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How Citizen Opposition to New Housing Becomes Concentrated in Expensive Housing Markets

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Abstract: Across the United States and Western Europe, strong local opposition has made it harder for governments to expand housing supply and address rising affordability pressures. Using geolocated survey data from the United States and five Western European countries, we show that opposition to new development is systematically stronger in high-cost areas. This relationship is robust across countries and is not explained by demographic or socioeconomic differences between low- and high-cost places. We then examine why this pattern arises, and argue that it partly reflects *preservationist sorting*: expensive housing markets disproportionately attract and retain residents who place a high value on preserving the neighborhood character. A survey experiment, which exposes respondents to information about rising local housing prices, provides further support for this explanation. Together, our findings point to a self-reinforcing cycle in which rising prices strengthen opposition to new housing, constraining supply and pushing prices higher still.

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From 1970 to 2020 the urban population of the EU and the U.S. grew by 200 million — or fifty percent — while the rural population decreased by 15 million (Ritchie and Roser 2018). This ongoing urbanization fuels a fundamental conflict in urban politics between those who want cities to develop and grow and those who are wary of such changes (Jacobs 1961; Glaeser and Cutler 2021). The outcome of this political struggle has important implications for cities and society at large. If cities are going to make room for the middle and working class that has traditionally used them for upward mobility (Glaeser 2011), increasing prosperity, and tempering regional inequality (Hsieh and Moretti 2019; Ganong and Shoag 2017), then they need to build more housing.

In most developed countries, land use regulation is governed by local democratic processes (Fischel 2015), making public opinion a crucial determinant of how cities manage urban growth. A growing body of research has examined which citizens oppose new housing and why. Opposition is more common among homeowners, older residents and those with stronger attachments to their neighborhoods (Nall 2015; Broockman, Elmendorf and Kalla 2024; Hankinson 2018), and certain project characteristics—such as density, proximity, and design—make new developments more or less acceptable (Trounstine 2022; de Benedictis-Kessner and Hankinson 2019; Wicki and Kaufmann 2022). Recent work also shows that neighborhood characteristics, including racial composition and homeownership rates, shape local responses to development (Trounstine 2020; Sahn 2025*b*; Einstein, Glick and Palmer 2019). Yet we still know surprisingly little about how and why opposition varies systematically across local housing markets.

This article makes two contributions. First, we show that opposition to new housing is systematically higher in high-cost areas. Linking geocoded survey data to data on local housing-prices, we document this relationship across five Western European countries and the United States. The pattern holds for both renters and homeowners and cannot be readily explained by the demographic factors emphasized in prior work. Furthermore, we show that opponents of new housing are willing to act politically to stop the development. These findings matter because they suggest that political resistance is strongest precisely where new housing would do the most to ease affordability pressures and expand access to economically productive places.

Second, we argue that this relationship between local housing costs and opposition to new housing partly reflects *preservationist sorting*: as housing costs rise, expensive places increasingly attract and retain residents who are especially willing to pay a premium for a neighborhood's existing character. This helps produce a concentration of residents who are more inclined to resist local change.

Several observational patterns are consistent with this interpretation and difficult to reconcile with alternative explanations. For one, the relationship is not meaningfully reduced by controls for income and wealth, suggesting that it does not simply reflect the socioeconomic composition of high-cost areas. It also extends beyond housing-specific opposition to more general resistance to local change. Consistent with this, residents in high-cost areas are more likely to justify their opposition in terms of preserving neighborhood character in open-ended responses. The relationship is also visible among recent movers into expensive areas, which is hard to square with the idea that it simply reflects long-run anti-development politics gradually driving up local prices.²

We test the sorting account more directly with a survey experiment conducted among 2,830 U.S. respondents during the COVID-era housing boom. The experiment allows us to observe how prospective movers respond to rising housing costs. Consistent with the preservationist sorting account, rising prices make respondents with weaker preservationist preferences more willing to consider relocating, whereas those with stronger preservationist preferences are less likely to do so. This pattern suggests that rising housing costs can selectively retain residents who are more committed to preserving neighborhood character.

Our findings have important implications for understanding the political roots of urban inequality and the persistent difficulty of expanding housing supply in productive cities. Rising housing costs do more than create affordability problems: they also reshape the social and political composition of neighborhoods. High-cost areas disproportionately attract and retain residents with strong preferences for preserving neighborhood character, making opposition to new housing more likely. This, in turn, reinforces barriers to development and can push growth

²This study uses artificial intelligence (AI) tools in three ways. First, Claude Code (Anthropic, model: claude-sonnet-4-6) was used to classify open-ended survey responses; the full prompt and validation procedure are described in Appendix E. Second, AI assistance was used in writing and debugging the analysis scripts. Third, AI tools were used to assist with proofreading the manuscript. All outputs were verified by the authors.

toward lower-cost areas where resistance is weaker (Hankinson and Magazinnik 2023) but the broader economic gains from new housing are smaller (Glaeser, Gyourko and Saks 2005b). The result may be a self-reinforcing cycle in which rising prices strengthen opposition, constrain supply, and further worsen affordability.

Housing Costs and the Politics of Preservation

Existing research on opposition to new housing has primarily focused on individual- and project-level explanations. Studies show that opposition is more common among homeowners, older individuals, and white residents, and that resistance varies with project characteristics such as density, proximity, and design (Marble and Nall 2021; Wicki, Hofer and Kaufmann 2022; Wicki and Kaufmann 2022; Larsen, Nyholt et al. 2024; Trounstine 2022; Yoder 2020; Trounstine 2020). These studies offer important insights into who opposes development and which projects provoke resistance. But they provide less guidance on how opposition varies systematically across local housing markets.

We argue that housing prices are one important contextual factor. While housing costs have been widely studied as a source of economic inequality, political conflict, and populism (Ansell 2014; Larsen et al. 2019; Ansell, Hjorth, Nyrup and Larsen 2022), their role in shaping opposition to new development has received much less attention. This is surprising, because housing costs are central to the politics of urban development. High-cost areas are precisely where demand for new housing is strongest and where additional construction would do the most to ease affordability pressures. At the same time, housing costs may shape opposition not only through the prices residents face, but also through the kinds of residents high-cost areas attract and retain.

Why Housing Costs May Increase Local Opposition

At first glance, rising housing costs might be expected to increase support for new construction. Standard economic logic suggests that increasing supply should ease shortages and slow price growth (Glaeser, Gyourko and Saks 2005a). Yet this logic often breaks down in practice. Many citizens do not believe that new development lowers prices (Nall, Elmendorf and Oklobdzija

2024), and public debate in high-cost cities often reveals strong resistance to new development (Einstein, Glick and Palmer 2019; Sahn 2025a). As we document below, opposition to new housing is often stronger—not weaker—in high-cost areas.

One possible explanation is that high-cost areas tend to contain more affluent residents, more homeowners, and populations better equipped to organize against local projects (Brady, Verba and Schlozman 1995; Einstein, Glick and Palmer 2019; Trounstein 2020). If these groups are more likely to oppose development, then opposition may be higher in expensive areas simply because these areas contain more of them. A related possibility is that homeowners in high-cost areas have more housing wealth at stake and may therefore be especially wary of nearby development if they fear it could reduce property values (Fischel 2001).

We advance a different argument here. Like existing accounts, our argument focuses on how housing markets sort residents across places. But rather than sorting only on income, wealth, or homeownership, we argue that high housing costs also sort and retain residents with stronger local preservationist preferences—those who place particular value on maintaining the existing character of their neighborhood (Larsen and Nyholt 2024).

Housing is not a homogeneous good. Residents do not simply buy square meters of shelter; they buy bundles of attributes tied to particular locations, including access to jobs and amenities, public services, social networks, and the physical character of the built environment (Rosen 1974; Bertaud 2018). Because neighborhoods are imperfect substitutes, rising prices in a particular area indicate that some households are willing to pay a premium for that specific bundle of attributes rather than for housing in general. Put differently, as housing costs rise, remaining in a particular neighborhood increasingly requires residents to forgo housing and consumption opportunities elsewhere.

This raises a simple question: who is willing to pay that price? We argue that expensive neighborhoods disproportionately attract and retain residents who place especially high value on the area's existing character. Prior research suggests that opposition to new development is often rooted not only in material self-interest, but also in a desire to protect and preserve the neighborhood as residents know it (Larsen and Nyholt 2024; Devine-Wright 2009; Davison,

Dovey and Woodcock 2012). High housing costs may therefore function as a sorting device, gradually concentrating residents with stronger preservationist preferences.

This logic applies to both renters and homeowners. For renters, remaining in a high-cost area means paying higher rents and accepting fewer outside options. For homeowners, it means forgoing the gains from selling and relocating to a cheaper area. In both cases, high housing costs can selectively retain residents who are especially committed to preserving neighborhood character. This is close in spirit to classic models of spatial sorting (e.g., Tiebout 1956), but the implication we emphasize is political: when expensive places retain residents with stronger place-based attachments, those places should also generate stronger resistance to change.

This mechanism differs from earlier work in two ways. First, unlike the homevoter account, it does not depend on residents fearing that development will reduce the value of their property. The key claim is instead that high prices select for residents who are especially attached to the existing neighborhood itself. Second, unlike project-centered explanations, our argument is contextual rather than tied to the specific features of a proposal: it explains why similar developments may face systematically stronger opposition in high-cost places than in low-cost ones. In this sense, housing costs are not just an outcome of urban scarcity. They are also part of the process through which neighborhoods acquire a political constituency for preservation.

Over time, these processes can produce a concentration of residents with strong preservationist preferences. Because these residents place particular value on the neighborhood as it currently exists, they may be especially likely to resist new development that could alter its character. Rising housing costs may therefore do more than reflect scarcity. They may also intensify the local politics of preservation by concentrating the kinds of residents most motivated to oppose change.

Research Design

To study the relationship between housing costs and opposition to new development, we combine observational and experimental evidence across six countries. Our goal is twofold: first, to assess whether local housing costs are systematically associated with opposition to new de-

velopment; and second, to assess whether this relationship reflects preservationist sorting or is better explained by alternative explanations.

We begin by leveraging cross-national survey data from six countries. We combine national surveys from the UK, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland, and the Netherlands—collected as part of the WEALTHPOL project (Ansell, Bokobza, Cansunar, Elkjaer, Haslberger and Nystrup 2022)—with an original national survey of U.S. residents. These countries span a range of housing market institutions, offering variation in both market structures and political contexts. The WEALTHPOL surveys were fielded in 2022 using quota sampling from Kantar Consumer, with quotas on gender, age, and region (and on education in the Netherlands). The original U.S. survey was conducted in October 2021 and used quota sampling to match the population on age, education, race, and region.³

We link survey responses to local housing cost data at the municipal level in Sweden, the Netherlands, and Ireland; the MSOA level in the UK; and the zip code level in Denmark and the U.S. All surveys include a measure of respondents' support or opposition to new housing in their local area. The U.S. survey further includes a broader set of items, including support for specific housing proposals and attitudes toward neighborhood change. Together, these data allow us to examine whether housing costs are associated with local opposition to new development and whether this relationship is consistent across countries and measures.

We then use additional modules in the U.S. survey to examine competing explanations for this relationship. These modules allow us to assess whether the association can be accounted for by demographic composition or respondents' financial exposure to housing markets, and whether it instead aligns more closely with preservationist motivations. We also examine whether the relationship is already visible among recent movers and analyze open-ended responses to compare how residents in high- and low-cost areas justify their views on new housing.

To assess whether residents in high-cost areas are also more willing to take concrete action to block new development, we draw on a separate survey of Danish homeowners fielded by Epinion in March 2021 ($n = 3,504$). Participants were asked whether they would be willing to

³The original surveys were conducted in compliance with relevant laws and regulations and were approved by the Research Ethics Committee at Aarhus University.

act—for example, by attending public meetings, signing a petition, or contacting local politicians—to prevent specific types of new housing development in their area. Because taking such action requires a meaningful personal commitment, this survey complements the attitudinal measures in the cross-national data by examining whether the association between housing costs and opposition translates into a greater willingness to act.

Finally, we test the sorting account more directly with a separate U.S. survey experiment. The experiment was conducted by YouGov in 2022 using quota sampling to match the U.S. population on age, education, race, and region. The experiment and its main outcomes were preregistered (for details on the preregistration, see Appendix A). The experiment exploits the sharp rise in housing prices during 2020–22 by providing respondents with accurate but potentially surprising information about local housing prices and affordability trends. We then assess whether rising housing costs make individuals with weaker preservationist preferences more willing to consider relocating, while leaving stronger preservationists less responsive.

While no single approach is sufficient on its own, the combination of cross-national observational data, detailed U.S. survey modules, and experimental evidence allows us to triangulate across methods. This multi-pronged design helps us assess not only whether opposition to new housing is more common in high-cost areas, but also why this pattern emerges and whether it is consistent with preservationist sorting.

