

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-47727-7 – Neighborhood Defenders
Katherine Levine Einstein , David M. Glick , Maxwell Palmer
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Neighborhood Defenders

Since the collapse of the housing market in 2008, demand for housing has consistently outpaced supply in many US communities. The failure to construct sufficient housing – especially affordable housing – in desirable communities and neighborhoods comes with significant social, economic, and environmental costs. This book examines how local participatory land use institutions amplify the power of entrenched interests and privileged homeowners. The book draws on sweeping data to examine the dominance of land use politics by ‘neighborhood defenders’ – individuals who oppose new housing projects far more strongly than their broader communities and who are likely to be privileged on a variety of dimensions. Neighborhood defenders participate disproportionately and take advantage of land use regulations to restrict the construction of multifamily housing. The result is diminished housing stock and higher housing costs, with participatory institutions perversely reproducing inequality.

Katherine Levine Einstein is Assistant Professor of Political Science and Faculty Fellow at the Initiative on Cities at Boston University.

David M. Glick is Associate Professor of Political Science and Faculty Fellow at the Initiative on Cities at Boston University.

Maxwell Palmer is Assistant Professor of Political Science, Faculty Fellow at the Initiative on Cities, and Junior Faculty Fellow at the Hariri Institute for Computing at Boston University.

Neighborhood Defenders

Participatory Politics and America's Housing Crisis

KATHERINE LEVINE EINSTEIN

Boston University

DAVID M. GLICK

Boston University

MAXWELL PALMER

Boston University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-47727-7 – Neighborhood Defenders
Katherine Levine Einstein, David M. Glick, Maxwell Palmer
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108477277
DOI: 10.1017/9781108769495

© Cambridge University Press 2020

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2020

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Einstein, Katherine Levine, author.

Title: Neighborhood defenders : participatory politics and America's housing crisis / Katherine Levine Einstein, David M. Glick, Maxwell Palmer.

Description: First. | New York : Cambridge university press, 2019. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019029333 (print) | LCCN 2019029334 (ebook) |

ISBN 9781108477277 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108769495 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Housing – United States. | Neighborhoods – United States. |

Social change – United States. | Community organization – United States. |

Community power – United States. | Gentrification – United States.

Classification: LCC HD7293 .E48 2019 (print) | LCC HD7293 (ebook) |

DDC 363.50973-dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019029333>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019029334>

ISBN 978-1-108-47727-7 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-108-70851-7 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-47727-7 — Neighborhood Defenders
Katherine Levine Einstein , David M. Glick , Maxwell Palmer
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

*We dedicate this book to our children, Elise and Ezra, Henry, and
Jacob and Noah. May they grow up in a world with enough
housing for all.*

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xii
1 Introduction	1
2 Neighborhood Defenders and the Power of Delay	24
3 Land Use Regulations and Multifamily Housing Development	58
4 Land Use Regulations and Public Input	80
5 Who Are the Neighborhood Defenders?	95
6 Neighborhood Defense Tactics	115
7 Gentrification, Affordable Housing, and Housing Reform	146
Appendix to Chapter 3	173
Appendix to Chapter 4	181
Appendix to Chapter 5	184
Appendix to Chapter 6	192
<i>References</i>	194
<i>Index</i>	211

Figures

1.1	Survey of mayors: Top three reasons residents leave my city	<i>page 7</i>
2.1	Effects of the relationship between regulations and participation	43
3.1	Map of sample towns by number of housing regulations	61
3.2	Distributions of lot size regulations	62
3.3	Distribution of shares of housing permits by town and number of units.	65
3.4	Proportion of multifamily housing permits, 2000–2015, for selected towns	67
3.5	Multifamily housing permit share by number of housing regulations	68
3.6	Multifamily housing permit share by multifamily housing regulations	69
3.7	Multifamily housing permit share by shape rule regulation	70
3.8	Church property redevelopment by number of town housing regulations.	75
3.9	Church properties by redevelopment type and town housing regulations.	76
3.10	Church properties redeveloped into housing by type and town housing regulations.	77
3.11	Type of housing developed by the number of multifamily and other housing regulations in the town	78
3.12	Density of housing redevelopments by housing type and town housing regulations.	78
5.1	Commenters and voters by estimated race	104

List of Figures

ix

5.2	Comments and voters by estimated race, most diverse towns	105
5.3	Homeownership rates for voters and commenters by race	106
5.4	Distribution of supporting comments by town.	107
5.5	Support for 40B referendum	108
5.6	Comments supporting development by estimated race of commenter	110
5.7	Comments supporting development by estimated race of commenter	111
5.8	Survey of mayors: Majority public opinion or small group politics	112
6.1	Reasons given by commenters, grouped by position taken	117
6.2	Hypothesized relationships between regulations, lawsuits, and building permits	127
6.3	Scatter plot of number of housing regulations and lawsuits filed per ten thousand residents. Lawsuits increase with additional regulations.	128
6.4	Scatter plot of number of lawsuits filed per ten thousand residents and share of multifamily housing permits. The share of multifamily housing permits decreases with lawsuits.	129
A.1	Type of housing developed by the number of multifamily and other housing regulations in the town for subsets of church properties.	179
A.2	Density of housing redevelopments by housing type and town housing regulations for subsets of church properties.	180
C.1	Race estimate validation: Town percentage CVAP and town voters percentage white	190

