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The divergent city: unequal and uneven development in St. Louis

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In St. Louis, as in many other cities, decline and displacement occurred when key policies, prejudices, and plans interacted with broad economic restructuring to devastate poor and minority communities, while leaving White and middle-class communities largely intact. Amidst overall population loss and neighborhood decline are pockets of prosperity and gentrification within the central city. In this article, we analyze three significant planning interventions in St. Louis, Missouri, that spurred displacement of populations—urban renewal, triage, and the foreclosure crisis. We argue that the differential experiences of Black and White during each of these periods represent two faces of development: one in the north of the city that is largely Black, experiencing vacant land, high crime, and crumbling infrastructure; another in the south of the city that is largely White, enjoying pockets of vibrant commercial development, larger homes, and stable real estate markets. We analyze each period through a framework of uneven and unequal development and displacement, which we call the Divergent City Theory. Based on this theory, planners face an ethical obligation to plan for the future of their cities in a way that seeks to reconcile the structured race and class inequalities of the divergent city.

Keywords: race; shrinking cities; uneven development; disinvestment; inequality

There has been much recent attention in the planning field to the concept of shrinking cities (e.g., Großmann, Katrin, Beauregard, Dewar, & Haase, 2012; Hollander, 2011; Hollander, Pallagst, Schwarz, & Popper, 2009; Martinez-Fernandez, Kubo, Noya, & Weyman, 2012; Pallagst, 2009; Ryan, 2012). This literature informs us that across the developed world, some cities, such as our case study, St. Louis, are losing net population year after year and decade after decade. That such decline appears not only consistent, but permanent in so many American and European cities casts serious doubt on the theory that urban economies are cyclical, and that downturns are merely a temporary hiccup in the growth machines that dominate America's urban centers. Issues related to the "Shrinking City" are currently receiving considerable public attention. Calls for large-scale, top-down planning for decline are increasingly becoming common (Leonard, 2009), and despite receiving considerable push-back among researchers (Hollander, 2010; Ryan, 2012), continue to be the dominant strategy on the ground. However, this "permanent" decline does not affect all neighborhoods or populations equally. Amidst overall population loss and neighborhood decline are pockets of prosperity and gentrification within central cities. Given this context, we feel it is essential to review how top-down planning

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has affected cities, neighborhoods, and families in the past, in order to inform how such strategies will likely play out in the future.

We use St. Louis as a case to analyze the last 60 years of development and decline through a lens of codependent duality. For most of the twentieth century, race was the driving force guiding land development in St. Louis (as well as other northern and mid-western cities). The Great Migration of Blacks from southern states to northern cities established patterns of spatial inequality that were further entrenched through decades of public policies, planning efforts, and funding initiatives (Hirsch, 2000; Lemann, 1992; Wilkerson, 2010). In this article, we analyze three planning interventions in St. Louis, Missouri, that spurred significant displacement of populations—urban renewal, triage, and the foreclosure crisis. In St. Louis, as in many other cities, decline and displacement occurred when key policies, prejudices, and plans interacted with broad economic restructuring to devastate poor and minority communities while leaving White and middle-class communities largely intact.

We argue that the differential experiences of Black and White during each of these periods represent two spatialized faces of development: one in the north of the city where all but two-and-a-half Census tracts had >80% non-White populations in 2010; another in the south of the city where all but one Census tract have <81% non-White population, and the entire southwest quadrant of the city has <25% non-White population. While North City experienced vacant land, high crime, and crumbling infrastructure, South City has enjoyed pockets of vibrant commercial development, larger homes, and stable real estate markets (Ganning & Tighe, 2014). We view each period through a framework of uneven and unequal development and displacement, which we call the Divergent City Theory. Based on this theory, planners face an ethical obligation to approach "smart decline" using a planning framework that seeks to remedy the structural inequalities of disinvestment that have shaped so many parts of shrinking cities for decades.

Theories of the city and planning practice

To date, few cities have embraced the reality that they are shrinking, and proposals for combatting or managing shrinkage are largely theoretical at this juncture.[1] This lack of political acknowledgement of decline is reminiscent of how many cities, including St. Louis, approached decline during the 1970s and 1980s.[2] The literature to date proposes a range of solutions to be considered by cities and metropolitan areas facing decline—the most dominant being land banking and urban farming (Krohe, 2011). However, these approaches often take a triage-style planning approach, which often manifests as a holding pattern until vacant and abandoned property can be put to more "productive" uses. Other researchers have proposed longer range, permanent approaches. Hollander (2011) has suggested using Reverse Transect and Village Planning approaches, and Popper and Popper (2002) propose a Smart Decline framework.

The "smart decline" approaches being proposed would eventually entail revitalizing the healthiest parts of the city while pulling back on infrastructure funding and servicing of the most abandoned and blighted areas (Hollander, 2011; Mallach, 2011; Schwarz & Hoornbeek, 2009; Sousa & Pinho, 2015). Swanstrom (2011) cautions that dedicated funding for renewal efforts may create abandonment and foreclosure in other areas of the city. This is particularly problematic in shrinking cities such as St. Louis and Detroit, where policy-makers and planners have long been cautious about dedicating too much time and money to revitalizing existing vacant buildings or dealing with abandoned properties.

Moreover, many planning studies (Beckman, 2010; Gallagher, 2010; Haase, 2008; Hollander et al., 2009) point out that revitalization in the classic sense is neither desired nor possible in shrinking cities, and that managing and maintaining vacant land may be a better approach than trying to attract businesses and residents through tax breaks and other incentives. These conclusions seem to lead in one policy direction—that shrinking cities should demolish abandoned buildings and clear lots in order to mitigate their negative effects on neighboring households, as vacant land is cheaper and easier to revitalize, and has fewer negative effects upon neighboring properties (Griswold & Norris, 2007; Han, 2014). Yet the literature focusing on "shrinking cities" has one major flaw. It focuses primarily on structural and land-use elements, evading issues of race, poverty, and the geography of opportunity. The literature remains largely race-neutral and continues to prescribe "triage"—style land uses to stabilize the city until such time as the cycle will renew itself and the land can be reused for more economically viable functions during a presumably inevitable urban renaissance.

