledging and fully engaging with historic, structural, and systemic drivers of inequitable outcomes, is essential to ensure that policymakers are equipped with the context necessary to develop antiracist interventions that redress harm and promote equitable outcomes for all impacted by a specific policy issue.”
What do you miss when racially disaggregated data and structural racism framings aren’t a part of your work?
Eviction
Socioeconomic Mobility + Housing
Education + Housing
Health + Housing
Housing Assistance
Tools and Strategies

Framing

- Qualitative and ethnographic research alongside quantitative disaggregation
- Critical histories
- Be specific

Implementing

- Community ownership of data
- Shift decisionmaking power through community boards/comittees
- Fund and cede space to organizers who have long been doing this work
- Regulatory teeth
Urban Institute: The Racial Equity Analytics Lab (REAL)

- Delivers data for decision making
- Identifies patterns of structural racism
- Cultivates collaboration and continuous learning
Key Takeaways

- Rigorous, clear data is an essential tool to build coalitions for racial equity in housing
- Disaggregating data is one (important) step, but must be bolstered by structural framings and plans for tangible power shifts
- Invest in critical qualitative research on a community’s specific history and present of racism in housing and land use before taking further steps to develop policy or plans
- Allow room for flexibility and creativity in creating an analytical approach to racial equity that fits the unique nature of communities
Please feel free to reach out with any further questions

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Thank you!