Independent Variable: Housing Cost

Our key independent variable is local housing costs, which we measure using the price of homes sold in the respondent's zip code, municipality, or metropolitan statistical area (MSA), depending on data availability.

Home prices do not directly reflect the average housing costs currently paid by residents. For homeowners, actual costs are shaped by mortgage payments and property taxes, while renters' costs lag behind housing prices due to lease agreements (Gallin 2008). However, home prices serve as a widely recognized indicator of local housing market conditions and influence both perceptions of affordability and expectations about future costs. High housing prices can signal exclusivity, reinforce concerns about rising costs, and shape attitudes toward new

development by influencing how people assess their own economic position and the desirability of maintaining neighborhood stability. Even for long-term homeowners with fixed costs, rising prices can shape preferences by affecting perceptions of home value, local demographic shifts, and potential future costs for themselves or their children. Similarly, renters may view high housing prices as a precursor to future rent increases, reinforcing concerns about affordability and neighborhood change.

For the U.S., we estimate home prices at the zip-code level using data from Zillow, specifically the average price of homes sold in 2020.⁴ For the five European countries, we use official national housing price statistics that offer the highest level of geographic granularity available. While price measurement methods differ slightly across countries, we focus on the most localized, transaction-based data available, ensuring comparability in capturing current housing costs. Additional details on data sources and processing are provided in Appendix B.

In the survey experiment conducted as part of our second U.S. survey, we manipulate respondents' perceptions of local housing costs by providing half of them with accurate information on home price changes in their MSA over the past 12 years (2010–2022). Due to the housing boom during the COVID-19 period (2020–2022), nearly all respondents in the treatment group receive information indicating substantial recent price increases. An example of the treatment and an overview of the information presented across MSAs are shown in Figure 1. The basic premise of this experiment is that respondents may not be fully aware of the extent of these price increases. We test this by asking participants in both the control and treatment groups about their perceptions of housing price changes, and as detailed below, we are successful in leading respondents in the treatment group, on average, to perceive larger price increases than those in the control group.

We use local rather than national price trends to make the information more personally relevant while relying on MSA-level data instead of zip codes to ensure that trends appear meaningful rather than overly volatile. Specifically, respondents are shown the Zillow Home Value Index, which reflects the typical value of homes in the 35th–65th percentile range. They

⁴Zip codes in the US cover approximately 10,000 people, making them roughly twice the size of a census tract. This provides the most detailed available measure of local housing costs while ensuring a sufficient number of transactions for reliable estimates. Examining smaller geographic units would introduce excessive volatility due to infrequent sales.

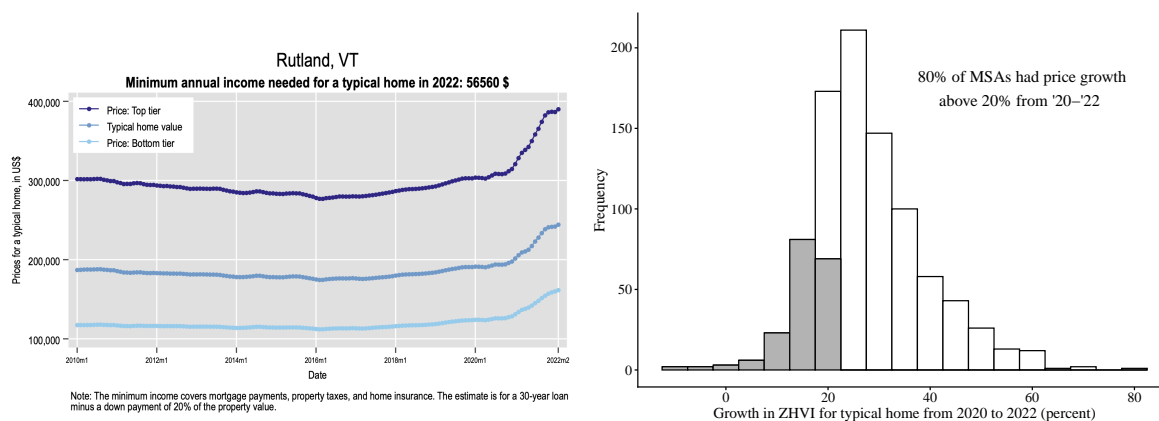


Figure 1: Treatment Example and Distribution of Housing Price Changes. Left panel shows the treatment presented to residents from Rutland, Vermont. Right panel shows distribution of housing price changes across metropolitan statistical areas.

also see price trends for top-tier (65th–95th percentile) and bottom-tier (5th–35th percentile) homes, allowing them to identify trends that align with their own housing situation. Additionally, they are presented with an estimate of the minimum income required to purchase a home in their local area today, based on Zillow’s affordability calculations. This approach ensures that respondents can anchor their beliefs about housing costs in real-world trends, maximizing both the credibility and salience of the treatment.

Outcomes

Our primary outcome is *opposition to new housing development*. In both the existing European surveys and our original U.S. survey, we use responses to the following question: “How much would you support or oppose more homes being built in your local area?” Respondents answered on a five-point scale ranging from *strongly oppose* to *strongly support*. We classify *opponents* (1) as those who express any level of opposition, while *non-opponents* (0) include those who are neutral, supportive, or respond with “don’t know.” Across countries, approximately one in four respondents oppose new housing. Opposition is most widespread in the UK, where 40 pct. of respondents are opposed, and least widespread in Ireland and the Netherlands, where only 18 pct. oppose. Sweden, Denmark, and the U.S. fall between these extremes.

In our U.S. survey, we include multiple additional items that capture both general attitudes and reactions to specific development scenarios. First, respondents are asked an open-ended follow-up after reporting their level of support or opposition to new housing: “You have an-

swered that you [strongly] [support/oppose] more homes being built in your local area. We would like to know why you gave this answer.” They are then presented with a free-text response box. This open-ended question allows us to analyze the justifications respondents provide for their views on local development.

Second, we include a broader attitudinal measure designed to capture preferences for preserving the status quo. Respondents are asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement: “*I would like my community to stay the way that it is.*” This item helps contextualize opposition to new housing by distinguishing general resistance to change from more targeted concerns about development.

Third, we incorporate a vignette-based measure that varies the features of a hypothetical development project. Respondents are told to “*imagine that your county is planning to permit a real estate development,*” and are randomly assigned to see different versions of the project. We manipulate four features: (1) distance from the respondent’s home (*1 mile vs. can be seen from your home*); (2) project type (*new homes similar in type and size to the respondent’s home vs. a mall with restaurants, shopping, and cultural activities*); (3) parking provision (*the development includes a large number of parking spaces, which should make parking easier*); and (4) a design cue (*the development is designed by an architect as a tribute to the neighborhood’s character*). Respondents then rate their support for the project on a seven-point scale from *strongly oppose* to *strongly support*. As before, we classify respondents as *opponents* (1) if they express any level of opposition and as *non-opponents* (0) if they are neutral, supportive, or express no opinion.

Fourth and finally, in our U.S. survey experiment, we examine respondents’ *willingness to relocate* in response to local housing costs. As the primary experimental outcome, we ask: “*In the near future, would you consider moving to another city?*” Respondents who answer *Yes* or *Not sure* receive a follow-up: “*If you were to move, would you choose a city where housing costs are higher, about the same, or lower?*” Respondents who indicate a preference for a *lower-cost location* are coded as willing to relocate to a cheaper area (1). Those who say they would move to a place with *higher or similar costs*, or who answer *No* to the initial question, are coded as unwilling to relocate to a cheaper area (0).

The survey experiment also measures respondents' attachment to their local area and its existing character. In the preregistration, we proposed a three-item index combining agreement with the statements "I would like my community to stay the way that it is," "I would like to stay in my community for the rest of my life," and "I like how my community looks and feels." In the analyses presented here, we focus on the first and third items, which map more directly onto preservationist preferences.⁵

Citizen Opposition is Concentrated in Expensive Housing Markets

We begin by assessing whether there is a systematic relationship between local housing costs and citizen opposition to new development. The purpose of this section is to establish the robustness of this relationship across countries and under different definitions of opposition. First, we analyze data from cross-national surveys to assess whether opposition to new housing is more common in high-cost areas across six countries. We then turn to the U.S. survey, which allows for a more detailed investigation using experimental measures, additional controls, and alternative indicators of opposition.

Cross-National Evidence

To facilitate consistent comparisons across countries and regions, we log-transform local housing prices and include regional fixed effects; U.S. states and NUTS 2 regions in the European cases. These steps ensure that our analysis compares areas relative to their broader regional context and accounts for differences in housing market scale and currency. Log-transforming prices allows us to interpret coefficients in percentage terms rather than absolute values, which is particularly useful when comparing housing markets across countries. We also control for population density (logged) to make sure that we are comparing areas where the prospect for new construction is relatively similar (except in Ireland, where no such information is available; for a detailed description of the data sources and coverage on the density measure, see Appendix C).

⁵In the preregistration we also noted that we would use "I would like to stay in my community for the rest of my life." Based on feedback on an earlier versions of the paper, we decided that this item was too close to the dependent variable of location choice. As we show in Appendix A results do not depend on including or excluding this item.

Figure 2 shows the relationship between local housing prices and opposition to new housing, using a binned scatterplot with a linear fit. The horizontal axis reflects the logged difference in housing prices relative to the regional average: a value of 0 corresponds to the regional mean, while +1 indicates an area where prices are approximately 2.7 times higher, and -1 indicates an area where prices are about 2.7 times lower (i.e., 63 pct. lower). The vertical axis shows opposition to new housing, also relative to the regional mean.

The results reveal a striking pattern: opposition to new housing increases with local housing costs. Moving from the 1st to the 99th percentile of within-region housing prices is associated with an 11 percentage point increase in opposition to new housing—a difference comparable in magnitude to the gap between renters and homeowners.

To assess the robustness of this relationship and explore cross-national variation, we estimate a multilevel model with a random slope for log housing prices by country and random intercepts for regions. This allows us to obtain partially pooled country-specific estimates—shrunk toward the overall mean in proportion to within-country uncertainty—while controlling for individual-level characteristics. We include controls for age, gender, homeownership, household income, college education, as well as log population density. We present three specifications: a baseline model without individual controls, a model adding demographic controls, and a model replacing random region intercepts with fixed effects. The results are presented in Table 1.

The findings confirm a strong and consistent relationship between housing costs and opposition to new development across all six countries. All partially pooled estimates are positive and clearly distinct from zero, and the pattern holds across all three specifications. Effect sizes range from around 5 percentage points in Ireland and the Netherlands to around 7–8 percentage points in Denmark and Sweden, with a pooled estimate of approximately 6.5 percentage points. Factors such as homeownership, age, and income—central to many existing explanations of variation in opposition to housing (Yoder 2020; Einstein, Glick and Palmer 2019)—do not account for the patterns we observe, as adding these controls leaves the estimates essentially unchanged. The third specification, which replaces random region intercepts with fixed effects, tends to yield somewhat larger estimates.

Taken together, these findings point to a broad and robust relationship between local housing prices and opposition to new development. The fact that this pattern holds across all six national contexts in Table 1 suggests that it is not merely a byproduct of any one political or institutional setting, but instead reflects a more general feature of how housing markets shape citizen preferences.

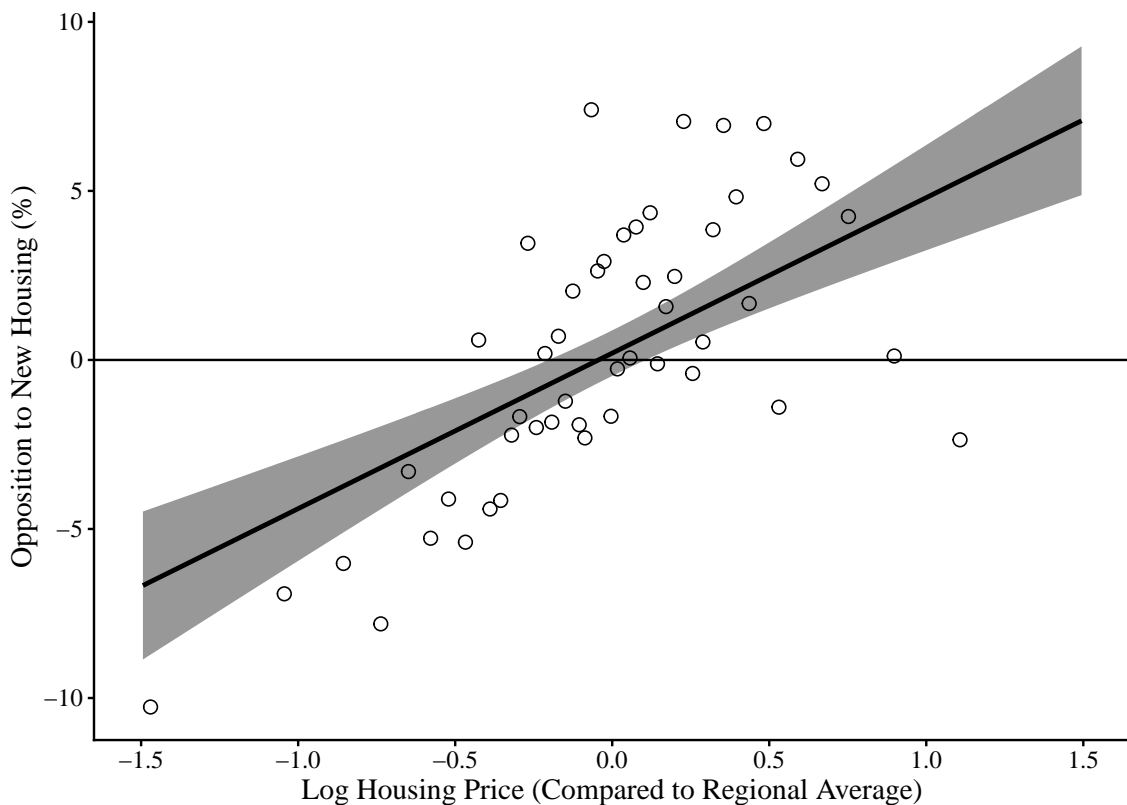


Figure 2: Local Housing Prices and Opposition to New Housing. Dots are binned grouped means. The solid line is a linear fit on the underlying data with a 95 pct. confidence interval.