Even when race is explicitly discussed in the literature (Dewer & Thomas, 2013; Galster, 2012), only a small portion of the recommended actions incorporate planning approaches that would directly remedy racial inequality. Recent evidence suggests that cities are not losing population evenly, but that the heaviest tolls are occurring in majority-Black and poor neighborhoods while pockets of prosperity exist just blocks away (BBC, 2012; Ganning & Tighe, 2014). Furthermore, the analysis in this article shows that when resources are limited (as they are in shrinking cities), decision-makers will divert those resources from decaying areas toward more robust areas. We see this phenomenon play out in St. Louis, where the experiences of those living in North City are vastly different from those living in South City. In many ways, they do not even live in the same city, but in diverging, adjacent cities.

The concept of "dual cities" has influenced urban theory for centuries. (Cohen, 2002; Maciocco & Tagliagambe, 2009). As Marcuse succinctly writes, "a divided city is certainly nothing new, historically" (1993, p. 355). However, the idea of a dual city has been applied in very different ways over time and in different contexts. Some urban theories of "dual cities" have traditionally focused on the divisions between urban and suburban within a single metropolitan area (Jackson, 1985; Jewson & McGregor, 1997; Maciocco & Tagilagambe, 2009; Phillips & LeGates, 1981). Others have focused on how a dual city has emerged in colonial cities in ways that mirror the ways in which cities in Europe were divided (Chiu & Lui, 2004; Perrons, 2004; Van Kempen, 2007). More recently, urban scholars have discussed how globalization and technology have created dual cities in terms of economic inequality and divisions between those who are able to take advantage of globalization processes and those who are left behind (Castells, 1997; Sassen, 2000, 2001) and how cities are often "contested" between groups (Gaffikin & Morrissey, 2011; Mitchell, 2003).

Within any conceptualization of dual cities is a focus of how the *haves* and the *have-nots* experience the city differently. The inequality, differential experience, and unequal access to opportunity have led some, including Harvey (2003, 2010), Soja (1999), Soja, Morales, and Wolff (1983 with Morales & Wolff) and Mitchell (2003), to espouse a "Right to the City" based largely on Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1974). These scholars have argued the existence of a marginalized and isolated "city within a city" for decades. We revisit the idea of duality in the context of shrinking cities, but our theory of duality takes a slightly different form. Rather than acknowledging that there are essentially two separate cities, existing fairly independently of each other as described by Marcuse (1989, 1993, 2002), Castells (1996, 1997), and others, we build more directly upon Sassen (2000, 2001) who presents the divided city as comprised of distinct, yet

inexorably related, units. However, rather than applying the theory of duality in a global context, as Sassen does, we return to the city itself, and the divisions within. Rather than emphasizing the separation within the dual city approach, we emphasize the relationships and connections between the two sides of cities in decline, and how those connections affect the experiences of people living there.

Our theory, which we call the Divergent City, presents a unified and co-dependent duality in which the uneven growth and decline at work within shrinking cities occur in direct relation to one other. Growth and prosperity do not occur merely alongside blight and decline, but *because of* nearby blight and decline. In a shrinking city context, where there are limited funds, limited land, limited exports, and limited households, where there is prosperity, there must also be decline. Those with mobility and choice avoid blighted areas, yet are drawn to downtown areas that are close to jobs, cultural districts, and other amenities that urban downtowns continue to offer. In cities across the United States, the use of public funds magnified the uneven distribution of wealth and opportunity and spurred significant displacement among minority and poor households (Galster, 1996; Imbroscio, 1997; Joseph, Chaskin, & Webber, 2007). This occurred time and again in St. Louis, as we show through an analysis of three planning interventions: urban renewal, triage, and foreclosure response. As shrinking cities like St. Louis consider top-down planning approaches to grapple with widespread decline, it is imperative that city leaders understand how such programs have perpetuated spatial inequality and adversely affected poor and minority neighborhoods.

Race and space in St. Louis

In St. Louis, we analyze three planning initiatives—urban renewal, triage, and the foreclosure crisis—to show how planning without direct engagement of race worsens the city's spatial, race-defined inequality, and possibly contributes to the city's overall decline. As Cohen (2002) states, "The theme of the dual city, first popularized by the Victorian urban explorers, has not ceased to multiply its terms of reference in the twentieth century. To the cities of rich and poor, bourgeois and proletarian, indigenous and immigrant have been added cities of night and day, youth and age, established and outsiders; there are pink cities and Black cities, global cities and mobile cities and cities where everyone with get-up-and-go has long since left town" (p. 316). Thus, there are numerous mechanisms at work that divide cities. Given the deep racial divides and segregated living patterns that have become more entrenched over time (see Figure 1), it is our judgment that race is the most predominant factor cleaving the city, and demands explicit consideration amidst the painful policy choices of urban decline.

An analysis of census data comparing demographics in "North" and "South" cities supports the construction of a dual city environment comprising the divergent city. As shown in Table 1, North City and South City are significantly different in terms of quality of life and environment: South City residents earn more than 40% more than North City residents; home values are nearly 70% higher in South City; and indicators of substandard housing are more prevalent in North City. These statistics show a stark contrast where 97% non-White North City experiences a significantly different standard of living than majority-White South City.

