

Nolan Gray: Howdy. I'm Nolan Gray, your friendly neighborhood city planner, research director at California YIMBY, and one of the new co-leads on the Metropolitan Abundance Project. Welcome back to the Abundance Podcast. In this episode, we have a very special guest, Jessica Trounstine. Jessica is the centennial chair and professor of political science at Vanderbilt University. So recently she was here with us in California at UC Merced. She earned a PhD in political science from the University of California in San Diego in 2004, and she's the author of one of my favorite books on the relationship between policy and segregated land use patterns, *Segregated by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities*, which rightfully won more awards than I can name here.

Jessica's an academic advisor at the Metropolitan Abundance Project, so we're incredibly happy to be chatting with her. In this episode, we talk about the relationship between zoning, public investment, and segregation, and we talk about some of the things that are being done to hopefully fix that. As always, please like, subscribe, leave a comment. Of course, full transcripts of every single episode are available on our website, that's metroabundance.org. And be sure to follow us on all social media platforms. You can see not only future episodes of the Abundance Podcast, but also some of the research work, blogging, and mapping work that we're up to. With that onto the show.

Ned Resnikoff: So Jessica Trounstine, thanks for joining us.

Jessica Trounstine: Thanks for having me.

Ned Resnikoff: I thought maybe I would start with just a sort of design feature of your book, *Segregation by Design*, which is - I finished reading it last week - it's a fantastic book, kind of long overdue reading. I mean, it's generally a fairly dense work of political science. There are actual equations in here. But it starts in a pretty surprising way, which is that the first little section is a comic book. And so I was wondering if you could tell me a little bit about the genesis of that and what you were accomplishing with that.

Jessica Trounstine: Absolutely. It's a fun story. I had a friend, I was living in Merced at the time, and I had a friend who was an artist, and was interested in communicating art differently and getting into this idea of communicating difficult, complicated academic ideas through art, there's a long history of this obviously, but he wanted to try his hand at it, start seeing how he could fit into this genre. And so I said, well, I do spatial work, right? It has a lot of features that seem like it could lend itself to visual representation. So we started talking and we agreed that it might be cool to try to make a six-image comic of the book. I had just finished writing the book, wasn't under contract yet, but I had the basic story down.

And he said, "Okay, let's start." We met at Starbucks and we sat down and he said, "Okay, the first thing you're going to do is write a one-page summary of the book, and then I'll draw it and then we'll work from there." So I did that. I wrote a one-page summary of the book, and then he drew it and we met again, and we both looked at each other and said, "This is just as boring as the book. This is not going to help anybody." This is not communicating in the way that we wanted it to be communicated.

And so we spent a long time trying to figure out why my summary of the book was not communicating the kinds of ideas that he thought I should be communicating and that I wanted to communicate. And what he said to me was, "You need some people and you need a story." And I just said, "Oh, what? I'm an academic, I study data and I have data sets. I don't study people." And he said, "No, you have to find people here in this story, who you can tell this through." And he had some ideas and he said, "Go home and sit down and write a story, and it will come to you, and then you'll write and write and write and write. And then when you're done, when you feel like you've written what you can, we'll try again."

And that's what we did. And then I came up with these characters. He was exactly right. I needed people to be trying to engage in their everyday lives through the lens of segregation by design. So when I invented these characters who were just a normal couple looking for housing, it started to feel exactly like what I wanted it to be, this is how, as individuals, we experience segregation - often in search of housing. You sort of notice the neighborhood around you, but you don't understand how it's embedded in a larger structure. And I had written the real estate agent as the person who was really telling that academic story of segregation by design in this comic, which I had mixed feelings about. I have had some not-great experiences being racially steered. I have had experiences with the real estate industry that were not positive for me personally.

So it was sort of funny that the person in the book who tells my story is the real estate agent. And I brought it back to my friend Derek and he drew it, and it blew both of our minds. And it was so much work, and months and months of finding all of these little details of figuring out how these people might communicate with each other. And what would happen is Derek would get excited and he would draw a picture and then I would say, "Oh, no, no, that's not, that's taking it too far. That's making a claim the book can't substantiate." And then I would write something and he would say, "That's the academic jargon. You need to go back to the drawing board, say it more clearly, write the voices of these people." So again, it took us about 10 months or so to develop the comic.

And what I thought I was going to do was make a website. So I thought I was going to have the book, and then I was going to have a link somewhere in the book that was going to point people to a website where they could find the comic and maybe learn about their community. I had all these different ideas of ways that we could bring people into the story of Segregation by Design. And I was chatting about this with my editor and she said, "I think you should put it in the book." And again, my mind was blown, "What? Put it in the book? In the academic book?" And she said, "Yeah, it's just pictures, right? Well, just start the book with it." And it was so great and the whole process of collaboration was so great. And then the cover was drawn by the same artist, and that also was a battle. So Cambridge had never published anything but a boring cover with a yellow and beige title that like, block letters said the name of the book. Yeah, exactly.

Ned Resnikoff: Yeah. For the record-

Nolan Gray: Good book. But the design is a little bit uninspired, I would say.

Jessica Trounstine: Yeah.

Ned Resnikoff: For the record, I do like the normal Cambridge University press designs, but I do think that this suits the book really well.

Jessica Trounstone: And that ultimately was a set of conversations with a variety of different people at Cambridge, my editor, the publicist, people coming together and deciding that this was a story that could be told in a slightly different way. And so there are a lot of great people who I worked with who had great ideas that made this all happen.

Ned Resnikoff: That's great. And for those who haven't read the book, the initial chapter is about a young couple, I think the wife is pregnant and they're kind of looking around different neighborhoods. And the realtor who grew up in one of these neighborhoods is sort of explaining the political institutional process that led to these neighborhoods being the way they are and being so intensely segregated. And I would say to listeners who are out there, who are maybe a little bit intimidated by academic literature, don't know how to interpret p-values or whatever, you could still read this first section of it and I think get a lot of what the book is about.

And get it from the sort of micro perspective, which is, I mean, I want to talk a little bit more about the overarching thesis in a second, but one thing that struck me about the difference between the comic and a lot of what you're talking about in the rest of the book is then the rest of the book, you are diving into this decades-long process that is maybe not especially visible to the people who are being affected by it, even as it is just deeply, deeply shaping the texture of their lives.

Jessica Trounstone: Right. And that was getting my mind around how an individual accesses segregated spaces was important for my own development, my own understanding of segregation. And that's why it was such a powerful process to engage in. And just so everyone knows, the comic is downloadable on my website, so you can find it for free, you can download it, it's in color on the website, and it's available for everyone.

Ned Resnikoff: And what's the URL?

Jessica Trounstone: Okay. It's a Google sites, and so I always get the name of it wrong, but-

Nolan Gray: It'll be in the show notes. Yeah.

Jessica Trounstone: Okay, good.

Nolan Gray: So Jessica, why don't we just dive in a little bit? So, okay. I think a lot of folks have been thinking about this issue certainly in recent years, probably to a much greater extent in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd and other incidents, when you're writing the book, so good timing. If you know what the next big issue is going to be, you should let the listeners know. But I think other folks might be encountering this and thinking, okay, segregation, big problem in American history. We used to do some really, really bad things, but we passed the Fair Housing Act in 1968, and come on, didn't we kind of solve this issue? What does the typical American city look like when we talk about segregation today? Have we made progress? Where are we at?

Jessica Trounstine: I think there are a couple of different ways to answer this question, but one piece of the puzzle is to say we have made progress. And I think it's important to recognize that, it's important to acknowledge that our cities have changed and that we are a much more diverse nation than we were even 20 years ago. And many of our neighborhoods are much more diverse than they were even 20 years ago. That said, we remain a deeply segregated nation. Segregation occurs at multiple spatial scales, and I'm happy to talk more about what I mean by that, but I'll just start, the short version is you can be segregated block by block, which is like the next block over, people look different from me or earn different incomes than me. Or you could be segregated neighborhood by neighborhood. That's like you think to yourself, oh, across town, that's a different kind of neighborhood, that's different kinds of people live there, there's different kinds of housing there.