Different Outcomes and More Extensive Controls

To further test the robustness of the relationship between housing costs and opposition to new development, we examine additional outcome measures from our U.S. survey. This survey includes both a richer set of attitudinal items and an embedded experimental vignette, allowing us to assess whether the pattern holds across different ways of measuring opposition—and whether it is specific to housing.

We first examine three additional outcomes from the U.S. survey. One captures a broad preservationist disposition: agreement with the statement, “I would like my community to

Table 1: Partially Pooled Effects of Local Housing Prices on Opposition to New Housing

	No controls		Controls		Region FEs		<i>N</i>
	β	(SE)	β	(SE)	β	(SE)	
All Countries	6.02	(0.92)	6.76	(0.95)	9.45	(2.44)	16770
Ireland	4.13	(0.23)	5.14	(0.22)	7.95	(0.12)	817
Netherlands	4.95	(0.20)	5.44	(0.19)	7.70	(0.11)	917
US	5.43	(0.34)	6.03	(0.32)	5.09	(0.04)	7200
UK	6.91	(0.14)	7.45	(0.12)	7.80	(0.05)	5983
Sweden	7.15	(0.27)	8.11	(0.25)	12.40	(0.15)	848
Denmark	7.55	(0.27)	8.38	(0.25)	15.75	(0.15)	1005

Notes: Partially pooled estimates from multilevel models with a random slope for log housing price by country and random intercepts for regions. *No controls:* no individual controls. *Controls:* adds gender, income quintile, education, age, homeownership, and log density. *Region FEs:* replaces random region intercepts with fixed effects. *N* from *Controls* model. Country SE = conditional BLUP SE; pooled SE = fixed-effect SE.

stay the way that it is.” The other two come from an embedded vignette experiment in which respondents evaluated a proposed development in their local area. Because the vignette varies whether the project is residential or commercial, it allows us to distinguish housing-specific opposition from a broader resistance to local change.

Figure 3 shows binned scatterplots with linear fits for these four outcomes. Following the comparative analysis, both local housing prices and each outcome are adjusted for state fixed effects and logged population density. The pattern is consistent across all four outcomes: people living in higher-cost areas are more likely to express preservationist attitudes and more likely to oppose both residential and commercial development.

We then estimate a series of linear regression models for each outcome to assess whether the relationship between housing costs and opposition persists after accounting for a richer set of covariates. Results are presented in Table 2. Controls are added stepwise. First, we adjust for basic demographics (age, gender, race), which may shape both housing preferences and neighborhood context (Einstein, Palmer and Glick 2019). Next, we include socioeconomic status (income and education) to account for differences in material resources and political preferences. We then add household characteristics (household size, tenure in current residence, and self-reported urban/suburban/rural location), which may influence both sensitivity to change and selection into particular neighborhoods. Partisanship is included to capture ideological predispositions to development (de Benedictis-Kessner, Jones and Warshaw 2025). Finally, we

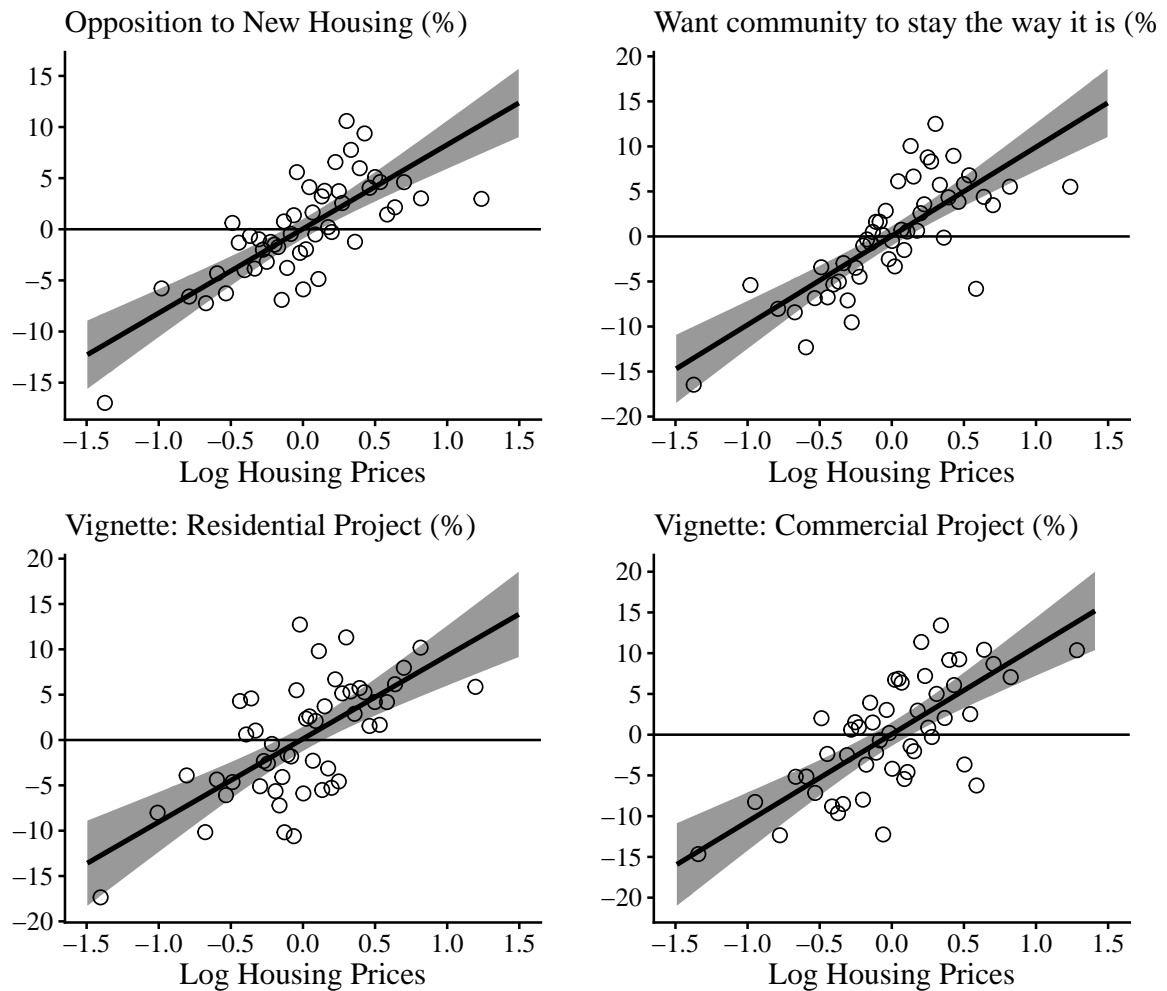


Figure 3: Binned scatterplots show the relationship between log housing prices (relative to the regional average) and four measures of opposition to development. The top panels display general opposition to new housing and agreement with a preservationist attitude. The bottom panels show opposition to hypothetical development projects from a vignette experiment: residential projects (left) and commercial projects (right). In all cases, opposition increases with local housing prices. Shaded areas indicate 95 pct. confidence intervals. Data from the U.S. survey.

refine the regional fixed effects by shifting from states to commuting zones and metropolitan statistical areas, allowing us to explore whether the relationship between housing costs and opposition to development holds *within* urban agglomerations.

While the strength of the association varies somewhat (e.g. models with more detailed geographic fixed effects tend to show slightly weaker relationships, but also absorb much of the variation in housing costs) the overall pattern remains clear: individuals in higher-cost areas are more likely to oppose new development. This association holds across multiple measures of opposition and remains robust after extensive adjustment for geography and population density.

Table 2: How Robust is the Relationship between Housing Cost and Opposition?

	Housing		Preserve		Residential		Commercial	
	β	se	β	se	β	se	β	se
Baseline	6.67	1.13	9.32	1.26	7.91	1.54	8.18	1.79
Age, Gender and Race	6.53	1.79	9.74	1.96	4.06	2.58	7.90	2.93
Income and Education	7.51	1.16	7.91	1.31	7.44	1.57	7.81	1.77
Household Characteristics	7.74	1.16	8.20	1.31	7.76	1.58	8.04	1.78
Partisanship	7.85	1.16	8.43	1.30	7.82	1.58	8.10	1.78
Commuting Zone FE	6.70	1.78	8.97	1.94	3.88	2.57	8.43	2.98
MSA FE	4.80	1.65	5.42	1.82	4.25	2.33	3.92	2.56

Notes: Each cell reports the OLS coefficient on log housing price (and its standard error) from a separate regression for each outcome–specification combination. *Baseline:* log housing price, log population density, and state fixed effects only. *Age, Gender and Race:* adds age, gender, and race indicators. *Income and Education:* adds income and education factors (state fixed effects). *Household Characteristics:* further adds homeownership, household size, and years in home. *Partisanship:* further adds party identification indicators (state fixed effects). *Commuting Zone FE / MSA FE:* replaces state FEs with Commuting Zone or MSA fixed effects. *Housing:* opposition to new housing. *Preserve:* “I would like my community to stay the way that it is.” *Residential/Commercial:* opposition to a hypothetical residential/commercial development vignette. Standard errors clustered at the ZIP code level.

Are People Willing to Act on Opposition to New Housing?

We have shown that there is a robust relationship between local housing costs and opposition to housing. Yet, are citizens ready to act on this opposition and try to stop new housing? We explore this in the Danish homeowner survey (see above for details).

We show descriptive results in figure 4, and conduct a more systematic test using regression analysis and the same analytical set-up as in Table 1 in appendix D. The results show a robust relationship between housing prices and the propensity of respondents to say that they are

willing to take concrete action to block the new development. It can be costly for politicians to approve the project. 35% of the respondents in the most expensive quintile indicate that they are willing to vote for another party, while this is only the case for 17.5% in the least expensive quintile.

One may argue that it is cheap talk for people to state in a survey that they are willing to act. However, it should be noted that we set the bar high and only code those who answer to "a very high degree" and "high degree" as being willing to act, while coding those who say "to some degree" as not willing to act.

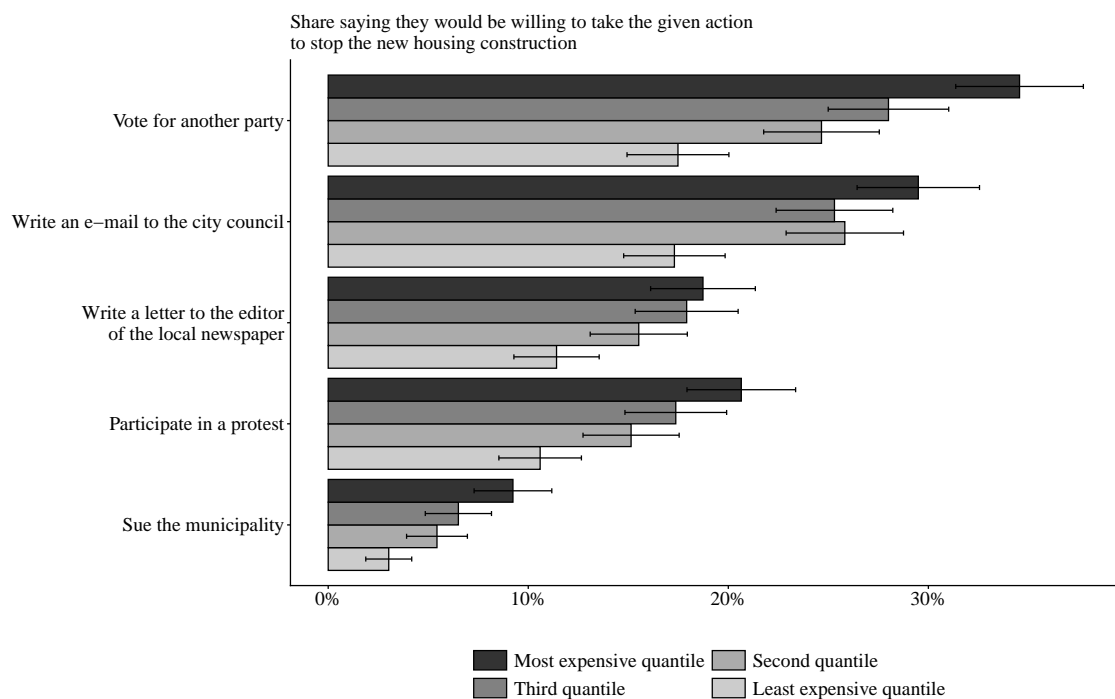


Figure 4: Local Housing Prices and Willingness to take Action Against a New Development. Bar plot showing the share of respondents in the Danish survey, who are willing to take a concrete action to stop a new construction by housing price quintile. All respondents are included, both those who oppose and support the construction. People are coded as being willing to take the action if they replied that they "to a very high degree" or "to a high degree" would be willing to take the action to stop the construction. The error bars show 95 percent confidence intervals.