Furthermore, Figure 2 identifies where the city's vacant land is located. As the image shows, vacancy is highly concentrated. Finally, when analyzing how North City and South City have changed over time, we can see that population decline has been more severe in North City (Figure 3). In short, the "shrinking city" phenomenon and the

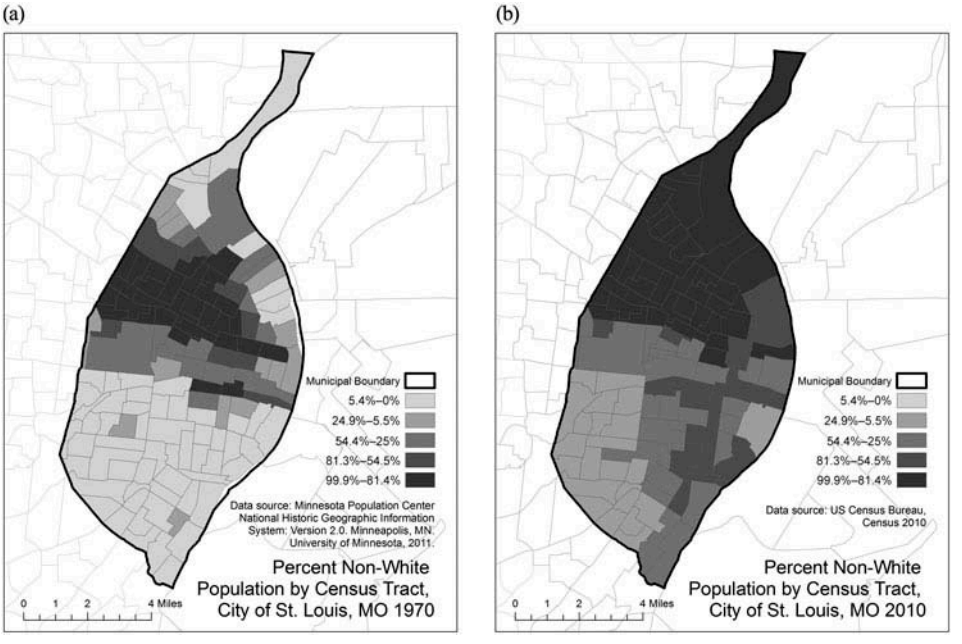

Figure 1. Percent non-White population, by census tract, in (a) 1970 and (b) 2010.

Table 1. Demographic analysis of St. Louis.

	St. Louis (all)	North City	South City
Total population	255,285	84,203	171,082
% non-White	59	97	38
Median HH income	$27,401	$21,614	$30,725
% lacking plumbing	3.4	5.9	2.0
% lacking kitchen	4.5	6.6	3.3
Median home value	$64,379	$44,922	$75,556
% vacant	20	28	16
% female-headed household	23	36	16

Note: We use Delmar Boulevard as the dividing line between "North City" and "South City." Delmar has been widely discussed as the unofficial line between these two parts of the city (BBC, 2012; Goodman & Gilbert, 2014; Harlan, 2014).

demographic changes that go along with it have largely occurred in North City, while South City has remained a fairly vibrant, safe, stable area where decline—while present—has not been nearly as severe as what has occurred in North City. How does the divergent city manifest in a context of urban decline? Beginning with Urban Renewal and continuing through the recent foreclosure crisis, we explore how the phenomenon of urban decline has compounded the disproportionate effects that top-down planning approaches have had upon minority households and communities relative to their White counterparts. In order to counter the duality at play within shrinking cities, we propose an explicitly race-centered approach to urban shrinkage in order to reconcile the divergent areas of the shrinking city and avoid the devastatingly unequal outcomes of previous large-scale planning efforts.

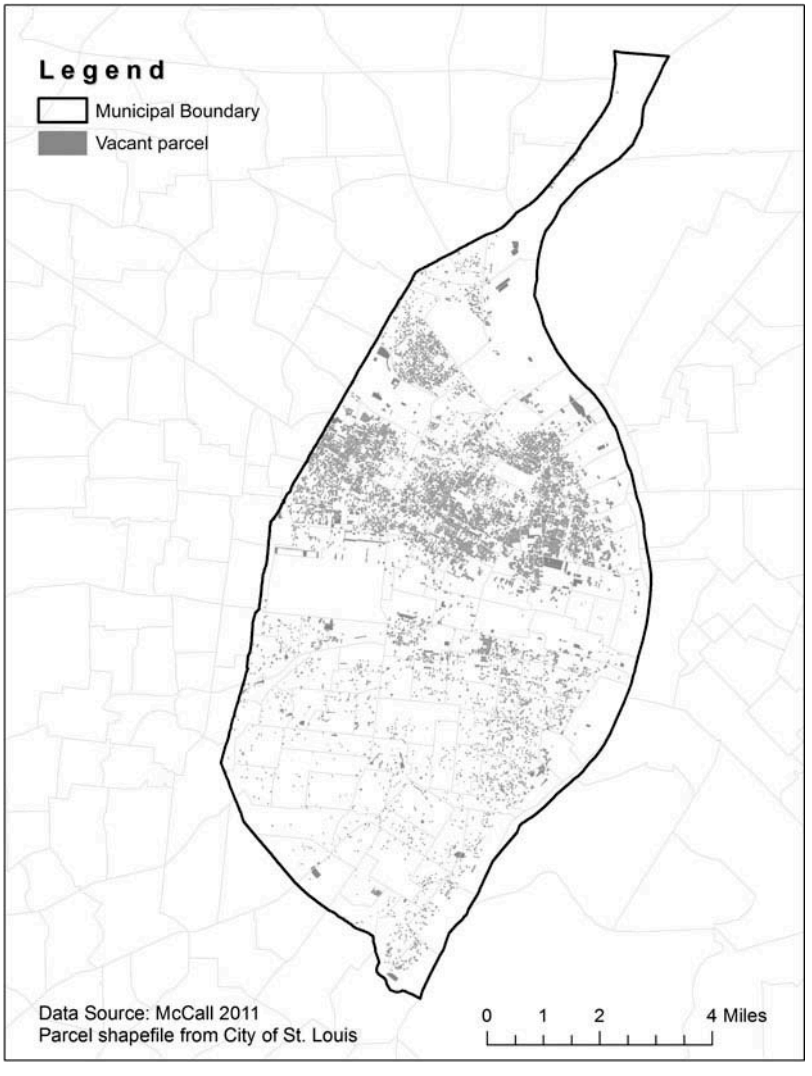

Figure 2. Vacant land in St. Louis, 2011.

