Public Opinion and Affordable Housing: A Review of the Literature

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Abstract

Public support for planning programs and initiatives are an important component of its success but opposition can be a powerful impediment. When siting unwanted land uses such as affordable housing, neighborhood opposition can be a particularly effective barrier. Understanding the factors that influence opposition is a necessary precursor to successful planning initiatives. This review discusses how attitudes toward affordable housing are likely shaped by factors that influence other social policy attitudes— particularly ideology and stereotyping. The author concludes with recommendations and methods that planners can use to manage public opposition and influence attitudes toward affordable housing.

Keywords

Housing, Public Opinion, Race, Poverty

The cost and quality of one's housing are among the most important factors influencing quality of life in America. Housing represents the largest expense as well as the largest investment for most households (Burchell and Listoken 1995). When housing is unaffordable, overcrowded, or unhealthy, it can affect the financial, educational, and emotional well-being of individuals and families (Bratt 2002; Dunn 2000; Rivkin 1994). When poor households and low-quality housing is concentrated in a single area, the negative ramifications of individual housing challenges substantially increase (Galster 2005; Jargowsky 2006; Squires and Kubrin 2005). Furthermore, such concentration of poverty often correlates to a concentration of racial and ethnic minorities (Briggs 2005; Katz 2006; Massey 1996). The resulting racial and economic segregation limits residents' access to goods and services, including poor public education and decreased access to employment centers (Jargowsky 2003; W. J. Wilson 1987). Developing affordable housing in nonpoor areas promotes both racial and social integration, promoting access to opportunity and mitigating many of these negative outcomes. Despite widespread recognition of the need for affordable housing, federal attempts to develop and implement policies to provide adequate housing for all Americans have not succeeded (Orlebeke 2000; Shlay 1995).

Implementing affordable housing policy presents a number of challenges. High land costs, inflexible zoning codes, and lack of adequate financing all limit the success of low-income housing policies (Cowan 2006; Goetz 1993). Exacerbating these structural forces are individual preferences for homogeneous neighborhoods and reluctance on the part of homeowners to take personal risks to achieve racial and economic integration (Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Orfield 2006; Cashin 2004). The combination of structural barriers and individual preferences has led to neighborhood settlement patterns segregated both by race and by class, which presents a formidable challenge to equality of opportunity for all Americans (Briggs 2005; Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Farley et al. 1994; Clark 1992).

Even when developers or policy makers overcome the financial and regulatory barriers created by the current system of affordable housing development, public opposition can sink a project before it even begins (Dear 1991; Koebel et al. 2004; Stein 1992). This neighborhood opposition, often referred to as ''Not in My Backyard'' or ''NIMBY'' opposition, can cause delays, force changes to the residential makeup of projects, and make untenable demands that can serve to undermine the successful development of affordable housing (Galster et al. 2003; Gibson 2005). When such opposition succeeds, it limits the effectiveness of public policies driving the development of affordable housing, hindering access to opportunity for moderate- and low-income families (Kean 1991; Pendall 1999; Stein 1996).

Research on NIMBY opposition to affordable housing finds that NIMBY attitudes are complex and often stem from an individual's ideology, level of trust in government, and the extent to which they agree with the necessity of the proposed development (Pendall 1999). Since a NIMBY response is characterized as a neighborhood-level response to local costs (Dear 1991; Lake 1993), researchers and writers typically portray NIMBY opposition as self-interested neighborhood-level concerns

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regarding the potential negative effects of a proposed project upon their community (Galster 2002; Kean 1991; Stein 1992) As one study stated, "Primarily, the contest is rooted in several interrelated factors that contribute to the NIMBY reaction: fear of adverse impacts on property values, anti-government sentiment, anti-poor sentiment, and racial prejudice and segregation" (Koebel et al. 2004, 3). Others suggested that concerns regarding property values have become a proxy for racial prejudice (Pendall 1999; Wilton 2002) or that, "Not In My Back Yard has become the symbol for neighborhoods that exclude certain people because they are homeless, poor, disabled, or because of their race or ethnicity" (Ross 2000, i).

While public support for the ideals of equal opportunity and integration has broadened over time (Erickson & Tedin 2003), the public remains hesitant to support the implementation of those ideals through policies and private action to plan, finance, and develop affordable housing. Public opposition, usually particularly strong in nonpoor areas, often thwarts housing policy implementation. While researchers and practitioners make many assumptions about why neighbors oppose affordable housing, there is little empirical research measuring the determinants of NIMBY attitudes. However, there is a wealth of literature on the determinants of other social policy attitudes and racial integration. It is likely that public opinion toward affordable housing is shaped by similar forces. A review of this literature should help us understand how the public forms opinions of and responds to proposed affordable housing development. Understanding the reasons behind NIMBY opposition will help planners manage and potentially overcome such opposition to affordable housing.

Public Input and the Planning Field

The field of urban planning strongly values the ideals of public participation and public debate (Arnstein 1969; Brooks 2002; Davidoff 1965; Forester 1993; Friedmann 1998). The code of ethics of the American Institute of Certified Planners states, "We shall give people the opportunity to have a meaningful impact on the development of plans and programs that may affect them. Participation should be broad enough to include those who lack formal organization or influence" (American Planning Association 2008). Thus, planners seek and highly value public opinion and public input when managing the development process.

However, during much of the twentieth century, urban planning seldom lived up to these goals. During the 1950s and 1960s, many federal planning programs, including Urban Renewal and highway construction, destroyed vibrant urban neighborhoods despite strong neighborhood opposition (Gans 1962; Hall 1988; Jacobs 1961). As a result, numerous researchers and practitioners contested the assertion that the planning process accurately and fully measures the attitudes of the entire affected population of a proposed plan or project (Davidoff 1965; Forester 1993; Imbroscio 1997; Krumholz 1982). These authors argue that planning is not democratic enough in that it does not reflect the needs and desires of all affected parties and

even serves to exclude certain stakeholder groups from the deliberative process. This presents a huge challenge for those who value public input, for, "if the planning process is to encourage democratic urban government then it must operate so as to include rather than exclude citizens from participation in the process" (Davidoff 1965, 279).

During the 1960s and 1970s, the planning field shifted toward more inclusive techniques and to increased citizen activism aimed at protecting urban neighborhoods and the natural environment (Fainstein 2000; Gans 1962; Jacobs 1961). Today, many planners seek "to interpose the planning process between urban development and the market to produce a more democratic and just society" (Fainstein 2000, 473). Despite these theoretical shifts, planners today tend to gather public input through public meetings, charettes, or focus groups—measures that tend to gather opinions from a small, self-selected group of individuals rather than the entire affected community (Carr and Halvorsen 2001). As a result, many individuals and groups continue to be excluded from the planning process (Alfasi 2003; Lowry 1997).