Can Preservationist Sorting Explain Why Opposition to New Housing Becomes Concentrated in Expensive Housing Markets?

We argue that one important explanation for the robust empirical relationship between local housing costs and opposition to new development is preservationist sorting: as housing becomes more expensive, residents face sharper tradeoffs between remaining in the area and living elsewhere while consuming more housing or other goods. Over time, this may disproportionately attract and retain residents who place especially high value on a neighborhood's existing character and are therefore more inclined to resist local change.

This preservationist sorting account generates several observable implications. First, if higher housing costs are associated with a stronger desire to preserve neighborhood character, residents in expensive areas should be more likely to invoke such concerns when explaining their opposition to new housing. Second, the pattern should not be limited to homeowners. If housing costs shape who remains in an area, the relationship should also appear among renters, even though standard homevoter accounts emphasize homeowners' incentives to protect their housing assets (Fischel 2001). Third, if the relationship reflects sorting, it should also be visible among residents who recently moved into the area. By contrast, if expensive places are more opposed simply because long-run residents have gradually restricted supply, the relationship should be weaker among recent movers, who did not themselves shape those earlier political decisions. Finally, if rising prices selectively retain residents with stronger preservationist preferences, then exogenous information about rising local housing costs should make individuals who are less attached to neighborhood preservation more willing to consider moving, while leaving the most preservationist residents less responsive.

The analyses in the following examine these implications in turn. We begin with open-ended responses about why respondents oppose new housing. We then test whether the relationship between housing costs and opposition holds for both renters and homeowners, and whether it is already present among recent movers. Finally, we turn to a survey experiment that allows us to assess more directly whether rising housing costs selectively retain residents with stronger preservationist preferences.

Preservationist Justifications in High-Cost Areas

To provide evidence of preservationist justifications, we analyze respondents' self-reported reasoning through open-ended answers. In the U.S. survey, all participants were invited to elaborate on their opposition to (or support for) new housing in an open text field. We use a large language model, namely Claude Code (Sonnet 4.6), to classify these responses based on whether they reflect local preservationist reasoning. Specifically, we prompt Claude Code to assess whether a response expresses a desire to protect the existing physical or natural characteristics of the local area, excluding concerns about congestion, overcrowding, the type of people moving in, or purely economic factors unless tied to local character. The full prompt and CLAUDE.md file used for classification is provided in Appendix E.

Large Language Models have been shown to be an accurate and efficient substitute for human experts in annotating political text (Heseltine and Clemm von Hohenberg 2024). To further validate our use of this method, we assess whether Claude Code's classifications align with those of two human expert coders. We find that Claude Code exhibits a high level of agreement with the human coders—comparable to the level of agreement among the human coders themselves. Details of this validation exercise are provided in Appendix E.

Examples of reasoning classified as local preservationist include statements such as: "I like the make-up of my community already. It is a nice, quiet neighborhood with beautiful natural landscapes and parks," "I love the old architecture," and "Would change bucolic character."

In Table 3, we examine whether respondents' use of local preservationist arguments is associated with local house prices. We estimate four models. Model 1 includes all respondents, where we classify those who do not oppose new housing as non-preservationists by default. The results show that individuals in higher-priced areas are significantly more likely to use local preservationist arguments to justify their views on new housing.

To test whether this relationship holds specifically among opponents of new housing, we restrict the sample in Model 2 to only those who oppose new housing. We find that opponents in more expensive areas are more likely to use local preservationist reasoning. Although the coefficient is slightly larger than for all respondents, the relationship is not statistically significant ($p = 0.2$) due to the smaller sample.

In Model 3, we limit the sample to only respondents living in built-up areas, excluding rural residents whose opposition may only reflect nature preservation and not preservation of the current urban form. Here, we also find an association: urban respondents are also more likely to use local preservationist arguments in more expensive areas. In Model 4, we only include opponents of new developments in urban areas, and find the same association, although it is not statistically significant.

Table 3: Effects of Local Housing Prices on Localist Justifications in Open-Ended Answers

	β	SE	N
All respondents	3.13	(0.57)	7149
Only oppose housing	3.23	(2.54)	1723
All respondents in urban areas	1.85	(0.53)	5721
Only oppose housing in urban areas	3.01	(2.67)	1283

Notes: OLS estimates with clustered standard errors at the post-code level. All models include controls for log(density) and state fixed effects.

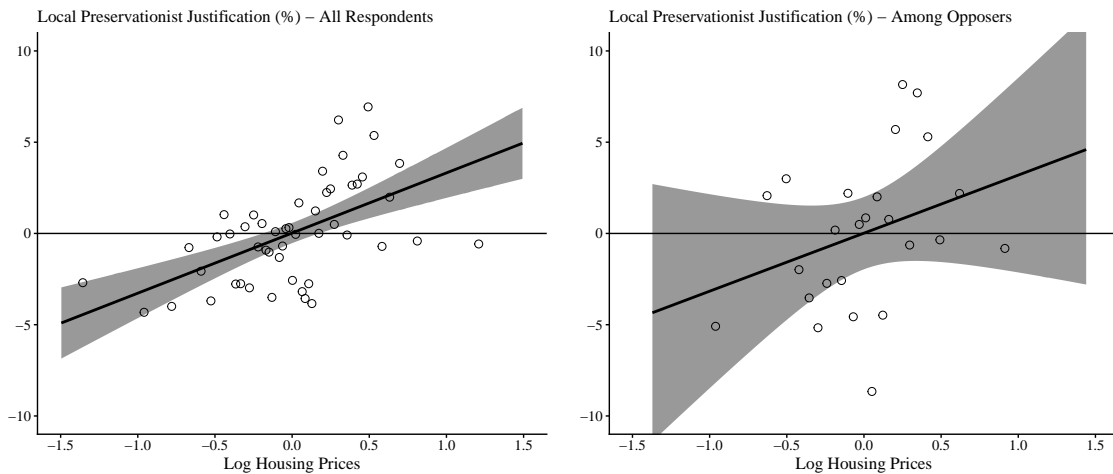


Figure 5: Local Housing Prices and the Use of Local Preservationist Justifications for Opposition in Open-Ended Answers. The graph on the left shows results for all respondents ($N = 7,149$); the graph on the right includes only respondents who said they oppose new housing ($N = 1,723$). The solid line is a linear fit on the underlying data with a 95 pct. confidence interval. Data from the U.S. survey.

Opposition in High-Cost Areas Is Not Limited to Homeowners

A central implication of the selection account is that the relationship between local housing costs and opposition to development should not be confined to homeowners. If rising housing

costs gradually sort residents across places, then expensive areas should retain both homeowners and renters who place greater value on preserving neighborhood character. This differs from standard homevoter accounts, which emphasize homeowners' incentives to protect the value of their housing assets (Fischel 2001).

Table 4 supports this implication using data from the U.S. survey. Among homeowners, opposition to development is higher in more expensive areas, but the same pattern is also found among renters, even though renters have neither home equity nor mortgage debt. The association is weaker for renters, but it remains substantial and clearly positive. This is difficult to reconcile with an explanation centered only on owners' financial exposure to the housing market.

The bottom row of Table 4 provides a further test. Even after controlling for homeowners' own stake in the local housing market—using the log of their self-reported home value and the log of their home equity (home value minus outstanding mortgage debt)—we continue to observe marked differences between high- and low-cost areas. In other words, individuals with similarly valued homes are more likely to oppose development when they live in places where housing is generally more expensive. This suggests that the broader housing-market context matters over and above respondents' own housing wealth.

Table 4: Relationship Between Local Housing Prices and Opposition by Housing Tenure

	Housing		Preserve		Residential		Commercial	
	β	se	β	se	β	se	β	se
Renters	2.99	1.66	4.53	1.95	7.08	2.35	7.12	2.74
Owners	8.19	1.47	10.71	1.62	7.91	2.03	7.79	2.32
+ Home Value Controls	10.86	1.94	12.32	2.22	7.16	2.76	7.99	3.12

Notes: Each cell reports the OLS coefficient on log housing price (and its standard error in the adjacent column) from a separate regression for each outcome–group combination. All specifications include log population density and state fixed effects; no additional controls are included. Standard errors clustered at the ZIP code level. *Renters* and *Owners* are defined by self-reported tenure (respondents in neither category excluded). *+ Home Value Controls* restricts to homeowners with non-missing home equity data and additionally controls for log equity and log self-reported sale price. Outcomes as in Table G1.

One way to reconcile these patterns with an economic account would be to argue that residents in high-cost areas, including renters, are especially likely to believe that new development will further increase local housing prices, perhaps because of concerns about gentrification and

displacement (Hankinson 2018). We therefore asked respondents whether the project presented in the vignette would cause housing prices in their local area to rise or fall. However, in Appendix F we show that there is little evidence for this interpretation. In particular, among renters, there is no relationship between local housing prices and the belief that new development will increase prices.

Taken together, these results fit the selection account better than a narrow economic self-interest story. The association between local housing costs and opposition is not limited to homeowners, does not disappear once we account for homeowners' own housing wealth, and is not accompanied by stronger beliefs in high-cost areas that development will further raise prices.

Could Housing Costs Reflect Pre-Existing Anti-Development Attitudes?

One alternative explanation for the relationship between housing costs and opposition to new development is that some areas are more preservationist to begin with, and over time, their anti-development attitudes contribute to rising housing costs by constraining supply.

To explore this possibility in more detail, we turn to the U.S. survey. Figure 6 presents an analysis interacting housing costs with time spent in the respondent's current home. The idea is straightforward: if the correlation were primarily driven by long-term residents restricting supply and thereby increasing prices, the relationship should be strongest among those who have lived in the area for a longer period.

What we find instead is that the relationship between housing costs and opposition to new development is already present among those who have lived in their current home for less than two years. Since this group has not resided in the area long enough to influence housing supply, the most plausible explanation is that individuals with more preservationist attitudes are selecting into more expensive neighborhoods. The analysis includes the full set of control variables, except for home equity and home value, which are only available for homeowners.