Or we can be segregated city by city. And you might think to yourself, oh, those suburbs are so different, or there's one area that's 40 minutes away that's really fancy. So there are different spatial scales of segregation. And the history in America is that our spatial scale of segregation grew over time. We became more and more segregated between larger and larger tracts of land that became very sticky starting in the 1980s. So our spatial scale has remained basically the same since the '80s, which is that segregation between cities has grown to be a more important kind of segregation than segregation even between neighborhoods. And so that's why even though we've become more diverse and you can point to very diverse neighborhoods, even though those changes have occurred, we remain a very segregated nation because we have these different kinds of segregation that get locked in place by the land use choices that we make over time.

Ned Resnikoff: Yeah. Let's talk a little bit about that process because one of the things I think is illuminating both about this and about your previous work, your previous book, is that you don't envision these processes as being static. It's not like, I think sometimes the story, those of us who have read the *Color of Law* or some of the other literature on segregation sometimes tell ourselves, is there still a story of segregation got locked in and now it's persisting, but it's not evolving, and you see land use patterns and political institutions as much more dynamic than that. So could you talk a little bit about the sort of history you tell, the trajectory of segregation, not just spatially but what tools were being used to maintain segregation at different points in US history?

Jessica Trounstine: I should start by saying, when I started writing this book, I thought, I'm going to start, I'm going to write a historical book about segregation, and I'm going to start way back in the 1960s before the Fair Housing Act. And so I started in the 1960s and it became immediately clear that everything I was finding was already in place. I was like, "Okay, so I'll go back 10 more years." So I went back to the '50s, and again, I kept having to go back in time because everything was driven by what had come before. So I threw up my hands and I said, "Okay, I'm going to start as early as I can get data. I'll start in 1890 before the United States became urbanized at all. And then I'll trace the patterns of the population over time." So the book starts in 1890, and exactly as you said, Ned, I try to be careful to understand the patterns of segregation and the government action that generates segregation at different points in time because it does change over time.

And it changes with the spatial scale of segregation. It changes with the social context. It changes with what individuals who are powerful in the political system feel that they want out of their city government. And that's the story I'm telling is the city government, although the state and federal

governments also play a role of course in the patterns of segregation, but my story is about what's going on at the local level. So in the early period of the early 1900s, a lot of segregation was driven in the private market. People were making choices about where to live, and there was a lot of activity in the banking industry, in the real estate industry, in the private market that drove segregation patterns in the early 1900s. Cities don't start getting into land use regulation until about 1915.

There's some debate over exactly what they're doing and when they're doing it, and then it doesn't really take off, land use regulation doesn't really take off until the 1920s. And so there's this sort of long period when segregation patterns are becoming embedded in cities because of what choices people are making. City governments get involved by eventually protecting single-family neighborhoods, white single-family neighborhoods in certain ways over time. And they do this through decisions about where to put roads, they do this in decisions about where to put public housing, and then not until the 1970s, and even in some places later than that, do you see massive changes in land use regulation becoming the predominant mechanism by which segregation then becomes stuck in place, and it becomes stuck in place by land use regulations starting in the 1970s and '80s. And that's basically where we're at today.

Nolan Gray: Yeah. Well, let's step back a little bit because I think one sort of maybe armchair theory of what's going on is, well, maybe this is just people's preference. Maybe people want to live in a neighborhood with other people who look like them, and maybe that's slightly stronger for whites and Blacks, but maybe that's explaining the overall patterns.

Jessica Trounstine: Yeah. And I think that's a very attractive explanation because then there's no fault. But you have to ask yourself, is it true that people who are in poverty want to live in neighborhoods where the streets are crumbling and the sidewalks are cracked and the sewers don't work and there are no parks or swings that are functional and the water is cruddy? The answer has to be no. The answer has to be that some people would like to live in nice neighborhoods that they can't, for some set of reasons. And so if you think about, if you understand that segregation patterns are purposeful and they are driven by the people who benefit from segregation, you begin to understand that it can't possibly be preferences because there's a whole set of people who suffer under the scheme of segregation that would much rather have their children go to good schools and be able to walk down the street at night and be safe from crime. Lots and lots of people do not have those opportunities because segregation has created this larger structure that does very much so benefit certain members of the population.

Ned Resnikoff: So what in your view is the purpose of segregation? Because this is one of the parts of your book that I found really... It was articulated in a way that I hadn't heard it articulated before, but I immediately thought, oh yeah, that makes a lot of sense. So could you talk a little bit about what the benefit is of segregation to the people perpetuating it?

Jessica Trounstine: Yeah, absolutely. So there are two main benefits that I concentrate on. There may be more, but the ones that I think about a lot are, one: stability or even increasing property value. So the wealth that you own as an individual because your property has become more valuable, is better maintained for white members of society in a segregated society. Alongside those property values are what are known in political science as public goods. And you can just think of that as the benefits

that governments provide. So at the local level, this is things like schools, clean water, and safe streets. The argument that I make is that it's easier to maintain high levels of those government benefits, those public goods for white wealthy residents when segregation is in place.

The goal of segregation is to make it easier to concentrate those benefits on your community for your family and your smaller neighborhood. And if it's at the expense of someone else, that's not a concern for the individuals or the groups that are engaging in the segregating patterns, right? Schools are the easiest way to think about this, right? If you segregate children who come from high socioeconomic backgrounds, from children who come from low socioeconomic status backgrounds, it is easier for the high socioeconomic status children to have a better educational environment, that is higher achieving, that has more resources, that has access to a whole variety of different kinds of resources when segregation is in place.

Ned Resnikoff: Yeah. It made me think of this other concept that I think comes up sometimes in political science or among political theorists of herrenvolk democracy. And you kind of get at this a little bit with the Ta-Nehisi Coates quote that serves as your epigram, but it's like spatial segregation the United States has historically, and I think continues to be a large extent this way of essentially creating a form of quasi-social democracy for one particular class of people and a sort of much weaker safety net for another class of people.

Jessica Trounstine: That's right. And again, schools are an instructive way to think about this. One of the consequences of integrating public schools, particularly in the South where I live now, is that we saw an immediate massive increase in private school enrollment. And so exactly as you're suggesting, Ned, the idea that we could create through segregation, a sort of social welfare system, a small safety net for a set of people who look like me or who come from my background was the goal. And then when that gets threatened by a higher level of government, say, forcing integration on that community, many people choose to remove themselves from that public community and put their children, put their dollars into another kind of segregated space like private school or private pools.

Pools are another excellent example of this, right? We used to have many, many public swimming pools in the South, and when public swimming pools became integrated along racial lines in the South, we saw massive development of private swimming pools, swim racket clubs, and a variety of other kinds of ways of people pulling their dollars and their personhood out of those public spaces and walling them off in other ways.

Ned Resnikoff: Right. That's sort of the whole Heather McGhee thing too, the public swimming pool getting filled in. I mean, I did want to talk about education briefly because obviously in the South, as you said, a lot of it is about private schooling, but I used to work on K-12 education policy for the state of California. One of the big light bulb moments for me early on in working on that was noticing that California has roughly twice as many school districts as it has incorporated cities. And so that's another way to just kind of secede from sort of integrated public school regime.

Jessica Trounstine: Exactly. Exactly right. And I grew up in San Jose, California, which has a bazillion school districts, I don't know, five or something that cover pieces of the City of San Jose. And this is

exactly right. So as the city of San Jose grew, different neighborhoods felt threatened by the changing demographics of that city. One way to ensure that the demographics of your school don't change is to create your own insular school district. And the South has a very different history. Kevin Cruz has told some of this history. There are quite a few different books that tell this history. But in the South, many school districts are countywide. My understanding of this - this is not my work, this is drawing on other people's work - my understanding of the explanation of this is that many school districts in the South wanted to provide as few black-serving schools as possible. So they would provide as many white-serving schools as needed. But the requirement, the constitutional, the legal requirement by the Supreme Court was that you had to provide separate but equal education, and so...

