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Studentification and the Political Displacement of the Black Worker Electorate

Meghna Chandra

Abstract

Studentification research shows how urban universities transform surrounding neighborhoods into more transient, dense, renter, and segregated places. Despite work on economic, social, physical, and cultural changes, there is a dearth of literature that examines racial and political changes. This dimension is especially important given the impact of many American universities upon historic Black neighborhoods which played a crucial role in struggles for political and economic democracy. This paper examines census data aggregated at the political district level and maps election data to understand the extent to which political districts surrounding Philadelphia universities have studentified, whether studentified and Black Worker neighborhoods emerge as distinct political cleavages, and whether these divisions played a role in two recent elections that saw the unseating of Black Worker incumbents. It argues that the studentification of the Black Worker political districts is correlated with the political displacement of the Black Worker electorate.

Keywords

Studentification, Black Worker, political cleavages, W.E.B. Du Bois, political displacement

Postdoctoral Fellow in Economic Justice, Institute for Racial Justice, Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

Corresponding Author:
Meghna Chandra, Postdoctoral Fellow in Economic Justice, Institute for Racial Justice, Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA.
Email: mchandra@luc.edu

Introduction

Universities as part of the "Meds and Eds" sector are having an unprecedented impact on cities. As "anchor institutions," they are fixed in geographical locations and have an incentive to transform their surroundings to ensure the safety of their students. They employ large numbers of people, attract capital as innovation hubs, improve the safety of surrounding communities, and act as engines of urban renewal in the wake of deindustrialization and the urban crisis (Adams 2003; Bartik and Erickcek 2008; Ehlenz 2016, 2018; O'Mara 2015; Rodin 2005; Vey et al. 2017).

Literature on studentification, or the process by which neighborhoods become economically, socially, culturally, and physically dominated by students, has raised important questions about the implications of these changes for surrounding communities. Scholars have established how studentification is leading to new geographies of consumerism, exclusivity, and segregation (Chatterton 1999; Foote 2017; Munro, Turok and Livingston 2009; Hubbard 2009). They also point to how studentification changes the housing stock and tenurial composition of neighborhoods from low-density owner occupancy to high-density rental for students (Donaldson et al. 2014; Kinton et al. 2018; Pickren 2012). Despite abundant work on the economic, social, cultural, physical, and demographic changes inherent in studentification, there is a dearth of research understanding the political implications of these changes, especially how demographic racial neighborhood change relates to changes in electoral makeup and outcomes. This study seeks to fill the gap in the literature by investigating the correlation of processes of studentification with racial, political, and electoral displacement.

Philadelphia, with its historic stock of single-family owner-occupied homes, high rates of low-income and Black homeownership, and its strong tradition of Civil Rights activism spatially linked to its owner-occupied housing stock, is a significant city to study studentification and political displacement. This study uses the work of W.E.B. Du Bois to understand the political and historical importance of Philadelphia's Black homeowner neighborhoods. It shows how the struggle for Black homeownership in Philadelphia is closely linked to what Du Bois calls the "Black Worker," or the historical force and political tradition that sought to make democracy real for all Americans, Black and White, via a redistribution of land and struggle for economic democracy (Du Bois 1998). Recent Democratic primary elections for City Council and PA House District saw the unseating of incumbents coming out of historic Black Worker traditions and replacement with newcomers (Miller 2020; Mitchell 2019; Terruso and Lai 2019). This study seeks to understand the relationship between studentification-related

demographic and tenurial changes with election results. It uses census data to track studentification-related changes in Philadelphia's 3rd Council District and Pennsylvania's 188th Council District using a spatial join with ArcGIS software. It seeks to understand the extent to which these districts have become studentified. It explores contextual differences across location, place, and group axes to understand whether studentified neighborhoods, that is, dense, transient renter neighborhoods clustered around universities, emerge as an urban political cleavage distinct from Black homeowner communities, and whether this political cleavage was decisive in electoral outcomes.

The paper begins with a literature review of studentification research that focuses on how the commodification of student housing has led to greater segregation and inequality in cities and explains the need for research on the racial and political dimension of studentification. The study then contextualizes the research question with a history of Philadelphia's Black Worker-homeowner tradition and explains its importance by using the work of W.E.B. Du Bois (1998) and others (Borgos 1986; Chappell 2020; Countryman 2006; Curtis-Olsen 2016; Feffer 2003; Nier, III Charles 2011; Warner 2014). It then moves into a methods and data section explaining the spatial join of census data to track changes over time and electoral mapping to understand whether studentified neighborhoods emerge as a political cleavage in electoral results. The study organizes its findings in two parts: first, understanding the extent of the studentification of the Black Worker electorate, and second, analyzing election results along axes of location (proximity to university), place (density of housing stock), and group (Black homeowners).

Studentification's Impact on Neighborhood Dynamics

Smith (2005) defines studentification along four dimensions: 1) economic changes, which involve the inflation of property prices tied to the recommodification of single-family housing and decreasing levels of owner-occupation, 2) social changes, which see the replacement or displacement of an established community with transient, young, middle-class social groups, 3) cultural changes revolving around shared student consumer lifestyles, and 4) physical changes involving the upgrading of housing stock and/or downgrading of the physical environment.

Studentification literature has explored how studentified neighborhoods contribute to segregation and inequality. Chatterton's (1999, 2000, 2010) ethnographies of traditional university students found that students consume and create exclusive geographies. Pubs, nightclubs, cinemas, and other venues cater to students, who are seen as more desirable consumers than locals, and students themselves prefer spaces for other students. He emphasizes how this process parallels the commodification of studenthood, as students

increasingly see themselves both as consumers of an education and urban lifestyle. Foote (2017) tracked how 'knowledge nodes cities' anchored by large universities have changed in neighborhood typologies from 1980 to 2010, paralleling the decline of a Fordist economy and the rise of a knowledge economy. He found a sharp decline in middle-class neighborhoods and a rise in elite and mixed/renter neighborhoods, suggesting that studentification is tied to processes of stratification and polarization. Munro, Turok and Livingston (2009) used an index of dissimilarity analysis to study the extent to which student neighborhoods meant changed geographies. They found that an influx of students meant more student enclaves and that students were markedly segregated from other areas. They also found that students were marginally more likely than the general population to live in deprived areas and that student neighborhoods were associated with high levels of turnover. Finally, Moos (Moos 2015; Moos et al. 2019) untangles the relationship between studentification, youthification, gentrification, and densification, finding that youth are driving high-density living in cities and that gentrification and studentification correlate and are distinct from youthification.

Relatedly, several scholars explore the rise of Purpose Built Student Accommodations (PBSAs), or high-rise rental buildings built specifically for students. A rationale for PBSAs was that they would draw students away from single-family housing stock and mitigate the problems of studentification. They emphasize how PBSAs drive rents up, create de-facto gated communities, commodify student housing by offering luxury amenities at a premium, and exclude non-traditional and disadvantaged students (Hubbard 2009; Reynolds 2020; Smith and Hubbard 2014). PBSAs in Australia and the UK have become attractive for institutional investors alongside the growth of international students (Lam and Chen 2021; Livingstone and Sanderson 2021). Scholars have also drawn attention to the speculative nature of PBSA financing and the dangers of a PBSA crash for the urban landscape (Mulhearn and Franco 2018).