Top-down planning in St. Louis: three interventions

Urban renewal

Housing and urban policy throughout the first half of the twentieth century established multiple systems where race determined access to opportunity. Redlining and segregation created separate housing markets for Blacks and Whites; lending rules constrained the supply of housing in Black neighborhoods; blockbusting and other unscrupulous actions by realtors sowed strife and suspicion between Blacks and Whites. As cities and their suburbs became increasingly segregated by both race and class, differences in service provision became starker, leading to growing blight in many inner-city neighborhoods. As a result, urban policy shifted its focus to economic development and growth, seeking to reverse the deterioration of America's urban neighborhoods and job centers. These new

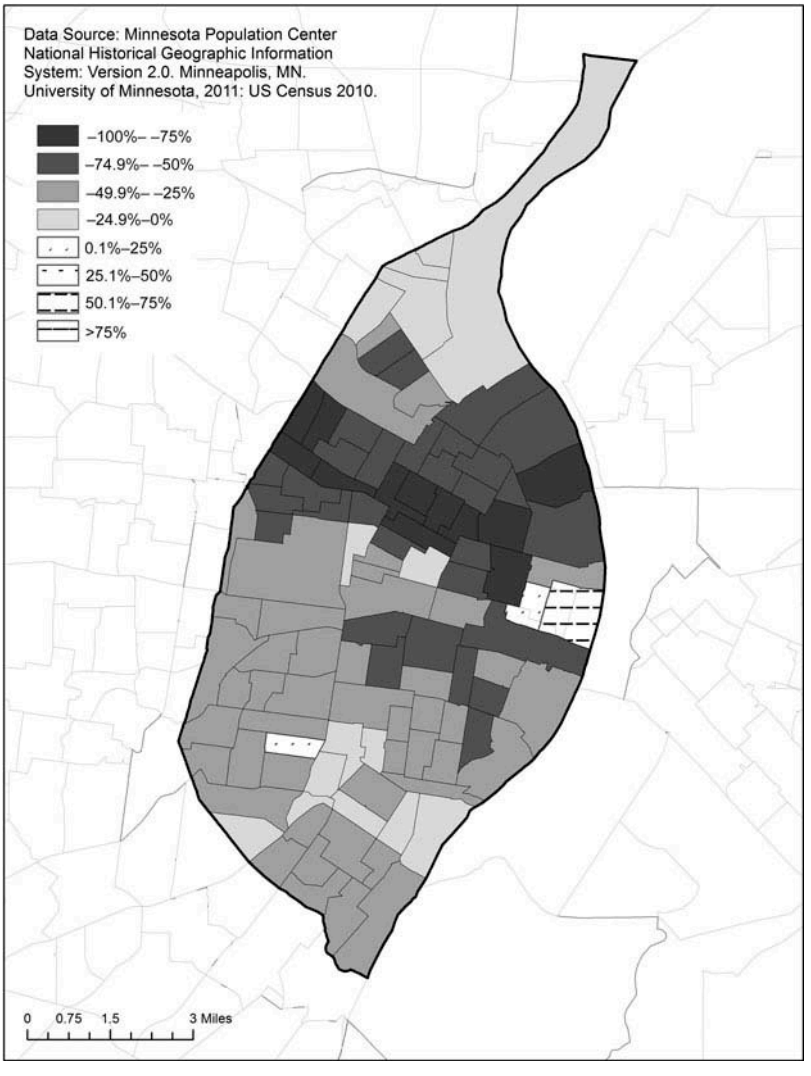

Figure 3. Population change in St. Louis, 1970–2010.

priorities were manifest in the Housing Act of 1949, designed to provide measures to improve the public perception of American cities and to combat the fact that publicly built housing failed to offer relief to those in greatest need. The means to accomplish this were threefold: slum clearance, broadening home loan options and availability, and the development of new public housing units (Lang & Sohmer, 2000; Orlebeke, 2000; Von Hoffman, 2000).

St. Louis arguably embraced urban renewal more aggressively than any other city in the United States. The first public housing projects in St. Louis began in 1939 and were completed in 1942 (Primm, 1998). In 1947, the city had determined that, despite the new housing construction and other improvements, St. Louis was rife with blighted areas. This was the same year that the design competition was held for the newly conceived Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (which would be won by Eero Saarinen's design of the St. Louis Arch),

located in a 40-block parcel along the Mississippi River. By 1950 it was estimated that at least half of the city's residential areas were blighted: 33,000 homes had shared toilet facilities, and 88,000 families lived in pre-1900 buildings (Primm, 1998). When urban renewal funds became available, the city jumped at the opportunity to redevelop its downtown residential districts and construct new public housing units for its poor.

Following the Bartholomew plan in 1947, construction of public housing was concentrated in former slum areas in the inner city (Montgomery, 1985). Construction of public housing in St. Louis occurred at an astounding pace. By the mid-1950s, nearly 10,000 units of public housing had been built in St. Louis. Several square miles of downtown had been razed and thousands displaced—many with no relocation assistance (Montgomery, 1985). Furthermore, it soon became clear that the new housing was constructed with little planning or thought to the broader needs of the residents. "It was soon obvious that there was too little recreational space, especially for the thousands of children who were stacked in the high-rises. There were no nearby shopping facilities nor health services, public transportation was inadequate, and close-at-hand job opportunities were limited" (Primm, 1998, p. 489). Since construction began at a time when racial segregation in housing was legal, the units followed the Black/North White/South pattern already established in St. Louis. The housing in North City was for Blacks and that in South City was for Whites. The racial divide was so entrenched by this time that when integration was passed in 1954, it had little effect on the settlement patterns in public- or private-sector housing in St. Louis (Montgomery, 1985). Thus, although Pruitt–Igoe and other public housing developments built after 1954 were racially integrated, within a few years, they, too had sorted along north–south segregated lines (Goetz, 2013).

