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Perceived benefits and risks of developing mixed communities in New Zealand: implementer perspectives

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ABSTRACT

In New Zealand, mixed communities are developed on green fields or to replace existing public housing as a way of increasing housing supply, and, in some views, improving outcomes for low-income residents. This paper identifies the effects of developing mixed communities as perceived by implementers of these projects – politicians, officials, developers, and housing providers – and places these in the context of the international evidence. The range of perspectives on potential benefits and risks of mixed-income development for public tenants, the mixed evidence base, and uncertainty about the applicability of research evidence across different urban contexts should inform a research agenda.

KEYWORDS

Mixed tenure; mixed income; mixed communities; housing development; regeneration; public housing; urban policy

Introduction

For several decades, policies in a number of countries including the United States, the Netherlands, Australia, and the United Kingdom have encouraged the redevelopment of public housing into mixed-income or mixed-tenure communities. Building mixed communities is achieved through mechanisms that ensure the presence of both market and low-income (public housing or subsidised private rental) housing, and is seen as a way of improving housing supply and overcoming disadvantages that are thought to result from the concentration of poverty (Arthurson 2005; Darcy 2010; Goetz 2012). Yet such redevelopment has also been seen as a means of clearing the most deprived people out of desirable inner-city land (Bridge, Butler, & Lees, 2012b; Vale 2013); in New Zealand, displaced public tenants have frequently been rehoused in different communities (McDonald 2015; Stewart 2019). Other scholars have suggested that while mixed community initiatives contribute to some benefits, the effects are more modest than either their champions or critics suggest (Fraser, Chaskin, and Bazuin 2013).

Over the past decade, New Zealand has joined what has been described as an international policy consensus or orthodoxy regarding mixed communities (Kearns, McKee, and Sautkina 2013; Rose et al. 2012) (see Figure 1). Under the National Government (2008–2017), development of communities of public, affordable¹ and market housing progressed in public housing communities, including 185 homes in Pomare and 7,500 (later increasing to 10,500)

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	Development (total number of homes)	Former use of land	Developer	Number (proportion) public homes	Number (proportion) private homes
Commenced under the National Government (2009-2017)	Pomare (150)	89 public homes	Private	20 (13%)	130 (87%), incl. 20 owned by community housing providers, some in shared equity/rent-to-buy schemes
	Northern Glen Innes* (260)	156 public homes	Private	78 (30%)	182 (70%), incl. 39 owned by community housing providers, some in shared equity/rent-to-buy schemes
	Northcote (1500)	380 public homes	Government	500 (33%)	1000 (66%), incl. 250 affordable*****
	McLennan (600)	Greenfield	Government	90 (15%)	510 (85%), incl. some affordable
	Waimahia (295)	Greenfield	Community	61 (21%) in community rental or owned by community providers	234 (79%), incl. 143 in shared equity/right to buy schemes
	Tāmaki (10,500**)	2500 public homes	Government (co-owned central/local)	2,800 (27%)	7,700 (73%) incl. some affordable
Commenced or planned under the Labour Government (2017-2020)	East Porirua*** (3024)	1516 public homes	Government	1516 (50%)	1504 (50%), incl. some affordable
	Mangere (10,000)	2700 public homes	Government	3000 (30%)	7000 (70%), incl. 3500 affordable
	Mt Roskill South**** (900)	260 public homes	Government	300 (40%)	500 (62%), incl. 250 affordable
	Ōwairaka**** (700-900)	190 public homes	Government	220 (24-31%)	480-680 (24-31%), incl. some affordable
	Oranga (1000)	335 public homes	Government	400 (40%)	600 (60%), incl. 330 affordable

Figure 1. Examples of mixed community developments in New Zealand.

*Northern Glen Innes is now part of the Tāmaki development

**Until 2019, the Tāmaki development was to have a total of 7,500 homes (including 2,500 public homes).

***Numbers are from the business case preferred option, and differ from the development website and press releases, which include refurbished and new public homes in other parts of Porirua as part of the total.

****Part of the Mt Roskill development which will have 10,000 new homes (3000 state homes, 3500 affordable homes and 3500 market homes)

*****See note 1 for varying definitions of “affordable” ownership.

Sources:

Cumming(2013); Kāinga Ora (n.d.); Moffiet (2015); Northcote Development (n.d.); RNZ(2018); Smith (2013); TRC (2019); TRC (20132020); Te Rūnanga O Toa Rangatira, Porirua City Council, Treasury, Ministry of Social Development,& HNZ (2018); ter Ellen (2013); Witten et al (2018).

homes in Tāmaki, as well as on greenfield sites such as Waimahia (295 homes) (Smith 2013b; Tāmaki Regeneration Company (TRC) 2020; Tāmaki Regeneration Company (TRC) 2019; Witten et al. 2018). Under the Labour-led Government (2017 – present day), major government developments of public, affordable and market housing have commenced or are planned, including 3,500 homes in Porirua and 10,000 in Mangere (Housing New Zealand (HNZ); Kāinga Ora (n.d.-b)). The mixed communities concept has recently been enshrined in legislation under the 2019 Act establishing the public housing and urban development authority, Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities. This Act brought together Housing New Zealand (HNZ, the public housing landlord), its developer subsidiary Homes Land Community (HLC) and the Kiwibuild unit, which is a scheme to build affordable housing for homeowners. One of Kāinga Ora’s operating principles is ‘ensuring that the housing it develops is appropriately mixed (with public, affordable, and market housing)’ (Kāinga Ora–Homes and Communities Act 2019).