Several studies of studentification have explicitly focused on the social consequences of zoning, density, and tenurial changes on neighborhoods. Revington and Wray (2022) identify four municipal policy approaches for land use policy in Ontario for student housing: restriction via low-density zoning, diversion via direction to greenfield sites, intensification via building PBSAs in residential areas, and limited intervention. They found that the restriction approach did not decrease the number of PBSAs in the area but pushed them farther away from campuses. Sage, Smith and Hubbard (2012) explore a case in which studentification dovetailed with the privatization of social housing via the right-to-buy scheme in Brighton, UK. They found that the tenure shifts from socially owned to privately owned via studentification decreased long-term residents' quality of life. Kinton et al. (2018) track the

change of a studentifying neighborhood from owner-occupied to private shared rental housing over time, showing how a new housing development of townhouses became quickly bought up by landlords and investors, with prices increasing, and housing stock becoming scarcer for those established residents and poorer students seeking affordable housing. Pendall et al. (2022) find that a high-end high-rise student housing boom in Champaign, Illinois traces back not to looser zoning restrictions, but to global capital in housing and the university's need to attract a larger and more affluent student body. Likewise, Donaldson et al. (2014) emphasizes the imbalance in population diversity brought about by an influx of student housing in South African cities, arguing that high-density development is not a direct consequence of studentification, but is an excuse developers use to create high-density accommodation in areas with single-family housing. Similarly, Pickren's (2012) case study of studentification in Georgia found that a coalition of environmentalists fighting sprawl and developers hungry to build student housing rezoned single-family neighborhoods to multifamily, enabling high-density student development and displacing a low-income mobile park.

Studies of Neighborhood Change in West Philadelphia

University-driven change in West Philadelphia has attracted great scrutiny because the University of Pennsylvania's West Philadelphia Initiatives set a nationwide precedent for university-community neighborhood revitalization processes and gave credence to the idea that universities could solve problems of the urban inner city through targeted initiatives. These initiatives included strategic investments intended to beautify surrounding neighborhoods, stimulate the housing market, encourage retail development, spur economic growth via local businesses, and improve schools, even overhauling and managing the closest public school– Penn Alexander (Perry 2010; Rodin 2005). Several scholars have evaluated the impact of university-driven change in West Philadelphia. Strom (2005) compares the political strategies behind the expansion of Temple University in North Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania in West Philadelphia, showing how Penn's strong institutional, nonprofit, and political partnerships, greater resources for community investment, and advantage of less dispersed property ownership in areas targeted for expansion resulted in fewer town-gown hostilities than Temple University. Ehlenz (2016) evaluated the effects of the WPI, finding that University City, the area of targeted investment, experienced a sharp decline of Black people, increase in median incomes, and skyrocketing of housing values. The effects were starkly concentrated in the Penn

Alexander School Catchment area, even bucking citywide trends of economic decline. Etienne (2012) placed Penn's Initiatives including the WPI in a larger geography and economy of polarization and exclusion, helping to explain why many long-term residents have mixed feelings about the WPI's place-based and people-based improvements. Similarly, Wolf-Powers (2022) critically evaluated newer university-led development efforts in Mantua in light of the history of the dispossession Black neighborhoods during Urban Renewal in the 60's, arguing that despite a rhetoric of inclusivity, the Innovation-District model of university development has significant continuity with older efforts that displaced Black people. Wolf-Powers contends that this continuity stems from being rooted in a market-based real estate approach that inherently stigmatizes and devalues Black neighborhoods. These studies evaluate the impact of Penn and Drexel's efforts, but except for Wolf-Powers (2022), they focus on how university strategies shape neighborhoods, rather than how African Americans created neighborhoods via struggles for self-determination.

This study will contribute to the literature on studentification and university-driven neighborhood change in Philadelphia in several important ways. The first is that it will more explicitly explore the racial consequences of changes in density and tenure. While some scholars warn of "emotive" debates about replacing single-family homes with rental housing for multiple occupations (Kinton et al. 2018), few have delved into the racial implication of these changes. Indeed, studentification literature tends to emphasize age and class segregation rather than race (Revington 2021). This is a gap in the US context given the location of many universities in inner cities with historic African American neighborhoods whose universities continue to struggle with legacies of racist urban renewal and displacement (Baldwin 2021). This study adds a historical dimension to contextualize Philadelphia's high rate of low-income Black homeownership and to understand the significance of changes in neighborhood housing conditions via studentification. Second, it will explore dimensions of studentification rarely touched upon: the political and electoral dimensions. It assesses political and electoral displacement defined as longstanding residents' loss of control over local institutions and decision-making bodies, which could include the loss of voting power for a given political division, or loss of political representation—in other words, the erosion of control over institutions that create policy that defines space (Hyra 2014; Martin 2007; Newman, Velez and Pearson-Merkowitz 2016).[1] Takahashi (2022) argues that the electoral dimensions of gentrification have been neglected. Despite abundant work on cultural, social, and demographic changes, the electoral dimensions of studentification have been wholly neglected. Doering, Silver and Taylor (2021) argue that urban studies literature should more fully appreciate the interconnectedness of space and politics

at the neighborhood level and propose a research agenda for investigating spatially articulated political cleavages along group, place, and location axes. This study is situated in this vein to address the gap within extant literature. It examines changes in studentified political wards in Philadelphia to understand (1) the extent to which Black Worker electoral districts have become studentified and (2) whether studentification and Black Worker neighborhoods emerge as distinct spatially articulated political cleavages, and (3) whether turnout in studentified neighborhoods played a decisive role in recent elections that unseated Black Worker incumbents.

A Du Boisian Framework of the Black Worker, Homeownership, and Democracy

This study roots itself in the historical framework provided by W.E.B. Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction in America* (1998), especially his concepts of the Black Worker, the centrality of the Black Worker to the struggle for democracy, and the democratic significance of land redistribution. This framework lends itself to understanding the significance of Philadelphia's affordable single-family owner-occupied housing stock and its connection to struggles for civil rights and democracy. Consequently, this framework aids in understanding the racial and political implications of university-driven development in changing this housing stock.

Black Reconstruction is an ideological defense of the African American people against the White supremacist consensus that the political, social, and economic enfranchisement of African American and White labor in the South failed. Crucially, he establishes the slave as a worker whose super-exploited labor furnished the "founding stone of a new economic system" in the nineteenth century. He explains how the Black Worker is "the ultimate exploited" who could not escape from his labor status because racial prejudice kept him out of the class of exploiters and thus made him "all the more bitter against all organization which by means of race prejudice or monopoly of wealth sought to exclude men from making a living" (15).

Du Bois explains how the political enfranchisement of the African American people is related to the extent to which the working class would control democracy. He presents the history of Reconstruction in the South as a case study of a dictatorship of the proletariat united to liquidate the planter class by redistributing land, educating the masses, and developing the leadership of workers. He explains how the struggle to redistribute land was a particularly important pillar of the Reconstruction project; land redistribution would break the power of the ex-slave-owning class, enable freedmen and poor Whites to gain economic independence as peasant proprietors, raise the tax revenue of the state (a revenue forcibly withheld by the defeated

planter class), and guard against monopoly. Du Bois argued that "…to have given each one of the million Negro free families a forty-acre freehold would have made the basis of real democracy in the United States that might easily have transformed the modern world" (602).

Du Bois writes that the end of Reconstruction via the Bargain of 1876 constituted a "counterrevolution of property" that established a dictatorship of capital as represented by the old planter class, the new Northern capitalist, and the capitalist that arose from the transubstantiation of poor Whites. This dictatorship had unparalleled control over labor and set the stage for the United States to become one of the most powerful empires in the world that subjugated colored labor the world over (631–2). Du Bois's particular attention to the occupancy of spaces as a form of economic and political power situates our understanding of modern forms of neighborhood change within a similar line of inquiry.

Philadelphia and the Struggle for Black Worker Neighborhoods

Du Bois's (1998) framework helps understand the historical trajectory of the Black community in Philadelphia and the importance of Philadelphia's single-family owner-occupied housing stock. His analysis of the Black Worker turns a sharp focus on the politics and aspirations of the Black communities that traveled North during the Great Migration whose ancestors lived through Reconstruction. It also explains why African Americans in Philadelphia struggled for homeownership as a form of democratic control over the city because of the significance of the struggle for land. Finally, Du Bois's analysis shows the significance of the Black Worker political and electoral tradition in Philadelphia, which fought for democracy and the rights of all labor, crystalized by politicians like Lucien Blackwell, Cecil B Moore, and David Richardson.