You had to provide separate but equal education. So that meant providing schooling for Black children as well. Well, if you make your school district county-wide, the county-wide school district can decide to have one or maybe two Black elementary schools where there might be 50 White elementary schools. The large footprint of those southern school districts then once integration became the law under the injunctions following *Brown v. Board of Education* meant that it was very difficult to separate the school districts as they did in California. So something that was driven by itself, a racist intent to create the minimal number of possible schools for Black children, made it very difficult for those school districts then to avoid integration, which is why private schooling became the pattern that is more predominant in the south.

Nolan Gray: So a question on this, and maybe the distinction doesn't matter, but I wonder to what extent are the racially disparate impacts and things like land use regulation and to a lesser extent or greater extent with public goods, is that downstream of class animosities, or is that separate? How do these interact?

Jessica Trounstein: In the United States, racial division has always been a more powerful dividing line than class division. There are lots of pieces of evidence of this, but it has always been easier to create a cross-class White coalition than it has been to create a class-separated coalition of lower-income whites and people of color versus a higher-income predominantly White coalition. And the history of slavery is the reason for that, right? That lower-income Whites have felt that their futures and their best chance of moving up in the world is to hitch their coalition to other White members of society rather than hitching their future to other low-income members of society.

So, racial divisions and class divisions, they're obviously tightly connected, and White members of society in the United States have more wealth and income than people of color do. However, the racial divisions in the United States have always been a more powerful driver of these kinds of spatial decisions at the local level than class decisions have been. Class decisions are important too. I don't want to minimize that, right? Many people in the United States are very opposed to having renters in their neighborhood, very opposed to having apartment complexes in their neighborhood. It's not to say that we don't have class division in the United States, it's just that racial division is an easier flame to fan in the United States.

Ned Resnikoff: And the fear of renters in the neighborhood or affordable housing in the neighborhood is often just a proxy for race too, right?

Jessica Trounstein: That's right, and the way in which, in the minds of Americans, poverty has been linked to people of color has been a very long and slow process that gets reinforced over time. And at this point, it's extremely difficult to break that relationship that people automatically think about.

Nolan Gray: Yeah. I was just reading some research on this because we're trying to do more investigation into this investor-owned homes phenomenon. And I'm on the one hand, very sympathetic to folks who are concerned of, "Hey, they're absorbing a lot of the supply." On the other hand, we know that, well, when you ban this, mostly what happens is that there's not any meaningful shift in overall housing affordability. Home prices fall and rents slightly increase, but the most robust finding is that neighborhoods just get less diverse. So lower-income, predominantly Black and Brown households that might not otherwise qualify for a conventional mortgage suddenly no longer have a rental opportunity in some of those neighborhoods. And I was wondering to what extent that seems to be driving the incredible salience of this issue, that there's a little bit of a Baptist and bootlegger coalition here of people who are like, "I want to be able to buy a home." And then people who are like, "Yeah, and I don't want any renters in my neighborhood."

Jessica Trounstein: And people don't want to view themselves or view their own views as being racist or classist. So we invent lots of stories that we tell ourselves, "Well, what I really don't want is the parking. I don't want my parking to be infringed upon," or, "I would really love that apartment complex if only it were 100% affordable housing otherwise I just can't support market-rate housing because who's going to move in but other people who could pay market rate. So we just don't need that." So people will tell themselves, "The developers are the ones who are going to make the money," or, "This is going to gentrify the neighborhood."

So you get these completely conflicting stories, "This is going to gentrify my neighborhood and my property values are going to drop," which can't both be true. Those things are in conflict, but people are connected to their neighborhood and the character of their neighborhood and will often create a set of stories, a set of arguments that allow them to feel comfortable opposing a variety of different kinds of changes in their land use environment.

Ned Resnikoff: So you talked about the two sides of this issue being property values on the one hand and public goods on the other. Let's talk about property values a little bit because, in several previous episodes, we've discussed the home voter hypothesis and how much credence to give it. Reading your book, I was thinking about this and thinking I could see an argument for the home voter hypothesis, this idea that NIMBYism is about protecting the value of one's home is more salient at a time when federal policy and also all these private actors, real estate agents and so forth, were all engaging in pretty explicit racist devaluing of property values in Black and integrated neighborhoods.

I wonder how you think about that now though because it does seem like more recently the home voter hypothesis might be less salient or that it might be either based on a misunderstanding or people who are acting as home voters might either misunderstand the effect on property values that more rental or multifamily housing in their neighborhoods would have, or that, again, property values is this more politically, socially palatable thing to say rather than, "I want to live in an all-White neighborhood?"

Jessica Trounstein: I think all of those things are true. So we have some new work, this is not work done by me, but work by some very smart friends of mine that generally shows that people are pretty confused about how housing markets work and don't have a clear sense of what development is going to do to their community other than it's going to look different. So some of this is just a knee-jerk reaction to, "I live in the place I live. I chose the place I live because I liked it, and I don't want it to be any different. And it's not that I chose it for all the White neighbors, but it just happens to have all White neighbors." So I think for individuals, it's very difficult to disentangle these things. And a lot of it is a protection of some amorphous character.

I have tried in a lot of different experimental settings, different ways of tricking people into saying things to unbundle these attitudes and I can't do it. They all seem to be tied together in ways that maybe 100 years of popular culture have taught us how to think about these things together, that your picket fence goes with a certain kind of house that goes with a certain kind of future for your children. And all of those things are connected and you don't want it to look different. And there are other parts of the world where success isn't linked to this image of neighborhoods in the same way that it is in the United States. And again, our history with slavery is profound and has shaped these kinds of decisions from the beginning. So I'm not sure that we can disentangle it, but I do think that the home voter hypothesis in some ways gives homeowners... It assumes that they understand more than they actually do.

Nolan Gray: So, let's get back to the beginning a little bit. I think there are certainly great discussions here. What chapter is it? Chapter four. On some of the early relationships, what we know about the early adoption of zoning and segregation. So, I think regular listeners to the show know my views on this, but there's a standard narrative around zoning of, "Oh, we had to keep factories out of single-family neighborhoods and we had to keep oil refineries away from preschools." But I think you tell a very different story about what's motivating zoning and especially some of the shocking findings about the long-term impacts on patterns of integration as a result. Do you want to unpack a little bit about what we know about early zoning and the objectives?

Jessica Trounstein: Sure. There was a time in American history when you could, it was a brief time, but where you could create a zoning map that said, "I'm going to put housing only for White people in this part of the city, and I'm going to put housing only for people of color in this part of the city." In those early racially zoned maps, the higher density zoning was associated with the parts of the community that were reserved for people of color. The single-family zoning was reserved for the White parts of the community. And there's all these great examples of these maps that were created before the Supreme Court ruling racial zoning unconstitutional, that literally have, "This is the Black part of town, this is the White part of town. This is the high-density part of town, this is the low-density part of town."

And then once the Supreme Court ruled racial zoning unconstitutional in 1917, they just erased the parts that said White and people of color, but they left the density designations. The high-density and the low-density designations were perfectly acceptable. So that's what remained. The history of adopting these comprehensive zoning maps that showed what parts of the city were going to be zoned industrial, light industrial, single-family zones, and higher density zones became extremely widespread starting after the prohibition on racial zoning. They really started to get adopted in the

1920s after the federal government produced a standard zoning set of guidelines. What I find is that cities that were early adopters of comprehensive zoning plans end up becoming much more segregated along race and class lines 50, 60, 70 years later.

So those maps, what I argue, are really stuck in place the neighborhoods that existed at the time, which were driven by explicit racist sentiment. So that's what a zoning map has the power to do -- it sticks in place something that was created for a particular purpose, in this case, separating White neighborhoods from Black neighborhoods. And over time, that doesn't change a lot because our housing stock changes very slowly. So land use regulations have the power just like historic overlays or preservation of open space, all kinds of land use regulations that prevent change in the housing stock have the power to preserve decisions that were made many decades ago that were made with racist intent.

Nolan Gray: It's a really powerful point. I think it's Atlanta where it was literally White and Black districts became R-1 and R-2, and that's still broadly the code that Atlanta operates under, which I think most Atlantans would-

Jessica Trounstine: That's right. Baltimore as well. Yeah.

