Neighborhood Social Mix:

Theory, Evidence, and Implications for Policy and Planning

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ABSTRACT

There has been a longstanding concern by planners to encourage neighborhoods containing the appropriate “social mix” of residents. Indeed, currently throughout Western Europe and North America there are a variety of public policy initiatives in effects designed to achieve neighborhood diversity of residents of one sort or another. This essay casts critical perspectives on the issue of neighborhood social mix, with the purpose of clarifying concepts, policy rationales, causal mechanisms, and evidentiary bases as a means of drawing practical lessons for planners. It concludes that there is a sufficient evidentiary base to justify the goal of a neighborhood social mix policy: (1) on equity grounds that works toward avoiding high concentrations of disadvantaged individuals and promotes residential diversity of groups, preferably of only modestly dissimilar socioeconomic status; and (2) on efficiency grounds, but only if the concentration of disadvantage stays relatively low in all neighborhoods. The equitable and efficient means of achieving this goal are highly contingent on the particulars of the metropolitan, local, and group contexts, however. Moreover, programmatic means to achieve social mixing to which the disadvantaged respond voluntarily are preferred.

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Introduction

Progressive thinkers about the residential composition of neighborhoods have long held that it was desirable to have at least a modicum of population socioeconomic diversity (Gans, 1961; Sarkissian, 1976). The clearest and most systematic early treatises espousing this position appeared in Britain at the end of the 19th century. This so-called “Garden Cities movement” arose in response to the highly segregated and wretched neighborhood conditions experienced by poor, rural migrants flocking to the burgeoning British cities. It promulgated places where all classes could reside as positively interacting neighbors, a “living tapestry,” if you will. A half-century later, an analogous communal vision formed the foundation for the New Towns movement in both the U.S. and the U.K.

Similar sentiments still undergird a rich palette of official pronouncements and planning initiatives on both sides of the Atlantic. Recent reviews of policy documents indicate that the segregation of different population groups is a central concern of governments across the European Union, both original and new members alike (Andersen, 2002, 2003, 2006; Musterd, 2003; Musterd, Ostendorf and de Vos, 2003; Kleinhans, 2004; Norris and Shiels, 2004; Andersson and Musterd, 2005; Berube, 2005; Meen et al. 2005, Pennix, 2006; Tunstall and Fenton, 2006; VROM, 2006). The issues of race and class segregation are typically treated with more official circumspection in the U.S., though President Barack Obama’s campaign platform included an explicit set of proposals to deal with spatially concentrated urban poverty (Obama, 2008).

A wide range of programmatic mechanisms have been recently employed to combat socio-spatial segregation and prevent the formation of new clusters of deprived households. These programs fall under the rubric of “social mix” in Europe and “mixed income communities” or “poverty deconcentration” in the U.S. Programmatic examples include: urban regeneration measures that replace concentrations of social housing with more diverse housing stocks (UK, NL, US); social housing management and tenant allocation reform (FR, IR, NL); tenant-based housing allowances (FR, US); and land-use planning rules requiring mixed developments (UK, some US locales); see: Murie and Musterd (2004), Berube (2005), Briggs (2005), Musterd and Andersson (2005), Norris (2006).

This paper aims to assist planners in this quest. It synthesizes and extends the challenges to social mix and assesses comprehensively the empirical evidence from many disciplines and nations as it interfaces with the topic considering both the goal of social mix and the means to achieve it. It tries to clarify what questions we need to ask and the degree to which answers seem certain regarding concepts, policy rationales, and causal mechanisms, and then draws appropriate, pragmatic implications for planners.

The Slippery Concept of Social Mix

Neighborhood homogeneity easy to define in principle and make operational in practice. But as soon as one moves away from pure homogeneity, three thorny definitional issues arise (Tunstall and Fenton; 2006: 25-26; Kleinhans, 2004):

- **Composition**: On what basis(es) are we mixing people: ethnicity, race, religion, immigrant status, income, housing tenure...all, or some of the above?
- **Concentration**: What is the amount of mixing in question? Which amounts of which groups comprise the ideal mix, or are minimally required to produce the desired outcomes?
- **Scale**: Over what level(s) of geography should the relevant mix be measured? Does mixing at different spatial scales involve different causal processes and yield different outcomes?
Many different combinations of the above elements characterize different aspects of social mixing policies in different national contexts, though often not explicitly. Indeed, “social mix” is an intrinsically vague, slippery term; it is typically used to mean different things by different planners and policymakers. Planners must be precise and explicit in specifying the parameters of these three aspects of social mix before they can evaluate evidence in a precise way or recommend specific planning policies and practices. Below I will examine the evidence base related to all three dimensions of social mix.

The Rationale for Social Mix as a Goal

Policy documents and the scholarly literature are replete with a wide range of objectives for a neighborhood social mix strategy. A comprehensive summary has been provided by Wood (2003), which suggest the following categories and examples:

- **Developmental Objectives**: to gain planning permission or reduce local opposition to proposed developments; to prevent or reduce negative real estate consequences following from concentration of disadvantaged households; to gain a variety of commercial and retail activities in an area
- **Social Objectives**: to promote interaction, mutual understanding, networks, and cohesion among neighbors that differ on one or more key characteristics; to enhance the collective efficacy and political power of the place; to provide social inclusion, positive role models and mechanisms of support for the disadvantaged
- **Financial Objectives**: to provide cross-subsidies for lower-income residents; to reduce future social service, building operating, and public infrastructure costs
- **Housing and Neighborhood Quality Objectives**: to provide a mix of dwelling sizes, types, and tenures to encourage residents to remain in the development when life-cycle moves occur; to improve the safety, appearance, and neighborliness of the area
- **Sustainability Objectives**: to provide a diversity of proximate residential and non-residential activities that reduce energy consumption and environmental degradation; to encourage more efficient management and maintenance for the long-run; to avoid place-based stigmatization
Though such a lexicon has its value, important insights can be gained by re-framing the rationales for neighborhood social mixing in terms of who, ultimately, is the desired beneficiary of the policy. I would suggest this tripartite classification of potential beneficiaries:

- **Disadvantaged Families, Adults, and Children** (potentially defined according to either tenure, economic, racial-ethnic, national-origin, and/or religious status, depending on context)
- **Advantaged Families, Adults, and Children**
- **Society** (all advantaged and disadvantaged individuals aggregated, though not necessarily benefitting equally or weighted equally by cultural norms)

I assume that the typical reader here will not be a planner whose goal it is to help the advantaged exclusively.¹ Thus, I will only amplify on the first and the third, which hereafter I will refer to the “equity” and the “efficiency” rationales, which I now define.

**Equity and Efficiency Rationales for Social Mixing**

I specify that equity is improved if any social mix policy increases absolutely the well-being of the disadvantaged group in society. Given the above framework, if society wished to pursue a policy of mixing advantaged with disadvantaged individuals in order to benefit the latter group, either of two necessary conditions would appertain.² Disadvantaged individuals must either: (1) lose well-being by residing with other members of their group (at least past some point of concentration) and/or (2) gain well-being by residing with members of the advantaged group (at least past some point of concentration). Put differently, neighborhood mix policy can be justified on equity grounds favoring the disadvantaged if and only if the disadvantaged are subjected to either: (1) negative social externalities from disadvantaged neighbors; (2) positive social externalities from advantaged neighbors; and/or (3) stigmatization/resource restrictions because their percentage in the neighborhood is past a threshold.