Philadelphia has a high rate of homeownership given its relatively high poverty rate compared to other large Northern cities. In 2000, 59.3 percent of the city's housing stock was owner-occupied, the sixth among the nation's 30 largest cities. The rate of homeownership among low-income homeowners has also been exceptionally high, with individuals earning less than $35,000 making up 38 percent of owner-occupied properties in 2012, the second highest of the nation's 30 largest cities (Warner 2014). The African American homeownership rate, while 40.7 percent nationwide in 2016, was 49.1 percent in Philadelphia. Philadelphia has the sixth-highest percentage of minority homeownership of the nation's 45 largest cities (S. Smith 2017).

Philadelphia's high rate of affordable housing stock traces back to the efforts of working Philadelphians. The Build and Loan movement, which

dates to the 1830s, provided working-class people a way to finance homeownership well before the New Deal's Federal Housing Act in 1934. Local loan associations were more willing to finance higher-quality single-family homes than lenders in other cities which favored dense multi-unit rental housing for immigrants and manufacturing workers (Nier, III Charles 2011; Warner 2014). In the 1920s, following a burst of new construction, single-family houses constituted over 91.6 percent of all housing stock, compared to 79.7 percent in Detroit or 52.8 percent in New York. This housing stock was affordable compared to renting; a single year of rental income was probably more than the worth of the building (Nier, III Charles 2011, 83–4).

Nier's (2011) work on Black lending institutions explains that African Americans chose Philadelphia as a destination during the Great Migration because of this exceptionally affordable housing stock. Coming from the South where ownership of land afforded freedom from White terrorism, homeownership was key to the Southern migrants' understanding of freedom. Homeownership meant economic independence and the stability needed to fight for Civil Rights. Philadelphia was particularly attractive to Southern migrants because of its plentiful stock of affordable single-family row houses. This was distinct from Chicago, Detroit, or New York, where median home values were thousands of dollars greater (84–5).

Though mainstream banks and building and loan associations often shut out African Americans, they fought to create their own banks and build and loan associations in close partnership with Black churches. One of the most prominent leaders of Black building and loan associations was real estate lawyer George Mitchell, who was also a founding member of the Niagara Movement, which resisted the politics of accommodation to White supremacy and sought to abolish the color line in America. By 1930, Philadelphia had both the highest number and highest percentage of African American homeowners of all major urban cities in the United States.

In the context of the Depression and lending discrimination by the Federal Housing Administration, Black build and loans were an alternative for African Americans looking to buy homes in Philadelphia. Black efforts at homeownership were complemented by African Americans' entry into the municipal labor force and the emerging Democratic political machine. In the postwar period, Black homeownership rose at a rate even faster than the overall growth of the Black population. In 1938, 11 percent of Black homes were owner-occupied, and by 1950, the number rose to 37.4 percent, and to 46.8 percent in 1960. White homeownership was at 43.1 percent in 1940 and rose to 72.3 percent in 1960s (Countryman 2006).[2]

Struggles for Black liberation in the 60's also raised the demand for homeownership. Community activists fought for the use of federal dollars to

revitalize Philadelphia's housing stock, the takeover of vacant housing as housing the poor, and the use of Section 235 funds to develop single-family owner-occupied homes (Borgos 1986; Chappell 2020; Curtis-Olsen 2016; Feffer 2003; Housing Association of Delaware Valley 1974; 1975; McClaughry 1975). There was a consistent climb of Black homeownership; between 1960–1990, a period roughly overlapping the Black liberation movement, the rate of Black homeownership increased by 13 percentage points reaching a 50-year high of 57 percent and the racial homeownership gap narrowed to just 10 percent (Whiton, Singleton and Ding 2021).

Out of Black liberation struggles came Black homeowner communities and a Black electorate. Blacks struggling for civil rights and housing realized they couldn't rely on the goodwill of White elected officials. They fought for organizational and political control over jobs, schools, and antipoverty programs to redistribute government resources to fight racism in labor and housing markets. They registered Black voters, fought for the leadership of ward committees, and ran Black candidates. The efforts of activists bore fruit with the election of politicians like David Richardson into the State legislature, Milton Street to the Pennsylvania State House, and Lucien Blackwell to City Council in 1975 (Countryman 2006; Goode 2018).

The State of the 'Black Worker' in Philadelphia Today

Homeownership in Philadelphia has suffered dramatic losses since 1990. The rate of homeownership in the city has dropped from 61 percent to 53 percent from 1980–2019, with steeper declines of as much as 30 percentage points in neighborhoods surrounding the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University. The rate of Black homeownership as a percentage of total Black people in the city has dropped significantly from 57 percent to 47 percent in 2019, reversing a trend of increase (Whiton, Singleton and Ding 2021). These trends show the erosion of historic Black homeowner neighborhoods in North and West that anchored the Black Worker electorate and the reversal of the gains made by the Black freedom movement in Philadelphia. Increasing numbers of renters likely suggest that affordable homeownership opportunities are declining for the next generation.

Philadelphia's loss of homeownership, especially around universities, traces back in part to a vision of city building that emphasizes university-driven growth, what O'Mara (2015) calls "the City of Knowledge." Urban policymakers in the 1950s and '60 s in the context of deindustrialization and urban crisis saw universities as engines of urban renewal. They envisioned universities as hubs of high-tech industries, places for White-collar professionals, and engines of innovations that might stem the tide of

professionals from the city. Federal and local governments empowered universities to remake the urban fabric to suit a university population with eminent domain, zoning exceptions, and subsidized relocation costs.

Plans to reconfigure university-adjacent neighborhoods into a haven for liberal technocrats met the outrage of working-class Black communities and student activists. North Philadelphia's Community for Racial Justice organized against Temple's expansion west of Broad Street and around Norris Homes Public Housing. West Philadelphia's African American community fought for justice after the razing down of the Black Bottom neighborhood, demanding that they be included in the university's plans for a high-quality high school. Successful mobilization in West Philadelphia against the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University, and the University of Sciences and in North Philadelphia against Temple University forced universities to pledge to communities that they would not expand beyond mutually agreed upon boundaries (Keefer 2013; Puckett and Lloyd 2013).

The university-development model saw a renewal in the 1990s as the "Meds and Eds" industries made a stirring rise in the economic landscape of the 1990s. Meds and Ed's industries grew to generate the most jobs of all industries in Philadelphia, 26 percent in the city, and 13 percent in the suburbs (Adams 2003). City leaders, corporate groups, and universities champion university-driven growth as a panacea to the city's problems (Andes et al. 2017; Cisneros 1996; Rodin 2005). Proponents of new university-driven development models carefully distinguish their model from earlier bouts of urban renewal that blatantly sought to replace a Black working class with a mostly White professional class by emphasizing "inclusion" for all via local hiring practices and patronizing minority businesses. However, city-level policies in favor of university-driven development including the 10-year tax abatement for developers, the rezoning of neighborhoods from single-family to mixed to accommodate development pressures, the Actual Value Initiative reassessing property values and inflating property taxes for homeowners in gentrifying neighborhoods, the non-profit tax exemption, and university boosterism attracting lavish retail have aided in the creation of neighborhoods under the control of universities, developers of student housing, and rentier capital rather than Black homeowners (Blumgart 2019a; McCrystal 2019; Office of the Controller 2018; Pew Charitable Trusts 2013; Philly Power Research 2018; Spinelli 2015; Stadium Stompers Steering Committee 2019; Temple University Graduate Students' Association 1998).

