

Social mix policies, spatial scale and resident interaction

Paper presented at the ENHR Conference, Dublin, 2008

Work in progress, please do not cite without the author's permission.

Kathy Arthurson, Program Leader, Cities, Housing and the Environment,
Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University, Melbourne, Australia
karthurson@swin.edu.au

Introduction

Recent Australian research maps the contemporary patterns of concentration of spatial disadvantage, due to structural economic change, across Australia's metropolitan cities and regional centres (Baum et al 1999; Vinson 2007). Within these studies the communities identified as the most vulnerable to change, in terms of income levels, labour force engagement and the presence of disadvantaged residents, are social housing estates and areas of concentrated low income private rental housing. In tandem with the economic changes, concentrations of social housing tenants have been perceived as having significant associations, whether rightly or wrongly, with a range of issues including anti-social behaviour, crime, welfare dependency and depictions of a socially excluded underclass eschewing work and disengaged from mainstream norms and values (Arthurson 2004). These depictions have been reinforced over the past few years internationally by civil disturbances, experienced on social housing estates, including in Australia (Macquarie Fields, Redfern in New South Wales), France (St Denis, Poissy, Clichy-sous-bois), and Britain (Bestwood, Nottingham).

Whilst the debate about a socially excluded underclass has been contentious it has contributed to the stigmatisation of areas in which social housing is concentrated. This affects social housing tenants through increased difficulty in gaining employment due to negative perceptions of particular areas and lack of role models in terms of employment participation and educational achievement. There are also other implications, such as poor quality local services and lowered local amenity (Galster 2007). Recent reforms to implement tighter assessment criteria for accessing social housing mean that in the future these issues around concentrations of disadvantaged tenants are likely to increase rather than decrease. These circumstances have prompted renewed interest by urban and social planners and housing policy makers in the idea of 'social mix'. In this context social mix is commonly used to refer to the level of socioeconomic variance of residents, housing tenure within a particular spatially delineated area, age range or ethnic mix of residents.

Sarkissian (1976), and more recently Arthurson (2008), detail that historically a continuing theme of the ideals set for social mix is about the necessity for propinquity between poor and better off residents. The underlying rationale is that propinquity enables the poor to become good citizens through the instrument of middle class role modeling and leadership. This reasoning assumes that residents' patterns of

socialisation in disadvantaged areas are largely restricted to the spatial scale of local neighbourhood with limited social networks/contacts beyond the immediate area. Contemporary proponents of social mix policies claim that the benefits for disadvantaged residents of living amongst homeowners and working residents include access to broader formal and informal networks, including social networks that link disadvantaged residents to job opportunities and role models to become good citizens (see Atkinson & Kintrea 2000; Arthurson 2002). However, within the international literature and policy debates the sociological understanding of space as a context for social interaction has not been clearly conceptualised or often explored as a framework for understanding the effects of social mix.

This paper explores the problematic nature of the basic assumption underlying support for social mix policies that propinquity in space provides the context for social interaction between residents in different housing tenures. In doing so it questions whether a focus at the broad level of neighbourhood is too delimiting. First, social mix policies are operationalised at a number of different spatial geographic dimensions – at the level of home, cluster, block, street and neighbourhood, which are likely to have different outcomes for residents. Second, social mix policies assume that most social interaction takes place at the level of neighbourhood rather than the world beyond when social network analysis suggests that in contemporary society most people's links extend way beyond the local neighbourhood. In the first part of the paper the approaches that are currently used to achieve social mix through urban regeneration are detailed. Then the relevant literature is reviewed before turning to the current study findings.

Contemporary Policy Approaches for Achieving Social Mix

Internationally, often the most visible signs of problems of social dysfunction and community disharmony are on the social housing estates that were predominately, but not always, constructed in the post Second World War period to meet the shortages at that time of good quality, low cost housing. In the present day, social housing, houses large numbers of the most disadvantaged, high need and complex tenants. Over the past two decades, global economic restructuring coupled with changes in family structures and progressively tighter restrictions governing access to social housing has resulted in the sector in most countries moving from housing for families and working tenants to housing for more complex, ethnically mixed and high need tenants. It is not surprising that common characteristics of neighbourhoods with high levels of social housing often include concentrations of residents experiencing greater than average levels of unemployment, low-income and reliance on welfare benefits, poor educational outcomes, mental and physical health problems and crime and anti-social behaviour (Arthurson & Jacobs 2006).