Tables

3.1	Summary statistics for zoning regulations	<i>page 64</i>
4.1	Traits of cities and towns for which we have participation data	84
5.1	Demographic differences between commenters and all voters	101
5.2	Number of commenters and comments by race	104
5.3	Demographic differences between commenters speaking in favor and in opposition to developments	109
6.1	Demographics of Worcester and Lowell compared with our entire meeting minute city/town sample	140
A.1	Regressions of zoning regulations on permitted buildings	174
A.2	Binomial regressions of church property sales by town by regulations, church presence, and other town-level variables (all standardized)	175
A.3	Logistic regression models estimating the effects of regulations on a property being redeveloped and being redeveloped into housing (all variables standardized)	176
A.4	Logistic regression models estimating the effects of regulations on a church becoming multifamily housing (all variables standardized)	177
A.5	OLS models estimating the effects of regulations on new housing density (all variables standardized)	178
B.1	Comment issue coding scheme	182
C.1	Difference in means between commenters and all voters	184
C.2	Logit models of commenters relative to full voter file	185
C.3	Logit models of commenters relative to full voter file – homeowners only	186

List of Tables

xi

C.4	Logit models of commenters relative to full voter file by town median income	187
C.5	Logit models predicting supporting comments	188
C.6	Summary of race matching variables	189
C.7	Race estimates by group	189
D.1	Regressions of zoning regulations on lawsuits per thousand housing units	192
D.2	Regressions of lawsuits on permitted buildings	193

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the vibrant intellectual community we have found at Boston University's political science department. Taylor Boas, Dino Christenson, Doug Kriner, David Mayers, Cathie Martin, Spencer Piston, Gina Sapiro, and Graham Wilson all provided helpful feedback on our research and the book publishing process. We especially appreciate Cathie and Spencer for telling us that what we thought was an article was, in fact, a book-length project.

This book would not have been possible without the generous support of Boston University's Initiative on Cities, especially Katharine Lusk, Stacy Fox, and Graham Wilson. Their funding helped us support much of the data collection for this book. Their partnership on the Menino Survey of Mayors provided invaluable national-level data for this project. They have generously promoted our work, allowing us to connect with interested policy makers and nonprofits. We also appreciate Citigroup and the Rockefeller Foundation's long-standing financial support of the Menino Survey of Mayors.

This book also benefited enormously from detailed feedback from the broader political science community. Conversations with and comments from Sarah Anzia, Justin de Benedictis-Kessner, Ryan Enos, Mike Hankinson, Alex Hertel-Fernandez, Mirya Holman, Vlad Kogan, Jeremy Levine, Megan Mullin, Clayton Nall, Joe Ornstein, Alex Sahn, Jessica Trounstine, and Chris Warshaw helped shape this book. Steve Ansolabehere and Jennifer Hochschild offered invaluable advice on the book publishing process. Joe Ornstein generously provided instrumental data on home ownership.

Acknowledgments

xiii

We had the opportunity to present this work at a variety of academic workshops. We are grateful to comments from participants at the American Political Science Association New Faces in Urban Politics Workshop; Brown University Political Geography and Inequality Conference; University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Department of Political Science Workshop; University of Michigan Women's Political Science Caucus Workshop; University of Massachusetts Boston Department of Public Policy Workshop; and Vanderbilt Local Political Economy Conference.

One of the most exciting parts of this project for us has been the enthusiasm we received from outside of academia, in both the government and nonprofit sectors. We appreciate the comments we received from members of the government and community at presentations at the Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA), a Government Accountability Office seminar, CoUrbanize, and A Better Cambridge. We are especially grateful to Karin Brandt, Rachel Heller, Dana LeWinter, and Sara Matasci, who helped connect our research with practitioners. Linda Jason was instrumental in linking us with valuable research resources.

While we preserve their confidentiality by not listing them by name here, we are thankful for the numerous elected and appointed city officials, housing lawyers, developers, and housing advocates who so generously gave us their time, allowing us to interview them for this book project. Their comments shaped our research and pushed us to think about the many complicated trade-offs inherent in housing policy.

An outstanding team of undergraduate and graduate research assistants made the data collection for this book possible. We thank Luisa Godinez Puig, Sarah Sklar, Nick Henninger, Elizabeth Champion, Tara Martin-Chen, and Lianne O'Reilly. Sarah Sklar's able management of our undergraduate research team is especially appreciated.

We are deeply grateful to our editor Sara Doskow for her seamless oversight of the publication process. Seamless is not an adjective often applied to academic peer review, but Sara's guidance and transparency are so appreciated. We also thank this book's anonymous reviewers, who provided us with detailed and thoughtful comments.

Finally, we thank our spouses, David Einstein, Jessica Blankshain, and Cori Palmer, and parents, Marta and Marc Levine, Terry and Leonard Glick, and Nina and Geoff Palmer, for their love, support, and patience as we wrote this manuscript. Without them, this book would not have been possible. We especially appreciate David and Marc for reading drafts of

our work. Our children, Elise and Ezra Einstein, Henry Glick, and Jacob and Noah Palmer, did not help with the writing of this book, but they made the times we were not writing so much brighter. It is to them that we dedicate this book.