The Study of Public Opinion

To more fully understand the factors influencing NIMBY opposition to affordable housing, it is important to recognize how similar attitudes are formed. Public opinion theory and research provides a rich framework that can be applied to affordable housing attitudes. When encountering opposition to affordable housing, planners should recognize how attitudes are framed by the media, how values and ideology influence policy preferences, and how stereotypes that may bear little resemblance to reality influence perceptions of target populations. Recognizing how each of these factors can shape the public's opinion toward public policies is integral to researchers and practitioners seeking to understand public attitudes toward affordable housing and is a starting point to overcoming opposition.

Information and Media Framing

One of the primary elements of attitude formation is information. Before an individual can develop an opinion on a policy or plan, they must have some level of information about the target. The level of information often depends on the level of interest a particular individual has in a particular issue. Such interest can depend on their personal stake in the issue or on their background or ideology. Thus, "although citizens are often poorly informed about politics in general, they still manage to learn about matters that are especially important to them" (Zaller 1992, 18). For the most part, however, the public is largely uninformed about most issues (Alvarez and Brehm 2002; Converse 2000; Zaller 1992).

Researchers differ on how individuals form responses, given a general lack of information. Some argue that when respondents do not hold a strong opinion on a topic, they may fall back on a set of "core values" that drive their reasoning on public

policies (Alvarez and Brehm 2002). Yet another explanation asserts that individuals maintain sets of considerations, not fixed answers to questions, and factors such as question effects, wording, and ordering, most often produce variability in survey responses (Zaller 1992). In other cases, respondents may simply choose a response at random when they have no concrete answer in mind (Converse 1964).

When individuals perceive a particular policy or program to affect them directly, they will likely gather more information about that policy, thus leading to more refined opinions. The source of this information is most often the media, which acts as a filter for all the information available, and concentrates public thought on certain issues. Work by McCombs and Shaw (1972) first demonstrated a strong correlation between the media agenda (measured by number and prominence of stories on an issue) and the public agenda (measured by public opinion surveys). Subsequent research has consistently demonstrated that the correlation between the media and the public issue agendas is strong (McCombs 2004; Dearing and Rogers 1996; Soroka 2002). Thus, media coverage often determines what topics or policies are most salient to the public. As Cohen (1963) pointed out, "The media doesn't tell us what to think, they tell us what to think about."

However, some suggest that the media also influences how the public thinks about issues and policies (Entmen 1993; Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder 1982; Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007). This second-level of agenda setting or "attribute agenda setting" is closely related to the theory of framing. Entmen (1993) explains, "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality to make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, oral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (p. 52). Using frames, the media can affect how the public perceives issues. Thus, how the media portrays the potential risks involved in the development of affordable housing, will shape how these messages are received by the public, and likely effect how the public views the issue.

Studies on affordable housing attitudes show that housing is not a particularly salient issue with the public (Belden, Shashaty, and Zipperer 2004; Belden and Russonello 2003). As a result, individuals often do not think about housing issues unless they are personally affected by them. So when affordable housing is proposed in a community, those with a personal stake in the matter will have strong opinions, while those not affected by the proposal will not. Thus, when affordable housing is proposed in a community, it is often portrayed as a he-said/she-said issue, pitting the developers against the neighbors, and seldom including relevant information such as the nature of the housing market, the depth of housing need, or research measuring the risks associated with the development of affordable housing (Stover et al. 1994; Goetz 2008). In the absence of this coverage, the public is left to come to their own conclusions based on information they already possess—much of which depends on values, ideology, and stereotypes.

Values and Ideology

Numerous public opinion scholars argue that while education and knowledge certainly shape responses, values and ideology are also important (Hurwitz and Peffley 1992; Alvarez and Brehm 2002; Chong, Citrin, and Conley 2001; Reyna et al. 2005). However, "identifying which value is relevant may not be obvious for the respondent. As a result, there is also a great deal of malleability or fickleness in public opinion. The malleability or fickleness may come from a simple lack of information about the issues ... or it may come from conflict among values and beliefs" (Alvarez and Brehm 2002, 9). This argument asserts that while Americans may not necessarily identify with an overarching ideology, core values and beliefs influence their opinions. Thus, when posed with a question on a policy or issue that the respondent knows little about, a respondent will fall back on their basic values and apply those values to their knowledge about the issue at hand (Alvarez and Brehm 2002).

For Americans, the core values and beliefs typically discussed in the political behavior literature are freedom—or liberty—and equality (Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote 2001; Bobo 1991; Hurwitz and Peffley 1992; O'Connor 2000). These two values clearly recur in the study of American public opinion, dating back at least to Tocqueville's observations on nineteenth-century America (Alvarez and Brehm 2002, 7). The extent to which such values shape public attitudes has been studied at length in the public opinion literature (Hurwitz and Peffley 1992; Lippmann 1922; McClosky and Zaller 1984; Page and Shapiro 1992). "Abstract values such as egalitarianism or conservatism are important to politics because they cause people to have opinions when they have no direct stake in a particular issue" (Erikson and Tedin 2003, 52). Therefore, even when respondents may not know much about a particular subject or have a personal stake in an outcome, they may still express and hold opinions that are consistent with a particular ideology or value set.

Public opinion research supports the theory that core beliefs and ideologies heavily influence policy attitudes. This holds particularly true when dealing with social or antipoverty policies. Gilens (1999), Alvarez and Brehm (2002), and Bobo (1991) each discuss the role of ideology in driving public opinion on social issues. Those with individualistic ideologies tend to view socioeconomic status as justified: material success demonstrates that a person made the most of their opportunities and worked hard. They also view differences in socioeconomic status as necessary to provide incentives to "get ahead." Individualists tend to view the economic system as working well and justly—they believe that business profits are distributed fairly and according to what has been justly earned. Therefore, interfering in business or industry will tend to reduce overall societal welfare (Hurwitz and Peffley 1992; G. Wilson 1996; Bobo 1991; Zucker and Weiner 1993). Egalitarians tend to view the government as responsible for securing the basic needs of its people, including adequate job opportunities and affordable goods. They believe everyone deserves a dignified existence, regardless of the work effort expended. They also

view success as dependent on family background, networking, or nepotism rather than hard work or pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps (Berinsky 2002; Bobo 1991; Alvarez and Brehm 2002).