Contemporary urban planning and social housing estate regeneration policies in Australia, the United Kingdom and North America often aim to break down or prevent concentrations of disadvantaged residents from forming through balancing 'social mix', or creating communities with a blend of residents across a range of income levels and different housing tenures. The mix of housing tenures includes social housing, private rental, home purchase and owner-occupied housing. Social mix is adopted in anticipation of it assisting to create more stable and vigorous communities than when disadvantaged residents are concentrated together in one neighbourhood (Arthurson 2002). The foundations of social mix policies in regeneration of social housing estates, reflects however, different countries' policy settings and social and political frameworks.

The North American approach predominately relocates low income black African-American and immigrant households from 'distressed' neighbourhoods of concentrated poverty to areas with wider socioeconomic and racial mix and a range of housing tenures. The programs include *Moving to Opportunity (MTO)*, *Gautreaux*, and *HOPE VI* (Popkin et al. 2004). Compared with Australian approaches, which may involve permanent relocation of tenants to social housing located outside of the regeneration neighbourhood, the UK and European approaches tend to focus more on developing social mix on social housing estates with tenants in-situ, although there are some exceptions (Kleinhans 2003). Thus far, dispersal or mobility programs that relocate residents out of areas of concentrated poverty into privately subsidised housing into more prosperous neighbourhoods in the nature of the US Gautreaux and Moving to Opportunity Programs have not developed in other contexts. In the European context social mix has also been facilitated through targeting social housing to tenants across a wide range of income levels. Conversely, in Australia and the UK, social mix is generally achieved through tenant right to buy schemes, demolition, and/or replacement of obsolete social housing with housing available for private purchase in order to attract higher income homeowners/purchasers into the neighbourhoods.

Geographic Scales of Implementation

In the current study the international literature on social mix from 1990 until 2007 was reviewed. This included 57 journal articles, seven conference papers, 13 reports and three book chapters. Two of the themes that emerged as the review progressed were first, the importance of scrutinizing the scale at which social mix is implemented and second, the impact of lifestyle in determining levels of social interaction in mixed income housing neighbourhoods.

North American Studies

Rosenbaum et al (1998) in a US case study of Lake Parc, a mixed income housing development, found that residents tended to socialise with their neighbours. However, the study did not determine how much interaction occurred across different income groups. In this study social mix was implemented at the scale of the building, whereby various income groups lived in the same two, 15-story apartment buildings. Within the study it was unclear whether households in every income were included on each floor or whether they occupied different parts of the buildings. Half the apartments were targeted to families with one employed adult earning between 50 per cent to 80 per cent of the median income and the other half for those earning less than 50 per cent of the median income. Where resident interaction did occur, it generally, involved casual interaction, such as in playgrounds, hallways or through volunteer activities. In this study children were more likely to interact than adults. Brophy and Smith (1997) utilising seven case studies of similar mixed income housing developments, with income mix implemented at the building level, found little evidence of interaction between different income groups. In effect, although lower and higher income residents lived in the same buildings there was little social interaction. Briggs (1997) studied tenants that remained in traditional, highly concentrated public housing neighbourhoods, compared to those that moved to scattered sites, where public housing was inter-dispersed amongst homeowners. He concluded that although the new neighbourhoods were safer there was little evidence of interaction between the low income movers and their new neighbours – some movers maintained ties outside of the area with their previous residential neighbourhoods, still attending church or socialising there. The findings suggested that the movers' social networks were much broader than their current residential

neighbourhood. In another study Briggs (1998) examined seven small concentrated social housing complexes built in middle income New York neighbourhoods. In this study he raised concerns about the design model undermining opportunities for public housing tenants to interact with better off neighbours.