That said, the effect of housing costs on opposition is somewhat larger among longer-term residents—those who have lived in their homes for more than five years. This could reflect some degree of reverse causation, in which anti-development preferences have influenced local

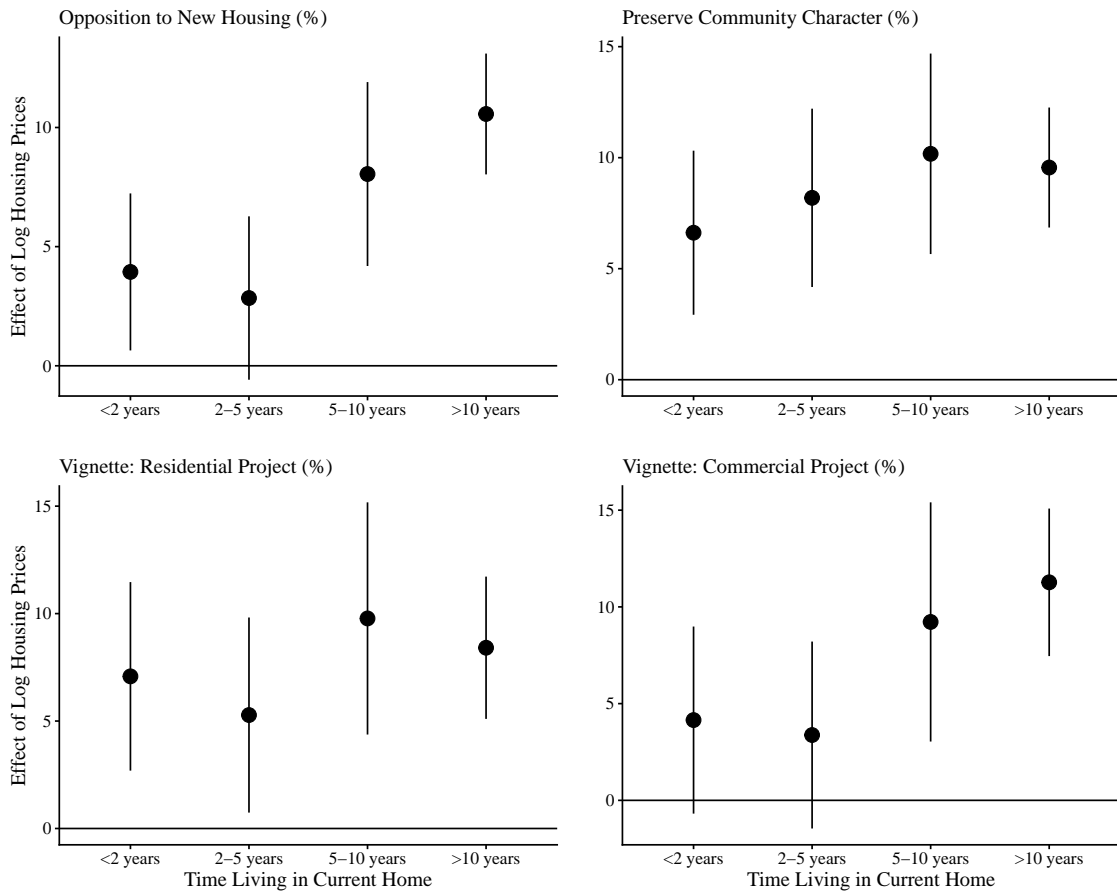


Figure 6: Length of Residence, Housing Costs and Opposition to Development and Community Change Each panel shows marginal effects of an increase in log housing prices by length of residence in the respondent's current home, estimated from interaction models with a full set of controls and state fixed effects. Outcomes include opposition to new housing, preference for maintaining the status quo, and opposition to hypothetical residential and commercial projects. Points indicate average marginal effects with 95 pct. confidence intervals. Data from the U.S. survey.

prices. But it may also point to differences in how long-term residents relate to their neighborhoods. Those who stay longer may be more committed to the area and more invested in its current character, while recent arrivals may be more likely to move again if they find better or more affordable options. In either case, the fact that the housing cost-opposition link appears consistently across groups supports the view that this relationship is not solely the product of local preservationist areas becoming expensive over time.

Do Local Preservationists Select into High-Cost Areas?

The analyses above have shown that citizen opposition to new development is consistently stronger in high-cost areas. This relationship is not readily explained by differences in demographic composition or by variation in the extent to which residents have a direct financial stake in the housing market. Instead, we find that residents in expensive areas are much more likely to explain their opposition in terms of wanting to maintain the existing character of their neighborhood.

In other words, high-cost areas tend to be home to individuals with strong local preservationist preferences and a marked attachment to the status quo. We have argued that this pattern is consistent with a selection-based explanation: those who place a high value on the look and feel of a particular area—local preservationists—are more willing to absorb rising housing costs in order to remain in place. In contrast, those without strong preservationist attachments are more likely to relocate to less expensive areas when prices increase.

In this section, we test this preservationist sorting mechanism more directly by analyzing how housing costs influence relocation preferences among individuals with varying levels of attachment to their neighborhood's physical character. To examine their behavior, we fielded a survey experiment among U.S. residents in the spring of 2022, in which respondents were presented with information about housing price trends in their metropolitan area over the past 12 years. Given the sharp nationwide rise in housing prices following the COVID-19 pandemic (see Figure 1), nearly all respondents were exposed to a signal indicating substantial recent local price increases. We classify respondents as strong or weak local preservationists based on

whether they scored above or below the median on a two-item scale measuring preferences for preserving the current character of their neighborhood.

Figure 7 presents the overall treatment effects of the experiment. The left panel shows the results for our manipulation check: respondents in the treatment group—who received information about recent housing price trends—were approximately 12 percentage points more likely to report that housing prices had “increased a lot” in their metropolitan area.⁶ The right panel examines our main outcome: whether respondents express a desire to move to an area with lower housing costs. Across all respondents, the treatment effect on relocation preferences is positive yet statistically indistinguishable from zero.

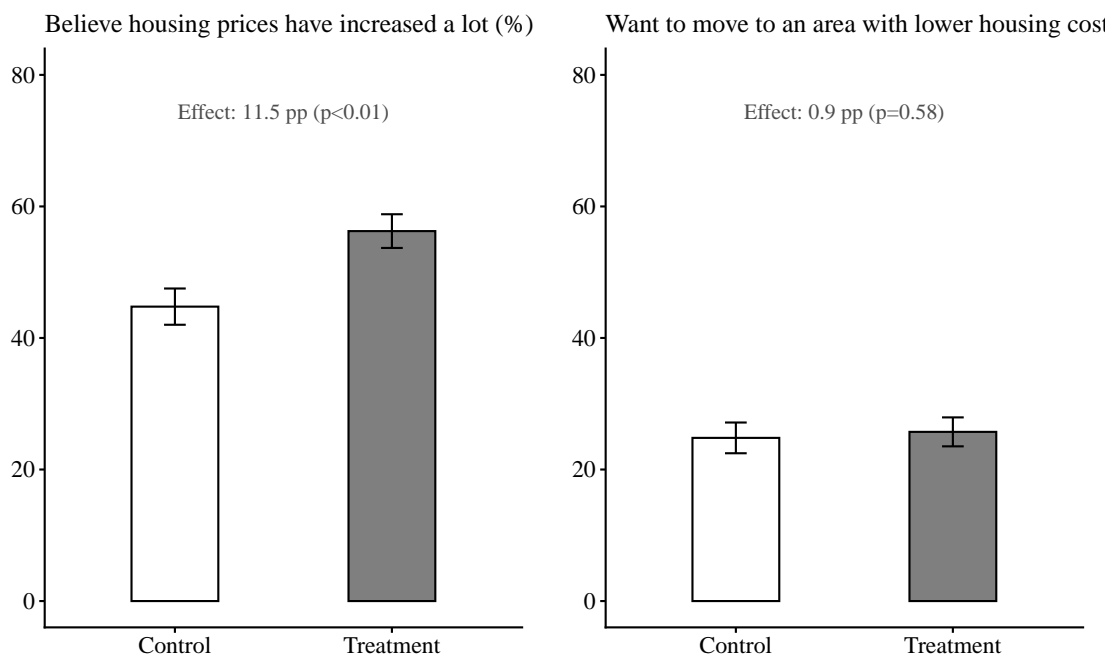


Figure 7: Overall treatment effects of the housing price information experiment. Left panel shows the manipulation check (belief that prices have increased a lot); right panel shows the share wanting to relocate to a less expensive area. Bars represent means for treated and untreated respondents. Spikes are 95 pct. confidence intervals. Data from the U.S. survey experiment ($N = 2,830$).

⁶Specifically, we examine the share selecting the response “Housing prices have increased a lot” to the question: “Would you say that the price of homes and apartments in your metropolitan area has increased or decreased from 2020 to 2022?” Other options included “Decreased a lot,” “Decreased somewhat,” “Have remained about the same,” and “Increased somewhat.” Using both linear and quantile regression, we also find a statistically significant treatment effect on the median and mean response to this question ($p < .01$).

Figure 8 look at the effect on our relocation outcome when we split respondents into strong and weak local preservationists. Among strong local preservationists—those who scored above the median on our two-item local preservationism scale—the treatment had no discernible effect on relocation preferences. In contrast, weak local preservationists were approximately 4 percentage points more likely to say they would prefer to relocate to a less expensive area. This difference between strong and weak local preservationists is statistically significant ($p < .05$), providing support for the selection-based account: individuals with weaker preservationist preferences are more responsive to rising housing costs and more inclined to consider relocating as prices increase.

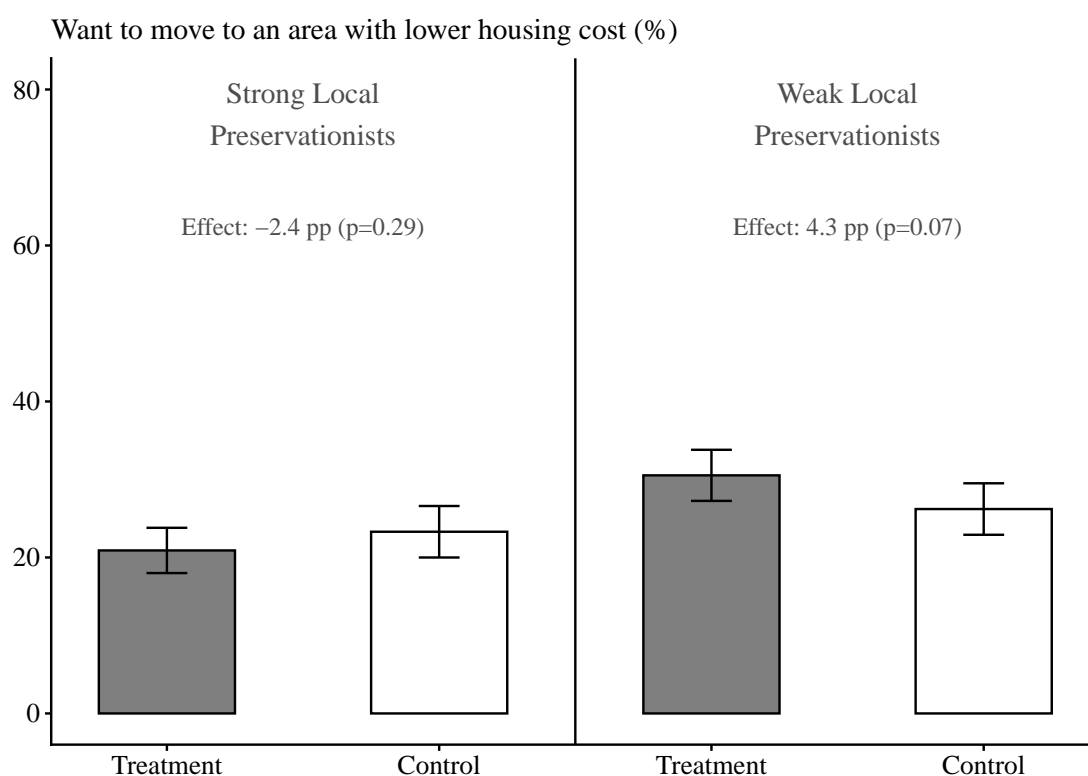


Figure 8: Local preservationists are less sensitive to housing price shocks. Bars represent mean response for treated and untreated respondents among strong local preservationists (who score above the median on the local preservationism scale) and weak local preservationists (who score below median). Spikes are 95 pct. confidence intervals. Data from the U.S. survey experiment ($N = 2,830$).

Figure 9 provides further evidence in support of the selection-based account by examining whether treatment effects are concentrated in areas with the strongest housing market signals. We split respondents by whether their metropolitan area experienced above- or below-median

housing price growth between 2010 and 2022 (the median being approximately 77 percent). In high-growth areas, weak local preservationists in the treatment group were approximately 7 percentage points more likely to report wanting to relocate, while strong local preservationists were unaffected. In low-growth areas, neither group showed a meaningful response to the treatment. This pattern reinforces the idea that weak local preservationists respond to rising housing costs by considering exit: when the treatment conveys a particularly dramatic signal of price increases—as it does in high-growth areas—they are especially likely to consider relocating.

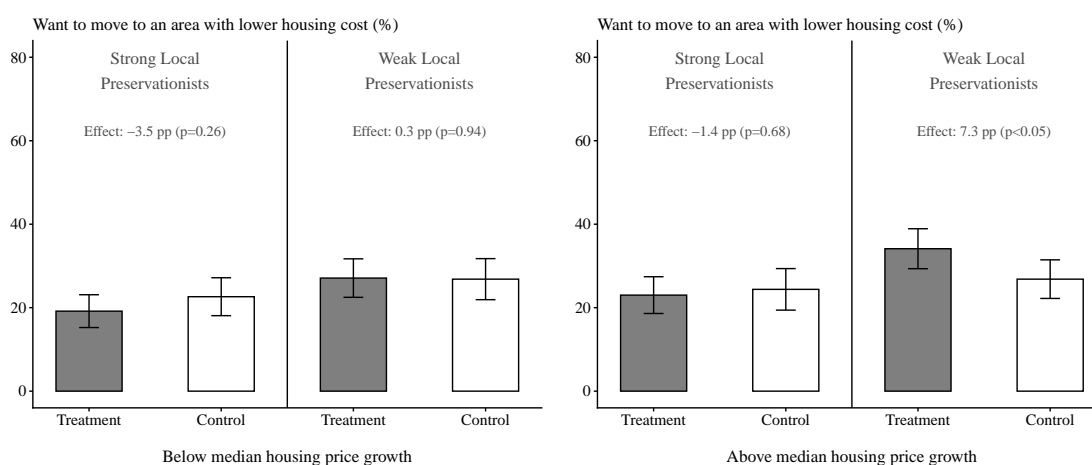


Figure 9: Treatment effects are concentrated in areas which experienced higher housing price growth. Bars represent mean response for treated and untreated respondents among strong and weak local preservationists across areas which had an above or below the median increase in housing prices from 2010 to 2022 (i.e., above or below 77 percent). Spikes are 95 pct. confidence intervals. Data from the U.S. survey experiment.