A person's ideological frame also influences how one views government action. "If people are to accept government decisions, they must believe that their political actions can be effective and that they can trust the government to respond to their interests. If political alienation becomes sufficiently intense and widespread, it may pose a threat to democratic stability" (Erikson and Tedin 2003, 143). Trust in government, in turn, affects how individuals view particular policies. If an individual does not trust the government to act in their interest on a particular issue, they will not support public policies that seek to remedy a particular social ill (Rahn 2001).

Americans typically value individualism but also have strong egalitarian tendencies. However, limited trust in government inhibits support for specific government-run programs designed to aid the poor, such as the development of public housing. The perception that the government should not provide, manage, or finance housing for low- and moderate-income households combined with an individualistic ideology likely erodes support for any governmental policy or program promoting the development of affordable housing. However, in many cases, the public recognizes the need for affordable housing but simply does not wish for it to be developed nearby. In these cases, it is likely that other factors, such as perceptions of the residents of affordable housing—their behaviors, ideals, and values—may influence NIMBY opposition.

Stereotypes

While information and ideology certainly influence the public's ability to form opinions, this does not mean that those who lack information or a strong ideological stance do not hold opinions regarding social policies. Given the generally low levels of information among the public, how do people form opinions on issues they know little about? According to Lippmann, "The only feeling that anyone can have about an event he does not experience is the feeling aroused by his mental image of that event" (Lippmann 1922, 9). The research suggests that people often rely on cognitive shortcuts to answer survey questions. These shortcuts include impressions, stereotypes, and beliefs about particular aspects of public policies or perceptions of their target populations (Lippmann 1922; McConahay 1982; Sears et al. 1997).

Perception—how we view the world—determines how we behave toward other people, how we identify our interests, and how we view politics and policies. Lippman describes perceptions as "the pictures in our heads." It is the picture, rather than the reality, he argues, that determines how we form opinions. Public opinion research strives to see these pictures and to identify how perceptions of reality contribute to the formation of attitudes toward people, places, and policies (Lippmann 1922). While perceptions influence our attitudes toward any number of things, considerable evidence exists in the literature

that such cognitive shortcuts prove particularly influential in attitude formation toward social welfare policies (Gilens 1996; Krysan 2000; Soss 1999).

Stereotypes—generalizations of individuals or populations based on popular beliefs about their appearance, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual preference, or any other characteristic—often shape perceptions. These stereotypes, "are often uncomplimentary . . . motivated by an ethnocentric bias to enhance one's own group and to disparage outgroups" (Sigelman and Tuch 1997, 9). Therefore, perceptions based on stereotypes can, "also contribute to the development of ideologies that justify discriminatory behavior" (Sigleman and Tuch 1997, 88). Furthermore, "if people believe a particular group poses a threat to cherished values, they may be more willing to subscribe to a whole range of disparaging beliefs about the group in question" (Hurwitz and Peffley 1992, 397). Studies also show that the media promulgates existing stereotypes—particularly regarding the poor and minority groups (Bullock, Wyche, and Williams 2001; Gandy et al. 1997; Iyengar 1990). This research suggests that when studying perceptions and attitudes toward social policies, particularly those that seek to reduce poverty, one must incorporate both ideology and stereotyping, as they likely interact when respondents form opinions on particular policy prescriptions. Furthermore, when encountering public opposition to affordable housing, planners should recognize that attitudes are likely formed with stereotypes of the future residents in mind—not accurate information based on the reality that the development may bring.

Public Opinion and Social Policy

Public opinion research indicates that values strongly shape attitudes toward public policies such as abortion (Alvarez and Brehm 2002), welfare (Gilens 1999), national health insurance (Erikson and Tedin 2003), and many others. However, there are often inconsistencies in public attitudes whereby the professed ideology of the respondent does not match up with the expected support or opposition to a particular policy proposal (Zaller 1992). Researchers suggested that this inconsistency results in part from specificity. Vague values such as "equality" are easy to support and have no negative connotations—while specific public policies such as "welfare" could affect tax rates and have negative societal impacts (Erikson and Tedin 2003; Sears et al. 1997).

Another explanation for the lack of support for policies designed to implement widely held values is that there might be a conflict between core values. People commonly may value both *equality* and *self-reliance.* Thus, an individual who values egalitarianism may desire equality but the importance they place on self-reliance may cause them to oppose a program designed to achieve equality. This contradiction represents what Shuman et al. (1985) refer to as the "principle-implementation gap" (Schneider and Ingram 1993, 341), where there can be widespread support for the goal of alleviating social problems, yet strong opposition to specific tools or policies necessary to achieve that goal. Numerous studies

present evidence of the principle–implementation gap, but it is particularly pervasive in social policy attitudes. For example, Erikson and Tedin (2003) present data showing that over 90 percent of White Americans agree that black and white children should attend the same school; yet, less than 30 percent of those same respondents favor busing for integration (Erikson and Tedin 2003, 88).

Like attitudes toward other public policies, social policy attitudes are largely influenced by perceptions, stereotypes, and ideology. In their review of the psychological literature surrounding how and why the public forms attitudes, Tourangeau, Rips, and Rasinski (2000) suggest that when respondents do not have information regarding the specific question readily available, they rely on "impressions or stereotypes, general attitudes or values, [and] specific beliefs or feelings about the target" (p. 172). Surveys on determinants of social policy attitudes strongly suggest that stereotypes and perceptions regarding the worthiness of the beneficiaries of such policies strongly define social policy attitudes. Furthermore, when negative constructions of the target population interact with core values such as individualistic ideology or a lack of trust in government, levels of support for policies such as welfare (Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote 2001; Gilens 1999), affirmative action (Alvarez and Brehm 2002; Kluegel 1986), or integration (Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Hurwitz and Peffley 1992; McConahay 1982) fall precipitously. It is likely that attitudes about affordable housing follow a similar pattern, with people forming opinions about the people they believe will be living in the proposed housing. The research on housing opposition suggests that NIMBY opponents may characterize the residents of affordable housing as poor and nonwhite. Thus, understanding how the public tends to view such groups may explain how attitudes about affordable housing are shaped.