Schwartz and Tajbakhsh (2001) also compared different models of mixed income housing across 12 developments in New York (the Bronx), Chicago, Massachusetts and California. They found little evidence that social mix impacted on social interaction and social networks. In another study that reviewed the existing research, Smith (2002) found inconsistent patterns of interaction between tenants in mixed income housing developments, and concluded that the limited evidence suggests that tenants are unlikely to interact in ways that may lead to potential social benefits. The interaction that does occur seems to be between residents across only a modest range of incomes. Where larger income gaps exist between residents in different housing tenures the probability of interaction appears more remote. Popkin, Harris and Cuninghame (2002) undertook a qualitative study of the 'Moving To Opportunity' (MTO) sites, in five US cities. The findings were similar to Briggs (1997) in that few movers formed deep relationships in their new neighbourhood, but most had strong social networks outside of the new neighbourhood. More than half of the respondents still had close ties with friends and families in social housing in their old neighbourhoods. In addition, substantial numbers of the children attended schools outside of the local area and some in their old neighbourhoods. In these latter studies of mixed income housing, the scale of social mix is unclear, although it appears that rental housing and owner occupied housing is interdispersed within the neighbourhood.

UK/European Studies

In studies of three Scottish social housing estates where owner occupation was introduced, Atkinson and Kintrea (2000) found that renters had fewer contacts beyond the estate than home owners, although few renters were absolutely isolated. By comparison owners had fewer attachments to the local neighbourhood as they spent more time away from the estates, used local services less often, and their employment placed them in different social networks to the renters. In this study there were only small income differences between owners and renters suggesting that with bigger gaps in income even less mixing would occur across the two tenures. Importantly, the findings suggested that lifestyle was an important factor in determining whether there was social interaction between the two groups. Another key finding was that children's play is important in bringing together different income groups and this was facilitated as nearly all the owners and renters sent their children to the local primary school.

Beekman, Lyons and Scott (2001), in another Scottish study that explicitly explored the spatial scale of social mix, examined social networks between owners and renters in ten case study areas where tenure diversification had taken place. They found a direct relationship between the level of spatial integration and the contact that occurred between tenants and home owners. Generally, owners and renters did not mind living near to each other but resistance increased exponentially as the spatial geographic proximity between the different tenures increased. In part tensions seemed caused by different values and lifestyles. In view of these findings, the authors did not recommend the policy of 'pepper potting' different housing tenures on the same street. As differences in socioeconomic characteristics lessened there was more mixing between residents. Unlike the Atkinson and Kintrea studies, Beekman et al (2001) found less evidence of social interaction between the different tenure groups through children attending the

same schools. These findings illustrate the importance of accounting for the spatial scale of social mix when investigating the effects.

In an English study of ten mixed tenure estates, involving interviews with over 1,000 residents, Jupp (1999) similarly found little evidence of interaction between residents across different housing tenures. Only four per cent of residents thought they could rely on someone in a different tenure for assistance that might improve their socioeconomic circumstances, help them find a job, deal with problems at work or get advice about money or assistance in filling in forms. The findings of this study suggested that the street is a more meaningful social scale of analysis than the estate. Jupp (1999:45) pointed out that the biggest single barrier to contact was that properties of different tenures tended to be located on different streets or parts of streets so little mixing was facilitated between the different tenure groups and people with different social backgrounds. In Jupp's study where there was street level mixing of housing there were higher levels of cross tenure contact between residents. Unlike the other studies careful street level mixing did not lead to conflict. For these reasons, and conversely to Beekman et al (2001), Jupp (1999:81) advocates for pepper potting but cautions that even then the levels of social interaction studied "are hardly sufficient to create a considerably more inclusive society". Like the Atkinson and Kintrea studies, Jupp found that schools were important facilitators for cross tenure mixing as large numbers of home owners sent their children to local schools. Another English study by Page and Broughton (1997) of four estates also found little social interaction between different tenure groups. Like Jupp (1998) the authors illustrate how spatial separation is a barrier to social interaction for residents across different tenures. The estate designs ranged from shared ownership in one block of flats with social housing tenants mainly located in houses in other parts of the estates; to home owners pepper potted amongst rental tenants; a mix of flats and houses; and an L shaped block where one part was rental and the other half shared ownership but with the two areas separated off from each other.

Dutch studies, as reviewed by Kleinhans (2004) also find little evidence of social interaction between home owners and renters. Some of the studies suggest that residents' lifestyles are the most important factor as the bulk of social interactions are taking place beyond the local estates. For instance, Van Beckhoven and Van Kempen (2003) in a study of two pre-war industrial estates, in Amsterdam and Utrecht that had undergone changes in social mix, found that the majority of old and new residents undertook activities outside of the areas. These activities included shopping, recreation and visits to friends and relatives.