Homeownership is the thread that links Black political action from Reconstruction to the Great Migration, and into the Black liberation movements of the 1970s. As ruling-class coalitions tried to demolish communities and expand the downtown using universities as hubs, African Americans pushed back by occupying housing and fighting to save the existing housing stock. The long struggle for Civil Rights saw the poor and working-

class demand the right to own homes and have a space of their own from which they could struggle for democracy. These struggles produced an electorate that voted for progressive causes that would broaden democracy for all Philadelphians. However, the building of the City of Knowledge has been a blow to the Black Worker tradition and the neighborhoods it created. Neighborhoods around universities and greater Center City have indeed become better educated, less black, less homeowner, and more concentrated with young professionals and students (Center City Development Corporation 2017; Dowdall 2016; Ehlenz 2016).

Philadelphia Neighborhoods and Changing Black Electoral Geographies

This study seeks to understand the impact of the building of the City of Knowledge on the Black Worker electorate by examining studentification-related changes and political outcomes in political districts occupied by former Black Worker politician Lucien Blackwell—the Pennsylvania House District 188th and 3rd City Council districts. These districts are adjacent to or contain the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University. See Figure 1 below:

As illustrated in Figure 1, the 3rd City Council district contains 211 political divisions and encompasses the Walnut Hill, Spruce Hill, Woodland Terrace, Cedar Park, Garden Court, Walnut Hill, Cobbs Creek, Kingsessing, Bartram Village, Mill Creek, Mantua, East and West Powelton, and Parkside neighborhoods. The PA 188th House District contains 83 divisions and encompasses Walnut Hill, Woodland Terrace, Cedar Park, and Spruce Hill with parts of Kingsessing and Cobbs Creek. The PA 188th House district is completely contained within the 3rd City Council district and has a larger proportion of census tracts adjacent to universities. A study of the two districts allows for an evaluation of studentification at two scales, one in which university-adjacent neighborhoods form a large proportion of the boundaries, and another in which university-adjacent neighborhoods are part of a larger and more varied geography.

This study then examines voting patterns from the 2019 City Council 3rd District Primary Race and 2020 PA House 188th District Primary. These were two races saw the clash of the Black Worker electorate with newcomers. It seeks to understand the extent to which the change and composition in demographics and housing stock is connected to the erosion of the Black electorate, and the implications of these changes.

The 3rd District Primary Race saw the ousting of Jannie Blackwell, advocate for the homeless and wife and political heir to Lucien Blackwell who had been in office since 1992, by Jamie Gauthier, a Penn-educated urban planner funded by Philadelphia 3.0. The 188th District Primary saw the defeat of Jim Roebuck, a Philadelphia doctor and longtime champion of public education

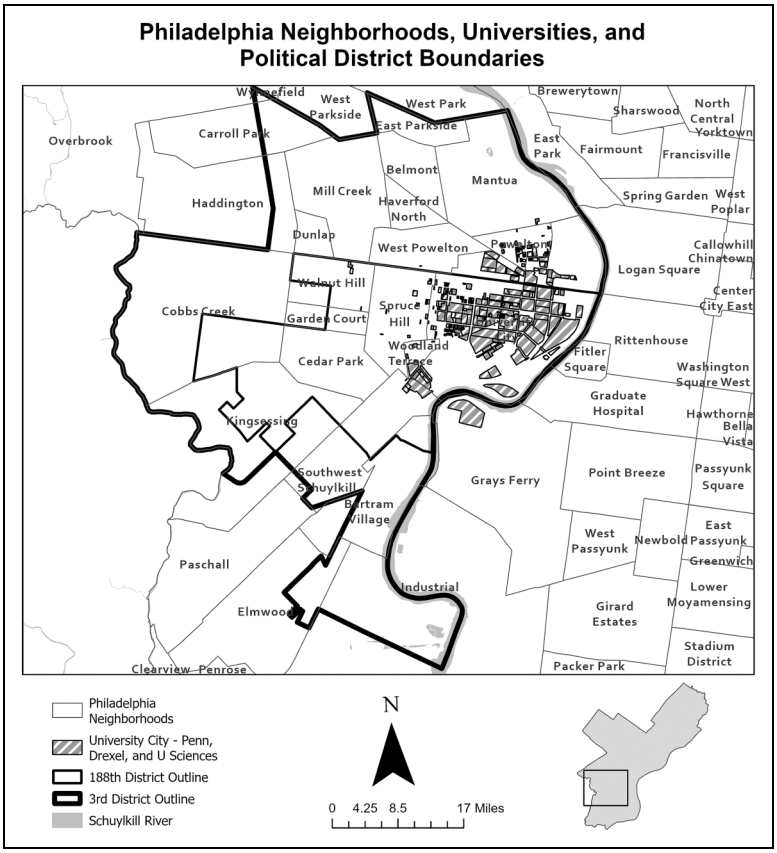

Figure 1. Philadelphia Neighborhoods, Universities, and Political District Boundaries.

who had been in office since 1985, by Rick Krajewski, a Penn-educated software engineer turned community organizer from the Bronx backed by RECLAIM Philadelphia.

Both Blackwell and Roebuck are Philadelphia natives who came out of a long history of Civil Rights struggle directly related to the Black Worker Tradition. They were criticized by some constituents and various commentators for not being militant enough against rapacious development, but also supported by some constituents as part of the Black Worker tradition for opposing property tax increases that would hurt homeowners in gentrifying neighborhoods, reforming charter schools, advocating for school funding, trying to rein in student loan interest, stopping rezoning of single family

households to multifamily that would allow large multifamily development by right, and advocating for the poor and homeless (Blumgart 2019b; Caruso 2020; Mitchell 2019; Pew Charitable Trusts 2012; Saturday Free School 2023a; 2023b).

Both Gauthier and Krajewski positioned themselves as anti-gentrification candidates fighting for the poorest and most oppressed of the district but were supported by organizations and money that were not organic to the neighborhood. Gauthier ran on a platform of protecting renters, reducing the 10-year tax abatement, and opposing councilmanic prerogative. She was backed by Philadelphia 3.0, a political action committee that agitates against free parking, councilmanic prerogative, and other urbanist causes (Geeting 2016, 2017, 2019b; Philadelphia 3.0 n.d.). The organization has faced criticism for spending more than $500,000 on Council races in 2015, with not identifying the donors because of its status as a 501(c)(4) organization (Terruso and Brennan 2019). 3.0 spent at least $300,000 in support of Gauthier and sent residents more than 30 mailers in the weeks before the elections on advertising alleging that Blackwell was a developer.

Krajewski was backed by RECLAIM Philadelphia, an organization founded in 2016 out of the Philadelphia Bernie Sanders campaign. The organization has the stated goal the elimination of corporate donations in politics, the abolition of structural racism, the abolition of identity-based discrimination, the right to economic justice through a living wage and full employment, the right to a clean climate, a full and fair funding of all public schools, healthcare, immigrant rights, and other issues (RECLAIM Philadelphia n.d.). RECLAIM's political methodology is to canvas neighborhoods for universal health care, housing as a human right, public education funding, climate justice, workers' rights, and other progressive issues. By their own admission, the bulk of RECLAIM's membership is White, though Krajewski is black. The group acknowledges the need for a multi-racial working-class coalition, and aims to build the power of the multiracial working class in Philadelphia (Otterbein 2018).

Despite running as anti-gentrification candidates, both candidates won most decisively in gentrifying neighborhoods through the efforts of organizations that did not have longtime roots in West Philadelphia. Other commentators have pointed out the role of changing demographics in producing these two victories. RECLAIM has been criticized for gaining the bulk of their votes in areas that are seeing the displacement of working-class communities in favor of a younger, wealthier, better educated, and whiter population (Brennan and Walsh 2020; Caruso 2020; Piccarella 2020). A *Philadelphia Inquirer* article reported that the better educated the precinct, the higher the home values, and the younger the voters, the likelier it was to vote for Gauthier. Gauthier won 80 percent of the vote in areas where people have

a majority bachelor's degree or higher, whereas Blackwell won 55 percent in areas in which less than 20 percent of voters held the same degree. (Terruso and Lai 2019). An opinion piece in the *Philadelphia Tribune*, Philadelphia's largest Black newspaper, pointed out how Gauthier's base was better educated, wealthier, living in more expensive homes, and younger. "Blackwell, on the other hand, received more votes from those with less education, less wealth, less valuable homes, and the aging—or those who can't afford to live in certain sections of West Philly anymore. And for the first time in generations this was simply not enough" (Mitchell 2019). This study draws attention to the role of studentification—that is the role of changing tenure, housing stock, levels of transiency, and the displacement of older more established communities in bringing about these outcomes.