Is it truly local preservationism that shapes how people respond to rising housing costs, or could the difference be driven by some other characteristic correlated with these attitudes? To some extent, this distinction may not matter for the broader implications: regardless of whether it is preservationism itself or some associated trait (such as income) that drives the response, the outcome is the same—rising housing costs lead to the exit of individuals less committed to the local status quo, resulting in a population increasingly composed of strong local preservationists.

That said, we find no evidence that other observable factors—such as income, typical home value in the respondent’s area, housing tenure (i.e., whether the respondent rents or owns), education level, or length of residence—explain the difference in treatment effects between

strong and weak local preservationists. Table 5 presents the treatment effects for each group, as well as the difference between them (i.e., the interaction effect), estimated from models that include interactions between treatment status and each control variable. These controls are added cumulatively, and across all specifications, the size of the gap between strong and weak local preservationists remains stable.

Taken together, these findings support the selection argument. Rising housing costs change the relocation intentions of individuals who are weak local preservationists—they are more likely to look for cheaper housing elsewhere—while strong local preservationists are largely unaffected. This mechanism helps explain why we observe more local preservationist attitudes, and in turn greater opposition to urban development, in areas with higher housing costs in our observational analyses.

Table 5: How Robust is the Difference between Localist and Non-Localist?

	Localists		Non-Localist		Difference		
	β	se	β	se	β	se	n
Baseline	-2.40	2.24	4.32	2.37	-6.72	3.26	2830
Log(Typical Home Value)	-2.53	2.24	4.43	2.37	-6.96	3.26	2830
Household Income	-1.98	2.35	5.84	2.51	-7.82	3.43	2516
Housing Tenure	-1.74	2.34	6.08	2.49	-7.81	3.41	2516
Education	-1.76	2.34	6.10	2.49	-7.85	3.42	2516
Years in Current Home	-1.71	2.35	5.72	2.55	-7.43	3.47	2449

Notes: Each row adds a control variable to the baseline specification. *Localists* are respondents above the median of the composite local preservationism scale; *Non-Localists* are at or below the median. *Difference* is the interaction coefficient (treatment \times localist). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors throughout.

Conclusion

In this article, we have shown that opposition to new housing is concentrated in places where housing costs are high. Across six countries, we document a consistent and robust relationship between local housing prices and opposition to new housing. This pattern holds across diverse political and institutional contexts, across multiple outcome measures, and persists after adjusting for demographic and socioeconomic factors. We also show that opposition in high-cost areas is politically consequential: residents in these places are more willing to take action to block new development.

We then examine why this pattern arises. Several observational findings are difficult to reconcile with standard alternative explanations. The relationship is not meaningfully reduced by controls for income, wealth, and other indicators of socioeconomic status. It is also not confined to homeowners: renters in expensive areas are more likely to oppose development as well, and this pattern is not accompanied by stronger beliefs that new development will raise local housing prices. At the same time, residents in high-cost areas are more likely to justify their opposition in terms of preserving neighborhood character, and the relationship is already visible among recent movers into expensive areas, which is hard to square with the idea that it simply reflects long-run anti-development politics gradually driving up local prices.

Taken together, these patterns are consistent with a preservationist sorting account: as housing costs rise, expensive places increasingly attract and retain residents who place greater value on preserving the existing character of their neighborhoods. We test this account more directly with a survey experiment conducted during the COVID-era housing boom. The experiment shows that rising local housing costs make respondents with weaker preservationist preferences more willing to consider relocating, whereas those with stronger preservationist preferences are less likely to do so. This suggests that rising housing costs can selectively retain residents who are more committed to preserving neighborhood character.

This dynamic helps explain why some of the world's most prosperous and progressive cities struggle to address housing, transport, and climate challenges: affordability crises push out those who might otherwise support change (Wetzstein 2017), while the residents who remain are often more committed to resisting change. The result is political deadlock—even in places where liberal residents broadly support affordable housing and public transit in principle (Dougherty 2020).

The findings also carry implications for housing policy. Approaches that seek to shift public opinion through appeals to affordability or economic growth may fail to engage with the preservationist motives that drive opposition in high-cost areas. Policies that dampen housing costs or reduce the extent of residential sorting—such as rent control, inclusionary zoning, or the expansion of non-market housing—may offer a more promising route by maintaining a broader mix of residents and preventing opposition from becoming entrenched.

An important caveat is that, while our evidence is consistent with a selection mechanism, we cannot directly observe how rising housing costs reshape preferences over time. Doing so would require panel data that track the same individuals over time and include fine-grained geographic information, so that changes in local housing prices can be linked to changes in opinion. No such geolocated panel data currently exist in any of the countries we study. Instead, we rely on a combination of cross-sectional, observational, and experimental evidence to evaluate competing explanations and trace the underlying mechanism.

Finally, as we noted in the introduction, the link between housing costs and opposition risks generating a self-reinforcing cycle: as prices rise, opposition hardens, supply is constrained, and affordability worsens. Over time, this dynamic can transform open cities into exclusionary enclaves—economically vibrant but politically resistant to change. Moreover, high-cost areas are often where new housing is most needed, as they serve as economic hubs with high productivity and access to opportunity (Bertaud 2018). Yet if opposition is strongest precisely in these areas, development may be pushed into lower-cost regions where the economic gains from growth are more limited (Hsieh and Moretti 2019). This pattern risks compounding regional inequality and undermining the potential for social mobility (Ganong and Shoag 2017).

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Appendix: For Online Publication

Contents

A	Pre-Registration of the Survey Experiment	2
B	Comparative Analysis	4
C	Population Density: Results	7
D	Action to Stop New Construction	8
E	Content Analysis using Large Language Models	9
F	Gentrification Concerns	13
G	Full Regression Models	14
H	Descriptive Statistics	19

A Pre-Registration of the Survey Experiment

The U.S. survey experiment discussed in the main text was preregistered prior to data collection in a joint pre-analysis plan by [REDACTED]. The preregistration covered a broader set of hypotheses than those analyzed in this article. As noted in the original preregistration, different hypotheses were intended for use in different research projects. The analyses reported in this article draw on the parts of the preregistration concerning respondents' mobility intentions and heterogeneity by attachment to their local area.

Relevant Preregistered Design Features

Respondents were randomly assigned to either a treatment or control group. Treated respondents were shown a graph with objective information about housing prices in their metropolitan area, including monthly data from January 2010 to February 2022. The graph displayed trends in top-tier prices, bottom-tier prices, and the typical value of a single-family home, as well as an estimate of the minimum annual income required to afford a typical single-family home in the respondent's area. The preregistration specified that the treatment would be assigned based on respondents' zip codes and linked to metropolitan statistical areas using HUD's ZIP-CBSA crosswalk.

The preregistration stated the following mobility hypothesis:

Hypothesis 6. *Mobility*. Subjects will be more likely to move to less expensive areas when exposed to housing prices compared to subjects in the control group. *Interaction effect.* This difference will be larger for respondents who do not feel attached to their local area.

The mobility outcome was preregistered as a binary indicator equal to one for respondents who reported that they would consider moving to another city and, if so, would choose a city where housing costs are lower.

The preregistration also specified an "attachment to local area" measure based on agreement with the following three statements:

1. "I would like my community to stay the way it is."
2. "I would like to stay in my community for the rest of my life."
3. "I like how my community looks and feels."

These items were to be combined into an index of local attachment.

In addition, the preregistration stated that treatment heterogeneity would be examined by the size of local housing-price increases across metropolitan areas, and listed heterogeneity by respondents' characteristics—including housing situation, time in current home, income, and attachment to locality—as exploratory analyses.

How the Present Article Uses the Preregistration

This article uses the preregistered survey experiment to examine whether rising housing costs are associated with mobility patterns consistent with what we call *preservationist sorting*. More specifically, we focus on the preregistered mobility outcome and on heterogeneity by respondents' attachment to their local area. In the terminology of this article, we interpret stronger attachment to the status quo and to neighborhood character as indicative of stronger preservationist preferences.

The article therefore uses the experiment somewhat more narrowly than the full preregistration. The preregistration covered multiple policy and perception outcomes, including displacement fears, support for housing development, support for affordable housing, support for rent control, economic perceptions, and perceived relative economic status. Those outcomes are not the focus of the present article.

Departures from the Original Preregistered Plan

The main departure concerns the operationalization of the attachment measure. In the preregistration, we proposed a three-item index of local attachment combining preferences for neighborhood stability, desire to remain in the community for life, and liking the way the community looks and feels. In the analyses presented in this article, we focus on the items that most directly capture preservationist preferences:

1. “I would like my community to stay the way it is.”
2. “I like how my community looks and feels.”

We do not include the item “I would like to stay in my community for the rest of my life,” because upon reflection it was too closely related to the article’s mobility outcome and therefore less suitable as part of the moderator used to interpret heterogeneity in relocation intentions.

This choice has limited substantive bearing on the results. The two-item and three-item scales are highly correlated ($r = 0.93$), and 89.5 per cent of respondents are assigned to the same strong/weak group under both operationalizations. The main finding—that weak local preservationists are more likely to report wanting to move to a cheaper area in response to price information, while strong local preservationists are unaffected—is essentially unchanged. The interaction effect on the relocation outcome is -6.9 pp ($p = 0.032$) with the three-item scale versus -6.7 pp ($p = 0.040$) with the two-item scale. The pattern in high-growth areas is slightly stronger with three items (-9.5 pp, $p = 0.047$, compared with -8.7 pp, $p = 0.071$). The manipulation check (belief that prices have increased a lot) shows no significant heterogeneity by localism group under the three-item scale (-4.5 pp, $p = 0.242$), which is consistent with the expectation that the treatment should shift price beliefs equally across groups.

Table A6: Experimental Results: Two-Item vs. Three-Item Localism Scale. Each cell reports the treatment effect (in percentage points) and its p -value for the indicated group or contrast. *Strong* and *Weak* refer to respondents above and below the median of the respective scale. *Interaction* is the difference-in-differences (treat \times localist). *High-growth interaction* restricts to respondents in MSAs above the median long-run price growth.

Outcome	Two-item scale (main)			Three-item scale		
	Strong	Weak	Interaction	Strong	Weak	Interaction
Want to move (movcheap)	-2.4	4.3	-6.7*	-2.6	4.3	-6.9*
Low-growth areas	-3.5	0.3	-3.7	-4.1	0.7	-4.7
High-growth areas	-1.4	7.3*	-8.7	-1.9	7.6*	-9.5*

Notes: * $p < 0.05$. OLS with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors.

A second difference is interpretive rather than procedural. The preregistration referred to this moderator as *attachment to local area*. In this article, we interpret heterogeneity by this

measure as evidence consistent with preservationist sorting. This reflects the substantive focus of the article rather than a change to the treatment or main outcome.

Aside from these differences, the treatment, random assignment, and primary mobility outcome follow the preregistered design.

B Comparative Analysis

To supplement the analysis from the US, we run similar analyses as the one found in Figure 2 in five other developed democracies. These are Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. In the following, we describe the data used in the analysis.

B.1 Opposition to new housing

The data on opposition to new housing stems from three different surveys conducted as a part of the WEALTHPOL-project (Ansell, Bokobza, Cansunar, Elkjaer, Haslberger and Nystrup 2022).

The project conducted one survey (WEALTHPOL Europe Survey) which was rolled out in 7 European countries in the Spring of 2022 by the WEALTHPOL team together with Kantar. The countries are Denmark, Sweden, Ireland, Germany, Netherlands, France, Italy. We are unable to find detailed data on house prices for France, Germany, and Italy, and these countries are therefore excluded from the analysis. The question on opposition to new developments is *Thinking about new housing in your local area. How much would you support or oppose more homes being built in your local area?*, and the respondents could answer one of four categories, 1. Strongly oppose, 2. Somewhat oppose, 3. Somewhat support, and 4. Strongly support. We code 1 and 2 as opposing new housing being built.

In addition, the project conducted two surveys in England and Wales (Elkjær et al. 2025). The first survey was conducted by YouGov in May and June 2021, using their nationally representative online panel, and included 3,186 adults living in England and Wales. The second was also conducted by YouGov survey in the fall of 2022, again using their nationally representative online panel but this time sampling 3,592 adults living in the United Kingdom. In the analyses we combine the two surveys and run analyses on the full sample. The results are practically identical if we run the analyses on the two surveys separately. The question to measure opposition to new housing in both surveys was *Thinking about new housing in your local area. How much would you support or oppose more homes being built in your local area?*, and the respondents could answer one of five categories, 1. Strongly support, 2. Somewhat support, 3. Neither support nor oppose, 4. Somewhat oppose, and 5. Strongly oppose. We code 4 and 5 as opposing new housing being built.