Australian Studies

To date there is a dearth of Australian studies that investigate the issue of across tenure social interaction, which forms part of the rationale for implementing social mix policies. One recent case study of a Newcastle suburb (NSW) found that both social housing tenants and home owners, felt that tenure separated and distinguished the local geographical community (Ruming et al 2004). In this study public housing consisted of 8 per cent of dwellings in the area. The majority of dwellings were located in three concentrated areas of the neighbourhood. The authors concluded that in relation to social mix, public tenants are not readily accepted into communities dominated by private owners and that there is little mixing between residents across different housing tenures. Based on the current review of the international literature this finding is hardly surprising as once again it raises issues about spatial concentration of public housing tenants providing a barrier to interaction with home owners located in other parts of the

neighbourhood. Nonetheless, in the Ruming et al study (2004) many of the public tenants were still perceived as different by home owners and stigmatised as they were readily identified by their small concentrated pockets of social housing.

In summary, the literature suggests that little social interaction takes place between residents across different housing tenures. Where social interaction does take place in mixed tenure neighbourhoods it is more likely between residents with similar socio-economic characteristics, where owner and rental housing is spatially integrated or owners have connections in the neighbourhood such as children attending local schools. As noted there is a deficit of research on this topic in the Australian context although social mix policies are commonly employed in estate regeneration activities with the underlying rationale that mixing or role modeling will occur. Given the lack of detail in the current studies reviewed, it is not always possible to explore the scale at which social mix is implemented. These findings support Galster's (2007: 35) argument that policy makers have given little thought to how advantaged and disadvantaged groups will interact within socially engineered mixed income neighbourhoods.

With the deficit in Australian research in mind the current study explored the question of whether residents in mixed tenure areas have attachments in common or at different geographic scales that make interaction more or less likely across different housing tenures.

The Research Design

Data collection for the research commenced in mid 2005 with 40 in-depth interviews with residents across three suburbs; Mitchell Park, Hillcrest and Northfield, (the latter two are contiguous suburbs) all located within the metropolitan region of Adelaide, South Australia. These neighbourhoods previously had high concentrations of public housing and have been extensively revitalised over the past fifteen years. Changes have been made to the social mix of the areas through demolition and sales of public housing, urban infill and building of new housing to attract homeowners/buyers into the neighbourhoods. Prior to regeneration all three suburbs were similar in terms of key area characteristics including high levels of socio-economic disadvantage and concentrations of social housing. As shown in Table 1, Mitchell Park originally had a concentration of 75 per cent public housing that has been reduced over a period of fourteen years to 30 per cent. Similarly Northfield and Hillcrest have experienced significant reductions to the concentrations of public housing.

Table 1: Summary of key neighbourhood characteristics

Area Characteristics	Mitchell Park	Hillcrest/Northfield
Location	10 kms south of city centre	8.5 km north east of city centre
History	Build to service manufacturing industry – Chrysler (now Mitsubishi) late 1950s	Building commenced in early 1950s
Type of housing	Mainly semi-detached double units – large blocks	Mainly timber framed construction imported from Europe in prefab form

Regeneration	Commenced in 1986	Commenced in late 1990
Public Housing Concentration before (%)	75	60
Public Housing Concentration after (%)	35	20

Findings

In interviews two key themes emerged. First, people generally lead busy lives that are not wholly tied to the local neighbourhood, which means that there is little time or inclination for mixing with other residents. Second, where social interaction does occur it is generally with immediate neighbours that are more likely to be in the same tenure or have similar socioeconomic backgrounds. A key factor that facilitates social interaction is the presence of children attending local schools. Each of these themes is discussed in turn in the sections following.

People are Busy – Little Time for Mixing

In discussions about social interactions occurring with other residents within the neighbourhood, numerous respondents expressed the viewpoint that people's lives were too busy for much interaction to take place, especially when people were working. For one respondent this meant that in effect:

over the time we've been here, it's become less friendly. But that seems to be the way of most neighbourhoods now, because neighbours just don't talk to each other. They're too busy, they have insufficient time or they're not interested ... and I think both parties are working and they don't get a lot of time (Northfield6, homeowner)

Other respondents described similar situations:

I go to work everyday early in the morning, I come home at night and I don't connect with my neighbours. So their whole theory around social mix is that, that it is meant to help people but that is not necessarily happening in society today (Northfield204, private rental tenant).

