

No place like home: wealth, community, and the politics of homeownership

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Abstrak

While Americans often believe that owning a home serves as a tool for building stronger communities and crafting better citizens, this book argues that these long-standing beliefs about the public benefits of homeownership are deeply mischaracterized. As owning a home has emerged as the most important way to build wealth in the United States, it has also reshaped the way citizens become involved in their communities. Rather than engaging as public-spirited stewards of civic life, the book argues that homeowners often engage in local politics as a way to protect their property values. This civic engagement, the book argues, contributes to the politics of exclusion. It keeps particular citizens from gaining access to high-opportunity neighborhoods and reinforces patterns of residential segregation. It often marginalizes renters from participation in public life, and it equates property values with the common good. Through an analysis of the politics of homeownership, this book asks readers to reconsider the power of homeownership to strengthen citizenship and build better communities.