The aim of this article is to explore the assumptions of those closely involved in developing and implementing mixed communities as to their effects. Canvassing the views of ‘implementers’ as key informants is a key part of understanding intended outcomes associated with building mixed communities (Kearns, McKee, and Sautkina& 2013; Mackenzie and Blamey 2005). In this context, implementers are people involved in the implementation of mixed communities, whether through advocating for and crafting policy and building and running projects. Actors within the system are an important source of knowledge as little policy work has been undertaken in New Zealand on mixed communities.² This contrasts with other countries where mixed communities have been rolled out under specific policies that are available for analysis (e.g. Tunstall 2003). Through interviewing a broad range of implementers involved in a number of different mixed communities, in a diversity of different roles in the private, state and community sectors, we seek to ascertain the perceived effects of developing mixed-communities, and strategies to minimise harms and secure benefits, and to place these in the context of the international evidence. This is intended to support the housing community by garnering its insights and to contribute to a research agenda for New Zealand.

Literature

Building mixed communities is often portrayed as helping public tenants access better opportunities. It is a response to the idea that living in an area of concentrated poverty limits opportunities for low-income residents and results in worse outcomes than if they lived in a more mixed area – so-called ‘neighbourhood effects’ (Galster 2012). Kearns and Mason (2007) identify four mechanisms potentially at work in mixed communities that bring about benefits. *Resource effects* signify that the entire community benefits when high-income people live there, as they bring their spending power as

well as their public advocacy skills – what Joseph (2006) calls the political economy of place. *Role-model effects* relate to low-income people adopting what Joseph (2006) calls the ‘culture and behaviour’ of high-income people, through, for example, observing school attendance or receiving advice. *Community effects*, or what Joseph (2006) identifies as social networks and social control arguments, are benefits low-income people experience through access to the social networks of high-income people, and through living in a safer community as a result of the informal social control exercised by high-income people. Finally, the *transformation effects* of mixed community development are thought to reduce stigma against public tenants and promote pride in the community: ‘residents acquire a sense of change and a degree of optimism about their own and their neighbourhood’s future and ... outsiders begin to talk about and treat certain areas differently’ (Kearns and Mason 2007, 667). That there are benefits to public tenants to living in a mixed community is a view shared by New Zealand housing providers, politicians, Auckland Council’s housing developer, and, until recently, HNZ (Housing New Zealand (HNZ) 2013; Panuku 2019; Todd 2018). However, the international literature paints a more complicated picture, as is discussed in conjunction with the findings. Briefly, as a ministerial-commissioned New Zealand review found, ‘evidence around low concentrations of social housing and resulting benefits for social housing tenants is weak, benefits are mixed or remain undemonstrated’ (Saville-Smith, Saville-Smith, and James 2015, 31).

Mixed communities have been defined differently, even within the same country. In the United States context, for example, the term ‘mixed-income’ has been used to describe many different communities, with great variation in the proportion and income-range of low-income and high-income groups, and the degree of mix (Schwartz and Tajbakhsh 1997). Under the HOPE VI programme, which provides federal funding to redevelop public housing projects, 60% of developments have a majority of public housing units, while others have no public housing, or are entirely public housing (Vale and Shamsuddin 2017). Similarly, in England, the term ‘mixed-tenure’ is used to describe communities that have no public and some affordable housing, as well as communities that have a majority of public housing (Tunstall 2012). In addition, the extent to which high-income and low-income (or private and public housing) is spatially integrated varies substantially between mixed communities within different countries (Sautkina, Bond, and Kearns 2012; Vale and Shamsuddin 2017). As noted by these authors, mixed communities mean different things in different contexts.

In New Zealand, mixed communities are achieved through mixing tenures: providing public housing alongside privately owned housing. Public housing is targeted at the most vulnerable New Zealanders, most of whom are welfare beneficiaries or work in low-paid jobs, who pay income-related rent to a maximum of 25% of their household income. Privately owned housing is occupied by renters and owners on a range of incomes; in new mixed community developments, private housing is occupied by relatively high-income people because of the desirability of the locations and of living in a new-build. In 2018, the majority of public housing was owned or leased by central government under Kāinga Ora (about 63,000 units) or Tāmaki Regeneration Company (2,800 units), the latter in a joint venture with Auckland Council. Further 9,000 units were owned or leased from local government by community housing providers (9,000).