You never see anybody. These girls over here, there's two I think. As far as I know you see the two come together, they are nurses and they are on shift work. So you never see them and I think the other side the lady she's new too and I never see her" (MitchellParkM270, social housing tenant).

For other respondents, like those in employment, they had links and social ties way beyond the local neighbourhood often with their old neighbourhoods, which is consistent with the findings of the international literature:

We do keep in touch with the neighbours from the other one [old neighbourhood]. We pop down every now and then and say hello and how are you. We do, yes. They're elderly neighbours and they loved to see the kids. The kids would drop in, take their bikes for a ride and ... yeah, they've grown up with them ... seen them born (NorthfieldN70, social housing tenant).

Where Social Interaction Occurs

Where social interaction did take place between residents it was generally described as being between neighbours and often at a low level, such as waving or saying hello in the street. Much of the contact was facilitated by the presence of children as described by the following respondent:

Yeah, one person on one side keeps very much to himself. He'll wave and that's probably it. The people on the other side, our two youngest kids play with them. You might get an acknowledgement occasionally from them.....I think that's the trend now, anyway. People tend not to be quite as friendly in there (Northfield70, social housing tenant).

Another typical type of response was as follows:

And I would say that it's friendly but not close, so people smile at each other in the street but they don't necessarily know each other well. In our little set of units here it has taken us two and a half years to get to know our neighbours.... and we know our neighbour across the driveway very well because he is not very nice! (Northfield204 private rental tenant).

In this situation, the problematic neighbour was the only owner-occupier in the group of clustered units and as described it had taken a long time to get to know the neighbours even though the units were spatially integrated.

Consistent with the findings of Atkinson and Kintrea (2000) and Jupp (1999), as described by the following respondents, the presence of children at local schools facilitated higher levels of mixing of residents across different housing tenures:

When the girls were at the primary school, and that's just down the road, there'd be lots of single mothers bringing their kids to school that lived a matter of streets away. And myself, we own our home - you've got a lot of single parents. And we all talk and get on well together (Hillcrest98, home owner).

Being in the school we have all the mixture of the Hillcrest Community in there. You've got all walks of community. You've just got to go in the car park in the morning and it's mind boggling the cars you see there. You can go there and there will be a sports car or there will be a beautiful four wheel drive and you think 'My God, it's just amazing' that all these different people live in this area and they all go to this one public school and they play together as one, or try to (Hillcrest2R social housing tenant).

Respondents often pointed out that with regeneration of the areas not only were more home owners moving to the neighbourhoods but there was a broader age mix of residents. These groups often lead different lifestyles, which might preclude the groups from interacting with each other. As the following respondent explains, young people, for instance, were often working hard to pay the mortgage and did not spend a lot of time in the neighbourhood. In contrast a lot of elderly people were housebound. Once again, people with children were depicted as the residents most likely to meet others as they were out and about the local neighbourhood.

Some of them [neighbours] are young, some are middle-aged, some older. There's quite a mixture that are buying here. There were some young people living up the road on the right hand side and, but you don't really see much of them, because they're young and they're working hard ...and then you've got elderly people living in these houses that don't get out much of the times and you

get young people, people up the road that have got two young boys that moved in a couple of years back with the house and they're of some new found religion or something. ...I don't believe in any of it. They're nice people. I get on with them really well. I have fun with their kids in the playground at school, you know, so there's all different walks of life. I accept people for who they are as I meet them (Hillcrest2R, social housing tenant).

the neighbourhood is not friendly... because of the social mix. You've either got the really elderly people who are friendly or you've got your cautious young couples with the kids. Because of the really awful things happening with paedophiles and stuff like that I think people are really sheltered and they hold on to kids and don't let them out of their sight. So it's not so friendly with the young (HillcrestH7, home owner)

Other residents expressed the viewpoint that as the new homeowners moving into the areas were younger couples, often child-free and out working to pay their mortgages, they tended not to spend much time in the neighbourhoods or frequent local schools. In addition, it was pointed out that the changes in socio-economic mix of the areas after regeneration made it even less likely for contact to occur across tenures:

Before there were all mainly the same types of people and now there are huge differences. Like you're really poor and really wealthy. Not wealthy but much better off people and I think they don't mix (Hillcrest7 homeowner).