Meanwhile, the city established the "Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority"—an organization governed by a board that included the mayor and other elected officials (Primm, 1998). By the mid-1950s, the city had begun to clear hundreds of acres of land in and around its downtown. Beginning in 1959, the Authority cleared 454 acres in the Mill Street Valley area, which had been primarily residential. It was to be replaced primarily by industrial and commercial development, as well as an expansion of Saint Louis University (Primm, 1998). The clearance was met with considerable opposition from residents, and an NAACP official called the project "Negro Removal," as 1,772 families and 610 individuals (primarily poor Blacks) were displaced from the area (Primm, 1998, p. 497). Those displaced largely moved to public housing or into the remaining Black neighborhoods in the city. Middle-class Blacks as well as Whites fled those areas for more desirable neighborhoods in inner-ring suburbs (Primm, 1998).

At the state level, the Missouri Legislature had passed the Missouri 353 (Urban Developments Corporation) Law in 1943. The law originally intended "to encourage private developers to build new housing in blighted areas" (Primm, 1998, p. 502). The primary vehicle by which this was achieved was to allow major cities to grant tax abatement on new development in blighted areas. St. Louis, however, went a step further, allowing private developers to "borrow" the city's power of eminent domain to clear out blighted areas, and "blight" was defined very broadly (Primm, 1998, p. 502). By 1970, the entire downtown area (between 3rd and 12th, Delmar and Highway 40) was determined to be "blighted" by the Redevelopment Authority, and much of downtown St. Louis consisted of tax-abated properties (Gordon, 2003). By the late 1990s, more than half of the property in the entire city was tax-abated, blighted for redevelopment, or tax-exempt (Gordon, 2003).

The racial divides in St. Louis have persisted over time, and the metropolitan area continues to be one of the most segregated in the United States (Glaeser & Vigdor, 2013). The segregation that emerged during the inter-war period was reinforced by the pattern of

demolition and racially defined housing construction during the 1940s and 1950s. The two cities—one Black in the North and one White in the South—were well entrenched by the time the St. Louis Arch was completed in 1967. As the city struggled to keep its reputation as a world-class city, it was already losing population to its suburbs and to other regions.

Triage: the legacy left by an initial local response

During the 1970s, cities across the United States struggled to deal with the consequences of urban disinvestment amidst significant reductions of federal tax dollars and population decline. Many cities utilized a "triage" approach to planning—usually in an informal, or de facto manner rather than as an explicit planning approach (Broadway & Snyder, 1989; Cooper-McCann, 2013; Schmidt, 2011). The term "urban triage" referred to a method of allocating resources to those areas most likely to respond to planning intervention rather than those in greatest need (Downs, 1975). The term stems from the medical field where patients are classified according to injury: those who will survive without significant intervention are largely left on their own; those who will almost certainly die regardless of intervention are made as comfortable as possible and allowed to do so; those who would die without intervention, but likely survive with it are given the most attention and prioritized by doctors. This theory has been applied to cities experiencing decline, such as St. Louis, Detroit, and Cleveland. In the urban context, limited public funds need to be applied in a way that achieves the greatest return on investment, and thus they are allocated in a way that provides the best opportunity for revitalization, rather than distributed according to need (Cooper-McCann, 2013; Metzger, 2000).

In 1973, the St. Louis City Plan Commission published a comprehensive plan entitled *Saint Louis Redevelopment Program*, colloquially labeled the Team Four Plan after the firm that was hired to write it. Despite its timing toward the end of the urban renewal era, the plan relied heavily on urban renewal projects and ideas,[3] including New Towns In-Town, land clearance, and top-down goal setting. Surprisingly, the plan made no reference to race in-text and has no maps of race distribution within the City of St. Louis (which was the geographic extent covered by the plan). Yet, the plan's policies were firmly tied to geographic sections of the City that coincided with the geographic pattern of segregation, in that the predominantly Black North City was largely categorized under "Reconstruction." No "Reconstruction" zones were suggested for predominantly White South City. These zones were to undergo dramatic demolition, land banking, and top-down reconstruction. The plan for the reconstruction zone, largely labeled an "Interim Action Zone," stated, "major public development investments should not be programmed until detailed neighborhood plans have been developed by the City" (p. 174). While awaiting this development, residents were instructed:

> Maintain your property and yard and urge your neighbors to do so. Don't make major investment in properties without checking with City to be sure it fits any plans for future rehabilitation or reconstruction. . .. In absence of agreed-upon plan, discourage scattered new construction; uncertainty is unfair to investor and ultimate consumer. Investigate concept of land-banking to allow assembly of land for reconstruction without penalty to existing owners. (Saint Louis City Plan Commission 1973, p. 111)

While neighborhoods designated as Improvement Areas, which were located primarily in South City but also in the White areas of North City (Figure 1, left panel), received attention accordingly:

> The Development Program recommends a higher relative priority, than has heretofore existed, to action programs designed to stop the spread of deterioration and abandonment into those still attractive neighborhoods which are along the edge of seriously deteriorated areas and threatened by the insidious expansion of blight. It makes little sense for millions of public and private dollars to be expended on reconstruction of neighborhoods while at the same time allowing stable neighborhoods to fall into decline. (St. Louis City Plan Commission, 1973, p. 155)

Many believe that the City's future development plans reflected explicit intentions to invest in the predominantly White southern half of the City while allowing the predominantly northern half to decay. This impression was swift and lasting. An interview held with Congressman Lacy Clay in 2008, 35 years after Team Four's unveiling, demonstrates this:

> We have to reverse the effects of Team Four, when you decide to cut off services to a large segment of the City, diminish services, when you decide to not enforce codes—building codes, housing codes—when you decide to not steer businesses to. It's a tragedy, it's a crime. . ..It became the policy, the official policy of this city for many administrations since the 1970s, since they started talking about it, since it was revealed to the public. Whether it became law or not is irrelevant. The effects of it took effect, took place. It actually happened. This is no fairy tale. This is something that actually occurred and is occurring to this day. (quoted in French, 2008)

As can be seen in Figure 4, the charges of racial discrimination—or at least of the targeting of majority-Black areas by planners—are not unfounded. The areas delineated by the triage plan as "reconstruction" overlap nearly perfectly with the borders of majority-Black North City.