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¹ I recognize that there have been several critical writings claiming that social mix strategies essentially benefit the advantaged by displacing the disadvantaged from valuable land; see Smith and Stovall (2008) and Imbroscio (2008).

² An unusually explicit articulation of such a position can be found in Andersson (2004).
I specify that efficiency is improved if a social mix policy improves the aggregate amount of well-being summed across all members of society, with the well-being of certain individuals perhaps weighted differentially (if implicitly) according to prevailing cultural norms. This standard does not necessarily require Pareto-improvements (wherein some individuals gain and none suffer a loss of well-being), though such would be sufficient. It does, however, require adherence to the Hicks-Kaldor compensation principle. I.e., a policy is efficient if the “winners” could, in principle, compensate the “losers” sufficiently to hold them harmless and yet still be better off themselves.

I recognize that planners do not think often of efficiency criteria; nevertheless, they are worthy of consideration. In a context where neo-liberal ideology is prevalent, efficiency criteria may well take precedence in the minds of key decision-makers with whom planners interface. In other words, the political feasibility of the proposal may be enhanced substantially if its efficiency can be demonstrated. Thus, to distinguish the two standards, a social mix policy that increases the well-being of the advantaged a great deal and decreases the well-being of the disadvantaged a small amount can potentially be efficient (unless the well-being of the disadvantaged is heavily weighted by society), even though it is not equitable within our framework. This is not to suggest that efficiency and equity are inherently contradictory or impossible to achieve simultaneously.

The efficiency-based justification for social mix requires considerations of the mechanisms of social mix neighborhood effects not relevant in the equity-based justification. Specifically, we must distinguish between neighborhood effects that occur because of social interactions within the neighborhood and those that occur because of the perceptions and actions of those outside of the neighborhood. First, because efficiency requires us to consider the well-being of both disadvantaged and advantaged individuals, a more comprehensive analysis of potential intra-neighborhood social externalities is required. This raises to relevance the possibility that negative social externalities imposed by disadvantaged individuals on their advantaged neighbors outweigh the positive social externalities that may flow in the opposite direction. If such were the case, it is easy to imagine a social weighting scheme (such as utilitarianism) that would register the highest values when the two groups were completely segregated residentially. Second, if only the extra-neighborhood process of stigmatization/resource restriction were operative, we would not need to concern ourselves with the potential zero-sum or negative-sum aspects associated with intra-neighborhood social
interactions between disadvantaged and advantaged groups. On the contrary, changing the social mix by reducing the share of disadvantaged in a neighborhood so that the stigma/restriction is removed would provide a net gain for the well-being of both types of individuals living in the formerly stigmatized neighborhood.

**Implications of Equity and Efficiency Rationales for Standards of Evidence**

What does the foregoing suggest about what sort of empirical evidence would provide *sufficient* proof that social mixing could be justified on equity and/or efficiency grounds? In the case of the *equity-based conditions*, the evidence must show that outcomes associated with greater well-being now or in the future (e.g., income, labor force participation, educational attainments) for disadvantaged individuals are either: (1) positively correlated with a higher percentage of advantaged neighbors and/or (2) negatively correlated with a higher percentage of other disadvantaged neighbors, all else equal.

In the case of *efficiency-based conditions*, the sufficient evidentiary base must be considerably more comprehensive and nuanced, with attention paid to the presumed underlying mechanism of neighborhood effect. First, consider if intra-neighborhood social interactions were the presumed mechanism. In this case, not only does the former equity-based criterion continue to apply for disadvantaged individuals, but the converse must also apply for advantaged individuals. That is, studies must be based on observations of advantaged individuals in different neighborhood contexts and find that they are neither: (1) significantly harmed by the negative social externalities generated by disadvantaged neighbors, nor (2) significantly benefited by the positive social externalities generated by other advantaged neighbors. Only if such evidence is gained about how both advantaged and disadvantaged individuals are affected by social interactions associated with neighborhood mix can we be confident that a wide range of normative social weighting schemes would yield neighborhood mixing as the most efficient outcome.

Second, consider if extra-neighborhood stigmatization/resource restrictions were the presumed mechanism. In this case, the statistical evidence would not need to be stratified by group *insofar as both* advantaged and disadvantaged individuals were harmed by the stigmatization and other institutional/resource constraints associated with higher percentages of disadvantaged residents in the neighborhood. Here the evidence must show that outcomes associated with greater well-being (such as income or
employment) for a combined sample of both groups are negatively (positively) correlated with percentages of disadvantaged (advantaged) in the neighborhood, at least past some thresholds(s).

The foregoing may strike some as overly pedantic, given that planners most likely try to pursue polices that simultaneously are equitable and efficient. Indeed, we should strive to achieve both when we can. Nevertheless, it is useful to distinguish them as alternative goals, and to urge that planners should be explicit about what their goals for social mix are, because:

- The evidence base may be supportive of one goal being achieved more than another
- The more desirable programmatic approaches will differ depending on goals specified
- It will force planners to determine how and why a particular plan for social mix is likely to achieve the desired effects (i.e., to be clear about the presumed mechanisms of change)
- If outcomes are equitable but not efficient, it will help planners to anticipate opposition from advantaged residents who may be adversely affected, and devise mechanisms to, ideally, hold them harmless

The Effects of Social Mix on the Disadvantaged: The Evidence Base

The prior section showed that sufficient grounds for social mix on the basis of equity arguments would be provided by evidence that disadvantaged individuals are harmed by disadvantaged neighbors (at least past some threshold) and/or benefited by advantaged neighbors (at least past some threshold). In this section I review evidence of various sorts relevant to establishing these sufficient conditions, after an overview of the potential mechanisms through which the composition of a neighborhood might affect individual residents.

Neighborhood effects may transpire through a variety of causal mechanisms that can occur either through social interactions within the neighborhood and/or by actions of others located outside of the neighborhood; for extended discussion, see especially Jencks and Mayer (1990), Duncan, Connell and Klebanov (1997), Gephart (1997), Friedrichs, (1998), Dietz (2002), Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley (2002), and Ioannides and Loury (2004). The potential intra-neighborhood social mechanisms
include social norms/collective control, peers/role models, networks, social solidarity, competition, and relative deprivation. The extra-neighborhood mechanism of relevance here is stigmatization / institutional resource restriction: when important institutional, governmental or market actors negatively stereotype all residents of a neighborhood and/or reduce the flows of resources flowing into it because of its population composition. This extra-neighborhood mechanism might become operational as the percentage of the disadvantaged group in the neighborhood exceeds the threshold of where they are perceived by these external actors as “dominant.” In this fashion, the share of disadvantaged residents may (through the impact on externals' perceptions) indirectly influence not only the well-being of other disadvantaged but also advantaged residents in the stigmatized neighborhood.  

While current empirical evidence is not decisive, it is strongly suggestive of several intra- and extra-neighborhood mechanisms described above (Van Kempen, 1997; Dietz, 2002; Sampson, Morenoff and Gannon-Rowley, 2002; Ellen and Turner, 2003; Galster, 2005), as I will amplify below.