Nolan Gray: Yeah. So that was *Buchanan v. Warley*. But a second point on this, most of my research now is looking at LA. And what you see in LA and in so many other cities is beginning in the 1960s, there's this great dissertation by Andrew Whittemore on just the dramatic down-zonings that happened in the 60s and 70s. And it's a powerful point that is like, "Well, if you're happy with housing integration and segregation patterns as they existed in 1959, cool. Yeah, you don't want anything in a place like LA to change, but if you're aware of that history and unhappy with the values embedded in that pattern of growth, you should be fairly open to some of these rules changing radically."

Maybe this leads to my next question. Something that I find difficult is that you have a lot of people whose stated values are very much not reflective of our current land use policy, right? In my book, which draws heavily on your work, I have a picture of the front yard of an Austin home and it's got the all are welcome here yard sign, right? Very nice sentiment. Nothing wrong with that. And then right next to it is the yard sign opposing zoning reforms. And Austin is a city where they're still explicitly referring to Black neighborhoods and comp plans through the 80s. This is the lifetime of most people listening to this podcast potentially. But how do you make sense of that tension and what changes people's minds? Do we have any evidence either way on this?

Jessica Trounstine: I'm going to give a waffle-y sort of answer because we don't have a really good sense of this in political science. And I think your work is pushing us a lot to think about it better. And I'm working on a new project, trying to understand the way that these fissures end up mapping onto each other. But in the United States currently, our liberal-conservative spectrum has become pretty well sorted so that people understand what it means to have a certain set of perspectives that go together on diversity, equity, inclusiveness, and police brutality, and that public opinion sort of maps fairly well right now onto political parties as well, Democrats versus Republicans.

The problem is that land use and how people think about their neighborhoods don't map super neatly onto those divisions. So a lot of this is that people don't understand how land use regulations

can produce the kind of unequal outcomes that they don't like. So it's complicated. It's hard to understand this. And complex technical issues like land use regulation become easier for people to understand when they get elevated to a high level of conversation, particularly at the federal level. And that's not where we have debates about land use regulation. There are a few exceptions to this, but for the most part, we don't have land use regulations debates when presidents are talking about their issues.

So a lot of this is just sort of muddled thinking on it and an inability to connect how a technical policy decision would affect a long-term pattern of inequality or inaccessibility that they don't like. Another piece of this is that I want to be careful how I say this, even people who are very supportive of equality, diversity, and inclusiveness in the abstract often are willing to do a lot to protect the choices and advantages for their own family. And that is hard. In some ways, we have to say to people, "Yes, your housing value may not grow as quickly if we densify this neighborhood." And that, to people, can feel like a loss. And we know from psychology research that loss is a powerful, powerful motivator of political action.

Ned Resnikoff: As someone who grew up in Connecticut and now lives in the Bay Area, I think you put that extremely diplomatically. I wanted to turn a little bit back to the public services conversation because there's a very well-designed study in the book that I thought was absolutely fascinating about sewer systems, segregation, and sewer systems.

We talked about schools, but this is an even more, I think, stark illustration of how residential land use patterns are a way to restrict access to certain public resources and provide other people with the full benefit of them. So could you tell us a little bit about what you were looking for in that study and what you found?

Jessica Trounstine: There are a couple of different ways that sewers come into this book. And I started working on sewers as a way to think about public benefits when I was writing my first book, which was my dissertation. And I was doing some interviews in San Jose, and I met a man who had been a worker for the San Jose Public Works for several decades. And he convinced me that sewers were where I needed to look, and understanding the placement of sewers, how people got access to clean water and sewers as well as experiencing sewer overflows, was going to give me a lot of insight into who had power and who got what they wanted in neighborhoods. So I have one piece of analysis in segregation by design where I look at water chlorination in various neighborhoods, and that's sort of a piece of this.

And then I look in another piece about where sewer lines get laid and where new sewer lines get laid. And one of the inspirations for this is to understand that you can put a school in any neighborhood, but you can't just put a sewer in any neighborhood. It has to be connected to other sewers in order for it to be functional. So one of the ways to study this is to understand where new sewer lines get laid and who benefits from those new sewer lines. And if your city is segregated, it's a much easier task to only lay sewer lines in the White neighborhoods and to deny access to the Black neighborhoods to sewers. If your city is very integrated, everybody gets access to the sewers.

Other scholars have written about this, but that's one piece of evidence that public benefits are much easier to deliver in a concentrated way if you have segregation patterns. The last way that sewers come into the story is when I look at how sewer overflows look different in segregated versus not segregated cities, and this is a later part of the book where I'm trying to understand what are the negative consequences for all of us, for everyone, when we have segregated communities? One of the consequences of segregation is that communities tend to under-invest in their public goods. So more segregated communities end up with more sewer overflows because they are unwilling to communally expand the sewer capacity when it's needed.

Nolan Gray: I think this is an important part of the story. It's not just a matter of, "Well, these rules and regulations combined with prejudices have us all living segregated. And that's just now very nice." It's you get poor or Black neighborhoods and then public services can just be significantly lower quality, disinvested, not have higher human capital residents who are going to make sure that services are upgraded. I had a student in a class I taught last semester who did a research paper on the relationship between schools and land use regulations. And the number one determinant of where a person sends their kids to school, even in a context where they have public school choice, so they could theoretically send their kid to any school in the district, is still, "What's the closest school?"

Sometimes there's additional funding for transportation, but sometimes there's not. And even if there is, that's a burden on the kid. And the research kind of suggests that it's all very well and good if you say, "We'll let you bus across town to the good school, but no, we're not going to let you build any new housing, especially housing that's inherently affordable near that school." And I think you do a really, really good job of teasing out the implication of segregated patterns of housing in the book.

Jessica Trounstein: Thanks. You mentioned something that I think is another important piece of this is that it's cyclical, right? LA is a great version of this where a city will decide that they're... And LA decided in the early 1900s that they were going to pave some roads and leave some roads dirt, right? You only have so much public investment to pave roads. So what they did in LA is, I'm going to get the names of the roads wrong, but they paved the roads starting downtown out in Spokes and then ended basically right at the doorway to parts of town that were heavily Latino and parts of town that were heavily Chinese. So then what you had was paved roads in the White neighborhoods and then the roads leading up to the Chinese and Latino neighborhoods, and then dirt roads in the Latino and Chinese residential areas.

And you start thinking, "Okay, well, what is the consequence of having dirt roads?" It's dirty. It's dusty and muddy and gross. So then you think to yourself, as a person who lived in Los Angeles in the 1910s, "That part of town is gross. I don't want to go to that part of town. I don't want to live in that part of town," because of a choice that the city made not to pave those roads. So again, it becomes this process of part of what people imagine to be true about a neighborhood is created by the choices that the city government has made.

Nolan Gray: Some of the stuff that surprised me, I was doing research into the 1904 LA ordinance, and the extent to which it's explicitly like, "We are trying to get Chinese laundries out of residential-

... like we are trying to get Chinese laundries out of residential neighborhoods, right? Because the original 1904 residential district in LA didn't distinguish among housing typologies, right?

Jessica Trounstine: Right.

Nolan Gray: It was much broader than... But when they say, "What industrial uses are they concerned about?" There are some classic nuisance industrial uses, like slaughterhouses and mines, and famous... had a check case. But just as often, same as in Berkeley, the other city that would adopt single-family zoning in 1916, they're saying there are certain ethnic businesses that we want to get out. They're providing a fire safety justification, but from the beginning, they're not hiding the ball, maybe in the way that we do today. They're saying, "No, yeah, a specific ethnic group is moving into these neighborhoods, and we don't like it."

Jessica Trounstine: Right. Yeah. Modesto was the leader of the Chinese laundry bans.

Ned Resnikoff: This might be a good segue back to something we were talking about near the beginning, which is the way that the spatial level at which segregation occurs has evolved. So during the period that we were just talking about, it was very neighborhood-based. And that was because of the way that cities themselves were denying or extending certain privileges to certain neighborhoods. And also obviously the redlining maps and everything. But, you write about this transition from neighborhood-level segregation to segregation by municipal lines. So you might have a more racially integrated city, but the larger metro area, the city and all the different suburbs, is much more segregated. Could you talk a little bit about that transition and how it occurred?