In contrast, another respondent felt that the different tenures "mix in pretty well" and did not really have a choice because although "a lot of people poke their nose up...they can't do anything about it, you've got to live there" (Northfield282 homeowner).

Social Mix and Scale

The findings of this study support the international literature that highlights the important role that scale of implementation of social mix plays in social interaction. In the current study, the lack of interaction between residents in different housing tenures was often facilitated as social housing was grouped in particular streets, down one side of a street or in clustered groups of units. This meant that many home owners and private renters were separated from the social housing tenants.

There's neighbours on either side owner occupiers, the house two along on one side and I think most of them are.....No, there's no social housing (MitchellPark118, private rental tenant)

All the neighbours are homebuyers except over the road - house is private rental - she goes to the church on Folland Avenue (HillcrestH7, home owner).

One side of the street is housing trust the other side newer homes [home owners] (MitchellParkM270, social housing tenant).

Another homeowner mentioned that she lived in a part of the neighbourhood where there was little public housing so she never came into contact with public housing tenants. In fact, the only time she saw "Trust tenants" was when they came into her work as she worked at the local Westfield shopping centre (MitchellPark1 homeowner).

Whilst the layout of the neighbourhoods suggested that there was little spatial integration between the different housing tenures a perception existed at Mitchell Park, in particular, that social housing tenants were responsible for anti-social behaviour and other problems in the neighbourhood. Sometimes this was based on experience as expressed

by the following home owner who lived down the road from a T-junction that entered a street of concentrated social housing:

One day it was like being in New York. I looked out my window, and I could see these cars and these police officers in vests with guns, and swarming around the outside of the house. Then there was this big attack, and they grabbed the girl and dragged her, and she bit someone, and they had the ambulance. And it was like the streets of New York here! (MitchellParkP9 home owner).

In other instances, divisions were obvious between neighbours that were the 'old' and established social housing tenants, often elderly, that been in social housing a long time and the newer more complex and high need tenants that characterise those now entering social housing. As one elderly social housing tenant depicted the situation:

Oh the language, they used to swear like anything and it was terrible you could hear them all the kiddies.....she couldn't care less but they were terrible children. Amazing how they get these homes, people like that....Oh it was funny it was like Coronation street! I'm glad there're gone anyhow (MitchellPark6 social housing tenant).

She's bipolar and her and her kids fight all the time and they yell and scream and slam doors, so I rang the HT, probably three months ago. She started at three o'clock in the morning and she went right through ... and I just couldn't take any more so I waited and got the HT and I complained. They rang her and told her that it was unacceptable. She was quiet for three weeks and they rang me back and asked me. I said that so far she'd been quiet, but it's not going to last. The woman said that instead of ringing us [HT], and you can ring us - but her advice was to ring the police, then it's on record for them (Northfield56, social housing tenant).

A key finding was that previous social rental tenants that had become homeowners, often through purchase opportunities provided by the regeneration project, were keen to distinguish themselves from the social housing tenure.

A lot of them are trouble. It puts your [house] value down. I think if you've got them all around [social housing tenants]. A lot of people don't notice who they are but I do. (Hillcrest 55 homeowner – previously social housing rental).

This point has been highlighted in earlier research in the Hillcrest area. A study conducted by Biggins and Hassan (1998) assessed the success of the integration component of the Hillcrest project specifically from the aspect of residents' acceptance of socioeconomic diversity and the new mix of public and private housing in the suburb. The highest approval for the new mixed community came from low-income earners receiving less than \$25 000 per annum (79.4 per cent). Conversely, middle-income earners (\$35 000-\$55 000) approved the least (40 per cent). This is 25 per cent fewer than those residents on incomes over \$55 000 (Biggins and Hassan 1998: 39). Hence, where social distance is least, that is, from the point of view of middle-income earners, there is greater disapproval of the new mixed income community. It seems middle-income residents want to distance themselves from low-income residents in the income strata below them, which is consistent with general findings on social interactions, social networks and social distancing and the current study findings.

In other situations that home owners and private renters described as follows, it was difficult to disentangle the perception and stigma associated with the social housing tenure from the reality of what was happening in the neighbourhoods:

And then if you do live in a block of social housing you get to know the other people living in social housing who might have been unemployed for quite a long time and then you all smoke pot together and have a good time and get even less motivated about getting a job. Or maybe just get more comfortable not having a job or whatever, I think (Northfield204, private rental tenant).