**Peer Influences, Role Models and Networks among Disadvantaged Neighbors**

There have been numerous studies that have examined in detail the social relationships of youth and adults from low-income neighborhoods. One of the most notable because of its sophisticated efforts to avoid statistical bias is Case and Katz's (1991) investigation of youth in low-income Boston neighborhoods. They find that neighborhood peer influences and role modeling among youth are strong predictors of a variety of negative behaviors, including crime, substance abuse, and lack of labor force participation. For more evidence on negative role models and peer effects in disadvantaged neighborhoods, see Diehr et al (1993), South and Baumer (2000) and Ginther, Haveman and Wolfe (2000).  

This body of work suggests that negative social externalities are frequently being generated among disadvantaged neighbors, especially youths. However, it is not definitive about the extent to which such negative socialization would be diminished, or replaced by positive socialization, were more higher-income youth to be present.

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3 There are other extra-neighborhood effects possible, such as residence-job spatial mismatch, but they are not considered here because they do not involve causal variations according to social mix of the neighborhood. I also recognize that intra-neighborhood social processes are vitally contextualized by the local institutional infrastructure available, but variations in this dimension are overlooked here for simplicity.

4 See the reviews in Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn (2000), Friedrichs, Galster and Musterd (2003), and the recent work of Oberwittler (2004).
The lack of social ties with employed and better-educated people is also an often observed characteristic of disadvantaged neighborhood residents (Tiggs, Brown, and Green, 1998; Fernandez and Harris, 1992; Pinkster, 2008). Several studies from both the U.S. and Europe support the hypothesis that these limited social networks reduce economic opportunities for the disadvantaged. As illustrations, Bertrand, Luttmer and Mullainathan (2000) found welfare participation by individuals in the U.S. was enhanced not only by geographic proximity to others on welfare, but especially if these proximate others on welfare spoke the individual’s language. Buck (2001) used British Household Panel Study data to ascertain a positive relationship between the probability that individuals have no close friends employed and neighborhood unemployment rates or disadvantage index scores. Farwick (2004) found that Turkish immigrants’ contacts with native Germans in a Koln neighborhood declined rapidly once the percentage of Turks in the apartment complex exceeded 20 percent, which, in turn, increased their chances of having an unstable employment history. Pinkster’s (2008) study of networks in deprived neighborhoods in The Hague (NL) discovered that localized social ties helped low-income residents in the short-term find jobs but over the longer-term locked them in to these dead-end options and adversely affected their work ethic and expectations. Pinkster suggested that one possible explanation for these effects was that processes of social control limited residents’ ability and willingness to interact with residents in the other groups and to look for opportunities outside of the neighborhood (Pinkster, 2008).

**Social Interactions among Disadvantaged and Advantaged Neighbors**

Though it thus seems likely that negative influences from peer groups and role models, and resource-poor and locally constrained networks help perpetuate individual disadvantage in disadvantaged neighborhoods, it does not necessarily follow that all social relationships of the disadvantaged will be significantly altered by mere residence near advantaged individuals in mixed communities. Indeed, there is a substantial and consistent literature from both sides of the Atlantic indicating that social mix is insufficient to induce substantial social interactions between groups that may enhance employment and other resource networks for the disadvantaged.

Several U.S.-based studies have investigated this topic in the context of socially mixed neighborhoods created by court-ordered racial desegregation plans for public housing (Briggs, 1997, 1998; Rosenbaum, 1995), public housing revitalization schemes (Schill, 1997; Kleit, 2001a, 2001b, 2002), or rental housing voucher experiments
Several European-based studies have probed this topic as part of restructuring of social housing estates (Atkinson and Kintrea, 1998; Jupp, 1999; Kleinhans, 2000; Cole and Goodchild, 2001; Van Beckhoven and Van Kempen, 2003; Duyvendak, Kleinhans, and Veldboer, 2000) or post-war neighborhoods (Blokland-Potters, 1998; Pinkster, 2008).

In sum, these studies consistently showed that the intra-neighborhood social relationships among members of different economic groups were quite limited, even within the same neighborhood or housing complex. Members of the lower-status group often did not take advantage of propinquity to broaden their “weak ties” and enhance the resource-producing potential of their networks, instead often restricting their networks to nearby members of their own group or to those remaining in the “old neighborhood.” This suggests that social networking may be a powerful neighborhood force among members of a given group, but less so in an inter-group context, where perhaps the role model and social control mechanism operate more strongly.

A few studies warrant special note because of their nuanced implications for neighborhood effect mechanisms. Rosenbaum (1991, 1995, et al. 2002) has provided a series of studies related to black families living in public housing in concentrated poverty neighborhoods who were assisted (with rental vouchers and counseling) in finding apartments in predominantly white-occupied neighborhoods of Chicago and its suburbs as part of a court-ordered remedy for the Gautreaux public housing discrimination suit. Though he provides one of the most optimistic portraits of the many benefits that such moves can provide to black adults and their children, he does not find a great deal of social interchange or networking between these new in-movers and the original residents. Instead, Rosenbaum (1991) stresses instead the importance of middle-class role models and social norms in suburban environments for generating positive outcomes for those participating in the Gautreaux Program.

Galster et al. (2008) provide a methodologically sophisticated study of the effects of both disadvantaged and advantaged neighbors on individual earnings of less-advantaged (part-time employed) adults using Swedish urban data. In the case of men who were not employed full time, it was the neighborhood with the highest possible share of middle-income neighbors that was most conducive to their earning more. The

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6 Though note that this study only analyzed people who self-selected to participate in the Gautreaux program, and results thus are likely not representative.
fact that even a few low-income neighbors eroded these benefits suggested to the authors that a negative role modeling or peer effect was transpiring here. Replacing middle-income with high-income neighbors also had negative impacts on these less-advantaged males, implying that the former provided positive role models but the latter did not, perhaps because the social distance between the groups was too great for social interactions. The social norm model of interaction was not supported by their findings, because no minimum threshold of low-income neighbors was observed past which their negative impacts began and because such would imply no distinctions between shares of middle- and high-income neighbors under the assumption that both provided comparable norms and social controls.

Thus, even though negative peers and role models, and limited, resource-poor networks might be part of the problem facing disadvantaged individuals living in deprived neighborhoods, it is not at all clear that social mixing will prove the panacea. As summarized by Kleit (2008:254) in her thorough review of the literature, “While proximity aids in the creation of relationships [with others not like them], perceived and real demographic differences can be barriers to forming more than superficial relationships across groups.” Nevertheless, if the social gap is not too great, role model and perhaps other benefits can accrue to disadvantaged residents from their better-off neighbors.

**Relative Deprivation: Might Social Mix Harm the Disadvantaged?**

Relative deprivation is important not only as an indicator of psychological well-being of the disadvantaged group, but as a predictor of potential criminal behavior (Kawachi, Kennedy and Wilkinson, 1999). It is noteworthy that studies of social interactions among different income groups in mixed U.S. neighborhoods (cited above) does not reveal compelling evidence of relative deprivation or inter-group competition that would harm disadvantaged neighbors. However, there are enough hints of this effect in a few European studies to make it risky to reject this mechanism completely, at least for some selected outcomes.