Jessica Trounstine: Yeah, absolutely. So it occurs in a postwar period. And all of these things are connected, and it's impossible to tease out one particular causal path. But I'll say the research generally suggests suburbanization, so what I mean by suburbanization is people moving out from the central city into incorporated municipalities that are not part of the central city. That process occurs for a lot of different reasons, largely having to do with the availability of land, and the availability of highway accessibility. So physically being able to move out of the city but still get back to work in the city, is underlined by the development of highways. And housing is cheaper.

You can get a bigger house as sort of your leave it to beaver house with the white picket fence and a yard. That became available in the suburbs in the postwar period because of changes in the building market, like lots of different. But because of restrictive covenants and how banks were engaging in lending at the time, the FHA and the federal guidelines as well, it meant that people who moved to the suburbs who could move to the suburbs were vastly more likely to be white, middle, and upper-income residents than the people who stayed in the city.

And so immediately, as suburbs begin to grow, they are whiter and wealthier than the cities that those people leave. And again, there are a lot of different reasons for this, but in the early part of the 20th century, people who had money did move away from the city center. And any reading that you do on the history of cities, will lead you to understand how disgusting it was, to live in the city center in a lot of these old cities, as Nolan was referencing right next to slaughterhouses and other gross uses. So wealthy people have for a long time moved away from the city center. What changed was whether or not city boundaries were also following those people who moved out from the city

center. That began to stop in the middle of the 20th century, so cities became hemmed in by municipalities that became incorporated in their outer underlying areas.

The suburbanization is the political incorporation of these outer underlying communities. And again, just like land use regulation sticks in place earlier patterns, the incorporation of these municipalities sticks in place the process of restrictive covenants that led them to be whiter and wealthier in the first place. The benefit of being an incorporated municipality as a suburb is that now you have full control over your land-use regulations, which then all many suburban communities immediately implemented much more restrictive land-use regulations, preventing higher density development, preventing renting, preventing a whole bunch of different things that we now understand are correlated with preserving segregation patterns, become easily adopted in the suburbs.

The last thing I'll say on this is that it's an important point that I don't write too much about in the book, but maybe for the future, is that there are really important political consequences to the level of segregation that you have. When you have segregation across neighborhoods within a city, it is possible, maybe not likely, but possible, for segregated disadvantaged neighborhoods to make a claim to the city government that they need better services, or to the school district that they need better books and teachers. Once you have people separated across school district lines or across municipal lines, the people in the disadvantaged community have no political power over the people who have the resources and advantages outside of that community.

Ned Resnikoff: Yeah, you have some research that sort of points in this direction too in the book, right? Because you talk about what happens when central cities elect non-white mayors. Could you talk a little bit about that research?

Jessica Trounstine: Yeah, it's actually even a step before that. When you see people of color running for office in central cities, you begin to see anxiousness on the part of white residents. And you see this in the qualitative research, but then in the quantitative research that I have in the book. When you have black mayors or mayors of color elected to office in central cities, combined with slightly different spending patterns in cities, you start to see higher levels of expenditure on police in particular, which is connected with a movement of white residents into outer-lying suburban communities.

Ned Resnikoff: Yeah. My favorite example in the Bay Area of this sort of ridiculous drawing of municipal boundaries is the city of Piedmont. Which is surrounded on all sides by the city of Oakland. It looks like Vatican City, but on a map.

Jessica Trounstine: And has one of the most powerful histories of restrictive covenants in California. Because every house in Piedmont, I believe, unlike some places where there might be a neighborhood or a street which is governed by restrictive covenants, Piedmont was wholly covered. My understanding is at one point in time.

Ned Resnikoff: Oh, I didn't know that. I mean, the thing that stands out to me about this, about Piedmont that I think is also really illustrative of your point about political power, is one of the ways to overcome this issue of political power, is to move some land use decisions up to the state level where you are representing everyone in the state. And so in the case of Piedmont, when the state

told Piedmont, "You have to plan for more affordable housing in your town, you have to find a place to zone for it where it's feasible to build," the city of Piedmont tried to annex back a chunk of Oakland that they could put all of the affordable housing in, instead of finding a place for it within their existing city boundaries. Which I just thought was such an amazing illustration of the dynamic that you're describing here.

Jessica Trounstine: That's right. And you'll see in places like Piedmont, and I haven't looked at the map in a while, but you'll see that where they put the affordable housing or the higher density housing, is right along the edge where it borders the city that they are separated from. And so that's a very common pattern. And East Menlo Park is the same way. You see these patterns in lots of different places.

Nolan Gray: The theme for this, we just did an episode with Megan Kimball on urban freeways, and she wrote an amazing new book on how they're still expanding urban freeways in Texas. And the theme of this series is going to be, Wow, How is this Still Happening? I'm always at pains to stress this, because I think a lot of people hear this stuff and they're like, "Wow, yeah, some really bad stuff happened in the 19th century. Some bad stuff happened in the '20s, some bad stuff happened in the '60s. And it's like, for the most part, these policies haven't meaningfully changed. I mean, maybe we're a little bit more subtle about what we're up to here, but yeah, Piedmont, a city that probably I would assume votes supermajority progressive in most federal elections, is here saying, well, we're going to do these crazy legal shenanigans to avoid building any affordable housing that would be potentially majority-minority. Yeah.

Jessica Trounstine: There's at least one Bay Area city, I'll have to go back and look at my notes on which one it is, but there's at least one Bay Area city where the vast majority of parcels in the city are zoned agricultural. The reason is that it's much easier to implement a two-acre minimum lot size on agricultural parcels than it is on any other kind of parcel in California. And so I don't want to say the name of the city and get it wrong, but it's not agricultural. You won't find horses and cows in this place.

Ned Resnikoff: I'm just going to take a wild uninformed guess here and assume that it's someplace like Los Gatos or Atherton. That sounds a little bit like their kind of thing.

Jessica Trounstine: Some place like that.

Nolan Gray: This was coming up down here in LA. I don't know if it was in LA or Burbank, but there's essentially a little horse ranch. And the opposition is "this new development is going to scare the horses." And you're like, I mean, how terribly have you lost the plot when you're opposing mixed-income housing on behalf of the hobby of maybe a few dozen extremely wealthy people? I mean, just get a grip. Sorry.

Jessica Trounstine: That was great.

Nolan Gray: It pushed me a little bit too far. Well, I'm curious. I mean, the landscape's changed a lot since your book came out, I think in part because of amazing work like what you've done. There does seem to be a lot more awareness of this issue, and I'm curious, we think about this a lot at California

YIMBY as well. What needs to happen on this issue? Let's say you're a policymaker or a staffer listening to this or even a planning practitioner, and you're like, "Okay, Jessica, you totally convinced me this is a problem. What do we need to do?"

Jessica Trounstine: There are two things. Well, many things, but one is to convince people that the boogeyman of a 40-story apartment complex isn't necessarily what we're talking about here. So like lot splits, quadplexes. We can have a lot of different ways that our cities can look where we can make meaningful changes that will produce more housing for more people. And another piece of this is to figure out who the coalition is in any one community. And it's going to be a different coalition in different places.

In some communities, people are going to be motivated by wanting to house, and make sure that their elderly residents and their children are going to be able to live in the community. In some places, people are going to be motivated by wanting to make sure that the service workers aren't commuting hours and hours. In some communities, they're going to be motivated by an environmental concern, where density is the way to fight climate change. We need to get people off the roads, we need to bring communities in, we need to create transit-oriented communities, and that's not going to be possible without density. So, figuring out who your coalition is, in any one community, I think is an excellent place to start. And getting people to understand the long-term consequences or the downstream consequences, of what seemed like sort of technical decisions, I think can also be very helpful.

Nolan Gray: I mean, a key part of the story that we've been talking about so far is this issue of metropolitan fragmentation, right?

Jessica Trounstine: Yeah.