Methods and Data

This study seeks to understand how the social contexts of space help shape political outcomes, and how changes in those spaces lead to changing electorates. Two analyses are conducted. The first is a descriptive examination of studentification-related changes in the 188th House and 3rd City Council districts from 2005 to 2019. The second uses an electoral mapping approach of examining election results against studentification indices to determine the existence of political cleavages. This study does not seek to make a causal argument about studentification and electoral displacement, but a descriptive one about the correlation of studentification-related changes with political displacement using Du Bois's (1998) conception of the 'Black Worker' and the spatiality of economic and political power.

The first part of the analysis evaluates the extent of studentification in the 3rd Council District and the 188th District by examining changes in studentification-related variables from 2005 to 2019. It hypothesizes that studentification has made the districts younger, denser, more educated, less African American, more transient, less homeowner, and less Black homeowner fanning out from university-adjacent districts but extending several tracts away. In other words, this study hypothesizes that the district has shifted away from Black Worker homeowner neighborhoods towards studentified non-Black rental neighborhoods.

First, ArcGIS software was used to conduct a spatial join of census data to political district shapefile data to evaluate the demographic shifts in each district. First, shapefiles for the 3rd City Council District and the 188th District were cut from City Council and Pennsylvania House District shapefiles obtained from OpenDataPhilly.com (City of Philadelphia 2015, Pennsylvania Redistricting 2014). A spatial join of ACS census data from 2005 and 2019 to these two shapefiles produced aggregate counts of

studentification-related variables for each district. Because political wards and census tracts did not neatly overlap, the "intersect" option was used to decide whether to include a census tract in a political district. Counts and percentages from 2005 were subtracted from counts and percentages from 2019 to get a sense of absolute numbers and percentage point changes, both of which have an impact on electoral outcomes.

The study uses American Community Survey 5-year estimate data at the census tract level to allow for comparability of both counts and percentages from year to year since both counts (number of new voters) and percentages (overall composition of neighborhoods) can have an impact on electoral outcomes. The ACS 5-year estimates allow for the greatest statistical reliability (U.S. Census Bureau 2020). ACS data also allows for the most current estimate of demographics at the time of the 2019 and 2020 elections. ACS data from 2005 to 2009 and 2015 to 2019 were selected to examine the extent to which these neighborhoods have been "studentified" and the patterns of studentification across time.[3] Data is examined at the census tract level because block level data was not available for indices of geographic mobility and is consistent with other studies of studentification which also examined changes at the census tract level (Foote 2017).

Studies of studentification emphasize changes in population from an older established population to a younger more transient one, an increase in non-family households, a change in housing stock from owner-occupied to rental, an increase in Asians, and from single-family to multi-family housing (Foote 2017; Kinton et al. 2018; Pickren 2012; Smith 2005). Following earlier studies of knowledge economy neighborhood typologies, the variables used to examine studentification includes concentrations of White, Black, Latino, and Asian households, percentage of population ages 18 to 34, rate of owner occupancy, percentage of buildings with five or more units per structure, percentage of residents that moved in last year, and percentage of the population over 25 with a bachelor's degree (Foote 2017). Several of these variables are also mapped across time to get a sense of the spatial pattern of these changes vis-a-vis universities.

The second part of the analysis examines the spread, distribution, and proportion of votes for each political candidate using Philadelphia City Commissioners Election Results data to examine the spatial correlation of studentified neighborhoods with the magnitude of votes and vote shares for political newcomer candidates. It hypothesizes that studentified neighborhoods and Black homeowner neighborhoods emerge as distinct political cleavages, with denser neighborhoods closer to the university turning out in greater proportions and absolute numbers for Jamie Gauthier and Rick Krajewski, and Black homeowner neighborhoods on the fringes of these political districts furthest away from universities forming the base of support for Jannie Blackwell

and Jim Roebuck. It also hypothesizes that studentified divisions played a decisive role in Gauthier and Krajewski's victory.

The unit of analysis is the political division. Philadelphia is divided into 1703 political divisions each with its own polling place, which consist of 500–1200 registered voters per division. These are grouped into 66 wards that consist of anywhere from 11 to 51 divisions. Political divisions are the smallest unit of aggregate data available and provide a fine-grained means to examine voting patterns. The study maps political divisions onto census tract data and analyzes patterns using the framework described above.

The study examines aggregate election data alongside ecological factors to understand spatial patterns of voting and their relationship to studentification (Agnew 1990; Agnew 1996; Verma 2022). It follows the framework proposed by Doering, Silver and Taylor (2021) to understand whether there are urban political cleavages, that is, whether political divisions materialize between rather than within neighborhoods. This framework also helps to understand how these cleavages, if they exist, are spatially articulated. Accordingly, the study examines election patterns alongside three spatial dimensions—the group, place, and location axes. The group axis refers to socio-demographic characteristics like race, ethnicity, and class. The place axis refers to the environmental characteristics of neighborhoods, like the level of density or concentration of community establishments. Finally, the location axis refers to the relative spatial position in the city, like location in the core or periphery of a regional economy.

Given extant literature on studentification and neighborhood change, this study examines household demographics along the lines of race and class (group), neighborhood characteristics including the number of occupied housing units and levels of homeownership and rental (place), and proximity to the university (location) of electoral victories.

Results

Part I: the Studentification of the Black Worker Electorate

Using the above-mentioned approach, Table 1 summarizes the results on the studentification of the Black Worker electorate.

Table 1 shows how City Council 3rd District and PA House 188th District have become younger, more educated, denser, more Asian and Latino, and more transient while simultaneously becoming less Black, less White, less owner-occupied, and less Black homeowner. This is consistent with studentified and mix/renters clusters found by Foote (2017). The 3rd District has seen a greater influx of people between 25–35, while the 188th district's population change has been younger, corresponding more to a university-aged

Table 1. Population Changes from 2005-2009 ACS to 2014 to 2019 ACS- Raw Counts and Percentage Points.

	City Council 3rd District		PA House 188th District	
	Count	*% Change*	*Count*	*% Change*
18–24	2256	0.97%	4197	3.46%
25–34	3306	1.61%	970	1.25%
18–34	5562	2.39%	5167	4.71%
Population 25 + with a BA or More	4181	2.96%	1419	3.75%
Buildings with 5 + Units in Structure	−4953	−3.59%	−6305	−5.65%
Moved in Last Year	2387	0.98%	2534	2.29%
Black	−4147	−1.96%	−6924	−3.24%
White	−1542	−0.73%	−1983	−0.46%
Asian	2994	1.31%	2479	1.93%
Latino	4617	2.03%	4118	2.96%
Other	192	0.08%	169	0.15%
2 + races	2360	1.04%	1932	1.41%
Black Homeowner	−2459	−2.54%	−2293	−2.19%
Renter	2446	3.46%	−838	3.09%
Owner-occupied	−3357	−3.46%	−3473	−3.09%
Population	420		−5209	

population and a more classic definition of studentification. There is a small increase in population in the 3rd Council District, but a decrease in population in the 188th district. However, there has been a net increase of populations 18–24 and 25–34, college-educated populations, and populations that moved in last year. There has also been a net increase of renters in City Council 3rd district.

Surprisingly, there was a net loss of buildings with five or more units in the City Council 3rd District and PA 188th District. This could suggest processes of restructuring occurring in which populations and structures are temporarily moved while new construction is initiated. The lack of major conversions to buildings with five or more units may also signal the successful efforts of Registered Community Organizations to keep their neighborhoods zoned single-family (Blumgart 2019a; 2016). Even though there has not been a wholesale change in housing stock, there has been a significant increase in renters both in absolute numbers and in terms of neighborhood composition. This suggests that though buildings have remained the same structurally, there has been a change in the use of buildings from owner occupancy to renting.

