

Laura Tach

Web Bio

Information

Biography

Biographical Statement

Dr. Laura Tach is a sociologist who studies urban poverty and family life. Her mixed-methods research examines how neighborhoods and families reproduce inequality and how public policy affects these processes. She received her Ph.D. in Sociology and Social Policy at Harvard University. Prior to joining the Department of Policy Analysis and Management at Cornell University, Laura was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Postdoctoral Scholar at the University of Pennsylvania.

Teaching

Professional

Research

Current Research Activities

Laura's current research examines how social policies affect urban poverty and family life. Her first area of research studies how neighborhood inequality has changed as a result of housing policies designed to deconcentrate poverty. With funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the National Science Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, she has conducted mixed-method studies of the dynamics of mixed-income neighborhoods in the United States. Papers emerging from this work investigate the spatial and temporal dynamics of neighborhood economic diversity, the social dynamics among residents when housing policies deconcentrate poverty, and the consequences of poverty deconcentration for neighborhood health environments and resident health behaviors.

Laura's second area of research examines family structure and economic coping strategies among the urban poor. With funding from the National Institutes of Health, she has examined how family instability and complexity influence the well-being of unmarried parents, the dynamics of paternal involvement following nonmarital births, and how family instability affects household income volatility.

She is also involved in a collaborative study funded by the Ford Foundation that examines the public and private strategies low-income families use to make ends meet in the post-welfare reform era, with a focus on the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

Extension

Education

Education

- B.A. Sociology, Pennsylvania State University
- A.M. Sociology, Harvard University
- Ph.D. Sociology & Social Policy, Harvard University

Courses

Courses Taught

- PAM 3250: Neighborhoods & Housing Policy
- PAM 3150: Social Welfare Policy in the United States
- PAM 4190: Poverty, Policy, & Child Development

Websites

Administration

Publications

Selected Publications

Books

Sarah Halpern-Meekin, Kathryn Edin, Laura Tach, and Jennifer Sykes McLaughlin. 2015. *It's Not Like I'm Poor: The Financial Lives of the Working Poor*. University of California Press.

Journal Articles

Tach, Laura. 2014. "Diversity, Inequality, and Microsegregation: Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion in a Racially and Economically Diverse Community." *Cityscape* 16(3): 13-45.

Tach, Laura and Sarah Halpern-Meekin. 2014. "Tax Code Knowledge and Behavioral Responses among EITC Recipients: Policy Insights from Qualitative Data." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 33(2): 413-439.

Tach, Laura and Sara Sternberg Greene*. 2014. "Robbing Peter to Pay Paul: Economic and Cultural Explanations for How Lower-Income Families Manage Debt." *Social Problems* 61(1): 1-21.