Review of: "On the Resilience of Urban Real Estate Development"

Laura Landau

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This paper aims to take on an important discussion of how the real estate sector has been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, and how it can become more resilient to future crises. My biggest concern with this paper is the lack of sufficient citations and engagement with current literature. There are entire paragraphs without a single citation, and I would have liked to see a larger consideration on the relevant and pressing topics of disaster capitalism green gentrification. Some specific notes:

- Rather than discuss the differences between sustainability and resilience (when you are really only focusing on the concept of resilience in this paper), it would have been helpful to have a section on urban resilience--there has been plenty published on urban resilience since 2013 that could be relevant.
- This section could be followed by a section on real estate resilience to better connect the dots between resilience literature and your later arguments. You bring in points about business and immigration in relation to resilience, but I think they either need to be more clearly connected to your main focus, or replaced with real-estate specific examples.
- You mention that “One of the most criticised development is when financial institutions and governments are buying homes and business premises for strongly reduced prices, only to let them out again for either inflated rents related to the new risk adjusted yields, or for subsidised social housing.” This would be a great place to bring in literature on disaster capitalism.
- You say that “A further issue concerns health effects on different demographic and ethnic groups. Consider, for instance, the news about black people being disproportionately affected by Covid-19 in cities across USA; or Somali background families in Sweden. What is the reason? Failure in the education about healthy life styles and social distancing are probably the most obvious reasons here.” This seems like an unsubstantiated and harmful statement. Look at the research--studies suggest that these trends have much more to do with the numbers of minorities in essential worker jobs, historical housing segregation, health care discrimination, and environmental injustice. This is an example of why it is so important to rely on citations rather than speculations.
- I wonder what you have found in the literature about people returning to cities after the worst of COVID, and empty downtown office spaces that are no longer used because of remote work? I'm guessing there are recent empirical studies following these trends, which seem like important topics to address when looking at the intersection between COVID-19 and urban real estate resilience.
- Finally, I think this paper would benefit from more clarity in both writing and organization.