Classroom Supplement for One Recession, Disparate Recoveries: Assessing Change and Stability Following the Great Recession

Discussion Questions

Definitions of “working class” vary across research paradigms and projects. What does “working class” mean to you? How do you think people who consider themselves working class (this might be you), researchers, or even politicians might define it? How do income, occupation, and culture matter for these different definitions and do you think the way people define “working class” has changed over time?

Language around race and social class position has evolved through the 19th and 20th centuries and into the 2000s. How do terms such as racialized, minoritized, subaltern, Indigenous, etc. add nuance (or obfuscation) to the complex relationships between majority/minority populations in the United States? Which groups of people have expressed agency to advocating for different names or labels for themselves or others? Why might other groups be resistant to such changes?

Compared to a narrower focus on income or income + education as basic measures of poverty and prosperity, how do wealth-based measures “widen the aperture” of discourse and evaluation around inequality and race in the 21st century?

The United States has relatively large swaths of its geography mired in “deep disadvantage.” How does geography intersect with race and social class position to create conditions of deep disadvantage for some groups but less so for others? How does intergenerational wealth transfer (or lack thereof) affect the ability of households to decrease economic hardship over time?

IRP Resources


General Resources