Nolan Gray: People went out, incorporated new suburbs, and then immediately pulled up the ladder and adopted exclusionary zoning. In California, as I'm sure you know, we've been making efforts at this with fair share mechanisms. You talk a little bit about Cherry Hill and Camden in New Jersey, which has Mount Laurel. How much thought do you put in that and what, if anything seems to work there?

Jessica Trounstine: So what has worked in my view in California, is the builder's remedy. So you need a hammer in some places. Moving the debate up to a higher level of government can be very effective. That's not going to be effective everywhere, because the constellation of voices at the higher level of government may not be the right coalition. But in California, it seems to be, and in my view, the mechanism that has been threatening communities has been the builder's remedy: allowing the state to permit developers to develop. That can be effective. And lawsuits can be effective. I have some research that shows this, that suing a city under fair housing laws can get them to change their zoning laws. So again, I think it's different in different places. But figuring out a way to make housing for all kinds of people accessible in all kinds of neighborhoods, is the very basic first step. We need a lot more variation in the communities that we have. And that's going to be a step in the right direction.

Ned Resnikoff: Is there any place in the United States that you think in general has really kind of nailed the formula? Any city or metro area?

Jessica Trounstine: Minneapolis seems to be making quite a lot of progress. And they made big news when they legalized triplexes in Minneapolis. They were the first big city to do this, to ban single-family-only zones. And they didn't get a lot of uptake. So when they first did this, it was very tepid. Because it takes a long time. People have to sell their property, somebody has to decide that they're going to develop a triplex or a duplex or whatever, and it just sort of trickled out. What I understand to be true in Minneapolis, I've done very little reading about their experience, is that they figured out that you can't just change one thing.

You can't just make it so that triplexes are buildable by right. You also have to make sure that your floor area ratios, and your setback laws, and your height limitations, and all of the other things that can prohibit densification, are also supportive of the kind of development that you, as a community, want to have. And once they did that, once Minneapolis sort of took a larger view of all the different kinds of regulations that could stand in the way of densification, they've seen a lot more development happening, and they've had a lot of permits pulled in the last couple of years, once they made this a holistic approach.

Ned Resnikoff: I guess my question is, and maybe it's a little bit too early to tell with Minneapolis, but my understanding is that the Twin Cities metro area, even by US standards, is very segregated. And I mean, I think what Minneapolis has been doing on land use policy over the past couple of years, is amazing and super laudatory. And I really hope we can import some of what they're doing here to California. But I think the real question I'm trying to get at here is, is it making the city or the metro area more racially integrated?

Jessica Trounstine: So I have two data points. I don't know about Minneapolis. I don't know the answer to that particular question. I do know that... So two things. One, I have some data that shows that fair housing lawsuits do successfully integrate communities, meaningfully. And there are a couple of examples that I could give. St. Helena is one of them that went from 97% white before their injunction, to 75% white. You would still say, okay, well, it's 75% white, but that is a meaningful amount of racial integration in that community. Is it segregated? Yeah. The city of St. Helena is super segregated internally. But those Latino residents who live in St. Helena now can go to St. Helena schools. And those Latino residents who live in St. Helena can access jobs in an easier way than they could have, 20 years ago. So you can't fix all the problems at once.

And for me, I would rather trade off one kind of segregation for the other. I would rather have more diverse communities, even if those communities end up segregated across neighborhoods. Because that's better than having segregation across cities. The other thing to say here is that, by my data, the most diverse, integrated metro area in the whole United States is the Riverside-San Bernardino metropolitan area. And somebody needs to figure out a lot more about why that happened and how that happened, and how they maintained it, how they have maintained it. But my data indicate that that's the data point that we might look at if we want to understand more about the history of these patterns.

Ned Resnikoff: Well, I don't know if this is exactly what's happening in Riverside and San Bernardino, but they are sort of part of the greater Los Angeles megalopolis. One of the things that I think has been an interesting theme in the past few years, and you can actually see this show up in federal election results in a really fascinating way, is that you've started to see inner ring suburbs become more integrated. Right?

Jessica Trounstine: Right.

Ned Resnikoff: Could you talk a little bit about why that's the case?

Jessica Trounstine: So integration is highly correlated with the price of housing. And as inner-ring suburbs have aged and have become more affordable, you end up seeing more diversification. So in the United States, there is a very strong preference for single-family detached housing among all racial and economic groups. So when people have the opportunity to move to an affordable place, and every kid in the house gets their own bedroom, a lot of families are going to make that choice. And to the extent that inner Ring suburbs used to be very exclusive, and then became less expensive as a housing stock aged and more exurban development happened, they have become more affordable. And we have seen diversification. There's also some great work showing chain migration patterns. So as immigration patterns have changed in the United States, some immigrant communities have become drawn to suburban communities outside of the central city, and that has produced some diversification as well.

Nolan Gray: I think the reason is actually that San Bernardino is a lot more progressive than the Bay Area maybe.

Jessica Trounstine: Oh, fighting words, right?

Nolan Gray: I mean, it is interesting that... Because I mean, a lot of times, at least my reading of the data is you see cities seem to perform well, they just have very, very small populations of non-white residents. They don't have high rates of... because they just never had a large population that required active policy to... So that's not particularly instructive. But Riverside and San Bernardino are very diverse.

Jessica Trounstine: Right. This is why I started that data point by noting that first, you have to eliminate all of the metro areas in the United States that don't have any diversity at all, so they have very low segregation -- exactly as Nolan, you're saying -- because there's nobody to segregate. So once you take the set of metro areas that have meaningful diversity, then look at who is the least segregated, it's San Bernardino and Riverside.

Ned Resnikoff: Let's talk a little bit about your current place of residence. We were talking a little bit about this before we started recording, and, because Nolan and I are both based in California and we think about California housing policy a lot, that's sometimes what we tend to focus on. But I'd be interested to hear how you've seen these things play out in Nashville, where you're currently based.

Jessica Trounstine: I'm just learning, and I'm trying to meet as many people as I can and talk to all of the wise people who have been here for a long time. And I've learned that there are many similar

sorts of patterns here in Nashville as there are in the Northeast where I used to live, as there are in California. So you still see segregation between neighborhoods, and you still can find segregation patterns across cities, as we were talking about before. But the one piece that seems pretty different... So there are a couple of things that are pretty different about Nashville. One, is that we have a very development-friendly community here. And we could just take a walk outside my office here, and you could see crane after crane after crane. I mean, there are a lot of buildings happening in Nashville. It's a really exciting place. And a lot of that is residential housing.

They build apartment complexes here, but they don't build apartment complexes in all the neighborhoods. And there remain exclusive neighborhoods. We have a pattern of development here, of lot splitting. They're called horizontal property regimes. So you end up with on a single parcel, two houses that are basically in front and back of each other, or sort of very close together. That seems like a new sort of land use policy that I need to learn more about. But it has created densification, created densification in my particular neighborhood. What seems to maintain patterns of segregation in Nashville, are historic overlays. And I don't have data on this, this is impressionistic only, but I believe it to be true that the most exclusive neighborhoods in Nashville are governed by very restrictive historic overlays, so that it's pretty difficult to densify in any meaningful way, and in places that have historic overlays that govern the development process.

Ned Resnikoff: Isn't Nashville also the capital of the whole HGTV house-flipping thing? I mean, I don't know if this is prevalent enough in Nashville to actually make a difference one way or another, but I've always kind of wondered if there was something about the Nashville housing market or land use regime that made it a particularly good place to do this sort of intensity of house flipping reality shows in Nashville has any sort of effect on the larger housing market?

Jessica Trounstine: I don't know the answer to that, but it's a good question for me to ask around. I mean, I think that there are more small scale and mid-level developers here than there are in a lot of communities in California. So to the extent that that is sort of correlated with house flipping, it seems from, again, my impressionistic view, that there is more space for that kind of small-scale development to happen here.

Nolan Gray: I think you're picking up on something important too, which is certainly in places like California or the Northeast, these land use rules probably are limiting overall housing production. They're probably not doing that in a place like Nashville or Austin or maybe Miami. They're not limiting the overall housing production, but they are determining what gets built and where. And so from a housing affordability perspective, it's like, okay, fine, whatever the housing's getting built. But from a spatial equity perspective, I think that's a potentially significant concern, especially if all the housing going in places that maybe don't have amazing public services are all going into neighborhoods where the locals are potentially at risk of displacement if their home gets redeveloped. Right?