Attitudes toward the Poor

Research on policy preferences demonstrates that attitudes about the beneficiaries of public programs significantly influence support for or opposition to those policies. One of the most important manifestations of social constructions is the extent to which such perceptions shape the way people view the worthiness of themselves and others (Berinsky 2002; Schneider and Ingram 1993; Checkel 1999). This holds particularly true when discussing the beneficiaries of government policies: "The personal messages for the positively viewed, powerful segments of society are that they are good, intelligent people . . . when they receive benefits from government, it is not a special favor or because of their need but because they are contributing to the public welfare" (Schneider and Ingram 1993, 341). Such social constructions mirror the theme of worthy versus unworthy in social policy debates.

One of the most common debates in the literature on poverty issues and perceptions encompasses the identification and perception of needy populations, often described as a debate over the "deserving" versus the "undeserving" poor (Erikson 2003; Vale 2000; Katz 1990). Social policy in the United States

has attempted to separate these two groups throughout history, a goal rooted in the values of individualism and self-reliance (Katz 1990; Katz 1996). Such attitudes have limited policy makers' willingness to create consistent and strong social welfare programs and have been particularly pervasive in shaping the policy approach to government-sponsored housing (Vale 2000).

While the beliefs of equal opportunity are widely held among Americans, most also recognize that the rich are provided greater levels of opportunity than the poor are (Kluegel 1986, 51). Furthermore, a majority of Americans agree that the rich tend to get richer while the poor tend to get poorer (McCall and Brash 2006). However, while Americans value equality and equal opportunity, they often oppose specific measures intended to achieve those goals (Schneider and Ingram 1993). Furthermore, Americans regard with suspicion policies that seek to achieve equality of outcomes or redistribute wealth, such as affirmative action or welfare (Erickson; Gilens 1999) Recent studies showed that these views not only transcend races and classes but also that they remain highly stable over time and are seldom subject to significant variability based on such external factors as economic recessions (McCall and Brash 2006).

Attitudes toward Minorities

Perceptions of worthiness prove particularly salient when discussing public policies that directly benefit minority populations. Public opinion toward racial minorities, particularly African Americans, has evolved considerably in the last forty years, with Americans moving from an attitude supporting nearly complete separation between the races to one promoting nearly complete desegregation (Page and Shapiro 1992, 68). However, "while opposition to racial discrimination is almost universal, attitudes about government intervention are anything but consensual" (Erikson and Tedin 2003, 88). It is clear from public opinion surveys that overt racial antagonism has lessened over time, yet racial unease and distrust remains. Furthermore, shifts in attitudes do not necessarily translate into support for public policies designed to alleviate racial inequality.

Erikson and Tedin (2003) suggest two rival explanations as to why support for policies designed to improve racial equality achieve little public support, despite increasingly widespread support for the goals of equality and integration. The first, evident in the research of Sears et al. (1997), Green, Staerkle, and Sears (2006), Tarman (2005), Henry (2002), and Reyna et al. (2005) suggests that the dramatic shift in public attitudes is partly due to political correctness. As a result of the *Civil Rights Act* and the criminalization of racial discrimination:

> People learned it was socially unacceptable to express overtly racist opinions. Instead, racial hostility is expressed indirectly by a glorification of traditional values such as "the work ethic" and "individualism," in which blacks and some other minorities are seen as deficient." (Erikson 2003, 90)

A rival explanation suggested by a number of researchers—most notably Sniderman and his colleagues (Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Sniderman et al. 1991)—challenges this conclusion, suggesting that

> The central problem of racial politics is not the problem of prejudice. [Rather], the agenda of the civil rights movement has changed from one of equal opportunity to equal outcomes. . . . in the eyes of many, the new civil rights agenda of racial quotas and affirmative action very much clashes with the principle of equal treatment for all." (Sniderman and Piazza 1993, 90)

These researchers suggest that the persistence of resistance to policies designed to promote racial equality result from the focus on equality of outcomes rather than equality of opportunity.

The similarity of views toward both racial minorities and the poor lead many to conclude that Americans highly correlate poverty status with minority status (Branton and Jones 2005; Clawson and Kegler 2000; Gandy et al. 1997; Gilens 1999; Harris 1999; Hoyt 1998; Weeks and Lupfer 2004). Misconceptions about numbers and percentages of minorities in poverty, particularly African Americans, run rampant in this country. Gilens (1996) summarizes numerous surveys and studies that demonstrate the misconceptions Americans have about race and poverty. These data show that "the American public dramatically exaggerates the proportion of African Americans among the poor and that such misperceptions are associated with greater opposition to welfare." (p. 515)

Evidence also exists of contradictory and conflicting attitudes toward social policy and race:

> On the one hand, a belief in equality encourages Whites to support racial integration (at least in principle). On the other hand, they often resent attempts to force racial integration on them because they feel it violates their individual freedom, and they often oppose preferential treatment because such largess is often seen as unearned." (Hurwitz and Peffley 1992, 396)

Views regarding whether minorities *deserve* preferential treatment go hand in hand with suspicion toward policies aimed at helping the poor. As Gilens (1996) states "White Americans with the most exaggerated misunderstandings of the racial composition of the poor are most likely to oppose welfare" (p. 516). Research by Weeks and Lupfer (2004) also finds that stereotyping depends highly upon class. Whereas lower class blacks are primarily categorized by race, middle-class blacks are primarily categorized by social class. This intertwining of race and class in America further complicates attitudes toward social policies and programs.

Americans also vary in their views regarding the causes of racial inequality, some attributing it to societal or structural failures, and some to individual failures. Alvarez and Brehm (2002) analyzed a variety of measures and questions regarding racial status, racially targeted public policies, and racial

equality. They found that both racial prejudice and ideology influenced beliefs about racial policies. However, when studied together, racial stereotyping has been shown to have a stronger effect than ideology in determining social policy positions (Alvarez and Brehm 2002). Numerous other studies corroborate these findings, which show that racial stereotyping has a significant influence on public attitudes toward minorities, race-targeted policies, and social welfare policies (Bobo 1991; Krysan 2000; Sears et al. 1997; Weeks and Lupfer 2004).

Attitudes toward Integration

Residential and institutional integration remains the most demonstrative symbol of racial equality. Yet, economic or class integration is not something that is particularly desirous to most Americans. To some extent, neighborhood differences are part of America's ideology: "Rising above humble origins to make it in the new and better neighborhood is central to our social tradition" (Leven et al. 1976, 202-3 in Bobo 1996). However, when it comes to racial mixing at the neighborhood level, negative perceptions of minorities often obscure these ideological pillars. These negative stereotypes, "are simplistic, resist disconfirming evidence, and create self-fulfilling prophecies when mutually stereotyping groups interact" (Sigelman and Tuch 1997, 87). The perception that minorities typically are poor leads many Americans to view neighborhood racial integration with skepticism and to believe that integration might have a negative affect on their property values and their quality of life.