In total, these comprise just under 4% of total housing stock (Johnson, Howden-Chapman, and Eaqub 2018). Māori and Pacifica people are 16.5% and 8.1% of the New Zealand population, respectively, but 37% and 27% of Kāinga Ora's tenants (HNZ, 2019). The concentration of Māori and Pacifica people in public housing means that greater tenure mix may lead to greater ethnic mix. Public housing communities that are slated for redevelopment (Figure 1) tend to be detached or semi-detached housing on large sections built as new suburbs on greenfield land between the 1940s and 1970s. Some housing in these communities has already been privatised under 'right-to-buy' and other historic privatisation policies (Schrader 2005). Redevelopment takes place on sites still owned or, in some cases, repurchased. For example, in Glen Innes prior to its redevelopment into a mixed community most meshblocks (statistical units usually comprising 30–60 dwellings) had more than 50% public housing and some had more than 75% (Olssen et al. 2010). Proportions of public housing in recent developments range from 15% to 43% (Figure 1). In most of the recent developments, initiated by the government housing developer, about one-third of housing is reserved for public tenants, who are among those with the lowest income in New Zealand; about a third is sold at market prices; and about a third is reserved for the Kiwibuild programme. Kiwibuild is intended to be affordable for first-home buyers, who must live there for at least two years, and have a household income below NZD\$120,000 (in the case of a couple). Recent figures show that those households buying homes in Auckland under this programme earn just under the city's median income (Leahy 2018). While both community and government providers emphasise the importance of having public and private housing within the same community, the developments at Waimahia and Tāmaki are explicitly focussed on providing 'blind' tenure, i.e. public housing that looks identical to private housing and is 'pepper-potted', or dispersed throughout the neighbourhood (TRC, 2016; Witten et al. 2018).

The recency of mixed community development in New Zealand has meant that the justification for building mixed communities leans on international research (Fergusson et al. 2016; Smith 2013a, 2014). However, New Zealand researchers are building the local evidence base. Researchers have explored the earlier experience of residents displaced by the development of mixed communities, and the discourse of developers, finding that relocation was traumatic and harmed community ties (Cole 2015; Gordon 2015; Gordon, Collins, and Kearns 2019; Terruhn 2019; Waldegrave, Thompson, and Love 2013). New Zealand research on how mixed communities function has focussed on the development of Waimahia by community and iwi [tribal] providers on a greenfield site in south Auckland. Interviews with development partners showed a strong belief that tenure mix would contribute to positive outcomes (Fergusson et al. 2016). Residents were satisfied with their new homes and communities and praised the goal of tenure mix, but some had negative attitudes towards renters, as later discussed (Fergusson et al. 2016; Witten et al. 2018). These negative attitudes call into question the extent to which tenure mix, rather than living in a newly-built dwelling in a well-designed community, contributed to positive outcomes in Waimahia. Besides the Waimahia research, there have been surveys of residents of mixed communities in Tāmaki and Glen Eden, which show that most people are happy with their new home and neighbourhood (CityScope Consultants and Nexus Planning & Research 2013; Housing New Zealand (HNZ) 2015). As this review of the New Zealand literature makes clear, we currently lack detailed information on the goals and effects of different mixed communities as perceived by

the implementers of these communities. Despite the commonalities with policies to promote mixed communities in other countries, it is important to have New Zealand research in particular because of New Zealand's distinct history, population and policy context, including its status as a bicultural nation (Walker 2004).

The need for New Zealand research is underlined by uncertainty regarding the applicability of the international evidence base to the New Zealand context. As New Zealand reviewers have noted, 'transferability is problematic from site to site within a jurisdiction and cultural context let alone between countries' (Saville-Smith, Saville-Smith, and James 2015, 34). Despite progressive ideals in its early history, New Zealand has been characterised alongside the UK, Australia, the Republic of Ireland, and Canada, as a 'reluctant welfare state' (Shirley 1994). While emergency care, and education and medical care for children are free, benefits for parents, invalids, the unemployed and the elderly fail to keep those without other means out of poverty (Boston 2019). Different welfare regimes as well as different urban form could influence how residential socioeconomic mix affects social outcomes (Galster 2007; Saville-Smith, Saville-Smith, and James 2015). This underlines the importance of local research.

Methods

Semi-structured interviews with key informants enable researchers to gather rich and textured data from experts on a particular issue (Creswell 2014; Liamputtong 2013). In the context of research on tenure or income mix, researchers have shown that drawing on key informant experiences is useful to help understand reality and avoid rhetoric, and learn about challenges, goals and intended outcomes (Atkinson and Kintrea 2004; Fraser and Kick 2007; Jackson 2018; Kearns, McKee, and Sautkina 2013; Rose et al. 2012).

We received Category B Ethics Approval from the University of Otago in order to carry out interviews with public, community and iwi housing providers, public and private housing developers, and local and central government staff and politicians responsible for housing. Participants were asked to participate in an in-depth interview of approximately one hour, audio-recorded, to explore the concept of mixed communities, based on their experience, reflections and expertise in the area. Participants were informed that their responses would be recorded and made anonymous. We carried out interviews with 31 people on the phone, via videoconference, and in person. We subsequently transcribed the interviews and analysed these for key themes relating to perceived effects of developing mixed communities, and strategies associated with promoting benefits and minimizing risks (Crabtree and Miller 1992; King 2004).

Illustrative quotes from interview participants are numbered in the text. Participants E1-E3 were elected to local government; participants G4-G16 worked in local or central government, including for local or central government-owned public housing providers and developers; participants P17-P21 worked in the private sector, including on development contracts to the government or community sector, and participants C22-C31 worked in the community sector, including for community providers of public housing. A number of participants had previously worked in other sectors and drew on this experience in responding to the questions. Participants spoke in general terms about mixed communities. Where they raised specific communities as examples, we did not include these in quotes as this would compromise their anonymity.