Jessica Trounstine: And we don't have any sidewalks here. We have a big transit initiative on the ballot that's going to come up in November. One of the big pieces of this transit initiative is to build sidewalks so that people can walk to bus stops. There's a lot of infrastructure that needs to happen. Housing prices here are skyrocketing so I wouldn't want to say that we're developing enough housing, but I think it's been an attractive place for a long time because housing prices have been

relatively slower growing than other metropolitan areas. So it is very expensive to live here and it can be very difficult for renters to find places to rent, but it's not nearly as bad as the coasts.

Nolan Gray: One, as an understudy of Donald Shoup and parking, I love the less sexy that the research topics, you've talked about sidewalks and sewers so far, the more excited I get. I mean, these are the things that are just run-of-the-mill, quality of life, things that just fly under the radar of academics who are like, "Oh, I'm going to do international relations or grand theories of urban governance."

Jessica Trounstine: Exactly.

Nolan Gray: And it's like, "Please, no. Can we just figure out how sidewalks get built and maintained?" But bigger... Stepping back. Okay, so stepping back and doing exactly what I was just complaining about, one of the questions I have is why do we see so much seemingly regional variation in attitudes toward growth? So I think your sense is totally right that Nashville is much more favorable to growth. That's certainly the case in a lot of these Sun Belt cities and some of these Mountain West cities that are absorbing a lot of folks priced out of places like New York and California. Why do we seem to go on this divergence in the sixties and seventies where a place like California basically stopped all growth and then places on the south just go on an absolute tear?

Jessica Trounstine: I don't have a good academic answer to that question yet. Maybe as I work on this next book, I will come to the right answer about this. But I think a lot of it has to do with the power of the development community. So there's this sort of historic narrative about cities that developers and that growth and that the economic, sort of the Chamber of Commerce drives everything. That there's this big... That the economy drives decisions that city governments make. I think that was pretty accurate in the 1950s and 1960s in a lot of big cities. What I have seen is that the rise of neighborhood voices in the 1970s and 1980s became much more powerful and a counterbalance to this development voice.

In places where you have maintained a stronger developer presence in city governments, I think you see more development. I think that that is true in a lot of Sun Belt cities. I think it's true in the South. I think it's true in a lot of more conservative places, that the development community and the Chamber of Commerce have more access or more ability to affect the policies that govern the city as a whole.

Nolan Gray: Yeah, it is something that I've been puzzling over. I don't know, because I mean, there once was a robust, powerful growth machine in LA and in the same way there was in Houston. It's like, well, they were both probably... I would suspect that based on my reading of the history, the LA growth machine was more coordinated, better funded-

Jessica Trounstine: Oh, yeah. And linked to all parts of the government, right?

Nolan Gray: Right. That doesn't happen in a place like Houston. I wonder to what extent NIMBY-interest, and I say that... Some of the protests were a little bit more sympathetic. We were coming out of an era of pretty disruptive planning. That's not to excuse people in Santa Monica Hills just not wanting any new housing getting built near them. But I wonder to what extent they were able

to find some more compelling moral cover for what they were up to. This is environmental, this is small and beautiful. Whereas in a place like Houston, all values discourse works in the opposite direction of like, "Oh yeah, we know it sucks having development near you," and especially if it's non-white people moving in next door, but on some level, there is a real commitment to property rights and letting people do what they want.

Jessica Trounstine: Right.

Nolan Gray: So I don't know, I'm just thinking out loud, but that's what I thought about.

Jessica Trounstine: Yeah. No, I think that that's right. I mean, figuring out where LA might've gone toward Houston or not is the right moment to look at is, "when did the growth machine get hemmed in?" I know in San Jose, the growth machine got hemmed in by a combination of the movement for district elections and the rise of the environmental movement. That might be true in other places. There are crucial moments where we might've had a different path and other voices might've maintained power in the city. There are trade-offs with all of these kinds of moments. Some people win and some people lose.

Nolan Gray: Well, and getting back to the core of your work too, Houston still is pretty average mediocre on spatial equity. Housing affordability is great, but it could be that, well, the people who wanted exclusion in Houston could easily get it through the private deed restriction regime that seems to be much more robust in Houston than it ever was in LA. In LA, if you wanted robust exclusion, you had to have the government come in and do it for you because too many of these neighborhoods were built at a time and maybe there weren't deed restrictions or they weren't written to be strong enough or something of that nature. I mean, I guess I'm looking at it and thinking, taking your work seriously, some people seem to have this demand for exclusion and segregation and they're trying to find different paths of achieving it. I think you're getting at that partly with Nashville where it's like, it's not zoning in a place like Nashville, but it might be historic overlays. Right?

Jessica Trounstine: Right. Yeah. A lot of my work has this sort of flavor to it where somebody wants something and they're going to figure out lots of different avenues to get that, and sometimes they're going to be overlapping. They might be as sneaky as they want to be, or they might try all the different strategies. Sometimes, one strategy is the thing that is the crux of the matter, and so I think it remains to be seen. I do think, as you just said, Nolan, that this preference for maintaining property values and creating exclusionary public goods is fairly universal. So it's a matter of figuring out why some communities can implement that and other neighborhoods are not able to implement that so easily.

Ned Resnikoff: I have my own pet theory about this, at least in the deep blue, coastal cities like San Francisco, LA, New York, et cetera, which is that a lot of it has to do also with the breakup of the New Deal Coalition in those cities and the rise of the new left. I mean, that's very salient, I think, in the sort of small is beautiful discourse that you still see to a large extent in San Francisco in the Bay Area.

Jessica Trounstine: That's really interesting. I'm going to follow up with you on that because I think this is a story that needs to be clearer for everyone.

Ned Resnikoff: Yeah. Jacob Anbinder's work, his recent work points in this direction, I think.

Jessica Trounstine: Yeah.

Nolan Gray: Well, in a great book, Rise of the Community Builders by Marc Weiss, I was rereading that recently, and he really gets to the FHA lending standards are providing this incredibly strong impetus to change a lot of these rules. Community builders are going to the city and saying, "We're not going to get all this generous federal housing money unless we start--"

Jessica Trounstine: Unless you do this.

Nolan Gray: "Segregating our neighborhoods and adopting R-1." Right?

Jessica Trounstine: Yeah. There's so much that I read for other purposes that I now have to go back and read with this new lens and Rise of the Community Builders is a great example of that. I get something new out of books every time I reread them.

Nolan Gray: It's a classic. I mean, it's so funny too, when they adopt zoning in 1921 and it's basically just speculators going crazy with it and the realtors in the chamber are immediately like, "Oh, this is a bad idea. We need to radically overhaul this."

Jessica Trounstine: Yeah, this kind of sucks.

Ned Resnikoff: Well, Nolan, is it lightning round time?

Nolan Gray: I think so, yeah. So I mean, I know you're in Nashville now, but you were in Merced for a while. Where should I get lunch in Merced?

Jessica Trounstine: Ooh. So my favorite place is just closed down. J&R Tacos was the very best place to get tacos, in my opinion, in town. But we love to go to the Mainzer, which is also on Main Street, and if you want a nice steak, you could go to Five Ten Bistro. Depends on what you want, but the tacos are unparalleled. There are many, many taco shops to go to.

Ned Resnikoff: So Nashville, you're current residence. Rumor has it that they have a pretty cool local music scene.

Jessica Trounstine: It's okay.

Ned Resnikoff: Yeah, okay.

Jessica Trounstine: There are some people you've heard of, yeah.

Ned Resnikoff: Have you seen any local Nashville acts that you would recommend?