Public opinion is one of the driving forces behind the creation and maintenance of public policies. That racial and economic segregation continues to exist reflects the public's ambivalence toward policies designed to promote racial and economic integration. Opposition to the development of low-income housing is likely a product of this ambivalence, as the introduction of poor and minority households into otherwise homogenous neighborhoods often produces concern that the urban problems associated with concentrated poverty and racial minorities will be transferred to middle-class and affluent communities.

The spatial patterns of concentrated race and poverty reflect such attitudes. Despite an overall decrease in concentration of minorities in central cities during recent years, most Americans continue to live in homogeneous communities (Briggs 2005; Denton 1999; Jargowsky 1996). A recent study of fifteen large metropolitan areas found that 63 percent of whites live in neighborhoods that are more than 90 percent white. Blacks and Hispanics are also spatially segregated in metropolitan areas, with 71 percent of blacks and 61 percent of Hispanics living in largely minority neighborhoods (Orfield 2006, 2). These numbers represent significant improvement from the levels of segregation found during the 1980s. However, research analyzing the 1990 and 2000 census found that the deconcentration of race and poverty in central cities is largely the result of minority migration from the inner city to the suburbs and does

not necessarily indicate strides toward black–white integration (Katz 2006).

It is widely accepted that segregated living patterns are largely the "market driven outcomes of individual preferences" (Hardman and Ioannides 2004, 370). According to microeconomic theory, these preferences include a complex interaction between affordability, location, and amenities that comprise an individual's "housing bundle" (Gyourko and Tracy 1999; Shlay 1993). However, another aspect of the housing bundle that not captured in the economic literature is what sort of neighbors one prefers. Studies show that changes in the racial composition of neighborhoods often spurs property owners to move. Beliefs that property values go down when black families move into the neighborhood contributes to white flight, lessening the possibilities for integration, and minimizing its benefits (Harris 1999). As more stable households flee the neighborhood, the value of property in the neighborhood may indeed go down, making the initial concerns a self-fulfilling prophecy (Farley et al. 1994). All of these attitudes encompass some of the most influential elements in maintaining segregation.

According to Bobo and Zubrisky (1996), three theories dominate discourse regarding why people prefer racially segregated neighborhoods, all of which are relevant to the study of income homogeneity as well:

- Perceived or actual differences in socioeconomic status;
- Ethnocentric preferences (in-group preference); and
- Prejudicial attitudes toward non-like groups (out-group avoidance; Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996, 883)

To determine which of these theories presents the strongest argument, Bobo and Zubrisky implemented an attitude survey. They find that perceived differences in socioeconomic status and in-group preference do indeed contribute but neither demonstrates enough significance to be considered the primary determinant of segregation attitudes. Out-group avoidance presents a stronger correlation to segregation attitudes, particularly among whites (Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996). Additionally, the study finds a high correlation between racial stereotyping and preference for segregated communities. Among all groups, stereotyping presented the *strongest statistical case* for why Americans segregate themselves. Finally, the authors show that these attitudes correlate highly to reported neighborhood composition—with those reporting preferences for segregated neighborhoods typically living in them (Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996).

Applying the Social Policy Attitude Framework to Affordable Housing

While housing policy generally falls within the purview of social policy, its uniqueness lies in its ties to a particular place: a neighborhood, a street, a community, and therefore it also adopts the properties inherent to land use policy. The construction of affordable housing is promoted as a tool to alleviate concentrated poverty, enhance access to opportunity, and improve affordability for many populations viewed as necessary or desirable to a community (Freeman 2003; Hartman 1998; Shlay 1995; Briggs 2003; Musterd and Andersson 2005; Pendall 2000; Rosenbaum 1995; Iglesias 2007). How Americans view the beneficiaries of housing policies certainly influences public perceptions of various government interventions in the housing market. However, some housing policies receive more opposition than others—a fact due in part to the way the public perceives the beneficiaries of such policies (Koebel et al. 2004; Field 1997; Wheeler 1993; Belden and Russonello 2003; Goetz 2008; Nyden et al. 2003).

In response to concerns voiced by neighbors about property values, crime, safety, and traffic, housing researchers have committed considerable time and money to study the evidence supporting or refuting claims by those opposing the development of affordable housing nearby. For the most part, the research demonstrates that well-managed housing that fits the scale of the neighborhood seldom produces the negative impacts mentioned above (Freeman 2002; Galster et al. 2002; Nguyen 2005; Schaffer and Saraf 2003; Werwath 2004). Despite this evidence, neighborhood opposition continues to be a major barrier to the successful development of affordable housing.

The perception of those capitalizing on affordable housing policies is even more important to those who live near proposed housing. Supporting increased spending for welfare, or for Medicaid requires little personal or household-level risk, but a much higher risk perception exists when affordable housing is proposed nearby (Chong, Citrin, and Conley 2001; Fort, Rosenman, and Budd 1993; Wassmer and Lascher 2004). That such risks may not exist at all does not lessen the *perception* of risk in the minds of neighbors. For, "under certain conditions men respond as powerfully to fictions as they do to realities, and that in many cases they help to create the very fictions to which they respond" (Lippmann 1922, 10).

Anthony Downs (1957) suggested that, "citizens translate information into opinions using the rules of instrumental rationality—that is, for the issue at hand citizens form opinions based on the personal costs and benefits that accrue to them" (Downs 1957, 56-7). This idea that self-interest drives opinion is one that is quite commonly applied to affordable housing siting conflicts. The phrase, "Not in my Backyard" implies that those who oppose the construction of affordable housing do not necessarily disagree with the need for such housing but take issue with the proposition that it be built near them. Pure self-interest is widely assumed to be the primary grounds for expressing such attitudes (Dear 1992; Field 1997; Koebel et al. 2004; Schaffer and Saraf 2003). When affordable housing proposals surface, the most often voiced objections concern such issues as loss of property value, increased crime, unsightly design, and poor management (Belden and Russonello 2003; Belden, Shashaty, and Zipperer 2004).

However, such assumptions about NIMBY opposition may represent a biased view on the part of planners and policy makers. Fort et al. (1992) suggest that planners and policy makers judge perceptions in one of three ways:

First, viewing perceptions as uninformed and biased, analysts may simply ignore them in a paternalistic way. Second, under the same view, analysts may seek to educate individual risk perceptions toward a chosen paradigm. Third, taking perceptions as the sincere and efficient (given the costs of information) representation of risk attitudes, analysts may incorporate them explicitly into the benefit-cost calculation (p. 187).