A suggestion of a social conflict-type of neighborhood mechanism is embodied in the finding by Sampson and Groves (1989) in Britain that neighborhood ethnic heterogeneity was associated with more unsupervised peer groups and lack of participation in local organizations. McCulloch’s (2001) analysis of British data found that disadvantaged women were more likely to experience a variety of negative outcomes if they lived in affluent areas, indicative of relative deprivation or competition
mechanisms. This is relationship consistent with two other British studies that found that health issues for poor individuals were more problematic when they lived in more affluent areas (Duncan and Jones, 1995; Shouls et al., 1996). Oberwittler (2007) observed that German adolescents living in households receiving welfare recipients scored substantially higher on an index of relative deprivation when they resided in neighborhoods with the lowest overall welfare receipt rates. Finally, in the Atkinson and Kintrea (2004) study of key informant opinions in Glasgow, some espoused the relative deprivation consequence of extreme social mixing within neighborhoods.

**Neighborhood Stigmatization**

On both sides of the Atlantic, what little evidence on this mechanism exists tends to be idiosyncratic, qualitative, and (with one exception) hard to evaluate or quantify. Nevertheless, case study evidence suggests that place-based stigmatization is an oft-occurring process in Western Europe. The work of Wacquant (1993), Power (1997), Taylor (1998), Atkinson and Kintrea (1998), Forrest and Kearns (1999), Dean and Hastings (2000), Hastings and Dean (2003), Martin and Watkinson (2003), Hastings (2004) and Permentier (2009) is noteworthy. It does not, of course, help us to quantify the degree to which neighborhood stigmatization diminishes the life-chances of residents or restricts the various public or private resources or institutions flowing into these areas. To my knowledge, only one study has attempted statistically to relate measured perceptions of key actors about neighborhoods to socioeconomic or demographic indicators measured in those places. Permentier, Bolt and van Ham (2007) asked households and real estate agents to evaluate on multiple grounds a variety of neighborhoods in their city of Utrecht in which they did not live. They found that neighborhood reputations were significantly correlated with their socio-economic characteristics, while their physical and functional features were of less importance. Unfortunately, these authors did not test for threshold points where the perceptions dramatically changed in response to neighborhood social mix. Perhaps even more crucially, it is unclear (but generally discouraging) the degree to which the reputation of a long-stigmatized neighborhood can change as a consequence of more advantaged households being added to the social mix (Cole et al., 1997; Pawson et al., 2000; Beekman et al., 2001; Hellerman and Wassenberg, 2004; Van Kempen et al., 2009).
The Evidence from U.S. Social Experiments

It is sometimes possible to observe non-market, exogenous interventions into households’ residential locations that allow valid deductions about neighborhood effects. The Gautreaux (Chicago) and Yonkers (NY) court-ordered, public housing racial-ethnic desegregation programs (Rosenbaum, 1995; Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum, 2000; Briggs, 1997, 1998; Fauth, Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn, 2003a, b; DeLuca et al., forthcoming) are illustrative. Evaluations of these programs revealed generally strong effects of neighborhoods in several dimensions, though underlying causal mechanisms were generally not probed. Recent evaluations of long-term impacts on Gautreaux (black) mothers found, for example, that residence in neighborhoods with highest percentages of black and low-income residents was associated with significantly greater welfare usage, lower employment rates, and lower earnings. Sons of Gautreaux participants who moved far from their original, high-crime neighborhoods were less likely to run afoul of the criminal justice system, especially in matters related to drug offenses (DeLuca, et al., forthcoming).

The Moving To Opportunity (MTO) demonstration in five U.S. metropolitan areas randomly assigned public housing residents who volunteered to participate to one of three experimental groups: (1) controls that got no rental voucher but could stay in public housing in disadvantaged neighborhoods; (2) recipients of rental vouchers; and (3) recipients of rental vouchers and relocation assistance who had to move to neighborhoods with less than 10 percent poverty rates and remain for at least a year. Most investigations of MTO data revealed no substantial neighborhood effects on educational and labor market outcomes after five or ten years (e.g., Ludwig, Duncan and Pinkston, 2000; Katz, Kling and Liebman, 2001; Ludwig, Ladd and Duncan, 2001; Ludwig, Duncan, and Hirschfield, 2001; Orr et al., 2003; Goering and Feins, 2003; Ludwig et al., 2008). However, analysts have observed several important neighborhood effects on mental health of mothers and daughters, rates of risky behaviors by youth, perceptions of safety, and overall life satisfaction (Goering and Feins, 2003; Kling, Liebman, and Katz, 2007). Clampet-Lundquist and Massey (2008) re-analyzed MTO data from the perspective of only those who experienced substantial spells in low-

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7 Based on this, it has become fashionable for some to boldly and publicly assert that “MTO has proven that there are no important neighborhood effects.” This is unjustified for many reasons; see Galster (2008), Sampson (2008), and Clampet-Lundquist and Massey (2008).
poverty neighborhoods, and found evidence that prolonged residence there was indeed associated with a variety of improved labor market outcomes for adults.

The Effects of Social Mix on the Disadvantaged: Provisional Conclusions

What does the foregoing evidence suggest about the effects of social mix on disadvantaged residents and the associated neighborhood effect mechanisms, when all is said and done? With the mandatory caveat that firm conclusions are elusive here, my evaluation provisionally suggests the following.8

First, in both the U.S. and Western Europe high concentrations of poverty or socially disadvantaged households (which typically are heavily Hispanic- and especially black-occupied neighborhoods in the U.S. and immigrant-occupied neighborhoods in Western Europe) have been empirically linked to negative externalities like youth delinquency, criminality, and mental health distress. This is consistent with several alternative mechanisms of impact in disadvantaged neighborhoods: (1) intra-neighborhood role model/peer effects; (2) intra-neighborhood circumscribed, resource-poor social networks that provide few links to labor market opportunities; (3) extra-neighborhood processes of stigmatization/resource deprivation based on the area’s inferior class or ethnic status.

Second, most U.S. and Western European evidence indicates that the influence on vulnerable individuals of advantaged neighbors is smaller in absolute value than the influence of disadvantaged neighbors. Many studies have consistently found that there is relatively little social interaction and networking between lower-income and higher-income households or children in the same neighborhood, and this lack is compounded if there are also racial differences involved. Thus, there is little to support the version of neighborhood effects that advantaged neighbors create valuable networks of “weak ties” for disadvantaged ones. Role modeling seems a more likely mechanism of positive intra-neighborhood social interactions.9

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8 I recognize that practitioners who deal directly with deprived neighborhoods hold divergent and conflicting opinions about which neighborhood effect mechanisms are most important (Atkinson and Kintrea, 2004).

9 Summary claims about specific mechanisms can be made with somewhat less assurance based on the Western European statistical evidence on neighborhood effects, given the comparatively limited scope and mixed findings of this literature. Perhaps the variety of findings is predictable, given that state interventions that may blunt the observed relationship between individual outcomes and neighborhood conditions vary greatly across Western Europe. For example, the finding by Musterd and Andersson (forthcoming) that neighborhood unemployment rate’s effect ceases after 16 percent may be due to a Swedish governmental strategy of targeting
Third, in U.S. neighborhood contexts there is virtually no evidence suggesting that the competition or relative deprivation mechanisms are operating in a meaningful way. The same cannot be said of Western European evidence, however, where there are some hints that mixing of extremely low- and high-income groups results in some harms for those who are disadvantaged.