Results

In this section, we discuss the perceived effects of building mixed communities. First, given that many mixed community developments take place on the site of existing public housing, we discuss the effects of displacing public tenants. Second, we discuss potential benefits to public tenants living in mixed communities. Third, we discuss risks and challenges facing public tenants living in mixed communities. Fourth, we discuss benefits and risk associated with mixed communities for wider society. Finally, we discuss strategies participants employed to mitigate harmful effects of mixed communities and encourage positive outcomes. We place the themes raised by participants in the context of the local and international literature.

Effects of mixed community development displacing public tenants

Most new mixed communities are built on land previously occupied by public housing. Some participants saw public housing neighbourhoods as positive places and acknowledged that they would change dramatically. One participant, despite emphasising the importance of a mixed city, noted that a community slated for redevelopment had ‘some very strong cultural roots that go deep down’ (E3). Another participant described the communities as strong: ‘Sometimes it’s not sufficiently acknowledged that, even if these can be communities with crime and dysfunction and maybe other issues associated with poverty, they’re actually inherently very stable communities – a lot of people have been there for many generations’ (C27). The strong networks in public housing communities slated for redevelopment have been recorded in a number of contexts, including in New Zealand (August 2014; Goetz 2012; Morris 2017; Waldegrave, Thompson, and Love 2013).

Participants noted that development of mixed communities could disrupt public tenants’ lives. While housing providers have committed to trying to rehouse public tenants near their former homes where possible, this has not always occurred; in addition, any relocation, even to another home in the neighbourhood could be disruptive: ‘there’s probably been a little bit of a drift from where they were ... and their immediate historic friends or family’ (P21). Aside from having to move, and having to disrupt community ties, the process of redevelopment could be traumatic: ‘There is the trauma of the planning process which is uncertain, and then the trauma of the construction process which could be years, and then it’s the impact of new people moving in’ (G9). The disruption and trauma of displacement is a strong theme in the local and international literature (Atkinson and Jacobs 2008; August 2014; Cole 2015; Goetz 2012; Greenbaum et al. 2008; Manzo, Kleit, and Couch; Schrader 2006; Waldegrave, Thompson, and Love 2013).

Some participants were concerned that the development of mixed communities in place of public housing would promote gentrification: the transformation of a neighbourhood’s character due to an influx of high-income people, which often prices out low-income residents (Lees and Ley 2008): ‘we’re very worried about gentrification’ (GS9). Most mixed communities that replace public housing in New Zealand retain at least the same, or an increased number of public housing units (Figure 1). However, private tenants may not be able to afford rent in the redeveloped community, or could be displaced if their landlord sells. Moreover, as observed in the US context, escalating local property prices could mean that original residents are unable to pay property taxes

or mortgages (Fraser and Kick 2007). As one participant explained: ‘although we do our best to create stuff for them [low-income residents] and we make communities that are important to them and all of those things, what we can’t control is what the private sector does’ (G13). Avoiding displacement was described as the ‘holy grail’ (G9); this participant noted the importance of working with other government agencies and social services to support people to stay in the area. Participants are clearly familiar with the difficulty of avoiding what has been described as ‘state-led gentrification’ (Gordon, Collins, and Kearns 2019; Huning and Schuster 2015; Lees and Ley 2008; Smith 2002).

Participants noted that redevelopment would be disruptive even for people who remained in the community due to the influx of new residents: ‘there’s a demographic kind of swamping too, because suddenly you’re a minority and that has implications’ (C27). Some of these implications included services and shops changing to fit a clientele with higher incomes, resulting in people starting to feel like they no longer belong; in this way, regeneration ‘can displace communities, whether they move away or not’ (G16). Displacement, then, is not just about spatial dislocation, but the loss of place: a social product that anchors identity (Davidson 2009). Despite acknowledging the harm of displacement, and the desire to minimise this harm, some participants thought that these issues were the inevitable consequence of the need to increase housing supply: ‘The intention [of the redevelopment] was never to move people out, it was actually to help make their community better. But ... at the same time there’s a reality that we need to put a lot more people in the city, and we have identified- there are areas identified for doing that, and it’s just going to have to happen’ (G16). The idea that displacement could lead to negative outcomes was raised by ten participants (four government, three elected, two community, and one private sector participant). The acknowledgement by participants of the harms associated with redevelopments that set out to provide more and better housing has been described as a ‘social justice dilemma’ (Lupton and Tunstall 2008). As noted in the English context, and as we will subsequently describe, many participants support the idea of mixed communities as contrasted with segregated communities, but here share their concern that regeneration could further marginalise already disadvantaged people.

Benefits for public tenants living in mixed communities

Participants raised a number of benefits of mixed communities for public tenant residents, which are here organised within the framework provided by Kearns and Mason (2007). It is worth bearing in mind that all of those displaced by mixed-tenure development in Pomare, and some of those displaced in Tāmaki, were not rehoused in the same community (McDonald 2015; Stewart 2019). This means that those displaced by mixed community redevelopment do not necessarily experience any benefits relating to living in new, mixed communities. However, government developers currently state that they will make every effort to rehouse those displaced in the same community where possible (Kāinga Ora n.d.-a-a; Stewart 2019).