The authors suggest that the typical perception is one of the first two: that efforts to overcome NIMBY typically use methods to market the proposal in a more attractive manner or to educate the public regarding the realities of the risks they fear. These authors suggest that, rather than try to convince neighbors that the risks they perceive are irrational, the local government should compensate the neighbors should any of those risks be realized after the fact.

This approach is similar to that suggested by Fischel (2001), who suggests that, "a major—not the only—source of NIMBYism is homeowners' response to uninsured risks" (p. 148). Fischel suggests implementing a system of home value insurance. Should the perceived risks of NIMBies come to fruition, they should be compensated. However, if the research on neighborhood effects stands true, and those perceptions are largely unfounded, the insurer stands to gain a great deal from the transaction. Compensation and insurance strategies would truly put the neighborhood effects research to the test. However, such strategies would require a sophisticated actuarial process that would isolate the effects of the project upon property values and ignore other factors influencing housing values—such as housing market fluctuations, employment trends, and demographic shifts.

Furthermore, the reality of affordable housing may be irrelevant, if the perception of risk is strong enough. As the literature on environmental pollutants and property values explains, the perception of risk can have as much of an impact—if not more of an impact—on property values than actual harm or threat of harm (Mccloskey 1994, 42). Just as perception and fear fueled white flight during the blockbusting period when blacks first began moving into white neighborhoods, fear that affordable housing will lower neighboring property values can also become a self-fulfilling prophesy, if alarmed neighbors sell at below-market prices. Thus, what may have been a benign threat to property values can become a very real phenomenon if owners act upon that fear (Fort, Rosenman, and Budd 1993).

A number of surveys conducted on affordable housing attitudes support this literature. The results demonstrate widespread acknowledgement of a considerable need for affordable housing and show strong support for policies that promote affordable housing (Pendall 1999; Realtors 2006; Stein 1992). However, support is strongest for vague, value-laden statements, fading as policies become more specific, or are proposed closer to home (Alvarez and Brehm 2002; Berinsky 2002; Gilens 1999). Thus, despite the fact that 65 percent of Americans say they would support affordable housing next door (National Association of Realtors 2006), such attitudes do not appear to translate into behavior. There are a number of reasons for this. First, people may answer survey questions in a socially desirable manner, that is, telling the interviewer what they think is the correct or appropriate answer (Alvarez and Brehm 2002). Second, respondents may be demonstrating the principle–implementation gap. Finally, these results suggest that when faced with the proposition of living near affordable housing, community needs and egalitarian values are trumped by the negative perceptions respondents have about the people who may reside in such housing.

The survey research that has been completed to date points to a variety of triggers that cause concern among respondents, including

- A reputation of poor maintenance;
- The perception that crime accompanies affordable housing;
- A sense of housing programs as giveaways;
- The oft-repeated concern with property values; and
- That it is unattractive (Belden and Russonello 2003, 8).

Many of these concerns—particularly those of property value decline, poor maintenance, and increased crime—are reminiscent of concerns regarding racially integrated neighborhoods. Thus, while the public may support affordable housing, their concerns about the negative effects upon themselves, their families, their property, and their neighborhood offset that support, if the housing is proposed near them.

Despite the strong opposition to affordable housing when it is proposed, there is significant evidence that once developed, neighbors have few complaints about their new neighbors or the new homes. One study of several rural NIMBY cases found that, "While a few past opponents expressed lingering concerns about overtaxing of their communities' services in general, none expressed concerns about their neighbors" (Stover et al. 1994, 129). Such attitudes have been found in other cases as well, where strong community opposition was tempered or completely absent once the housing was constructed and tenants moved in (Tighe, 2005; Collins 2003). In these cases, the realities of living near affordable housing demonstrated the misguided nature of the fears residents had during the proposal process.

The literature on social policy preferences recognizes that misconceptions, stereotypes, and ideology regarding the poor contribute to public support for these policies. Furthermore, widespread speculation exists in the field that NIMBY concerns regarding property values, crime, and school crowding are simply publicly professed concerns that serve to disguise privately held prejudice (Pendall 1999; Somerman 1993; Takahashi 1997; Wilton 2002). This research suggests that local opposition, which often successfully thwarts the development of affordable housing, is often based on misperceptions and stereotypes of the people who may live there. Such opposition is seldom grounded in the reality of modern affordable housing but shaped by perceptions of public housing and the negative externalities that it produced. Because of the lack of salience for the issue itself, the public's information levels may

be particularly low. Such factors suggest that use of the media early in the process (as suggested by Stein 1992) could be used to shape the information provided and reduce the instance of attitudes formed by stereotypes and assumptions based on false information. Thus, should planners focus on gaining support of the media and other trusted outlets such as political leaders, they may be able to influence public attitudes about specific affordable housing projects.

Managing Opposition through Planning

Debra Stein suggests three possible methods for understanding opposition to affordable housing—all of which planners have used: (1) "make wild guesses about what the community thinks;" (2) "rely on gut instinct and pray that it's right;" and (3) "use public opinion research" (Stein 1992, 101). Unfortunately, public opinion research is seldom used in the field, so attitude information is gathered haphazardly and usually late in the siting process, from public meetings, editorials, and sporadic interactions with neighbors. Therefore, outreach techniques are applied with only a partial, and potentially false, understanding of neighborhood concerns, and very little understanding of attitudes beyond the immediate neighborhood or study area.

When confronted with neighborhood opposition, it is common for planners, developers, and policy makers to present a case for affordable housing that demonstrates its value to the community as a whole and shares evidence demonstrating the lack of negative externalities (Dear 1991; Field 1997; Stover et al. 1994). However, such outreach efforts seldom calm neighbors' fears and local opposition to affordable housing continues to hinder the successful implementation of federal housing goals. A number of studies provide guidance for municipalities, advocates, and developers to manage NIMBY opposition (Dear 1992; Katz et al. 2003; Koebel et al. 2004; Pendall 1999; Stein 1996; Stover et al. 1994). Others present examples of cases where these techniques have been applied (Dear 1991; Stover et al. 1994; Field 1997). Advocates, planners, and developers have used various techniques to overcome this opposition, including education, negotiation, and litigation. While each of these techniques has demonstrated some measure of success, a lack of understanding by planners of the underlying factors driving opposition inhibits their ability to use these tools successfully.