While PA House 188th District is a little over half the size of the 3rd District in terms of geographic area and population, it has seen more dramatic changes in terms of raw counts and percentages than the 3rd District has on several axes, including population that moved in last year, population aged 18–24, loss of Black people. This is likely because the PA House District is both closer to universities and has a greater number of tracts that are university adjacent.

Figure 2 shows the spatial spread and patterns of studentification. A university cluster is evident at baseline in 2005, with high concentrations of people over 25 with a bachelor's degree, majority renter tracts, and low concentrations of Black homeowners as a percentage of total occupants. The cluster of dense college-educated tracts is an inverse of Black homeowner tracts, and strong Black homeowner neighborhoods cluster in the tracts farthest away from universities.

Patterns of change show an extension of this cluster fanning outward from university areas. This change is particularly evident with the percentage population with a bachelor's degree and the percentage of Black homeowners out of the total occupants. Census tracts that were between 10 and 20 percent college educated flipped to 30 percent concentrated, while census tracts further north, northwest, and southwest of universities flipped from 0–10 percent to 10–20 percent college educated. Black homeownership has steadily eroded in areas adjacent to the studentified cluster, dropping from 10 to 20 percent Black homeownership to less than 10 percent. There has also been a loss of clusters of Black homeownership farther west and northwest, with tracts shifting from over 50 percent Black homeowners as a percentage of total occupants to 30–50 percent. The concentration of renters has also expanded north, west, and southwest from university areas. The two tracts in Mantua that were majority owner-occupied flipped to majority renter, as did several tracts in Kingsessing and Cobbs Creek.

Part II: Cleavages Along Location, Place, and Group Axes

As the last section demonstrated, the demographics of the 3rd Council District and the 188th House District have shifted significantly towards becoming younger, more transient, less homeowner, and less Black and Black homeowner, in other words, more studentified. While there was a net loss in population in the 188th District between 2005 and 2019, there was a net gain in studentification-related demographics. These population changes likely influenced the Black Worker electorate, especially in the Democratic primary elections of 2019 and 2020.

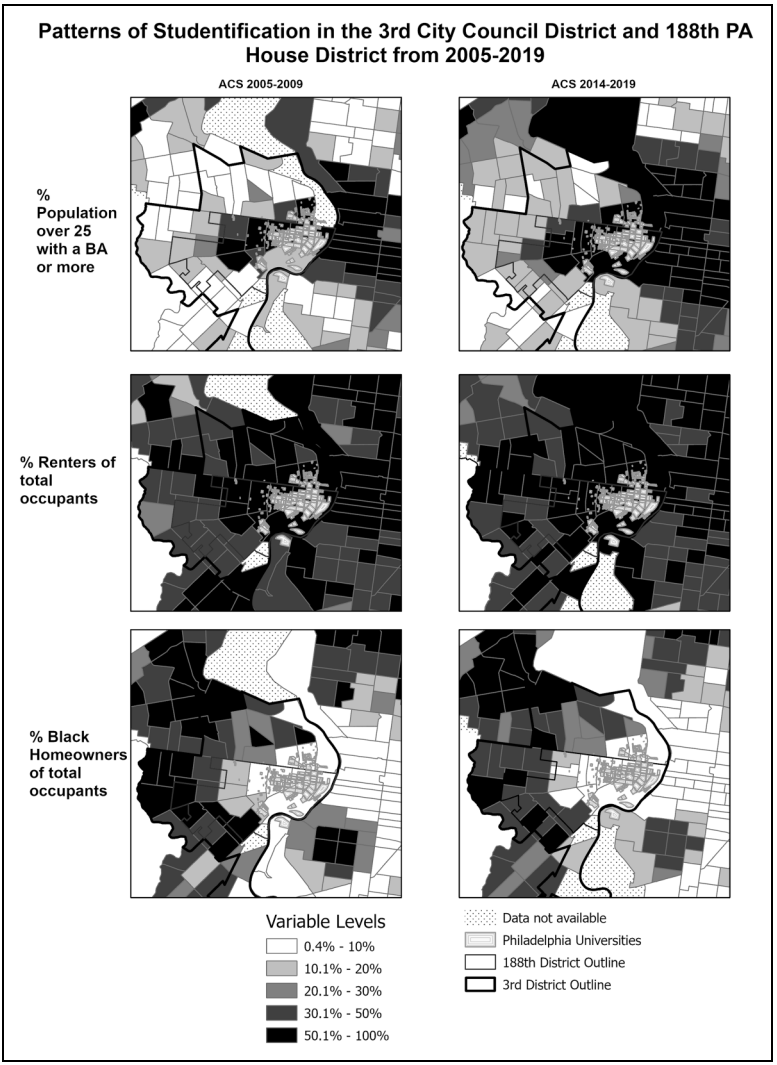

Figure 2. Patterns of Studentification in the 3rd City Council District and 188th PA House District from 2005-2019

The primary elections for the 2019 City Council 3rd District Primary Race and 2020 PA House 188th District Primary saw established candidates who traced their history to the Black power era defeated by newer candidates. Both candidates were educated at the University of Pennsylvania and ran against incumbents with the aim of defeating "machine politics", and both

candidates are political newcomers to neighborhoods they are seeking to bring political change to (Geeting 2019a; McMenamin 2020).

Jamie Gauthier won 13,460 votes, while Blackwell won 10,588. Rick Krajewski won 6,274 votes while Jim Roebuck won 3,649. Jamie Gauthier won over Jannie Blackwell with a margin of 2872 votes, while Rick Krajewski won over Jim Roebuck by a margin of 2625 votes. The following maps show the spread and proportion of votes for each candidate per political division alongside dimensions of studentification.

Proximity to University as a Location-Based Cleavage

Figure 3 shows the margins of victory for each candidate per political division vis a vis university location. The white and light gray areas correspond to areas where Blackwell or Roebuck won, while the dark gray and Black areas show where Gauthier or Krajewski won.

While Blackwell and Roebuck won divisions by at most 75 votes, Gauthier and Krajewski won some political divisions with as many as 296 votes. Twelve out of thirteen of the divisions that Gauthier won with over 100 votes overlap with divisions where Krajewski won with over 100 votes, suggesting an overlapping political base. The high turnout districts that went for Gauthier with a 100-vote margin, shown in white, got her 3012 votes, which is well over the 2872 margin of her victory. The districts where Krajewski won over 100 votes, also shown in white, got him 2056 votes, which is over two-thirds of his 2625 margin of victory.

Areas of strong Gauthier and Krajewski victories are clustered in the same areas that border university neighborhoods and fan out west and north of

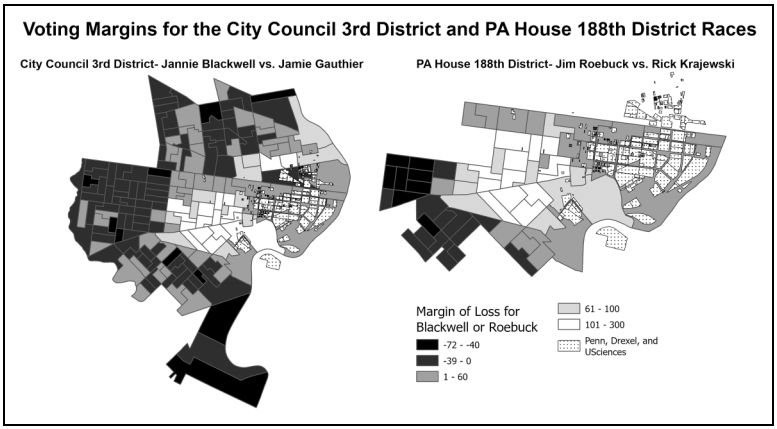

Figure 3. Voting Margins for City Council 3rd District and PA House 188th District Races

universities. These clusters represent Spruce Hill, Garden Court, Cedar Park, Woodland Terrace, and East and West Powelton, all neighborhoods directly bordering universities. Blackwell strongholds include Cobbs Creek and parts of Bartram Village, Mill Creek, Mantua, Kingsessing, and Bartram Village, all neighborhoods farthest away from universities. While there are patches of support for Gauthier in parts of Mill Creek, Mantua, and Cobbs Creek, the margin of victory is at most 60 votes. Roebuck won a much smaller geographic portion of his district on the outermost edges corresponding to parts of Kingsessing and Cobb's Creek.