In sum, my reading of the U.S. and Western European evidence is that social mix can be beneficial for disadvantaged residents in terms of intra-neighborhood processes, but this appears most likely when the social gulf between groups in the neighborhood is not excessive. The main benefits seem to transpire as the extremely negative consequences of concentrated deprivation (transmitted likely through both intra- and extra-neighborhood processes) are replaced by the comparatively weak but beneficial consequences of social mix.

The Effects of Social Mix on the Advantaged: The Evidence Base

Above I argued that planners should be concerned about whether social mixing has positive, negative, or neutral impacts on advantaged residents, applying the evaluative criteria of social efficiency. Relevant evidence on this point comes in two forms. One set of statistical studies directly investigate behavioral outcomes for advantaged individuals living in socially mixed neighborhoods. The second examines attitudinal changes related to increased tolerance that may be produced by social mixing.

Effects on the Behaviors of the Advantaged

Only a few statistical studies have examined neighborhood effects on advantaged individuals generated by disadvantaged neighbors, but most find negative impacts. Musterd and Andersson (2005) found for both those with moderate or high levels of education that residence in predominantly low-income neighborhoods in 1995 was associated with diminished future employment prospects. Musterd and Andersson (forthcoming) observed that those with 15 or more years of education who were unemployed were more likely to remain so if they resided in neighborhoods with higher resources to precisely such neighborhood of concentrated unemployment. On the other hand, there are many inconsistent findings even among European studies using similar measures, methods, and data from the same social-welfare regimes; cf. Musterd and Andersson (2005) and van der Klaauw and van Ours (2003); McCulloch (2001), Buck (2001), and Bolster et al. (2004).
percentages of unemployed neighbors, at least up to a point. Oberwittler (2007) analyzed a sample of adolescent children who were advantaged by their German-citizenship. Multi-level analyses revealed that the rate of self-reported delinquency and gang membership for German girls (but not boys) and self-reported rates of serious property offenses (both genders) were positively related to the percentage of neighbors who received welfare payments in the neighborhood.

However, two studies that more convincingly controlled for selection effects than those cited above found no negative impacts on advantaged individuals from disadvantaged neighbors in Sweden. Based on data for Swedish urban individuals, Galster et al. (2008) found that incomes of neither advantaged (i.e., full-time employed) males and females were affected by variations in the share of low-income neighbors. Operationalizing “disadvantage” as immigrant status in Sweden, Edin, Fredricksson, and Aslund (2003) found that living in municipalities with more members of the same ethnic group provided no impact on earnings of high-skill immigrants, regardless of the surrounding co-ethnic group’s income level.

Thus, the evidence is sparse and contradictory about whether the economic opportunities or behaviors of advantaged individuals (defined either by employment, income, or immigrant status) are harmed by the presence of disadvantaged neighbors. Conclusions of harm must be treated cautiously since they were not based on models with appropriate controls for selection. Moreover, the vast majority of work in this realm employs Swedish data, which clearly have limited generality.

**Effects on the Attitudes of the Advantaged**

Advantaged (as well as disadvantaged) populations may benefit from social mix if the contact results in a reduction of inter-group prejudices (Allport, 1954). Studies have observed that inter-ethnic group and inter-economic group tolerance and subsequent social contacts have been enhanced with greater intra-neighborhood contacts, especially earlier in life (e.g., Ihlanfeldt and Scafidi, 2002; Emerson, Kimbro and Yancey, 2002). The conditions for which the most positive sentiments arise are when the groups work toward common goals and when the contacts situation allows the participants the opportunity to form friendships (Pettigrew, 1998). However, a recent meta-analysis of hundreds of empirical studies of the contact hypothesis by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) concluded that reductions in inter-group prejudice occur, even when optimal context for contact is not present. This implies that there may be some case for
the social solidarity neighborhood effect mechanism operating in socially mixed
neighborhoods, at least in places where “community building” activities are successful in
directing diverse groups toward collaboration on actions for the common good of the
community.\textsuperscript{10}

\textbf{The Effects of Social Mix on the Advantaged: Provisional Conclusions}

There is little convincing evidence that social mixing with disadvantaged
neighbors creates negative outcomes for advantaged households, unless the former
group exceeds a threshold share in the neighborhood. On the contrary, there is a large
body of evidence that such contact can (though not necessarily) increase the tolerance
and reduce the prejudicial stereotypes of advantaged residents (as well as those of their
disadvantaged neighbors).

\textbf{The Effects of Social Mix on Society as a Whole: The Evidence Base}

There are two types of statistical evidence that help us ascertain whether social
mixing of neighborhoods might provide a net improvement of the well-being of
disadvantaged and advantaged individuals in aggregate. The first examines potential
non-linear statistical associations between variations in the share of disadvantaged
residents in a neighborhood and outcomes for other individuals residing there. The
second examines potential non-linear relationships with housing values and the social
mix of the neighborhood. I consider each in turn.

\textbf{Non-Linear Relationships between Social Mix and Individual Outcomes}

Empirical studies in the U.S. literature that test for non-linear relationships
between neighborhood poverty rates and various individual outcomes (not distinguished
by their degree of disadvantage) include Krivo and Peterson (1996), Vartanian (1999a,
b), Weinberg, Reagan and Yankow (2004). My review (Galster, 2002; but cf. Johnson,
Ladd and Ludwig, 2002) suggests that the evidence from the U.S. may be summarily
portrayed as a logit-like relationship, with two thresholds. The independent impacts of
neighborhood poverty rates in encouraging negative outcomes for individuals like crime,
school leaving, and duration of poverty spells appear to be nil unless the neighborhood

\textsuperscript{10} The picture seems less clear from Western European evidence, however (e.g., see Farwick,
2007).
exceeds about 20 percent poverty, whereupon the externality effects grow rapidly until the neighborhood reaches approximately 40 percent poverty; subsequent increases in the poverty population appear to have no marginal external effect. Analogously, the independent impacts of neighborhood poverty rates in discouraging positive behaviors like working appear to be nil unless the neighborhood exceeds about 15 percent poverty, whereupon the effects grow rapidly until the neighborhood reaches roughly 30 percent poverty; subsequent increases in poverty appear to have no marginal effect. This evidence is consistent with either the internal neighborhood mechanism of social norms or the external mechanism of stigmatism/institutional resource restrictions, both of which implicitly involve thresholds of disadvantaged share in the neighborhood before they take hold.

By contrast, the Western European evidence related to potential non-linear neighborhood effects of disadvantaged neighbors focuses on labor market outcomes, and the findings are mixed in the extreme. Several studies (Ostendorf, Musterd, and de Vos, 2001; Bolster et al., 2004; McCulloch, 2001; Musterd, Ostendorf and de Vos, 2003) detected no important non-linearities. Other studies detected non-linear relationships, but of highly inconsistent natures; cf.: Buck (2001), Musterd and Andersson (forthcoming), Van der Klaauw and van Ours (2003), Gordon and Monastiriotis (2006), Oberwittler (2007), and Galster et al. (2008).

A few studies have tested for non-linear relationships between educational or developmental outcomes for youth and neighborhood percentages of affluent residents; see: Crane (1991), Duncan et al. (1997), and Chase-Lansdale et al. (1997) in the U.S. and Kauppinen (2004) in Finland. Unfortunately, though they all suggest the existence of a threshold of neighborhood affluence they differ on where this occurs, perhaps because somewhat different outcomes and measures of advantage are being used.\(^\text{11}\) This evidence also is consistent with both intra-neighborhood processes (e.g., high-status neighbors exerting collective social norms) and external processes (the affluent negating stigma of the area or bringing resources that made local institutions and services better).