Resource effects

One community sector participant thought that mixed communities were beneficial because high-income people were best equipped to advocate for neighbourhood

resourcing, which would benefit all residents: ‘The better off you are, or the more social capital you have as a community, the more likely you are to advocate for better parks, better schools, better transportYou get heard, you do. So, if you’ve got people in the community who are able to voice that sort of thing, the whole community becomes better off’ (C22). Other researchers, however, argue the contrary point: ‘the louder voices and sharper elbows of the middle-class monopolis[e] local services and schools’ (Bridge, Butler, and Lees 2012a, 320). The evidence for resource effects is mixed. A UK review of the evidence showed that secondary studies reported that mixed tenure had negative effects or no effect on neighbourhood satisfaction or satisfaction with services and amenities, while primary studies reported mixed effects (Sautkina, Bond, and Kearns 2012). Reviewing the US evidence, Joseph, Chaskin, and Webber (2007, 395) note ‘a lack of empirical evidence about the extent to which affluent residents of mixed-income developments can more effectively demand and attract external resources’; nevertheless, they suggest that, based on the greater residential stability and political participation of high-income people, resource effects remain ‘a compelling argument for mixed-income development’.

Community effects

Other participants thought that the presence of high-income people or homeowners benefitted the low-income public tenants because they provided social capital. One participant reflected that in one mixed community, ‘it’s got a lot of home ownership in there which is very good because that’s people that are really going to be sort of grounded in it’ (C25). People in rent-to-buy and shared equity schemes ‘engage and connect with the community in a profoundly different way than a transient renter would’ (C28). Because of the perception that homeowners were more likely to get involved in the community, it was thought that there was less need for the housing provider to play a community-building role: ‘You can have a wider integration and a lower level of management services, because you’re relying on the wider community to do a bit more integration. So ... the assumptions are, you get greater and more diverse activities going on in that community ... They’re the normal things that happen, the clubs and societies and meeting places ... But the advantages for the tenant is there’s less intervention required’ (C23). Related to this was the idea that homeowners, or people on rent-to-buy or shared equity schemes, could provide support to public tenants: ‘you can see the dynamic of a mixed-tenure there where you’ve got a couple of whānau [families] that are buying their homes – they’ll support the whānau that are renting’ (G5). Nine participants stated that mixed communities supported public tenants through stated that mixed-tenure neighbourhoods would enable stronger social capital and better support for public tenants (six community, two government, one private).

While homeowners, including in New Zealand, tend to have higher rates of social capital (Roskrug et al. 2011), there is little evidence that this benefits low-income tenants in the community, largely because the interaction between high-income and low-income people in mixed communities tends to be minimal (Saville-Smith, Saville-Smith, and James 2015). Narratives of people living in mixed-income housing in the US suggest that it the fact of living in subsidised, good quality housing, with access to social programmes, that supported their upward mobility, rather than their limited

interactions with neighbours (Fraser, DeFilippis, and Bazuin 2012). While sharing schools and other public spaces has been shown to support interaction between tenure or income groups, overall, the evidence shows that residential mix strategies do not increase social interaction between income or tenure groups (Arthurson 2010a; Joseph 2006; Morris, Jamieson, and Patulny 2012; Sautkina, Bond, and Kearns 2012). Where intergroup interaction occurs, residents tend to have a similar ethnic or socio-economic background (Joseph 2006). In most mixed communities, however, groups have different ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds; moreover, they have different schedules and limited time (James Fraser, DeFilippis, and Bazuin 2012); they ‘occupy largely different social worlds’ (Atkinson and Kintrea 2000, 104).

Role-model effects

Participants thought that living in a mixed community would help low-income public tenants as they would have homeowners as role models. It was thought that in streets of public housing ‘there’s not much to aspire to’ (C24); ‘one of the challenges of a social housing suburb is the homogeneity of the expectation and aspiration’ (P17); ‘when you’ve got a street or a community ... that is exclusively state housing ... there’s no role models of people who’ve got work experience or working. So, what does that tell families or children?’ (G5). In mixed communities, in contrast, participants suggested that public tenants could see ‘people going to work doing different things than you just being at home with children or you just being at home, depressed’ (C26). It was thought that public tenants would observe people taking up work, educational and other opportunities, which would serve as an inspiration for them to do the same: it was about ‘trying to change people’s expectations, and what the norms are’ (P17), such that they ‘see that there’s another way of living’ (G6). In this way, ‘putting social in amongst private actually lifts the social’ (P21), resulting in ‘social and community benefits [which] would massively reduce the expenditure budget through both health and corrections, and possibly police’ (P19). The benefits to public tenants were thought to occur through observation and interaction; the behaviour ‘actually rubs off very well on lower-income families who might otherwise be sort of stuck in that cycle of being out of work and having low aspirations’ (P20). Getting to know each other ‘begins a culture change’ (C28). Another way in which participants thought that high-income people role modelled good behaviour was through property maintenance. One participant said, ‘the privately-owned people tend to you know, keep everything neat and tidy’, because of the ‘kind of custodianship of their own space’ (P17). The caretaking of the private owners ‘then encourages our tenants to take care of their properties as well, and not, not feel different, look different in any way’ (G11). Ten participants expressed the view that mixed communities helped tenants by providing them with role models (four community, four private, three government).