The Density of Housing Stock as a Place-Based Cleavage

Since, proximity to the university is a location-based cleavage, the dense housing stock that clusters around universities is likely to be a place-based cleavage. Figure 4 shows the concentration of buildings with five or more units mapped onto election results. Dark grey and Black clusters represent the densest parts of the political districts.

The spread of votes shows that areas of Gauthier and Krajewski's victories correspond closely to neighborhoods that have over 30 percent of all structures having five or more units, while Roebuck and Blackwell's victories occur in the least dense outer edges of the districts. This is particularly

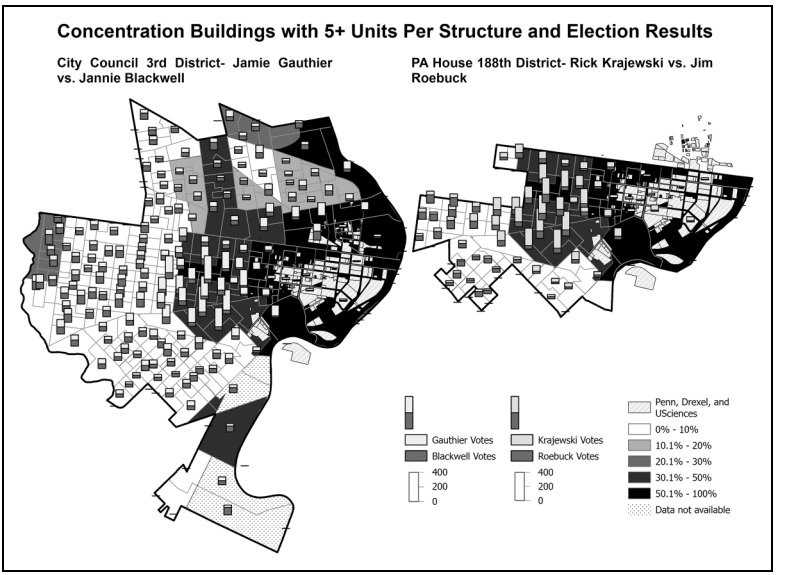

Figure 4. Concentration Buildings with 5+ Units Per Structure and Election Results.

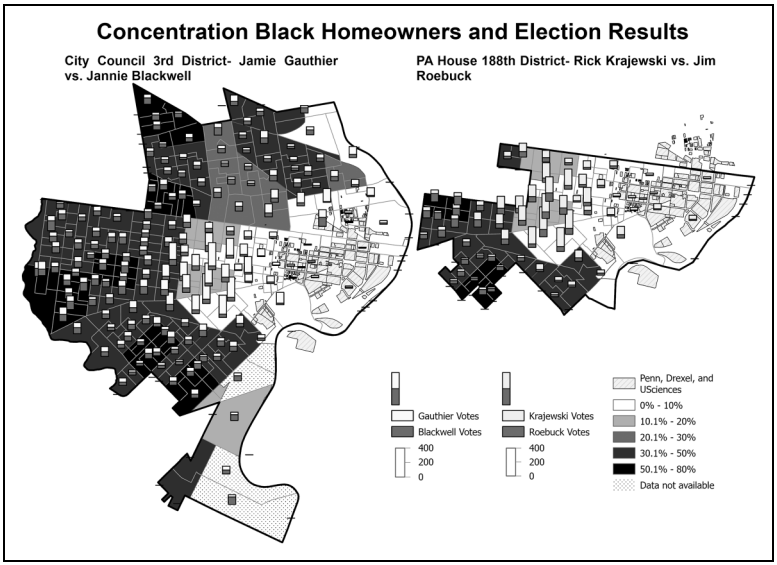

Figure 5. Concentration Black Homeowners and Election Results

stark in the case of Roebuck's district in the southern and westernmost corners which, though small in absolute numbers, are larger in proportion victory for Roebuck. The proportion of votes for Gauthier and Krajewski is also largest in the densest areas, whereas elections on the outer edges of the districts are more contested. An exception is the westernmost edge of Council District 3 which has a 20–30 percent proportion of dense housing stock but saw victories for Blackwell. Another exception is a political division directly at the northernmost edge of University City. Finally, the magnitude of votes for Gauthier and Krajewski is largest in the densest areas directly to the west of universities.

Black Homeowners as a Group-Based Cleavage

Another political cleavage corresponds to the Black Worker electorate. As previous sections discussed, Black homeowners represent a distinct voting block with a history rooted in movements for Black liberation in Philadelphia. They are a segment of the electorate that has eroded in favor of dense transient neighborhoods as processes of studentification wear on. Figure 5 shows the concentration of Black homeowners as against election results.

Gauthier and Krajewski won biggest in areas with less than 20 percent Black homeowners. The proportion of votes for Krajewski and Gauthier is

the largest in these areas, and the magnitude of votes is also greatest in these areas. The divisions where Blackwell and Roebuck won correspond closely to clusters of strong Black homeownership, while Gauthier and Krajewski owe their electoral victories to areas with the lowest concentration of Black homeowners.

Discussion

Analysis of American Community Survey data from 2005–2009 and 2014–2019 shows that City Council District 3 and Pennsylvania House District 188 have become younger, more educated, more transient, and denser while becoming less black, less homeowner, and less Black homeowner. While the 188th district saw a net loss of population in the 188th district, it also saw a net gain in studentification-related populations. Maps show a cluster of dense college-educated tracts surrounding the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University, and the University of the Sciences bordered by a cluster of non-college-educated less dense Black homeowner neighborhoods. Over the period examined, the studentified cluster expanded westward, northwest, and southwest of University City, while Black homeowner clusters eroded.

These findings confirm those of scholars who focus on the tenurial and zoning changes, showing how developers and universities push for re-zoning single-family neighborhoods to multifamily in order to create more density correlated with studentified neighborhoods (Donaldson et al. 2014; Hubbard 2009; Kinton et al. 2018; Pickren 2012). It has suggested that though community groups have stopped re-zoning neighborhoods to multi-family for the time being and stopped a conversion of the housing stock from single-family to multifamily, tenurial transformations have gone unchecked, playing a role in the political displacement of Black homeowner neighborhoods. It also vindicates community sentiment of wanting to keep neighborhoods zoned single-family; census tracts dominated by dense apartment buildings built for student housing fundamentally change the character of neighborhoods and correlate with large voter turnout for candidates that do not come from the Black Worker tradition. However, stopping density alone may not stop studentification-related displacement; student developers must be held in check and homeowners must be given support to hold their housing stock.

The findings also relate to studentification scholars' observations about students as shapers of cities and new exclusive geographies (Chatterton 1999; 2010; Hubbard 2009; Munro, Turok and Livingston 2009; Reynolds 2020). The political dimension of these changes must be investigated alongside cultural and social ones, wherein the student habitus described by

Chatterton creates a political sensibility as well at odds with that of older more established residents. More research is needed to understand the shaping of this new political sensibility, and how established residents, especially those that are being politically displaced, receive it.