\(^{11}\) Turley (2003) analyzes behavioral and psychological test scores for youth as measured in a special supplement of the PSID. She relates these scores to the median family income of the census tract, so one cannot be certain whether the relationship is being generated by share of affluent or share of poor.
Non-Linear Relationships between Social Mix and Housing Values

As noted above there is a substantial body of U.S. econometric literature suggesting that a variety of negative behavioral outcomes occur for residents when the neighborhood poverty rate exceeds a range of 15%-20%. Two additional, recent pieces of remarkably consistent evidence support the same conclusion, but when aggregate neighborhood housing values are the outcome of interest. These studies utilize the well-known proposition that a variety of localized amenities and disamenities are capitalized into values of homes in the area. The authors reason that the direct and indirect effects of having more disadvantaged residents in a neighborhood (larger incidence of social problems, reductions in maintenance of housing, loss of neighborhood prestige, etc.) will be reflected in declines in housing values, all else equal. Using data from similarly scaled neighborhoods (wards in England and census tracts in the U.S., respectively), Meen (2005) and Galster, Cutsinger and Malega (2008) statistically estimate a strong negative relationship between neighborhood property value changes and increases in neighborhood disadvantage (poverty rates), but only after such exceeds roughly the same 15-20% threshold as noted above. The overall relationship resembled a negative logistic function.

The Effects of Social Mix on Society as a Whole: Provisional Conclusions

The fact that neighborhood poverty rates in the U.S. appear consistently related to a range of individual behavioral outcomes in a non-linear, threshold-like fashion is consistent with only a few sorts of neighborhood effect mechanisms. Unfortunately, with highly inconsistent evidence regarding non-linearities of neighborhood impacts on individual behaviors in the Western European evidence, less clear inferences can be drawn. However, both U.S. and U.K. evidence from studies of non-linear effects of shares of disadvantaged populations on housing values is consistent with the aforementioned U.S. evidence on behaviors. Collectively, this evidence provides, in my view, strong support for the hypotheses of the neighborhood effect mechanisms of: (1) external stigmatization/institutional resource constraints, and (2) intra-neighborhood effects manifesting themselves past a threshold, such as collective social norms.

Even more importantly, it clearly suggests that a regime of complete segregation (neighborhoods of either concentrated advantage or concentrated disadvantage) is socially less efficient than one in which every neighborhood has an equal share of the disadvantaged. This improved social well-being can be measured either as lower overall
incidences of socially problematic behaviors or higher aggregate housing values. However, the evidence also suggests that not every degree of social mix is more efficient than complete segregation; only mixes with extremely low concentrations of the disadvantaged appear to be more socially efficient.

The Composition of the Social Mix: The Evidence Base

Mixing by Economics or by Immigrant Status

Thus far, I have reviewed the evidence related to “disadvantaged” as defined by income, but what about immigrant status as the basis for disadvantage? The latter seems to be a category of higher salience in many Western European contexts. The evidence here is reasonably consistent about whether more intra-neighborhood immigrant contact in homogeneous communities (enclaves) provides net (or long-term) positive externalities for ethnic minorities or immigrants. In most cases, prolonged residential contact with other immigrants (whether own- or other-group) is associated with negative outcomes. However, a neighborhood with exceptionally highly skilled and employed immigrants can provide positive externalities to other resident immigrants that have clear economic payoffs. This suggests that the economic mix of the neighborhood trumps the immigrant mix in importance.

European-based statistical work by Clark and Drinkwater (2002), and Aslund and Fredricksson (2005) and U.S.-based work by Galster, Metzger, and Waite (1999) and Cutler, Glaeser and Vigdor (2008) have found that residence in ethnic enclaves reduces economic opportunities for low-income immigrants. However, other studies from both regions (Borjas, 1995, 1998; Edin, Fredricksson, and Aslund, 2003; Cutler, Glaeser and Vigdor, 2008) have found that residence with economically advantaged co-immigrants can provide a variety of advantages for new arrivals.

A potential resolution of these apparently contradictory findings was produced by Musterd et al. (2007), who examines how the duration of percentages and densities of own-group and other immigrants in the neighborhood affect individual Swedish immigrants’ future earnings during 1999-2001, controlling for a wide range of personal
characteristics. They found that the impact of immigrant neighbors (both own- and other-group) depends on the duration of residence and economic context of the neighborhood. Co-ethnic clustering provided only a net positive effect if one stayed in an own-group-dominant neighborhood for a few years; thereafter the effect became strongly negative. Residence among other immigrants provided further detriments to earnings unless residents of the area had very low unemployment rates, whereupon their impact appeared to be positive.

Thus, it appears that among immigrants the mix of advantaged and disadvantaged groups defined in income/employment terms is much more powerful than the mix defined purely in terms of immigrant ethnicity or national origin. This conclusion is strongly buttressed by Andersson et al. (2007), who found that the neighborhood share of the adult population in the lowest 30th percentile of income was related to adult male and female Swedes’ incomes over a subsequent five-year period in a stronger fashion than a variety of other potential measures related to neighborhood social mix, including immigrant status, education, social benefit receipt, or housing tenure type.¹²

Social Mix or Neighborhood Social Process Characteristics

Thus far we have been examining evidence related to how a variety of outcomes are related to the social mix of a neighborhood, operationalized by the socioeconomic characteristics of the residents. But is it the socioeconomic composition of neighborhood per se that matters, or the lack of social order and cohesion that might be associated with it?

The latter position was first given empirical support by Aneshensel and Sucoff (1996), who found that neighborhood social cohesion explained a large portion of the relationship between neighborhood socioeconomic status and adolescent depression. Turley (2003) modeled the determinants of youths’ behavioral and psychological test scores and found strong interaction effects for white (but not black) youths between median family income of neighborhood and proxies for number of peer interactions and time spent in neighborhood. She concluded that “differences in neighborhood socializing may explain why median neighborhood income affects black and white children differently” (2003: 70). Finally, Kohen et al. (2002) found that neighborhood disorder was negatively related and neighborhood cohesion was positively related to

¹² The most powerful effect seemed to occur in neighborhoods characterized both by low income and high proportions of refugees.
children’s verbal ability; the addition of these variables rendered previous associations with neighborhood affluence and poverty insignificant statistically. They found that neighborhood cohesion (though not disorder) also was negatively associated with children’s behavioral problems, though neighborhood social characteristics retained some explanatory power as well.

Thus, at least for some outcomes, it appears that it is not social mix alone or directly that may influence outcomes but, rather, the internal social dynamics of the place that often is only partly measured by its socio-economic status mix. This theme has been emphasized in a number of studies by Sampson and his colleagues (Sampson, 1992; Sampson and Groves, 1989; Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls, 1997; Morenoff, Sampson and Raudenbush 2001. To understand the effects of disadvantaged neighborhoods, they argue, one must understand their degree of social organization, which entails the context of community norms, values and structures enveloping residents’ behaviors (what he has labeled “collective efficacy”). Sampson’s work has empirically demonstrated that disorder and lack of social cohesion are associated with greater incidence of mental distress and criminality in neighborhoods (see the review in Sampson, Morenoff and Gannon-Rowley, 2002). In this regard there is a good deal of trans-Atlantic commonality of findings related to collective efficacy and negative crime outcomes; cf. Hirshfield and Bowers (1997), Veysey and Messner (1999), and Blasius and Friedrichs (2004). However, in neither North American or Western European contexts has it been demonstrated that social control and disorder have affects on other outcomes of interest such as youth behavioral and psychological development, school leaving, teen pregnancy, and employment and earnings.

