

Abstract:

Existing literature on the politics of NIMBY-YIMBYism primarily focuses on the incentives of exclusionary zoning in relation to opportunity hoarding. While this model of neighborhood defense adequately describes the role which homeowners play in promoting static zoning regimes, it has two major limitations: (1) an inability to explain the vast majority of empirical research on zoning change which demonstrates upzoning's relationship to housing price growth (2) an insufficient account of relational nature of housing markets in which owners, landbankers, and landlords have opposing interests to renters and prospective buyers. This article intervenes in mainstream accounts of zoning politics by providing: (1) an understanding of density's revived role in models of urban growth, amenities, investment, and displacement in the context of post-Fordist urban growth (2) a relational understanding of ownership-based variation in preferences zoning and urban change. Using Nashville's upzoning strategy in relation to its rise to 'it city' status in the 2010s, I contribute to our understanding of zoning's apparent relationship between modes of urban change and inequality. In doing so, I provide a path for future research on the politics of zoning which is poised to understand its relation to 21st century patterns of urbanization and displacement.