The characterisation of public housing communities as housing people who are not good role models has been challenged by communities and researchers; for example, a survey undertaken in Pomare, which was subsequently redeveloped as a mixed community, showed that many people were active in the workforce or in education, caregiving and volunteer activities (Rethinking Crime and Punishment 2009). The discourse that homeowners or high-income people can guide public tenants or other low-income residents is frequently discussed. Reviews of international studies found no

clear evidence for the role-model effect (Galster 2012; Sautkina, Bond, and Kearns 2012); indeed, ‘without clear evidence that there are basic interactions between groups of residents, it is difficult to conceptualise how any positive transmission [of behaviour] processes would work’ (Manley, Maarten, and Doherty 2012, 155). The role-model argument ‘fails to acknowledge the broader set of structural conditions that work to limit social tenant opportunities’ (Ruming 2014, 173).

Transformation effects

Participants thought that living in mixed communities would enable public tenants to feel less marginalised and stigmatised than they would in a public housing community. They ‘feel part of a wider community, not just in a social housing development’ (P18). They would be less likely to encounter stigma due to living in neighbourhoods with a better reputation: ‘It frees these families up to change their lives because they’re not being judged and put in a box by the people they’re living with ... They’re equals living in a neighbourhood together’ (C28). Seven participants (four community, two private, one government) expressed the view that mixed-income developments helped tenants feel part of the community and feel less marginalised. There is evidence from a range of settings that communities with more social mix have a better reputation than low-income or public housing communities (Allen, Camina, Casey, Coward, & Wood, 2005; Musterd 2008). However, there is also evidence that within mixed communities, the areas that house public tenants or low-income residents are stigmatised (Arthurson 2010a), and that, as discussed subsequently, low-income or public tenant residents experience stigma.

Risks for public tenants living in mixed communities

Some participants thought that living in a mixed community could negatively affect low-income public tenants. They may not feel comfortable in this environment: ‘some people don’t want to live around people that are different to them, they want to live around people that are the same as them’ (C26). Living among higher-income people may limit their social interactions: ‘[public tenants] might still be quite isolated because they’ll still find it hard to engage in a mixed community’ (C23); ‘tenants don’t necessarily want to mix, you know, people tend to mix with their own type of social grouping of people’ (G11). The fact that people living side-by-side may not actually mix with each other was compounded by education choices: ‘social housing kids go to local schools, the other ones being shipped off to [other suburb]’ (C29), as observed in other countries (Arthurson 2010a; Chaskin, Sichling, and Joseph 2013; Stenson and Watt 1999; Van Beckhoven and Van Kempen 2006). The view that public tenants may prefer to live in public housing communities, feel isolated in mixed communities, and not interact with homeowners in mixed communities, was raised by six participants (four community, one private, one government).

The preference for people to live near others like them – ‘affinity clustering’ – has been observed in a number of contexts (Cheshire 2012; Markovich 2015); as one public tenant in a New Zealand community asked, ‘What’s wrong with living side-by-side?’ (Cole 2015, 89). In public housing communities in Australia and the UK, sharing common experiences of living in poverty with neighbours provides opportunities for mutual support and has been associated with higher social capital (Middleton, Murie,

and Groves 2005; Ruming, Mee, and McGuirk 2004); however, as previously outlined, international research indicates that high-income and low-income residents in mixed communities interact only minimally (Joseph 2006; Morris, Jamieson, and Patulny 2012; Sautkina, Bond, and Kearns 2012).

Participants observed that living in mixed communities could result in surveillance of and discrimination against public tenants by private residents. One participant recalled the stigmatisation of a public housing household in a block of private flats. The neighbours 'were white middle-class people that actually scrutinized everything this woman with her three children, and what she and her three children did. Any damage that was done in the gardens or anything was blamed on her children, and not the other children' (C26). Another participant recalled 'yuppie owners not liking the family across the road', because of the noise the children made playing: 'it wasn't even antisocial behaviour, it was about, you know, it was about people's expectations about how they should live' (C29). One participant described a community meeting where the tenants all sat together, separate from the homeowners. This and other experiences made her question whether public tenants felt excluded: 'I wonder whether [the public tenants] think that they, don't feel part of the, might not necessarily feel part of the place, and that maybe the private owners don't necessarily want them to be there' (G11). The contrasting experiences of homeowners and public tenants emphasise how the effects of mixed communities depend on people's social position: 'some segments of society may experience very real advantages, while others experience the effects as deeply disadvantaging' (Fraser, DeFilippis, and Bazuin 2012, 215). Four participants (two government, two community) raised the concern that public tenants were marginalised in mixed communities. The phenomenon has been frequently observed in mixed communities internationally; low-income residents 'are actively constructed as different and experience forces of oppression, stigmatisation and exclusion' (Ruming, Mee, and McGuirk 2004, 246); a phenomenon described as 'incorporation exclusion' (Chaskin and Joseph 2015). In New Zealand, some Waimahia homeowners saw public tenants as noisy, as not participating, as unfriendly and as 'not belonging' (Witten et al. 2018, 32). Some public tenants that remained in Tāmaki after the development of a mixed community reported that new residents made them feel like 'strangers' there (Gordon 2015, 141). The protective aspects of living among like people have been borne out in research which shows that for Māori, the indigenous people (who are overrepresented in public housing), living in an area with a higher concentration of Māori is associated with decreased odds of some health problems and experience of racial discrimination (Bécares, Cormack, and Harris 2013). The potential marginalisation of public tenants counters the theorised mechanism, previously discussed, that the advocacy of middle-class residents in mixed communities will benefit the whole community.