The Concentration of Social Mix: The Evidence Base

The U.S. literature is replete with studies that have investigated the impacts on housing values associated with assisted (social) housing being developed nearby. This evidence provides indirect evidence on potential concentration effects of the disadvantaged. When viewed in its totality, the subset of this home price impact literature that employs the appropriate statistical methodology provides a distinct theme (for reviews, see Freeman and Botein, 2002; Galster et al, 2003; Galster, 2004). The impacts of assisted housing on prices of nearby single-family homes will depend in an interactive way on concentration and neighborhood context.
As for concentration, it appears that higher amounts of new construction or rehabilitation of assisted housing in a given area will provide larger positive price impacts for nearby homes over some range (Galster et al., 1999; Santiago, Galster and Tatian, 2001; Ellen et al., 2001; Schill et al., 2002; Schwartz et al., 2002). However, there apparently is a diminishing marginal positive impact (Schwartz et al., 2002) that, at least in the case of affordable, multi-family rental complexes, can become a negative impact once concentrations exceed a threshold amount (Johnson and Bednarz, 2002). This potentially negative “over-concentration” effect seems particularly apparent in the case of tenant-based subsidy programs like rental vouchers (Galster et al, 1999; Galster, Tatian and Smith, 1999).

Neighborhood context also affects the magnitude and direction of concentration effects. Assisted housing seems least likely to generate negative impacts when inserted into high-value, low-poverty, stable neighborhoods. There appears to be growing evidence, however, that neighborhoods with modest values, trajectories of decline, and non-trivial poverty rates will have a greater risk of experiencing negative housing price impacts at lower concentrations of assisted housing, regardless of its specific form (cf. Galster et al, 1999; Galster, Tatian and Smith, 1999; Galster and Tatian, 2001; Johnson and Bednarz, 2002).

Thus, these studies comport well with aforementioned work on nonlinear relationships between neighborhood shares of economically disadvantaged populations and various behavioral and property value outcomes. The evidence is clear that relatively low concentrations of the disadvantaged group (below roughly 15-20% in the case of U.S. poverty rates) do not create measurable negative externalities for neighbors.

The Scale of Social Mixing: The Evidence Base

In an earlier survey of the neighborhood literature, I noted the multiplicity of conceptualizations of neighborhood (Galster, 2001). Many scholars have employed a purely geographic perspective, while others have attempted to integrate social and geographic perspectives. The upshot is that, whatever “neighborhood” is, it undoubtedly has distinct social, economic, and psychological meanings and exerts various effects at multiple geographic scales. The first to recognize this was Suttles (1972), who argued that households engaged indistinct social relationships within four scales of
neighborhood, which he labeled: (1) “block face;” (2) “community of limited liability;” (3) “expanded community of limited liability;” and (4) “sector of a city.” Suttles’ and subsequent empirical work has confirmed the ability of households to recognize multiple scales of neighborhood; see, e.g., Birch et al. (1979). I have since formulated theories of nested scales of neighborhood based on the nature of the spatial variations in externalities of amenities impinging on a household (Galster, 1986) and of the geographic nature of the various attributes of the bundle comprising neighborhood (Galster, 2001). However, often there is a great deal of interpersonal variance in the perceived boundaries of neighborhoods, both within and across scales. Moreover, it is likely that different mechanisms whereby neighborhood effects may transpire extend over different spatial extents from the individuals in question.

The statistical literature on neighborhood effects is replete with alternative specifications of neighborhood geography because data employed were collected at various scales by different institutions. The U.S.–based studies typically employ the census tract, an area bounded by local planners who employ transportation routes and/or topographical features to create as demographically homogeneous areas as possible containing roughly 4,000 inhabitants, on average. Western European-based studies evince a greater variety of scales. For example, U.K.–based work has used administrative data from wards (similar to tracts), lower super output areas (roughly 1,400 inhabitants), and school catchment areas (various sizes); e.g., see Buck (2001, 2007) and Bramley and Karley (2007). Postal code areas have often been employed, though these vary from 9,000-17,000 inhabitants in Germany (e.g., Drever, 2004; 2007) to 1,700 in the Netherlands (e.g., Van der Laan Bouma-Doff (2007a). Still other work has employed “city districts” of various sizes (cf. Blasius and Friedrichs, 2007,Oberwittler, 2007). Farwick (2007) has considered the “apartment complex” as neighborhood. The challenge in examining this work is in deducing the influence of different neighborhood scales, when so much is different across these studies.

The most direct way of answering the question “what scale(s) of neighborhood matter most in influencing individual outcomes” is to conduct parallel analyses of a particular outcome where neighborhood indicators are measured at different scales and estimates of effects are compared. Several Western European studies have taken this tack: Buck (2001), Bolster et al. (2004), Knies (2007), Van Ham and Manley (2009). All found statistically significant relationships at various scales, but stronger correlations
were observed between individual outcomes and neighborhood variables when the latter were measured at smaller spatial scales.

These findings nicely comport with several European (Atkinson and Kintrea, 1998;) and American (Kleit, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2005), Clampet-Lundquist, 2004) studies showing the degree of social interactions among different groups residing in a common neighborhood was enhanced if the groups were mixed more at the micro-scale. The evidence therefore strongly suggests that the most net-beneficial effects on disadvantaged (and, perhaps, advantaged) residents will occur if social mix is achieved at a very finely grained scale. Thus, pleas in Great Britain for more of a “pepper-potting” strategy (Page and Boughton, 1997; Jupp, 1999; Beekman et al. 2001) appear to have empirical merit.

Conclusions Regarding the Planning Goal of a Neighborhood Social Mix Strategy

When all is said and done, what does the foregoing Western European and U.S. evidence suggest about whether the goal of neighborhood social mix can be justified and, if so, on what grounds? There is convincing evidence from both regions that disadvantaged individuals are significantly harmed by the presence of sizable disadvantaged groups in their neighborhood, likely due to negative peer/role modeling, weak social norms/control, limited-resource networks, and stigmatization mechanisms. There also is convincing, broad-based evidence that disadvantaged individuals may be helped by the presence of more advantaged groups in their neighborhood, likely due to positive role modeling, stronger social norms/control and elimination of geographic stigma. However, mixing with those of much higher income appears to produce inferior outcomes for the disadvantaged relative to mixing with middle-income groups, likely through relative deprivation and competition effects. In concert, the foregoing suggests that there is a sufficient evidentiary base to justify on equity grounds (i.e., improving the absolute well-being of the disadvantaged) a social mix policy that works toward avoiding high concentrations of disadvantaged individuals and promoting residential diversity of groups, preferably of only modestly dissimilar socioeconomic status.