Jessica Trounstine: Ooh, local. I've seen a lot of live music, and this is one of the first things we did is sort of start going to all the different venues here. So our big arena is Bridgestone. We've been there several times. The Ryman is amazing. It's the best place to see a show. I saw Blue October there a

couple of months ago, and they were fantastic. I've seen the Postal Service, I saw Depeche Mode. We're going to Built to Spill and Modest Mouse. There's so much music. And the jazz scene here is just incredible. But maybe my favorite place so far is this little jazz club. Jazz blues? I don't know. I think it's a jazz club. It's called Rudy's, and it's in sort of a weird part of town off of Broadway, but it's amazing.

You're sitting 20 feet away from brilliant, brilliant artists, probably sitting next to somebody who's also a brilliant, brilliant artist. It's just any kind of music you want, you can find it and it's so accessible, right? It's like 10 minutes from my house. I jump in a ride-share and I'm downtown and it's fantastic. It's really a great place. Also, the farmer's market, an amazing place to see people, or the airport. I was there last week and an incredible banjo player was sitting right outside the burger shop at the Nashville airport.

Ned Resnikoff: All right. I have to ask one, maybe two follow-up questions. So the first one is a jazz club called Rudy's. Is that the Rudy's from the Steely Dan song, Black Cow?

Jessica Trounstein: I don't think so because it's not that old.

Ned Resnikoff: Okay. Okay, maybe not then. Second question, just tell me more about Nashville jazz. I didn't know that Nashville had a big jazz scene.

Jessica Trounstein: It's incredible. So a colleague of mine here introduced me to the Nashville jazz scene and has taken me to a couple of jazz shows. So the Nashville Jazz Workshop is a place where people who are truly aficionados go to just interact with each other and listen to people playing amazing music. Again, it's a tiny little venue, like 10, 15 tables. You bring your own wine, some cheese and crackers, and you sit and listen to people who are just unbelievably good at their craft. There are lots of different ways to access jazz around here, but I think that's probably the Nashville Jazz Workshop, it's phenomenal.

Nolan Gray: If you could put one book on the desk of every state legislator in Tennessee related to your work broadly, and it can't be... Sorry, it can be *Arbitrary Lines*, but you don't have to say that.

Jessica Trounstein: I was just going to say, "Can I pick your book?"

Nolan Gray: No, no. Nobody on the call who's been involved in the book. Let's set that aside.

Jessica Trounstein: Oh, that is really a hard question. I mean, there are so many options here. Yeah, this is too hard. I know it's hard because I'm still learning the Tennessee state legislature and understanding the culture of the Tennessee state legislature. One piece of this is that the Tennessee state legislature and the city government, city-county government, we're a consolidated city-county government of Nashville, have not had a great relationship lately. So I want to think of something, I want to think of a book that's about coalition building in a federal system, and nothing immediately comes to mind, but part of this is that I am too new to give the right answer to that question, Nolan.

Nolan Gray: Well, we can just go with segregation by design while we chew on it. Yeah, that's interesting. I mean, I can imagine this is a typical dynamic of antagonism between levels of government in these red states and blue cities.

Jessica Trounstine: Yeah. We have the added excitement of being the Capitol. So the legislature sits here and experiences Nashville in a way that is different than it might otherwise be. The politics of Nashville are very different from the politics of Memphis are very different from the politics of Chattanooga and Knoxville and then all the cities in between.

Nolan Gray: Yeah, it's a challenging state because it's genuinely pretty multipolar in a way that a lot of states are not. I mean, you do have these radically different major cities with almost entirely different economies and profiles.

Jessica Trounstine: And a quite big agricultural sector in between all of the major cities and a lot of racial strife and history and division that overlays all of this.

Nolan Gray: It's much more complicated than Kentucky, where we really only have one city in Lexington. There are some Indiana suburbs in the Louisville area, but... No, sorry, I'm kidding. I mean, it is remarkable. Certainly, Bowling Green, which is sort of becoming an outer excerpt of Nashville is one of the fastest growing cities in Kentucky, and you're seeing growth almost along that entire-

Jessica Trounstine: Along that line, yeah.

Nolan Gray: What is it? I-64, the freeway? Sorry, guys. I-65.

Jessica Trounstine: 65, right.

Nolan Gray: I-65 corridor. I mean, it's pretty remarkable. Just providing the Kentucky perspective for the Tennesseans who I know cherish that.

Ned Resnikoff: All right. Here's another lightning round question. Favorite work of fiction, book, film, TV show, whatever, where the city where it takes place is a main character.

Jessica Trounstine: The city is part of the story?

Ned Resnikoff: Yeah. And the city is sort of... You know how sometimes people will say like, "Oh, really, it's the city that's the main character of this book," or something like that? Something like that.

Jessica Trounstine: Yeah, *The Wire* is sort of a cheating answer because it's correct, if you like that. It's just an amazing art view of the city and all of its different ways. But actually, I just finished watching *The Warrior*, which is focused on San Francisco during the Tong Wars. That one's pretty good too, and has a nice political history as well, so I'm going with TV at the moment.

Ned Resnikoff: Okay. Yeah, it's funny because *The Wire*, there's a little bit in there about housing, right? I mean, there are the projects that get blown up at the beginning of season three or something. But you have to wonder what it would've looked like if *The Wire* had done a season six in the city planning department. There's that kind of missing piece of it.

Jessica Trounstine: Yeah, that's true.

Nolan Gray: We kind of have that, Show Me a Hero, right?

Jessica Trounstine: I was just going to say, Show Me a Hero is sort of the bookend. I don't know. I love that mini-series so much.

Nolan Gray: So if you get a political science PhD with even a passing focus on urban politics, do they make you sit down and watch The Wire and Show Me a Hero? I think Stan Oklobdzija and Sarah Anzia both referred to those in these questions. I mean, they are, they're fantastic. Right? I'm watching Ripley right now on Netflix. I don't know if either of you have seen that.

Jessica Trounstine: No.

Ned Resnikoff: Yeah.

Nolan Gray: It's incredible and it's so good. Rome and every city that he's moving through, it's like there's a real... The city's a character.

Ned Resnikoff: Yeah.

Nolan Gray: They haven't brought up zoning yet, but I'm holding out.

Jessica Trounstine: You're waiting.

Ned Resnikoff: Well, you remember, that beautiful apartment that he rents in Rome midway through the series, you look at it and you go, "How is this so big and beautiful and he can afford to rent it?" It's because it's a single stair building.

Nolan Gray: Thank you so much for that, Ned. Thank you. I was going to say, he starts off living in an SRO. It's this con-man. He's meant to be like, you're not supposed to really be rooting for him, but he starts in an SRO and he's able to use that opportunity to build a better life and appreciate that.

Jessica Trounstine: Look at that. Right?

Nolan Gray: Incredible.

Jessica Trounstine: That's how we're going to solve all the problems.

Nolan Gray: What are you working on next, Jessica?

Ned Resnikoff: Oh, yeah.

Jessica Trounstine: I'm working on a book about polarization in local politics. So the first part of the book... So I think in popular culture at the moment, it's common to believe that big fights that happen at the local level are trickle-down polarization, that when we were fighting about masks or critical race theory or whatever, that this was like national level polarization has finally seeped into our

local politics. I just think that's backward. The argument that I make in the book is that polarization is deeply embedded in our cities and our school districts, that these fault lines are largely driven by race and racial division, and that it is segregation and land use patterns that have created the context for the divisions that we see, the polarization that we see in local politics and local communities today.

So the first half of the book is trying to understand the power and the moments at which these land use decisions get made and get stuck in place, and sort of whose voices were the deciding factor when these decisions get made. It's surprisingly difficult to figure this out. And then the second half of the book traces divisions within cities over time and ends with a really large survey of cities across the United States trying to map our polarization patterns and understand when and under what conditions those polarization patterns map onto what's happening at the national level. So I have little pieces of this that I've written. The big story isn't quite there yet, but that's what I'm working on.

Nolan Gray: Awesome. If it's even half as good as Segregation By Design, I'm sure it'll be great and we'll have to have you back on to discuss it.

Jessica Trounstine: Thank you.

Ned Resnikoff: Yeah, absolutely. All right. This was such a big pleasure, Jessica. Thank you so much for coming on the show.

Jessica Trounstine: Yeah, absolutely. Thank you so much for having me. I'm really honored.