This study contributes to the call for research that speaks to the spatial articulation of urban political cleavages (Doering, Silver and Taylor 2021), showing evidence of how political divides manifest between neighborhoods on location, place, and group axes. It has used the work of W.E.B. Du Bois (1998) to explain the spatiality of the Black Worker electorate and its rootedness in owner-occupied rowhomes. It has shown how the urban form created by studentification of density clustered around a university extending outwards, populated by transient young people, and the urban form created by working class and Black Worker traditions of single-family owner-occupied rowhomes correspond to a political divide.

An analysis of the election data shows a location-based cleavage corresponding to distance from universities. Voter turnout around universities is far higher than on the outer edges of the district. Gauthier and Krajewski had their highest margins of victory in these districts with as much as 100 vote margins. These high-turnout districts clustered around universities were crucial to their victory, making up all or nearly all their vote margins. While there was support for these two candidates in divisions farther away from universities, the university-adjacent divisions were decisive. This suggests that there has been a political displacement of the Black Worker electorate.

The density of neighborhoods, that is, the concentration of buildings with five or more structures per unit, is also a place-based cleavage. This variable signifies the densification inherent studentification, that is, the conversion of single-family homes into housing for multiple occupations (HMO's). While there has not been much change in concentration multifamily homes from 2005–2009 to 2014–2019, the spread, proportion, and magnitude of votes for Krajewski and Gauthier correspond closely to the densest parts of the districts surrounding universities. The fact that neighborhoods have not been more densified may correspond to established residents' zoning victories that keep their neighborhoods zoned single-family (Blumgart 2016; 2019a).

The group-based dimension of Black homeownership is also a significant cleavage. Blackwell and Roebuck did far better in Black homeowner neighborhoods both in terms of the magnitude of votes, vote margins, and proportion of votes. The Black Worker electorate that produced Blackwell and Roebuck largely voted for them, though not in every case. However, their losses in Black homeowner neighborhoods were not decisive to their larger defeats, while their losses in dense non-Black renter neighborhoods were.

Finally, these cleavages inflect and overlap one another, as Black Worker neighborhoods of single-family homes concentrate further away from

universities, while dense studentified neighborhoods are clustered closely around universities. Two outliers are the dense cluster at the westernmost edge of the 3rd Council District and a strip running in the north-central portion of the district which voted for Blackwell. These clusters exist alongside Black neighborhoods, suggesting that the character of density in Black Worker neighborhoods is different from density in studentified neighborhoods.

Results from the 2019 3rd District Council primary and the 2020 188th PA House district suggest that the electorate created by studentification and the electorate created by the movements of Black Workers are fundamentally at odds with one another politically, as the growth of one leads to the erosion of the other.

Conclusion

This paper has contributed to the literature on studentification in several ways. It has added a dimension alongside the economic, social, cultural, and physical changes—a political one. By mapping election results around different axes of space, the paper suggests that the urban form created by studentification of density and transience fanning out from universities has led to a political displacement of the Black Worker electorate. Transient renters living in areas of high-density who have far less understanding of the history of the neighborhood turn out in greater numbers for anti-establishment candidates, likely because they don't know what the establishment represents. This paper has also shown what is at stake in the tenurial transitions inherent in studentification by adding a historical dimension of the Black Worker and the struggle for homeownership. It has shown that far from mere "emotive debates" about the change of single-family homes for owner occupancy to multifamily rentals, studentification-related changes have significant consequences for a historically constituted electorate that has been shaped by the Civil Rights movement and Black liberation struggles. Furthermore, the work of W.E.B. Du Bois and others helps explain the spatiality of the Black Worker electorate and its significance to the struggle for democracy.

One of the biggest limitations of this study is that it does not make a causal argument about population change and political displacement, but a descriptive one. This is because the number of political divisions for the 188th District was too small to run a statistical analysis and also because the processes of electoral displacement are too complex to be understood simply through direct statistical relationships. Future research could attempt a more statistical approach by using cluster analysis techniques to investigate elections that have a larger number of political divisions (Doering, Silver and

Taylor 2021). Such a technique could establish the existence of statistically distinct electoral blocs and track their growth or diminishment over time.

Another limitation is the relatively small sample size of elections—this study only examines the results of two elections and that too, in a short time frame. This small sample size allowed for a fine-grained parsing out of electoral cleavages. However, it also makes it more difficult to make empirical generalizations. Future research could expand the sample size of elections in the districts across time to understand the continuity of these cleavages, and whether there is a point in time when these cleavages become decisive. Future research can also consider the proportion of registered voter turnout for another dimension of political displacement.

Perhaps the greatest irony of these races is that both Krajewski and Gauthier positioned themselves strongly as "anti-gentrification" candidates who sought to stem the tide of predatory development and blamed the established Democratic Party machine for gentrification (Geeting 2019a; McMenamin 2020). However, like other new progressive candidates like US Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, their base is in areas that have seen the most gentrification (Jilani and Grim 2018; Otterbein 2018; Otterbein and Brennan 2018). The disparity between their political base and their ideological commitments ought to be cause for self-reflection and critical interrogation of the meaning of "progressivism" as defined by these newcomers. Moreover, as their constituents change over time, these could also lead to incongruent political ideologies between the community and their local representation.

Recent qualitative work in these neighborhoods helps shed light on the disparity between the stated progressive aims of newcomers and their inability to win decisively in the Black Worker electorate. Interviewees who identified with the Black Worker tradition emphasized the importance of a politics rooted in mass organizations, like unions and churches, as opposed to foundations. They resented an ideology of progressivism by newcomers ignorant of Philadelphia's revolutionary history. Interviewees rejected seemingly progressive policies championed by newcomers of increasing density, privileging the bicyclist over the motorist, and not requiring parking minimum in new construction for destroying the urban fabric of Black Worker neighborhoods and eroding the existing affordable homeownership stock. Interviewees readily recognized the betrayal of the Black Worker electorate by contemporary Black politicians who departed from a tradition of principled politics in exchange for a neoliberal politics of accommodation. However, they castigated newcomers for using their wealth to forcibly take over the civic landscape; interviewees saw newcomers as a symptom of their displacement rather than a solution. Rather than

embracing new progressive politicians, interviewees called for a restoration of the historically constituted Black Worker tradition (Chandra 2024).[4]

On the other hand, the Black Worker electorate did not vote unanimously for Blackwell and Roebuck. This suggests that Blackwell and Roebuck's loss was due to a combination of "demographics, development, and dissatisfaction," as other commentators have noted (Terruso and Lai 2019). For the Black Worker electorate to come alive again, there must be a renewal of the principles that animated it: self-determination, working-class organization, and militancy rooted in long historic struggle.

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ORCID iD

Meghna Chandra https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9689-7569

Notes

1. This paper takes the position that political displacement can happen even when it appears that the newcomers are acting in the interests of those being politically displaced. Ultimately, this investigation of political displacement is not evaluating whether Blackwell and Roebuck were or were not complicit with gentrification, but whether *they were gentrified*.
2. This study supplements Countryman's data with IPUMS Census data from 1940 and 1960 (Ruggles et al. 2021).
3. Though Penn's Neighborhood Initiatives began in the 1990's (Rodin 2005), ACS only goes back to 2005. As such, the changes in this table do not capture the full extent of studentification-related changes and likely understate them.
4. This study agrees with urban theorists (Reed 1999, Spence 2015) about the neoliberal turn of many Black political urban regimes, including those in

Philadelphia. However, it also recognizes the anti-Black racism constitutive of urban capitalism in the United States (Dantzler 2021) and extends this analysis to the political realm; the political displacement of Black people and erasure of the alternative tradition they once championed is part of the neoliberal takeover of cities.

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Author Biography

Dr. Meghna Chandra is a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for Racial Justice at Loyola University Chicago. Her research investigates university-driven development and is concerned more broadly with the struggles of the working class in knowledge economy cities. She is currently undertaking a comparative study of studentification in Philadelphia and Chicago and investigating the war economy underpinnings of knowledge-economy growth in contrast to the peace industrial economy vision of the Black Worker tradition.