Descriptive statistics for the surveys are found in Appendix H.

B.2 Full Multilevel Model Results

Table B1 presents the full multilevel model results underlying Table 1 in the main text. The structure is identical but reports N separately for each specification.

B.3 Data on house prices

Denmark

We use data from the Danish Mortgage Bank Federation, Realkreditforeningen. This data contains quarterly information about the average price per square-meter for both apartments

Table B1: Partially Pooled Effects of Local Housing Prices on Opposition to New Housing (Full Results)

	No controls		Controls		Region FEs	
	β	(SE)	β	(SE)	β	(SE)
All Countries	6.02	(0.92)	6.76	(0.95)	9.45	(2.44)
Ireland	4.13	(0.23)	5.14	(0.22)	7.95	(0.12)
Netherlands	4.95	(0.20)	5.44	(0.19)	7.70	(0.11)
US	5.43	(0.34)	6.03	(0.32)	5.09	(0.04)
UK	6.91	(0.14)	7.45	(0.12)	7.80	(0.05)
Sweden	7.15	(0.27)	8.11	(0.25)	12.40	(0.15)
Denmark	7.55	(0.27)	8.38	(0.25)	15.75	(0.15)
<i>N</i>	17666		16770		16770	

Notes: Partially pooled estimates from multilevel models with a random slope for log housing price by country and random intercepts for regions. *No controls:* no individual controls. *Controls:* adds gender, income quintile, education, age, homeownership, and log density. *Region FEs:* replaces random region intercepts with fixed effects. Country SE = conditional BLUP SE; pooled SE = fixed-effect SE.

and single family homes at the zip code level. We use the data for 2020-2021. We calculate an average for both types of housing by multiplying the number of sold units for each type with the average price for each type. This number is then divided with the total sum of sold units.

Ireland

We use data from the Residential Property Price Index (RPPI) for July 2022, released by the Central Statistics Office on Wednesday (14 September). The index contains data on the median price of a dwelling purchased (in EUR) in the 12 months to July 2022 for the 139 Eircodes in Ireland.

The Netherlands

We use data from Statistics Netherlands on the average purchase prices of existing own homes by municipality in 2022 (in EUR). The identifier for the statistics is 83625ENG. There are 728 municipalities in the dataset.

Sweden

We use data provided by Svensk Mäklarstatistik AB. This data contains information about the average price per square-meter for both apartments and villas on the municipal level in 2022. There are 290 municipalities in the dataset.

The United Kingdom

We use the *House price statistics for small areas in England and Wales* provided by the Office for National Statistics. We use the mean price for the Year ending Mar 2020 paid by the Middle layer Super Output Areas (MSOA). There is data on 7,201 MSOA's.

B.4 Population density data sources

Population density is included as a control in all regression models to ensure that comparisons are made between areas where the scope for new construction is broadly similar. We collect density data from national statistical offices at the most granular geographic level for which both population and area information are available.

For **Denmark**, we construct postal-area density from Statistics Denmark (DST table POSTNR1), combining 2021 population counts with area estimates derived from DAWA GeoJSON postal boundary files.

For **the Netherlands**, we use municipality-level (*gemeente*) density published directly by Statistics Netherlands (CBS table 70072ned) for 2022.

For **Sweden**, we combine 2021 municipal population from Statistics Sweden (SCB table BefolkningNy) with land area from SCB table Areal2012NN; because the survey records ZIP codes rather than municipality codes, respondents are matched to municipalities via a crosswalk derived from two open-source Swedish postcode files, yielding a match rate of approximately 90 per cent.

For **the United Kingdom**, we use ONS mid-year 2020 population estimates at the Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) level combined with MSOA boundary areas from ONS ArcGIS, giving near-complete coverage across England and Wales.

For the **United States**, ZIP-code density is derived from US Census ZIP-level area and population data for 2020, matched to the Zillow house price data.

For **Ireland**, comparable sub-national density data are unavailable; density is accordingly treated as a constant for Irish respondents, which is absorbed by the regional fixed effects.

C Population Density: Results

Table C1 reports the association between log population density and opposition to new housing within each country, estimated using the same within-region fixed effects used in the main analysis. The relationship is heterogeneous across national contexts. In Denmark and Sweden, higher-density areas are *more* opposed to new housing, consistent with the intuition that urban residents in high-demand neighbourhoods may be more protective of the built environment. In the United States, the relationship is negative but modest: denser areas are slightly *less* opposed. The UK shows a relatively strong negative relationship within regions: once regional differences are accounted for, denser MSOAs oppose new housing less. The Netherlands shows no statistically significant association.

These patterns reflect the complex interplay between density, housing prices, and opposition. In countries where density and housing prices are positively correlated within regions (as in Denmark and Sweden), controlling for density tends to attenuate the price coefficient. In the UK, density and housing prices are negatively correlated within regions—denser MSOAs are not systematically more expensive once regional differences are removed—which explains why including density in the UK models reduces the estimated price effect.

Table C1: Association Between Log Population Density and Opposition to New Housing, by Country. Each estimate comes from a regression of opposition (0–100) on log density with regional fixed effects (U.S. states; NUTS 2 regions in European cases). Standard errors clustered at the local-area level.

Country	β	(SE)
Denmark	2.82	(0.85)
Netherlands	−0.30	(1.41)
Sweden	3.38	(0.94)
United Kingdom	−4.59	(0.46)
United States	−0.81	(0.26)

Notes: Ireland excluded (density not available). All models include regional fixed effects.

Multilevel model. The multilevel model underlying Table 1 in the main text is estimated by restricted maximum likelihood using the BOBYQA optimiser. It includes a random slope for log housing price by country, absorbing cross-national heterogeneity in the price–opposition relationship, alongside random intercepts for regions (or fixed effects for regions in the third specification). All country-specific estimates are positive and the pattern is robust across the three specifications shown in Table 1. The variation across countries—ranging from approximately 5 percentage points (Ireland, Netherlands) to 8 percentage points (Denmark, Sweden)—confirms that the positive relationship between local housing costs and opposition to new development is a general feature of high-income housing markets, not an artefact of any particular national context. For Ireland, where sub-national density data are unavailable, log density is set to zero ($= \log(1)$), which is absorbed by the regional fixed effects.

D Action to Stop New Construction

Table D1: Effects of Local Housing Prices on Willingness to Act Against New Housing

	No Municipality FE		Municipality FE		<i>N</i>
	β	(SE)	β	(SE)	
Vote for another party	10.82	(2.20)	19.67	(3.56)	2580
Write e-mail to the city council	7.37	(1.93)	5.68	(4.22)	2629
Write letter to the editor of the local newspaper	3.75	(2.13)	2.13	(3.55)	2684
Participate in a protest	7.53	(1.79)	10.14	(3.54)	2723
Sue the municipality	4.10	(1.13)	5.55	(2.09)	2651

Notes: OLS estimates with clustered standard errors at the postcode level. *No Municipality FE:* includes controls for log(density), gender, income, education, and age. *Municipality FE:* adds municipality fixed effects. *N* from model without fixed effects.

E Content Analysis using Large Language Models

Large Language Models (LLMs) have quickly gained prominence as a tool for large-scale analysis of political text. It has been shown to be accurate and cost-efficient for annotating political text (Heseltine and Clemm von Hohenberg 2024). In comparison, other methods, such as manual coding or supervised machine learning, require more manual work and are not necessarily more precise. Therefore, we use an LLM to classify the open text responses from the US survey. In the following, we describe the method and show that it performs comparably to human coders in terms of accuracy.

E.1 Description of the method

To classify the reasons for opposing new housing, we first filtered the data, so we only kept those who oppose building more housing in their community, meaning that they answered 4. *Oppose* and 5. *Strongly oppose* on *Think about new housing in your community. Would you support or oppose building more homes in your community?*. This left us with 2,051 respondents who opposed building more homes.

All respondents (both those who opposed and supported new housing) were asked *You have answered that you [INSERT ANSWER] the building of new homes in your community. We would like to know why you gave this answer.*

We then developed a prompt through an iterative process in which we increased precision by testing different prompts until we reached an acceptable Krippendorff alpha reliability estimate (over $\alpha > 0.7$). We did so by randomly selecting 100 answers which were coded by two human coders, ChatGPT (GPT 4.0 & GPT 5.4), & Claude Code (Sonnet 4.6). Next, we calculated the level of agreement and kept refining the prompt until agreement was acceptable. In the end, we decided on using Claude Code (Sonnet 4.6) for the final coding, due to this model having the highest agreement with the human coders. The final prompt is found below in the CLAUDE.md-file.

Classification	N	Share
1. Clearly preservationist	68	3.3%
2. Somewhat preservationist	384	18.7%
3. Not preservationist	1309	63.8%
4. NA	290	14.1%
Total	2051	100%

Table E1: Distribution of Open-Ended Answer Classifications

E.2 Accuracy Measures

It is difficult to code whether a person has preservationist preferences compared to, for example, coding whether a statement is negative or positive, or classifying whether a text concerns a specific topic. “Preservationist preferences” is not a commonly established term, and therefore the LLMs and the human coders have little prior knowledge about the concept. Thus, we should not expect complete agreement. Below, we test agreement between coders and the final prompt coded using Claude. We see that agreement is high and above the conventional 0.70 threshold for reliable coding.

	Claude	Coder 1	Coder 2
Claude	1.00	0.83	0.79
Coder 1	0.83	1.00	0.88
Coder 2	0.79	0.88	1.00

E.3 Survey Coding Instructions

Below, we provide the CLAUDE.md file, we created and used as instruction for Claude Code when classifying the open-ended survey responses.

CLAUDE .md — Project Instructions File

Project Overview

This project involves coding open-ended survey responses from a **representative survey of Americans** about the reasons they **oppose new housing being built in their community**.

Data

- **Format:** Excel file (.xlsx)
- **Content:** Open-ended survey responses describing why respondents oppose new housing construction in their community

Task

For each open-ended survey response (TEXT), determine whether the person expresses **preservationist preferences**, using the definition, coding rules, and categories below.

Definition of Preservationist Preferences

Preservationist preferences are when a person expresses *attitudes, beliefs, or actions aimed at preserving, protecting and maintaining the physical appearance, architectural style, or character of a specific locality*.

What is NOT Preservationist

The following types of reasons should **not** be considered preservationist, even if they relate to opposing new housing:

- Congestion of public services
- Overcrowding
- Concerns about the type of people (e.g., demographic or social concerns)
- Economic considerations in themselves

Examples

- ✓ **Preservationist:** “*This will ruin the village feel of our neighborhood.*”
- × **Not preservationist:** “*There will be too much traffic.*”

Coding Categories

Assign **one** of the following codes to each response:

Code	Label	Description
1	Clearly preservationist	The reasoning explicitly refers to preserving the local character.
2	Somewhat preservationist	The reasoning hints at preservationist preferences but does not explicitly state them.
3	Not preservationist	The reasoning does not refer to preserving local character at all.
4	NA	The reason cannot be classified (e.g., unintelligible, off-topic, or no reason given).

Table E2: Coding categories for preservationist preferences.

Coding Instructions

- Read the open-ended response carefully.
- Apply the definition of preservationist preferences strictly.
- **Only provide the chosen classification** (e.g., “1. Clearly preservationist”) as your answer — no explanation.
- The prompt format is: “A person provides the following reason for opposing new homes in their community: [TEXT]. Does the person express preservationist preferences?”
- **Provide a reasoning for your coding in the Reasoning column.**

Files in This Directory

File	Description	Status
CLAUDE .md	This instructions file	Active
(Excel data file)	Survey responses to be coded	—

Table E3: Files in the project directory.

Full Prompt

A person provides the following reason for opposing new homes in their community: “[TEXT]”. We are interested in whether the person exhibits preservationist preferences. Preservationist preferences are when a person expresses attitudes, beliefs, or actions aimed at preserving, protecting and maintaining the physical appearance, architectural style, or character of a specific locality. Thus, congestion

of public services, overcrowding, the type of people, and economic considerations in itself should not be considered preservationist. For example, a statement like “this will ruin the village feel of our neighborhood” would be preservationist, whereas a statement like “there will be too much traffic” in itself would not. Does the person express preservationist preferences? Choose from one of the following three options: “1. Clearly preservationist” meaning the reasoning explicitly refers to preserving the local character, “2. Somewhat preservationist” meaning the reasoning hints at preservationist preferences but does not explicitly state them, “3. Not preservationist” meaning the reasoning does not refer to preserving local character at all. If the reason cannot be classified assign “4. NA”. Only provide the chosen classification in your answer.

Notes

- The goal is to systematically assign reason-codes to each open-ended response.
- Responses come from a representative sample of Americans who oppose new housing in their community.