Effects of developing mixed communities on wider society

Participants identified three benefits of mixed communities for society beyond public tenant residents: supporting stable communities, avoiding segregation and increasing housing supply. First, building affordable and public housing would support community stability by enabling people to buy or rent houses in their communities, even as house prices increased: 'you've got people who've grown up in the neighbourhood, but

they can't afford to get a foothold' (G4). This also meant that people could move out of the home they have grown up in, or out of public housing, and stay in their community: 'an ideal community is one that people can move along their housing career without actually having to leave' (G5). Another participant described rent-to-buy and shared equity options as existing for local public tenants 'to help those families that want to help themselves, to lift themselves out of poverty, to provide a pathway for them' (C28). The view that mixed-income communities supported community stability was expressed by four participants (two government, one elected, one community). This is supported by UK research showing that mixed communities supported kinship networks by enabling people to buy homes near their families (Sautkina, Bond, and Kearns 2012).

However, one community sector participant identified a risk that benefits relating to community stability would not play out because buying a new house, even at a below-market price or through a rent-to-buy or shared equity scheme, was not affordable for the original residents. The participant reflected that a decade ago, when one mixed community development commenced, the intention had been to provide homeownership opportunities for tenants as they moved out of public housing, which would enable them to stay in the community. However, the participant noted that while the theory is sound, 'it's much harder in practice' (C22). By the time, the development was completed, house prices had increased so much that it was unlikely that public tenants could afford homes in the community.

Second, participants thought that building mixed communities avoided people being 'segregated by their demographics' (G7). Many participants emphasised the advantages of socio-economic and ethnic groups mixing: 'segregated or separated communities, socioeconomically or ethnically or whatever are not strong communities ... To build strong communities we need to have diversity' (E1). Diverse, mixed communities were thought to build tolerance and broaden perspectives: 'It hopefully helps people be a bit more objective and tolerant and all those good things' (G4). Wealthy people 'should be rubbing shoulders ... with a good mix of society, so that their ideas might be challenged' (C25). To one participant, mixed communities were a result of the desire for an equal society: 'we pride ourselves in New Zealand [that] there is still that long-standing desire for egalitarianism' (C31). Similar perspectives – of ethnic or socio-economic residential mix encouraging social harmony, cultural cross-fertilisation, and opportunities for all classes and races – have been traced back over 200 years (Sarkissian 1976). However, strong communities can also practice exclusionary tactics. This was observed in a US case study where local organisations prevented a Latino organisation from being established in a mixed-income community; so-called community-building can tend towards 'defining spaces for some but not others' (Fraser 2004, 445). Twelve participants emphasised the advantages of diversity and of socio-economic and ethnic integration (six government, four community, two elected).

Residents' experiences of a strong and diverse community have been observed in a newly-constructed mixed community in New Zealand (Fergusson et al. 2016; Witten et al. 2018); however, we lack comparative studies between this and communities that are not developed as mixed. Such arguments against segregation do not take into account that public housing neighbourhoods in New Zealand also house private residents. Public tenants in an area slated for redevelopment described their community

as being mixed already due to their proximity to wealthy neighbouring suburbs, and the fact that both workers and beneficiaries lived there (Cole 2015, pp. 89–90). In addition, despite the perceived advantages of residential socio-economic mix, developments rarely target wealthy suburbs (Arthurson 2010b), and as already discussed, residential mix does not necessarily result in social interactions between different groups.

The final broad benefit of developing mixed communities identified by participants was increasing housing supply for groups on different incomes – low-income public tenants as well as first-home buyers. This was raised by three government, two community and one elected participant. Such development was necessary because ‘if we were just focused on building social housing, we’re only catering for a portion of the population’ (C22), and ‘there is a need for more housing across the board’ (G13). The shortage of affordable and public housing is well-documented (Johnson, Howden-Chapman, and Eaqub 2018). However, one government and one community participant thought that the supply of private housing as part of mixed community developments occurred at the expense of public housing supply. In some redevelopments, while the total number of houses on a particular area of land increases, the amount of public housing stays the same, or increases only slightly (Figure 1). As one participant noted, ‘the question you’ve got to ask is, we started with 200 state houses, and we ended with 200 state houses, [so] how are you better off, for all that effort?’ (C29). Furthermore, selling public land as part of mixed community developments could inhibit future development of public housing: ‘the moment we sell a piece of land it’s gone forever ... and so if we wake up in 20 years’ time and we need another thousand social houses we probably won’t have anywhere to put them’ (E2). In line with the criticism raised by these participants, the privatisation of land and lack of public housing supply in current redevelopments has been criticised by New Zealand commentators (ActionStation 2019; Auckland Action Against Poverty 2019; Dykes 2016; Housing Action Porirua 2019). This reflects international criticism of similar policies (Goetz 2011; Morris 2017; Tunstall 2003).