Education and Marketing

One of the most widely applied techniques is that of education or marketing. The purpose of a marketing campaign is to provide information to the public that presents the need and worth of affordable housing. In many cases, marketing campaigns present images of the sort of people who might live in affordable housing—educators, firefighters, police officers, and nurses—people who do not conform to the stereotypes and perceptions that individuals may have about the recipients of government aid. Such techniques are an important element to any potential housing program, but they are limited by the extent to which the public trusts their political leaders and believes the advertising.

Numerous states and cities have pursued educational campaigns to garner support for affordable housing. In Fort Collins, Colorado, posters and flyers were distributed showing the "faces of affordable housing"—including teachers, firefighters, and auto mechanics—and the "places of affordable housing"—portraying attractive single and multifamily affordable homes (Koebel et al. 2004, 3) Advocacy groups in Chicago, Minnesota, and elsewhere have applied similar strategies (Belden and Russonello 2003). These education and advocacy campaigns portray affordable housing and its residents as average working Americans, not as dependent, jobless vagrants. Including pay rates for these types of workers as well as the amount needed to rent or own a home in the community presents evidence that affordable housing is targeted to the "submerged middle class"—people who simply need a leg up to succeed, not those who might abuse government subsidy (Belden and Russonello 2003; Dear 1991; Goetz 2008; Koebel et al. 2004).

While education might be effective as a proactive measure, there is little evidence to show that it would successfully counter an already established opposition. As Pendall (1999) points out, the opposition has little reason to trust those advocating for a particular development. Furthermore, some cases show that the opponents agreed with the basic premise that affordable housing was necessary in the area but argued with the siting (Koebel et al. 2004, 71). However, the role of ideology and stereotyping present additional barriers to countering opposition with marketing and outreach efforts. If opposition is based not on practical concerns, but on ideological beliefs, such efforts will likely not succeed. As Gibson (2005) points out, "attempting to counter 'ideology' with 'data' remains pointless at best (p. 396).

Recently, increased attention has been given to the terminology used when discussing "affordable housing." Some (Goetz 2008; Hartman 2008; Pendall 1999; Kirp, Dwyer, and Rosenthal 1995) have suggested that affordable housing has become synonymous in the public mind with public housing, or subsidized housing—terms that elicit negative feelings and memories of past government program failures. In response, advocates have begun to use different terminology to describe "affordable housing" such as "workforce housing" and "lifecycle housing" (Bell 2002; Goetz 2008). While these terms do elicit stronger support from the public, "any such term may have a finite shelf-life, after which planners and advocates will have to search for the next acceptable label" (Goetz 2008, 228). Thus, education on the community need for affordable housing would do little to mitigate opposition based on suspicion of fear of the residents. Consequently, a more typical first step is negotiation.

Negotiation

Numerous articles and studies have described strategies that can be used to negotiate the siting of unwanted land uses (Dear 1991; Stover et al. 1994; Field 1997; Koebel et al. 2004), yet not all provide cases where these techniques overcame opposition and explain how well they worked. Examination of this

body of literature reveals a number of general techniques applicable to overcoming or managing opposition. These include proactive and early meetings with citizens, education and media outreach methods; partnerships with local supporters and advocates of affordable housing; gaining support from political leaders where possible; and open and honest dialogue (Stein 1992).

Many advocates and developers respond to opposition by making aesthetic changes, or otherwise altering the composition or size of the project to make it more acceptable to neighbors, with varying degrees of success (Koebel et al. 2004; Dear 1991; Stover et al. 1994; Dear 1992; Stein 1992; Iglesias 2002). In many cases, these changes increase the cost of development, reduce the number of affordable units, and generally decrease affordability, thereby undermining public policy and planning initiatives (Heudorfer 2002; Stover et al. 1994). Constant opposition or fear of opposition can also result in developers preemptively proposing more ''acceptable'' types of housing perceived to have fewer negative impacts, such as single family homes, housing for elderly populations, or housing for higher income residents (Galster et al. 2003; Koebel et al. 2004; Stover et al. 1994; Field 1997). Developers may also choose to site affordable housing in neighborhoods that offer less resistance: either in more peripheral areas with lower populations or in neighborhoods that lack the political and social capital to present a coordinated resistance (Estes 2007; Buki 2002). However, such strategies do not placate opposition that is concerned primarily with the *residents*, not the appearance or size, of the project.

Field (1997) suggests a consensus-building approach to gain support for housing projects. He cites a number of cases, including Norfolk, Nebraska, and Hartford, Connecticut, where a joint problem-solving approach was used. Such approaches are designed to include all parties in a negotiation process that imbues a sense of partnership in the process rather than the feeling that a government program is being forced on an unwilling neighborhood. Such approaches are suggested in other works—particularly (Godschalk et al. 1995; Lassar 1990; Nenno, Brophy, and Barker 1982). However, as Field points out, "Social concerns about race, class, and neighborhood quality severely complicate the situation. When these factors are in play, opposition to affordable housing becomes extremely difficult to overcome" (p. 825). Based on the findings from the social policy opinion literature discussed previously, these social concerns are nearly always in play when affordable housing is proposed and likely minimize the potential success of negotiation strategies.

Litigation

The courts have a long history of involvement in housing battles, whether based on discriminatory sale or rental practices (*Shelley v. Kraemer; Jones v. Mayer Co.*) to the overturning of exclusionary zoning (Mt. Laurel). In many cases, the race of the residents or other unconstitutional discrimination underlies opposition to affordable housing. One such example of this

is a NIMBY battle that occurred in Yuba City, California, over proposed farm worker housing. According to the study, "Opponents, who had initially raised objections running from property value decline to the inappropriateness of spending federal funds on assisted housing, eventually focused their arguments on school overcrowding" (Stover et al. 1994, 52). This argument proved successful in blocking the permitting required for the development, despite the fact that the project met all the criteria set up by the city council. Because the rejection was based on the argument that the minority residents tend to have more school age children that their white counterparts, the nonprofit developer sued based on discrimination and won.

Court-ordered dispersal programs, particularly the *Yonkers, Gautreaux,* and *Mount Laurel* decisions, induced municipalities to develop scattered-site housing to desegregate their neighborhoods. However, "The public resistance to (and essentially limited efficacy of) such efforts . . . each of which sought to force racial or socio-economic residential diversity results beyond antidiscrimination remedies—seem to be ample evidence of the futility of any such government action at this point in time" (Eaddy et al. 2007, 14). Furthermore, the Moving to Opportunity program was effectively halted as a result of community opposition in Baltimore (Goring 2005, 136-7). As a result, such dispersal programs remain limited, and absent significant changes in the application of fair housing laws, will likely not be implemented widely.