F Gentrification Concerns

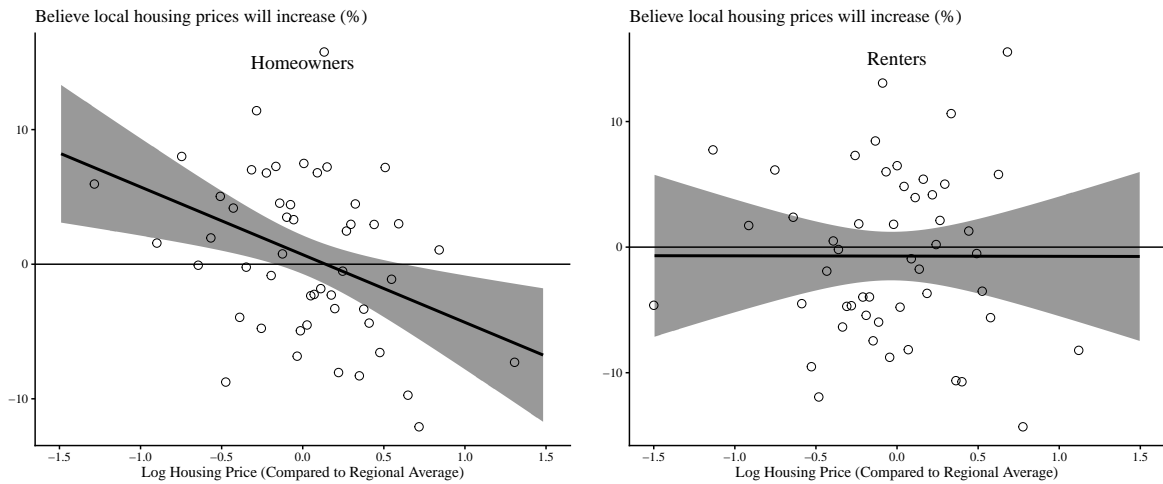


Figure F1: Beliefs about the Effect of a Hypothetical Development Project on Local Housing Prices, by Housing Tenure. Binned scatterplots showing the relationship between local housing prices (log-transformed and centered on the regional average) and the share of respondents who believe a proposed urban development will increase housing prices. Results are shown separately for homeowners (left) and renters (right). Shaded areas represent 95 pct. confidence intervals around the fitted line.

G Full Regression Models

Table G1: Full Regression Results: Local Housing Prices and Four Measures of Opposition (U.S.)

	Housing		Preserve		Residential		Commercial	
	β	(SE)	β	(SE)	β	(SE)	β	(SE)
Log housing price	7.85	1.16	8.43	1.30	7.82	1.58	8.10	1.78
Log density	-0.84	0.36	-0.90	0.40	-3.37	0.50	-2.23	0.55
Age	1.07	0.19	1.42	0.22	1.50	0.27	2.01	0.29
Gender	-4.24	1.11	3.86	1.24	-3.88	1.57	-6.35	1.68
Homeowner	6.12	1.28	10.16	1.44	4.17	1.77	1.16	1.92
Household size	0.04	0.05	-0.10	0.05	-0.05	0.05	-0.11	0.05
Years in home	0.25	0.40	-0.45	0.44	0.70	0.55	1.59	0.59
Race (factor)	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Education (factor)	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Income (factor)	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Partisanship (factor)	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
State fixed effects	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
<i>N</i>	6512		6512		3277		3235	

Notes: OLS estimates with state fixed effects and standard errors clustered at the ZIP code level. *Housing*: general opposition to new housing. *Preserve*: agreement with “I would like my community to stay the way that it is.” *Residential/Commercial*: opposition to hypothetical residential/commercial vignette project.

Table G2: Full Regression Results: Local Housing Prices and Opposition by Housing Tenure (U.S.)

	Housing		Preserve		Residential		Commercial	
	β	(SE)	β	(SE)	β	(SE)	β	(SE)
<i>Panel A: Renters</i>								
Log housing price	2.50	1.82	4.71	2.11	5.13	2.53	5.40	2.92
Log density	-0.30	0.59	-0.92	0.65	-1.32	0.77	-0.91	1.00
Age	0.30	0.29	1.15	0.35	0.87	0.41	1.41	0.48
Gender	-1.24	1.74	2.47	2.03	-1.44	2.48	-5.71	2.79
Household size	-0.03	0.06	-0.05	0.06	-0.12	0.03	-0.12	0.08
Years in home	-0.08	0.59	-0.58	0.67	-0.55	0.87	-0.84	0.94
Race (factor)	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Education (factor)	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Income (factor)	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Partisanship (factor)	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
State fixed effects	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
<i>N</i>	2348		2348		1186		1162	
<i>Panel B: Homeowners</i>								
Log housing price	10.85	1.48	10.73	1.67	8.98	2.05	9.29	2.27
Log density	-1.10	0.45	-0.99	0.51	-4.20	0.66	-2.59	0.68
Age	1.49	0.26	1.58	0.29	1.84	0.36	2.26	0.38
Gender	-5.98	1.45	5.01	1.59	-4.95	2.08	-6.05	2.19
Household size	0.12	0.07	-0.18	0.08	0.07	0.11	-0.10	0.07
Years in home	0.42	0.53	-0.42	0.60	1.57	0.73	3.12	0.77
Race (factor)	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Education (factor)	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Income (factor)	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Partisanship (factor)	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
State fixed effects	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
<i>N</i>	4164		4164		2091		2073	
<i>Panel C: Homeowners + Home Value Controls</i>								
Log housing price	10.86	1.94	12.32	2.22	7.16	2.76	7.99	3.12
Log density	-2.10	0.57	-2.39	0.63	-5.92	0.88	-3.66	0.89
Age	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Gender	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Household size	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Years in home	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Log equity	1.11	0.52	-1.22	0.67	0.59	0.73	1.11	0.78
Log sale price	-0.41	0.73	1.24	0.88	0.47	1.01	1.75	1.02
Race (factor)	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Education (factor)	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Income (factor)	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Partisanship (factor)	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
State fixed effects	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
<i>N</i>	2611		2611		1319		1292	

Notes: OLS estimates with log population density and state fixed effects; no additional controls. Standard errors clustered at the ZIP code level. *Renters* and *Owners* split by self-reported tenure; respondents in neither category are excluded. Panel C restricts to homeowners with non-missing home equity data and additionally controls for log equity and log self-reported sale price. Outcomes as in Table G1.

Table G3: Effect of Log Housing Prices by Time Living in Current Home (U.S.)

	Housing		Preserve		Residential		Commercial	
	β	(SE)	β	(SE)	β	(SE)	β	(SE)
<2 years	3.94	1.68	6.62	1.89	7.08	2.24	4.15	2.47
2-5 years	2.84	1.75	8.19	2.05	5.28	2.32	3.38	2.47
5-10 years	8.05	1.97	10.17	2.30	9.77	2.76	9.22	3.15
>10 years	10.57	1.29	9.56	1.38	8.41	1.69	11.27	1.95
<i>N</i>	7802		7802		3914		3888	

Notes: Each cell reports the marginal effect of log housing price (and its standard error) at the given time-in-home category, estimated from a single OLS model interacting log housing price with time-in-home dummies. Respondents in the two shortest categories (<1 year, 1–2 years) are pooled into the <2 years group. All models include the full control set (age, gender, race, education, household size, rural/urban classification, party identification) and state fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the ZIP code level. Outcomes as in Table G1.

Table G4: Full Regression Results: Main Experiment Effects

	Belief: Prices Increased (%)	Want to Move (%)
Treatment	15.25 (2.82)	5.72 (2.55)
Strong Localist	16.93 (3.03)	0.32 (2.57)
Treatment \times Localist	-8.24 (4.05)	-7.43 (3.47)
Log(Typical Home Value)	0.20 (1.85)	6.43 (1.52)
Household Income	-0.39 (0.30)	-1.03 (0.26)
Education	2.49 (0.73)	0.42 (0.61)
Years in Current Home	-0.14 (0.09)	-0.08 (0.07)
Housing tenure (factor)	Yes	Yes
<i>N</i>	2327	2449

Notes: OLS estimates with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors (in parentheses). *Treatment* = information about local house price increase. *Strong Localist* = above median on composite local preservationism scale. *Belief: Prices Increased:* respondent believes local housing prices have increased a lot. *Want to Move:* respondent wants to move to a cheaper area.

Table G5: Full Regression Results: Heterogeneous Effects by Price Growth

	Below Median Growth	Above Median Growth
Treatment	2.07 (3.73)	8.10 (3.62)
Strong Localist	-0.86 (3.68)	-0.53 (3.73)
Treatment \times Localist	-3.29 (4.90)	-10.02 (5.08)
Log(Typical Home Value)	5.56 (2.42)	4.19 (2.42)
Household Income	0.10 (0.37)	-2.01 (0.36)
Education	-0.16 (0.87)	1.06 (0.89)
Years in Current Home	-0.17 (0.09)	0.05 (0.12)
Housing tenure (factor)	Yes	Yes
<i>N</i>	1204	1182

Notes: OLS estimates with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors (in parentheses). Outcome is wanting to move to a cheaper area. Columns split the sample at the median of long-run MSA price growth (12-year change). *Strong Localist* = above median on composite local preservationism scale. Controls: log typical home value, household income, education, years in current home, housing tenure.

H Descriptive Statistics

Table H1: Descriptive Statistics: U.S. Survey

Variable	<i>N</i>	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<i>Outcomes</i>					
Opposition to new housing (0/100)	7819	25.63	43.66	0.00	100.00
Preserve community character (0/100)	7819	41.76	49.32	0.00	100.00
Vignette: Residential project (0/100)	3920	26.12	43.94	0.00	100.00
Vignette: Commercial project (0/100)	3899	33.73	47.28	0.00	100.00
<i>Housing market</i>					
Log housing price	7819	12.45	0.70	10.10	15.46
Log population density	7802	6.93	1.95	-5.15	11.88
<i>Demographics</i>					
Homeowner (0/1)	7215	0.64	0.48	0.00	1.00
Age	7819	6.47	3.39	1.00	15.00
Female (0/1)	7819	1.48	0.50	1.00	2.00
Household size	7819	5.29	15.16	1.00	98.00
Years in home	7819	4.81	1.50	1.00	6.00
Family income (category)	7017	6.36	3.80	1.00	16.00
Republican (0/1)	7819	0.24	0.43	0.00	1.00
Democrat (0/1)	7819	0.37	0.48	0.00	1.00

Notes: Summary statistics for the U.S. survey sample. Binary outcomes (opposition, homeowner, female, Republican, Democrat) are coded 0/100 or 0/1 as indicated. Housing price is the Zillow Home Value Index for the respondent's ZIP code (log-transformed). Income is an ordinal category code. Republican and Democrat are indicators for self-reported party identification.

Table H2: Descriptive Statistics: Survey Experiment

Variable	<i>N</i>	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<i>Outcomes</i>					
Believe prices increased a lot (0/100)	2691	50.91	50.00	0.00	100.00
Want to move to cheaper area (0/100)	3037	24.63	43.09	0.00	100.00
<i>Experiment</i>					
Treatment (0/1)	2830	0.54	0.50	0.00	1.00
Local preservationism scale	3037	3.56	1.04	1.00	5.00
<i>Housing market</i>					
Log typical home value (MSA)	2830	12.76	0.57	10.44	14.36
Long-run MSA price growth, % (2010–2022)	2755	87.13	43.26	13.22	251.82
<i>Demographics</i>					
Household income (category)	2698	6.66	3.87	1.00	16.00
Education (category)	3037	3.37	1.48	1.00	6.00
Years in current home (category)	2957	12.58	12.23	0.00	70.00

Notes: Summary statistics for the survey experiment sample. Binary outcomes are coded 0/100 as indicated. The local preservationism scale is the mean of two items (range 1–5). Long-run price growth is the percentage change in the Zillow Home Value Index from 2010 to 2022 at the MSA level.

Table H3: Descriptive statistics, comparative analysis. Means reported; standard deviations in parentheses for continuous variables. Log house price and log population density use the original local-area units for each country. Income quintile (1–5) is computed within each country; respondents who did not report income are assigned to the middle quintile (3). Because quintiles are assigned within each country, the mean is approximately 3 by construction. Population density is unavailable for Ireland (absorbed by region fixed effects in the regression models).

	Denmark	Ireland	Netherlands	Sweden	UK	US
Oppose new housing (%)	30	19	18	34	39	26
Log house price	9.69 (0.60)	12.55 (0.39)	12.93 (0.22)	10.40 (0.55)	12.45 (0.49)	12.45 (0.70)
Female (%)	51	57	51	50	54	48
College degree (%)	27	40	38	34	31	29
Homeowner (%)	54	55	65	51	61	64
Income quintile	3.00 (1.32)	3.00 (1.34)	3.00 (1.24)	3.00 (1.35)	3.00 (1.25)	3.00 (1.34)
Log pop. density	5.36 (2.20)	—	5.78 (2.64)	4.05 (2.55)	6.87 (2.33)	6.93 (1.95)
<i>N</i>	1,280	1,249	1,216	1,259	6,778	7,819