Figure 4. (a) Neighborhood racial composition (percentage non-White, by Census Tract) 1970, vs. (b) the neighborhood classifications of the 1973 Team 4 plan.

The Triage approach in St. Louis represents a formalization of the divergent city into a systematic planning approach. There is no way to interpret the delineation of neighborhoods in the plan that does not include an analysis of racial divisions. State Representative Charles Quincy Troupe stated in 2002:

> As a result of the Team Four Plan, [the City] spent hundreds of millions of dollars in the Central West End to stabilize and to create a barrier between North and South St. Louis so the [few] Black people in South St. Louis [at that time] could never gain political power. (quoted in French, 2008)

What is most interesting about the Team Four Plan was that it was never formally adopted. Public outrage quickly quieted the plan, and those affiliated with its writing rarely if ever spoke about it. The city of St. Louis still does not have a comprehensive plan. The City's last comprehensive plan was the Bartholomew plan adopted in 1947. Thus, some argue that the Team Four Plan remains the de facto approach to planning in St. Louis to this day (Cooper-McCann, 2013; Elliot & Quinn, 1983; Quinn, 1986). To the extent that the Team Four Plan reflected urban renewal-era planning nationally, urban renewal could be seen as insult on top of injury to minority populations. That era's top-down planning took cities already constructed with inequitable access to employment and recreation, and added programmatically inequitable access to public investments. With the reduction in federal spending in cities and falling municipal budgets, increased spending in "Improvement Areas" zones necessarily resulted in further reduced spending in minority neighborhoods, solidifying the co-dependent duality of the divergent city.

These trends became more entrenched as federal urban policy moved from the direct budget allocations to cities in the 1960s to a block grant approach in the 1970s. These changes meant that the county and the city both received funding, with considerably less federal money going directly to the city (Jones, 1980). The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program allowed more flexible spending than the previous urban-renewal era funding rules. As a result, CDBG funds failed to address the deepest needs in the city, instead going to a broader constituent base. This was particularly damaging to Black neighborhoods in light of the triage strategy that was being followed (Dommel, 1987; Jones, 1980). Rules of the CDBG program, which focus more on populations than measures of distress, also resulted in shrinking cities receiving relatively fewer federal resources (Dommel & Rich, 1987). Dommel and Rich (1987) present evidence that large cities in decline like St. Louis lost out to smaller, wealthier cities in the competition for federal resources in the 1970s and 1980s: "As the smaller new communities were added to the entitlement list,[4] the *share* of funds for the entitlement portion of the CDBG program declined" (p. 572).

The combination of a triage approach to planning that favored more diverse, more affluent areas of St. Louis and declining federal funding dedicated to distressed urban communities exacerbated the spatial inequality promulgated by urban renewal. Deteriorating neighborhoods in North City received fewer resources as the federal rules for spending were loosened. In his critique of federal urban policy, Lowi (1979) stated: "Since each city is special, a federal policy oriented toward cities as such can be general only if it is vague. But if these programs make federal funds available without any criteria they are merely an open invitation to scramble... Under these circumstances federal aid enables local elites to reinforce local patterns and practices" (cited in Jones, 1980, p. 911). This seems to be what occurred in St. Louis: the flexibility granted to cities and counties by federal agencies promulgated the further decline of the neediest neighborhoods by

allowing city leaders to concentrate their efforts on areas more likely to bounce back. Block grants enabled the implementation of a triage approach that had never been publicly vetted nor officially approved.

Foreclosure and recession

As St. Louis struggled with the effects of 30 years of blight, population loss, and triage, the foreclosure crisis and "Great Recession" appeared on the horizon. Due in large part to the expansion of the subprime lending market, between 2006 and 2008 the foreclosure rate increased by 225%, with a disproportionate number of these foreclosures occurring in low-income and minority communities (RealtyTrac.com, 2009). As foreclosures increased and the value of homes fell, the mortgages held by banks and the quasi-public institutions Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae lost value. By 2009, total home equity in the United States had declined by over one-third to $8.8 trillion from its high of over $13 trillion in 2006 (Altman, 2009). As the crisis in the housing market hit, the broader national economy constricted as well, with the nation losing 8.4 million jobs between 2007 and 2009 (Joint Center for Housing Studies, 2010).

Almost from the beginning, experts on urban issues called for greater attention to be focused on the disparate impact the crisis has had on communities of color. A special forum published in *Urban Geography* found that:

> Deregulated mortgage market segmentation has created uneven new geographies of debt, risk, and default—superimposed atop existing landscapes of old-fashioned exclusionary discrimination. Low-income and racially marginalized neighborhoods, once redlined and excluded from mainstream credit markets, were at the center of the profitable wave of subprime abuse and equity extraction during the long housing boom, and are now at the center of the long, slowly unfolding catastrophe of the U.S. foreclosure crisis. (Crump et al., 2008, p. 745)

At a conference convened by the Kirwin Center in 2008, discussants found that "To remove the racial and ethnic dimension of the subprime crisis and imagine that this is simply a housing markets problem, looking for a housing finance correction or solution, is to miss the potential power of a structural racism approach" (Cohen, 2008, p. 15).