While many of these techniques can improve the success rate of affordable housing proposals, none provide a magic bullet. Marketing techniques must be implemented long before a development is proposed and are hindered by skepticism and distrust of government. Negotiation techniques are effective but can often undermine the affordability or size of the development—minimizing its impact. Litigation is costly, extremely time-consuming, and often ineffective, given the current state of Fair Housing law. Furthermore, if NIMBY opposition is based on stereotypes and perceptions as demonstrated in other social policy attitudes, it is even less likely that education and negotiation will succeed. Given these constraints, it is unlikely that planners will actually be able to "overcome" NIMBY opposition. Instead, planners may need to take a more aggressive stance rather than try to educate or negotiate with neighbors. They may also choose to garner support outside of the narrow confines of the proposal area and build a coalition of beneficiaries and other supporters of affordable housing in the broader community.

Conclusion

Public opinion is one of the driving forces behind the creation and maintenance of public policies. That racial and economic segregation continues to exist reflects the public's ambivalence toward policies designed to promote racial and economic integration. Opposition to the development of low-income housing is likely a product of this ambivalence, as the introduction of poor and minority households into otherwise homogenous neighborhoods often produces concern that the urban problems

associated with concentrated poverty and racial minorities will be transferred to middle-class and affluent communities. Planning and policy guidelines emphasize the promotion of a decision-making environment that values public participation (Lowry 1997; Friedmann 1998; Brooks 2002). This present context stems largely from years of top-down planning and policy decisions that adversely affected many neighborhoods and communities (Fainstein 2000; Hall 1988). However, the emphasis on public participation has given neighborhoods and communities much power over land use decisions, leading to situations where private interests may trump public needs (Fort, Rosenman, and Budd 1993; Chong, Citrin, and Conley 2001).

The research to date suggests that perceptions about the residents of affordable housing, ideological views toward social welfare policy, and self-interest frame attitudes toward housing policy. Much of the housing-related NIMBY research constructs opposition to the siting of affordable housing primarily as a response mechanism to perceived negative externalities accompanying proposed developments (Koebel et al. 2004; Stover et al. 1994). However, this review suggests that perceptions of the residents of affordable housing is the primary reason neighbors consider it such an insidious threat. Often, the extent to which these future residents are perceived as undesirable strongly shapes the neighbors' support or opposition for the project (Dear 1992; Takahashi 1997; Wilton 2002).

The continued incidence of NIMBY battles over the siting of affordable housing casts doubt on the premise that the public is willing to share their neighborhoods with the individuals and families who benefit from affordable housing. Such attitudes reflect broader trends in public opinion in which, "There has been a dramatic increase in support for the principles of equality and integration, [yet] this positive trend has clearly not been extended to support for policies designed to implement these goals" (Hurwitz and Peffley 1992, 395). The rich literature focusing on NIMBY attitudes has resulted in a variety of techniques, recommendations, and processes to apply when faced with public opposition. However, most feel that the core issue lies in changing attitudes about people who are different from them (Stover et al. 1994; Dear 1992).

Studies have shown that neighbors who experience the development of affordable housing (Collins 2003; Stover et al. 1994) or the integration of poor residents into existing neighborhoods (Rosenbaum and Popkin 1991) are largely positive about their new neighbors after the fact. Planners must determine how to convince the public that residential integration will not result in the negative outcomes they fear. In doing so, efforts should be made to focus on the benefits of affordable housing, framing them as promoting opportunity, not a government handout. While some have found success through use of the media, reframing the debate, avoiding negative "buzzwords" and marketing affordable housing toward existing residents, the negative perceptions and fears remain. Planners must control the dialogue early and often around any conflicts over the siting of affordable housing.

However, it would be naive to believe that marketing will change the minds of those who are strongly against the development of affordable housing nearby. In such situations, it would behoove planners to create broad alliances and networks with those who may benefit from the development of affordable housing units. While the field of planning seeks inclusion, this does not mean that planners must cede control to small groups of residents when the benefits are so broadly felt. Instead of focusing on the opposition, planners should take pro-active steps to get affordable housing on the municipal agenda and promote support from political and community leaders.

There are a number of practical steps that can be taken to get housing on the municipal agenda and therefore increase the likelihood for political support. Government is by no means a single, unified force. Often, the process of building affordable housing frustrates housing advocates, developers, and city planners equally. By identifying parties that are sympathetic to the housing needs of the community, the groups can work together to lobby the municipal political leadership to place greater emphasis on affordable housing. An effort that combines planners, advocates, and citizens has a much greater impact when working together than do each of these forces separately, especially if it presents a unified front with a unified agenda.

The second piece of effective lobbying is use of the media. Effective media coverage can be achieved by pursuing human-interest stories that involve the lack of housing or that highlight good affordable developments. Other methods may be to organize a tour of existing projects that feature real people telling their success stories. Another effective method may be to call in to radio talk shows or write letters to the editor of local newspapers. Any time there is media coverage, forward clippings to local politicians to keep their focus on affordable housing. If these measures are in place in a community before a development is proposed, it is less likely that political or community opposition will develop into a time-consuming or costly barrier to development.

When applying communicative and deliberative planning processes at the neighborhood level, regional needs—such as affordable housing or racial integration—can be overlooked. As Fainstein points out, planners are "committed to equity and diversity, but there is little likelihood that such will be the outcome of stakeholder participation within relatively small municipalities" (Fainstein 2000, 460). Thus, when seeking the public's opinion during the planning process, it is important to do so broadly, so as not to confine public participation to a self-selected, homogeneous population who may act in self-interest rather than the public interest.

Much of the literature on social policy preferences recognizes that misconceptions, stereotypes, and ideology regarding the poor contribute to public support for these policies. Therefore, it is reasonable to extend similar assumptions to public attitudes toward affordable housing. Furthermore, widespread speculation exists in the field that NIMBY concerns regarding property values, crime, and school crowding are simply publicly professed concerns that serve to disguise privately held prejudice (Pendall 1999; Somerman 1993; Takahashi 1997;

Wilton 2002). Regardless of the particular factors at play in each siting battle or NIMBY attitude, it remains important to understand *who* opposes affordable housing and *why* they hold such attitudes. Such research must recognize the role that race and class perceptions, as well as ideology, play in shaping housing attitudes.

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