Cause I can tell you going down my street which ones are the housing trust, which ones are the rentals, by the rubbish they are leaving out in the street. Dumping it alongside the road, that sort of attitude and what it actually does is actually instead of pulling up those who are in the lower socio-economic group it actually dumbs down, it drags down the neighbourhood (Mitchell ParkP7 homeowner).

There are one or two streets that I wouldn't want to live in. That's mainly probably because they are Housing Commission homes and you might find that obviously the people that live in those homes are maybe of a poorer quality of life or something like that but that I suppose is being judgemental. It might be a very nice street to live in but I wouldn't live in it. When you look at the home and the way it has been let go, you wouldn't want to live next to somewhere like that I think (Mitchell Park118 private rental tenant).

These findings are similar to other studies in that the social housing tenure is stigmatised by private homeowners and even private renters, although in reality there appears little social contact between the different tenures. Social interaction is not often facilitated as public housing tends to be located on one side of the street or concentrated in a particular part of the neighbourhood as a clustered group of units. Whether or not residents' perceptions reflect reality is a moot point as the stigma attached to social housing appears to undermine opportunities for across tenure social interaction.

Some of the social housing respondents expressed the view that it is important to disperse concentrations of social housing. One tenant explained that living amongst people that were similarly disadvantaged impacted negatively on her perception of herself because:

People need variety to start with. Where you have got areas with all public housing tenants you have got everybody's on a low income which is why they are in public housing for whatever reason and it's really easy to be demoralised by that (MitchellPark8 social housing tenant).

Likewise, for another social housing tenant, tenure diversity was preferable for:

the kids, for everybody growing up in the area, its more social, you meet different people in life, you get to learn respect and to value other people's opinions and property. It is a different setup and I think its working for the best. I think they should have done it a long time ago (Hillcrest2 social housing tenant).

Some of the homeowners expressed similar viewpoints suggesting that it might be better to have a mix of people of different tenures interspersed, so that the 'Trust people' can be amongst other residents that are employed or on higher incomes (MitchellPark1 homeowner). One of the homeowners associated high concentrations of public housing with "ghettoes", arguing that,

getting away from the ghettoes is certainly the way to go because if I think you, just looking at what happened in the past it was certainly a recipe to create dreadful areas and for bad behaviour to be encouraged in the sense that good

behaviour was never rewarded. Why bother to do up your house if you're likely to get a beer bottle thrown through your front yard window, or next door had got five or six car bodies sitting in your front yard (Hillcrest155 home owner).

Conclusion

This paper has examined the underlying rationale of social mix policies that propinquity facilitates social interaction between residents across different income levels and housing tenures through interviews with residents in three case study neighbourhoods. Analysis of the study findings suggests a complex picture and that the spatial scale of implementation of social mix is an important consideration as a context for social interaction. In general, across the three neighbourhoods, there appeared little social interaction between tenures. The exception was residents with children and local schools were identified as important places for facilitating social interaction. In part, this lack of social interaction may not illustrate an obvious choice but rather seems facilitated because social housing is spatially separated from the other housing tenures. Clearly, the greater the distance between residents in the different housing tenures then the less likely they are to interact.

A key difficulty is that the literature on social mix lacks precision in detailing the relevant geographic scale of implementation. Conceptually, it is unclear at what level of spatial scale the effects of diversification are expected to work. In view of these findings, there is a need to view the neighbourhood as multilayered – this means different neighbourhood effects operate at different spatial scales. For instance, is social mix more effective as a 'salt and pepper' arrangement or as small homogenous clusters within a more mixed area? This current conceptual confusion hinders policy development.

Another important finding is that social housing targeting policies to house only high need complex and difficult tenants are at odds with social mix policies. The resultant stigma attached to a residualised social housing tenure makes social interaction across different housing tenures even less likely.

Nevertheless, the findings also suggest that lifestyle may be the more important factor impacting on social interaction than housing tenure, so there is a need to look beyond a focus on neighbourhood to where residents' employment, family and friends are located.