A number of more recent studies demonstrate how the subprime mortgage crisis has continued to plague minority and poor communities, "exacerbating existing patterns of inequality and segregation" (Pfeiffer & Molina, 2013, p. 81). Studies show that Latinos are disproportionately numbered among the foreclosed (Neidt & Martin, 2013), that, "even after controlling for percentage minority, poverty, unemployment, low credit scores, home value escalation, and bank branch accessibility, Black/White segregation is a significant predictor of the proportion of subprime loans originated in the largest 200 U. S. metropolitan areas" (Hyra, Squires, Renner, & Kirk, 2013, p. 177). Wyly et al. (2012) analyzed a number of cities and found that, "comparing the odds of receiving high-risk subprime loans among Whites and otherwise similar African Americans gives us what we might call an 'exploitation ratio' for America's mortgage mode of accumulation. In the city of St. Louis this ratio is almost five; in the county, it's well over six. These inequalities are tightly integrated into transnational investment and debt markets" (p. 591). In short, the policy-based segregation seen in St. Louis did, in fact, worsen the local effects of the Great Recession.

In weak-market cities such as St. Louis, "the subprime mortgage foreclosure problem constitutes simply one more layer of vacant properties on top of a rash of vacancies that

Table 2. Foreclosure by race, St. Louis, 2003–2007, 2008–2011.

	Majority Black block groups	Majority White block groups
Foreclosures as % of total sales, 2003–2007 (pre-crisis)	22.0	6.1
Foreclosures as % of total sales, 2008–2011 (during the crisis)	54.4	30.2

Source: Authors' analysis of City of St. Louis parcel database.

already existed" (Cohen, 2008, p. 6). In St. Louis, between January 2003 and March 2011, there were 13,417 foreclosures among the 102,000+ residential buildings in the City,[5] though some buildings may have experienced multiple foreclosures during this period. The average (current, non-constant) amount owed at the time of foreclosure was $69,790. By comparison, the average value of an owner-occupied housing unit in the City in 2011 was $120,500 (U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2011). As this article has already provided some description of the drastically different real estate markets between majority Black and majority White neighborhoods in the city, the data will not be repeated here. To reinforce the point, however, consider Table 2.

Foreclosure disrupts families and households in numerous ways. Beyond the major shocks to households' financial position, foreclosure spurs displacement, which can have many negative effects on children (Mueller & Tighe, 2007; Swanstrom, 2011). Furthermore, in St. Louis and elsewhere, foreclosures are not evenly distributed across a metropolitan area, nor do they occur in a bubble (Swanstrom, 2011). Foreclosures have broad ramifications on neighboring properties—including property value loss and increased criminal activity (Swanstrom, 2011). In St. Louis and elsewhere, the foreclosure crisis magnified existing inequalities. As Swanstrom states, "concentrated foreclosures in weak markets generate reinforcing processes of neighborhood decline marked by obvious signs of distress, such as vacant and boarded up houses" (2011, pp. 10–11). St. Louis has one of the highest rates of abandoned property in the country (Mallach, 2006). Combined with the concentrated foreclosures present in North St. Louis, the negative effects of decline are exacerbated.

Unfortunately, state and local policies in Missouri have not adequately addressed the severe need present in so many neighborhoods in St. Louis. Missouri scores poorly in foreclosure prevention overall, having the fifth fastest minimum time from first referral to foreclosure, at 38 days. "The foreclosure process can begin when homeowners are just 10 days late with their payments. Lenders do not need to file a lawsuit to foreclose; they are required to simply send a certified letter and publish notices of the sale in a newspaper published in the county where the home is located" (Swanstrom, Chapple, & Immergluck, 2009, p. 9). Nor has the City of St. Louis been able to enact strong legislation. An ordinance that would have provided foreclosure prevention within the City was proposed in 2012 but was blocked by a judge in March 2013 (Allington & Eaton, 2012; Lippmann, 2013). The ordinance had faced strong opposition from banks.

Swanstrom et al (2009, p. 16) pose a question: "Why has St. Louis County, a county with a solid tax base that is being hit hard by foreclosures, done so little to prevent them? Part of the answer probably has to do with the geographical distribution of the problem. Large swaths of the wealthy and politically powerful parts of the region in the central corridor are not directly affected by foreclosures." St. Louis, as an independent city and

adjacent county responded to the foreclosure crisis in the same manner it responded to the challenges of redeveloping poor communities of color in the past: through disinvestment and neglect.

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program[6] was created to combat the negative effects that concentrated foreclosures have on the surrounding neighborhoods. In St. Louis, the city identified two areas that were most in need of NSP funding. The methodology for determining how to target those monies is not entirely clear. The latest NSP performance report states, "Although 50 neighborhoods were identified as eligible target areas in the City's NSP-1 application, the city chose to achieve greater impact by limiting activity to only the 21 neighborhoods identified as target areas A [in north city] and B [in south city]" (City of St. Louis, 2013). According to the city's NSP application, the areas of greatest need were identified by percentage of foreclosures present in each area. While both target areas likely meet the criteria specified, more projects were allocated to the southern neighborhood, despite its less pronounced population decline over the previous 40-year period, and its higher median household income level in 2011 (City of St. Louis, 2013). The application of the NSP program to St. Louis represents a significant improvement over the experiences of urban renewal and triage, yet lacks a thorough acknowledgment of the racial divide and the need for significant changes in how resources are allocated in order to reverse the effects of historical choices.

The parallels to the shrinking cities literature are twofold. First, both foreclosure and population decline affected virtually all parts of St. Louis but were experienced differently between majority White and majority Black areas. In population decline, the majority White areas of St. Louis converted empty units and lots to larger single family homes and side yards, maintaining a high quality of life. In majority Black neighborhoods, declining population resulted in a weak localized real estate market and an excess of vacant land and buildings. Second, in St. Louis, both the foreclosure crisis and inner-city population decline have been met with people-insensitive responses.