By contrast, there is evidence that advantaged individuals in the U.S. and Western Europe may be harmed by the presence of disadvantaged groups (both via social interactions and property market reactions) under certain circumstances of high concentrations and weaker neighborhood housing markets. However, there is evidence
that prejudices of advantaged (and disadvantaged) groups may be eroded by closer residential contacts. Moreover, there is evidence (in both regions but more convincingly so in the U.S.) of increasing marginal negative consequences of disadvantaged neighbors past a threshold neighborhood share. In concert, these points suggest that there is probably a sufficient evidentiary base to justify on efficiency grounds a goal of neighborhood social mix, but only if the concentration of disadvantage stays relatively low in all neighborhoods.

Implications for Planning the Means to Achieving Social Mix

Thus far I have concentrated on analyzing whether neighborhood social mix was a goal worthy of pursuing on equity and efficiency grounds. Given that the answer is a qualified “yes,” here I turn to a general analysis of means to achieving this goal. I do not provide prescriptions, but rather a set of issues that planners must confront in the context of the particular situation they confront. Worthy goals do not justify all conceivable means of achieving them, so the planner must assess the equity and efficiency dimensions of particular program(s) being considered for enhancing social mix. I will argue below that these considerations must be highly contingent, thus I can provide no general rules.

However, the foregoing review does provide several desirable parameters of social mix that help guide practical planning practice:

- **Composition**: mixing on the basis of economic status seems more important than on the bases of immigrant or housing tenure status; there should not be to great a gap between the economic groups being mixed; little empirical guidance on overall composition (Tunstall and Fenton, 2006) or on which characteristic(s) producing heterogeneity within the disadvantaged are worthy of attention
- **Concentration**: the U.S. research indicates that the mix should not exceed roughly 15-20% poverty populations; evidence less clear for Europe
- **Scale**: mixing should be accomplished at the smallest feasible spatial scale

Other issues related to the means of achieving social mix are specific to the programmatic vehicle chosen. For example, social mix could be encouraged in the U.S. by encouraging and assisting recipients of housing choice (formerly section 8) rental
vouchers to locate in areas with relatively few assisted households or other low-income families, and by encouraging or requiring landlords to participate in the program. For discussions of these issues, see Galster et al. (2003) and Goering and Feins (2003). Another strategic possibility is inclusionary zoning, whereby a minimum percentage of dwelling units in developments exceeding a certain threshold are set aside and offered at below-market-rate rents or prices. The U.K. and some places in the U.S. have experimented with this strategy. Yet another is to provide economic incentives to private developers (like density bonuses, tax credits, or low-interest mortgages) to provide more affordable units as part of the mix of dwellings in a new development; see Brophy and Smith (1997). Yet another approach is to develop (or preserve) social housing in areas that are gentrifying; see Levy et al. (2006).

The above strategies have a common element: they expand opportunities for lower-income families to live in communities with households of somewhat higher economic means and are voluntary in nature. There is another social mix strategy, however, that deserves more attention here because it typically reduces options for low-income families and is involuntary. I am referring to the redevelopment of public housing estates and their transformation into mixed-income developments, as has been widely practiced in Europe, U.S., and Australia.

Whenever contemplating demolishing or radically altering the resident composition of a public housing estate, a planner must take a myriad of contingencies into account. Beyond the aforementioned composition, concentration and scale parameters, however, at least five other facets need to be analyzed for the strategy to reach its fullest potential: maintenance, design, community building, location, and function (cf. Brophy and Smith, 1997; Joseph, 2006; Tunstall and Fenton, 2006; Van Kempen et al. 2009). Maintenance of socially mixed estates (especially the units occupied by the disadvantaged) is a crucial element to the success of the development. Not only does a well-managed and maintained area raise all residents' satisfaction levels, it reduces potential for inter-group tensions and intolerance (Jupp, 1999; Martin and Watkinson, 2003), and minimizes chances that the larger housing market will perceive social mix as associated with negative externalities that can lower proximate property values (Galster et al., 2003).

Design of the dwellings and the larger residential complexes that encompass them is also important in achieving group-interaction goals of social mixing (Joseph, 2006). Clearly, dwellings, common areas, parks and pathways designed to encourage
inter-household interactions and defensible spaces will maximize the opportunities for different groups to interact and collectively create secure, satisfying residential environments. Architecture that minimizes the visible distinctions among dwelling for the different groups will also reduce chances for stigmatization.

But physical attributes of socially mixed places likely will be insufficient to generate the type of non-superficial interactions that ultimately may lead to more significant network and friendship formation that may prove instrumental for the disadvantaged. “Community-building” efforts aimed at developing more informal events and formal institutions in the neighborhood likely will be required to help different groups facilitate interpersonal connections and find common interests (Joseph, 2006).

The location of the development being considered for restructuring must be assessed. Some sites have poor access to jobs, shopping, recreation and other amenities. Merely altering the physical quality of dwellings and the social mix on the site may do little to enhance the opportunities or satisfaction of low-income residents.

Finally, the type of the development being considered for restructuring must be assessed. It is rarely the case that “areas of concentrated disadvantage” are all uniform in their function. Some indeed may operate as “poverty traps,” as is often feared. But others may operate as springboards launching residents into improving life trajectories. Such has often been seen as the function of “immigrant enclaves,” for example. Though disadvantaged by most conventional indicators, they nevertheless may provide crucial human, financial, and social capital in a linguistically and culturally sensitive way that simply could not be replicated were the area to be “deconcentrated.”

Before closing, I would be remiss to not mention several daunting ethical challenges of achieving the sort of productive socially mixed places meeting all the criteria above (cf. Tunstall and Fenton, 2006; Brophy and Smith, 1997). Not only are substantial financial and human resources involved, but some of the aforementioned parameters may be mutually contradictory. A “pepper-potting” approach of keeping low concentrations of the disadvantaged might be desirable from the standpoint of increasing exposure of the disadvantaged to positive role models and social controls, eliminating place stigmatization, and gaining political acceptability from the advantaged. However, such an approach may badly disrupt the support networks and local institutions of the disadvantaged and subject them to excessive scrutiny and stigmatization (Briggs, 1997, Joseph, 2006), and heighten potential intergroup conflicts over differences in lifestyles (Goodchild and Cole, 2001; Beekman et al, 2001). Mixing
the disadvantaged with those who are not too dissimilar in socioeconomic status may prove more beneficial to the former group. But it may be difficult to accomplish this if deconcentration strategies are taken to scale and policy makers wish to avoid destabilizing middle and working class neighborhoods with additional assisted housing.

Whether all these challenges can be surmounted or not, social mix planning should be approached with a substantial dose of circumspection, sensitivity to contextual nuance, and modest expectations. Despite the volume of research related to social mix, I believe that many of the fundamental questions I have posed have not been answered with sufficient clarity and unanimity to warrant uncritical formulations of policy and plans. Moreover, planners should not be lulled into thinking that social mix—even at its most successful—is a panacea for disadvantage (Joseph, 2006; Joseph, Chaskin ad Webber, 2007). Neighborhood environment alone may be insufficient to change drastically the economic prospects of adults who lack basic human capital, social skills, or means of transportation that would unlock doors of opportunity. Similarly, youth may gain little payoffs from a mixed neighborhood if their networks predominantly connect them to their previous environments of concentrated disadvantage or they continue to enroll in inferior, underachieving school systems. It will take a more comprehensive set of social welfare interventions and supports to provide fair opportunities for all citizens, even in a world of socially mixed neighborhoods.
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