References

- Arthurson, K. (2002) "Creating Inclusive Communities through Balancing Social Mix: A Critical Relationship or Tenuous Link?" *Urban Policy and Research*, 20(3).
- Arthurson, K. (2004) "From Stigma to Demolition: Australian Debates about Housing and Social Exclusion", *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 19 (3) pp. 255-270.
- Arthurson, K. (2008), 'Australian public housing and the diverse histories of social mix', *Journal of Urban History*, 34, 484-501.
- Arthurson, K. & Jacobs, K. (2006) "Housing and Anti-social Behaviour in Australia", in John Flint (Ed) *Housing and Anti social Behaviour*, Policy Press, Bristol.
- Atkinson, R & Kintrea, K. (2000) Owner Occupation, Social Mix and Neighbourhood Impacts, *Policy and Politics*, 28, pp. 93-108.
- Atkinson, R & Kintrea, K. (2001) Disentangling Area Effects: Evidence from Deprived and Non-deprived Neighbourhoods, *Urban Studies*, 38 (12), pp. 2277-2298.

- Baum, S., Stimson, R., O'Connor, K., Mullins, P. " Davis, R. 1999 *Community Opportunity and Vulnerability in Australia's Cities and Towns: Characteristics, Patterns and Implications* University of Queensland Press for Australian Housing and Research Institute, Brisbane
- Biggins, N. and Hassan, P. R. (1998) Northfield Precinct One, a Review of the Social Objectives', Department of Sociology Flinders University of South Australia, Adelaide.
- Beekman, T., Lyons, F. & Scott, J (2001) Improving the Understanding of the Influence of owner occupiers in Mixed Tenure Neighbourhoods, Edinburgh, ODS Ltd for Scottish Homes.
- Briggs, Xavier de Souza (1997) Yonkers Revisited: The Early Impacts of Scattered-Site Public Housing on Families and Neighbourhoods, Unpublished Report to the Ford Foundation.
- Briggs, Xavier de Souza (1998) Brown Kids in White Suburbs: Housing Mobility and the Many Faces of Social Capital, *Housing policy Debate*, 9 (1), pp.177-221.
- Brophy, P. & Smith, R. (1997) Mixed Income Housing Factors for Success, *CityScape* 3, 2, pp.3-32.
- Galster, G. (2007) Neighbourhood Social Mix as a Goal of Housing Policy: A Theoretical; Analysis, *European Journal of Housing Policy*, 7(1), pp. 19-43.
- Jupp, B. (1999) *Living Together: Community Life on Mixed Housing Estates*, Demos, London.
- Kleinhans, R. (2004) Social Implications of Housing Diversification in Urban Renewal: A Review of Recent Literature, *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 19 (4), 367–390.
- Page, D. & Broughton, R. (1997) Improving the Design and Management of Mixed Tenure Estates in London, London: Notting Hill Home Ownership.
- Popkin, S, Harris, J. & Cunningham, M. (2002) Families in Transition: A Qualitative Analysis of the MTO Experience, Final Report. Prepared for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development under a subcontract with Abt Associates Inc. Washington, DC; US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Rosenbaum, J, Stroh, L & Flynn, C. (1998) Lark Parc Place: A Study of Mixed-Income Housing, *Housing Policy Debate*, 9 (4), pp. 703-72?
- Ruming, K., Mee, K. and McGuirk, P. (2004) "Questioning the Rhetoric of Social Mix: Courteous Community or Hidden Hostility?", *Australian Geographical Studies*, 42, 234-237.
- Sarkissian, W. (1976) "The Idea of Social Mix in Town Planning: An Historical Overview", *Urban Studies* 13 (3), 231-246.
- Schwartz, A. & Tajbakhsh, K. (2001) Mixed Income Housing as Social Policy: The case for diminished expectations. Paper presented at the 43rd annual conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, November 8, Cleveland, OH.
- Smith, A. (2002) Mixed-Income Housing Developments: Promise and Reality, Fellowship program for Emerging Leaders in community and Economic Development, Joint Centre for Housing Studies of Harvard University Neighbourhood Reinvestment Corporation.

Van Beckhoven, E. & Van Kempen, R. (2003) Social effects of Urban Restructuring: A case Study in Amsterdam and Utrecht, the Netherlands, *Housing Studies*, 18 (6), pp. 853-875.

Vinson, T. (2007) Dropping off the Edge, the Distribution of Disadvantage in Australia, Faculty of Education and Social work, University of Sydney.