The future of shrinking cities: reconciling divergence

Each of these periods in St. Louis represents a crisis and a planning intervention. Such interventions were primarily top-down in nature and placed the city in a holding pattern awaiting the eventual return of prosperity. Each of these planning interventions also resulted in disproportionately negative outcomes for non-White neighborhoods and households. Based on our analysis of top-down planning in St. Louis, we believe that it is time to acknowledge that the city is likely permanently "shrinking" and the decline is not equitably experienced. Thus, planners and policy-makers must begin to apply the theories and practices suggested in the shrinking cities literature to deal with the issues inherent in a permanently shrinking city.

In shrinking cities across the country, we see a continued adherence to the concept of growth-based economic development. Hollander and Nemeth (2011) write that planning must conclude that growth is not always inevitable—even though growth is the only dogma the planning profession has ever known. The planners in Hollander's case studies are often oblivious of the severity of urban decline, or unaware of how to approach implementing possible solutions. As Dewar and Thomas (2013, p. 11) state: "Growth after five or six decades of decline seems improbable, but local elected officials and development boosters such as downtown landowners and investors, corporate leaders, and the press continue to focus primarily on encouraging growth."

The literature responding to the issue of shrinking cities has focused its responses on converting land to inactive use, such as combining vacant lots with remaining homes for side lawns or gardens (Hollander & Németh, 2011). Other recommendations have included discouraging new housing in declining areas, land banking, tearing down publicly held buildings, and encouraging remaining residents to move toward opportunity (Hollander & Németh, 2011). The city of Cleveland, for example, found success in dealing with vacant land by decreasing neighborhood density through a program promoting the appendaging of vacant lots with adjacent occupied parcels, creating pocket-parks, and creating community garden space (Martin & Starnik, 2010). However, recent studies show that such efforts are only productive when there is a sufficient market to purchase adjacent lots and local land banks work aggressively to pursue acquisition in neighborhoods with significant amounts of vacant land. A recent analysis determined that St. Louis has neither the market-strength nor the strong non-profit network that has enabled Cleveland's success (Ganning & Tighe, 2014).

Other options have focused on homeownership and design (Ryan, 2012, p. 222). Few researchers have incorporated an extensive discussion of race into their work. Ryan (2012) discusses historic demographic change and its relationship to industry, particularly in his treatment of Detroit, and enters the discussion of social justice and the use of eminent domain in the name of redevelopment (see also Hackworth, 2014; Keating, 2010; and Mallach, 2010, 2012). Beyond case studies of Black ghettos, the larger scale correlation of segregation and population decline has been limited to the distinction between city and suburb, as illustrated by Mallach (2011, pp. 371–372):

> The region's lower income households and people of color, who are disproportionately concentrated in the cities, have suffered disproportionately from the resulting misdistribution, as reflected in reduced incomes and employment opportunities, inadequate municipal services and deteriorating infrastructure and the manifold harms arising from living in proximity to abandoned houses, contaminated vacant industrial sites, and overgrown vacant lots.

As we have shown, even in St. Louis, which lost a larger share of its population between 1950 and 2010 than almost any other US city, there is great variation in living conditions within the central city, with everything from near-complete abandonment to vibrant, desirable neighborhoods. In short, the issues associated with racial tensions, segregation, and unequal allocation of resources is neither a new nor undocumented problem. We feel that the most applicable approach is one that directly engages issues of race and class inequality at the neighborhood level.

The field of planning has evolved considerably since the days of urban renewal and now embraces the goals of participation, democratic decision-making, inclusion, and equity. Planning's "Green Book" is clear on this point: "Social and demographic changes affect every aspect of planning, and part of a planner's task is to recognize and address differences in how various segments of the population may be affected by plans. Historically, powerless groups, whether small in number or influence, have had difficulty getting their needs met. Planners should anticipate the needs of the weak and seek opportunities for improving their strength" (Dalton, Hoch, & So, 2000, p. 12). The planning profession has a checkered past with people-centered planning and continues to struggle to translate the theoretical and ethical goals promoting equity into policy and planning action on the ground. However, given the pervasiveness of shrinking cities, the stakes are high and the evidence is clear; urban decline is more about people than place. Planning and policy should reflect this.

Equitable outcomes are merely one of many goals discussed in the current debate over shrinking cities. The shrinking cities research agenda within planning is not likely to fade soon. The problem is pervasive in the European Union and the United States, and it presents a counter-factual to the growth mentality that has always been espoused in planning. Our findings point to the need for an approach to the shrinking cities research agenda that prioritizes equity and directly engages the issue of race. Such an approach would have to challenge the dominant paradigm in the planning field of "color blindness" and instead prioritize the preservation, revitalization, and development of poor and minority neighborhoods. We have taken the initial step here of suggesting a starting point for that framework, and hope to see a fuller development follow.

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Notes

1. Youngstown, Ohio, is the only US city that has actually passed a plan that is based on decline, but it has yet to be implemented, largely because the mayor and city leaders do not believe in the plan's goals. (Skolnick, 2013)
2. In Cleveland in the 1970s, Krumholz complained that elected officials refused to acknowledge the city's decline, despite the plain evidence before them. In 2010s Youngstown, the mayor has backed away from their smart decline plan because he doesn't "agree with downsizing the city, which is the basis of the plan" (Skolnick, 2013).
3. The Team Four Plan was "financed in part through a Community Renewal Program Grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development under the provision of Section 103 (d) of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended" (St. Louis City Plan Commission, 1973, front matter (no page)).
4. Within the CDBG (and other block grant programs), entitlement communities are those that receive a direct allocation of funding from the federal government without having to apply to states. For CDBG funds, any city with more than 50,000 in population is considered an entitlement community. (http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src = /program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs/entitlement)
5. This number varies from the number of housing units in the City as published by the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey for 2011 (175, 632, of which 134,193 were occupied). The data referenced here pertains to buildings, not dwelling units, and is thus a smaller number.
6. The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) was established in 2008 for the purpose of stabilizing communities that have suffered from foreclosures and abandonment. For program information, see: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs/neighborhoodspg

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