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Review of *Climbing Mount Laurel: The Struggle for Affordable Housing and Social Mobility in an American Suburb*. Douglas S. Massey, Len Albright, Rebecca Casciano, Elizabeth Derickson, and David N. Kinsey. Reviewed by Aretousa Bloom

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fell for the less educated, racial and class segregation worsened, political participation by the poor declined, and children suffered. His anodyne analysis of the causes of growing inequality leaves out politics, power, and policy dynamics. However, it clear that this is an intentional strategy to help *Our Kids* find a readership beyond the usual liberal and academic circles. He hopes that those who read it will be shocked into supporting the programmatic remedies he suggests. Compared with Putnam's, Cherlin's discussion of causal factors and policy solutions is more satisfying. In a careful nonpartisan tone, he considers the need for broader institutional and political changes that would rebalance the relationship between capital and labor in the United States.

With their powerful narratives and analytical insights into a widening chasm at the heart of the American family, both books are highly recommended to academic and nonacademic audiences alike.

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Douglas S. Massey, Len Albright, Rebecca Casciano, Elizabeth Derickson & David N. Kinsey, *Climbing Mount Laurel: The Struggle for Affordable Housing and Social Mobility in an American Suburb*. Princeton University Press (2013), 288 pages, \$35.00 (hardcover).

Climbing Mount Laurel assesses the effects of the Ethel R. Lawrence Homes, an affordable housing development in Mount Laurel Township, New Jersey, on the lives of its residents and surrounding neighborhoods. The rental apartment complex was named after the lead plaintiff in the Mount Laurel case and is located in a White affluent suburb near the city of Camden; it opened in 2000 after three decades of historic litigation. In a series of lawsuits against Mount Laurel Township, the plaintiffs argued that the town's large lot, single-family zoning had systematically excluded low-income and minority residents from obtaining housing. The suits resulted in two ground breaking court rulings: in Mount Laurel I (1975), the

New Jersey Supreme Court barred the use of exclusionary zoning and ordered municipalities to provide housing options for low- and moderate-income families, while Mount Laurel II (1983) reinforced this ruling by specifying a method to calculate each municipality's "fair share" of affordable housing obligations.

In addition to documenting the outcomes of a landmark exclusionary housing case, whose ongoing controversy is best exemplified by Governor Christie's hostility towards its stipulations, the book makes a critical contribution to the "neighborhood effects" literature. Indeed, the research question of Climbing Mount Laurel is whether neighborhood circumstances can significantly predict the life outcomes of their residents. A central assumption is that residential mobility is linked to social mobility, as housing markets are responsible for distributing a range of benefits including education, public services, employment, safety and the opportunity to accumulate wealth. However, whether this relationship is causal is the subject of debate. The absence of consensus is linked to the difficulty of quantifying neighborhood effects: both the Gautreaux project and the Moving to Opportunity experiment yielded mixed results and suffered from methodological weaknesses including self-selection bias. Climbing Mount Laurel overcomes some of these limitations.

The book is divided into nine chapters that clearly detail the history of the case, the study's methodology, the physical design of the housing complex, and the outcomes of the project. In order to evaluate the impact of the project on the surrounding community, the authors designed a multiple control-group time-series experiment to analyze regional trends in crime, property values and taxes—the three fears expressed by opponents of the projects. The experiences of project residents were compared to those of non-residents who applied to the Ethel Lawrence Homes but had not yet been admitted. Differences between the two groups were further balanced using propensity score matching. Surveys of neighbors, project residents and non-residents were complemented by qualitative in-depth interviews.

Massey and his colleagues find that the opening of the Ethel Lawrence Homes did not cause an increase in crime

rates, a decrease in property values or an increase in property tax rates. Moreover, the reaction of neighbors to the project was subdued, leading the authors to believe that much of the controversy was created by a small number of "racially antagonistic individuals" (p. 185). Project residents experienced a decline in negative life events, improved mental health and increased earnings. Children attended better quality schools with lower levels of violence and had access to quiet spaces to study. While some residents complained about strict managerial practices, geographic isolation, and the feeling of being out of place in a predominantly White environment, the authors believe that the advantages of moving into the Ethel Lawrence Homes outweigh any negative experiences.

For Massey and his colleagues, the Mount Laurel project confirms the hypothesis that neighborhood environments can significantly alter the life trajectories of residents. They do acknowledge, however, that a large part of the project's success was related to the fact that residents were self-selected and filtered according to their ability of being "good tenants" (p. 195). In this respect, housing mobility programs cannot be used as policy solution for households facing complex problems such as substance abuse.

Climbing Mount Laurel is a welcome addition to the literature on housing mobility programs and neighborhood effects. Its methodological rigor and ability to avoid the pitfalls of spatial determinism are some of its key strengths, and the book should be of interest to scholars and practitioners of affordable housing, planning law, and program evaluation. Whether the book's findings are transferable to involuntary residential mobility programs such as HOPE VI remains a somewhat unanswered question. Yet, what is clear is that affordable housing litigation continues to play an important role in the struggle for racial and economic integration, particularly following the U.S. Supreme Court's 2015 decision to recognize disparate impact claims under the Fair Housing Act.

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