Strategies to mitigate risks and encourage benefits associated with mixed communities

Participants noted the importance of urban design, community development, and tenant management to encourage a well-functioning community. First, participants suggested that public and private housing should be well integrated within a community, and be of similar quality. Five government, four community, and four private sector participants expressed the view that public and private housing should be placed alongside each other, although they varied in opinion as to the maximum number of public housing units that should be clustered together. Furthermore, four government and three private sector participants referred to urban design features that encouraged strong communities: ‘it’s always the space between the buildings that facilitates that sort of social interaction’ (P20). For example, fences were built low or mailboxes close together so that ‘when you go and get your post, there’s a reason to potentially talk to people and have a conversation’ (G13).

Community development activities further supported different groups to interact and get along together. It was important to involve existing residents in the

redevelopment process: 'We have to involve these communities in that so they're a part of it as opposed to something that has been done to them' (G8). Once communities were built, participants shared a number of other strategies for building community and encouraging interaction of income or tenure groups: neighbourhood barbecues and events; mechanisms to share spaces, tools and gardens; introducing neighbours to each other; providing new residents with information on facilities and groups they could get involved with in the area; and involving residents in design. Such activities were important in order to bring people together and give them a sense of belonging: 'That act of co-creation helps build bridges and make connections with people irrespective of tenure' (G9). The ongoing presence of staff helped ensure this happen: 'I don't think it's just about doing the building and leaving it when you've got a mixed community' (G11). The importance of carrying out community development was raised by five government and three community sector participants.

Despite these practices, some participants noted that community development activities could exclude public tenants. One participant said, 'you tend to find the private residents will come in and take over these kinds of activities and the tenants feel like they don't have a voice at all' (G13). A participant noted that overseas research showed that 'when the more affluent community move in they will often take over so they will get themselves represented on community groups, board of trustees, whatever, and then their voice becomes the more dominant voice and they start shaping that community disproportionately' (G14). In some cases, public tenants were excluded from residents' societies and body corporates (which are responsible for managing common property and concerns in multi-unit dwellings), as rules stated only owners were allowed to be involved. Housing providers were investigating ways to enable their tenants to represent them on these bodies. The literature supports the idea that owner-occupiers can dominate decision-making processes in mixed communities, including at the expense of public tenants (August 2014). While participants agreed that community-building activities could help, some reflected that this did not always work because some people would not get involved: 'you might not benefit from being in that mixed-tenure community, because you haven't stabilised your life circumstances, and you're not ready to necessarily participate in that community' (C27). Or, in another participant's words: 'The invitations keep coming, [but] some people ... are less inclined to take up those opportunities because they've got other shit happening in their lives' (C28). The perspective that community development activities could exclude public tenants was raised by two government and two community sector participants.

Finally, participants emphasised the importance of decisions made by housing providers in terms of tenant selection, placement and management to a well-functioning mixed community. Where public tenants were placed within a mixed community could support positive social interactions: 'there's potential for people that are in the same boat, as it were, connecting and supporting each other' (G10). For example, 'you place people with children in state housing near to people with children in the private housing, so that the children start playing together, and then they invite each other to playdates, and then there's a reason for people to kind of interact more' (G13). Three community and two government participants talked about ways that tenants were placed in particular houses to encourage community interaction. One participant said that tenants placed in mixed communities were those next in line

on the public housing register. In contrast, another said that tenants were carefully selected for mixed communities: ‘they pick the good ones, because ... [in mixed communities] there’s really strict rules ... and the tenancy managers and the asset managers are really scared that they’ve got to abide by those rules’ (G11). This ‘cream-skimming’ effect has been observed in other countries (Goodchild and Cole 2001; Manzi 2010) and can result in selection bias in studies on the effectiveness of income or tenure diversification as an intervention (Saville-Smith, Saville-Smith, and James 2015).

Participants thought that proactive tenant management was important to prevent issues developing between public tenants and private neighbours. This was particularly important in mixed communities because there may be covenants or rules registered to the title which restrict certain activities³: ‘it’s like we’ve got to be careful, and we’ve got to be on to them, and be looking and checking all the time, so they’re not breaking the rules, it’s pretty important’ (G11). Neighbours support tenant management: ‘we need neighbours to watch out for us, be another pair of ears for us’ (C26). Housing providers shared their contacts with neighbours, letting them know that ‘hey, if our tenants are leaving the rubbish out or too noisy or what have you well then, hey, we’re very interested to hear about that’ (C25). This meant having a low tolerance for poor behaviour:

“If you’re a social landlord, [you] have a responsibility to make sure that you’re really good at managing your [tenants]. And that needs to be a really proactive thing that, you know, deals with problem tenants very promptly, and if there’s problems then you throw people out, and you say, ‘you get a house but you have to behave’” (P20).

One government and one community sector emphasised the importance of tenant management. Yet management practices intended to encourage cohesive communities can also work against this goal. In the US context, rules, social signalling and direct communication to public tenants in a mixed community were observed to foster resentment against high-income residents, and work against the interaction of income groups (Graves 2010).

Housing providers may also provide education to support a well-functioning community. One government participant noted that it was important ‘to share expectations, tips, guidance, how to get along well and be a great neighbour, but not targeted just at state housing tenants, targeted at everybody in the community’ (G14). This was partly because mixed communities, as new developments, were built at a greater density than most New Zealand neighbourhoods. However, as one community sector participant observed, management and education techniques to try to get public tenants to ‘fit in’ to the wider community can be problematic. This is particularly the case given that public tenants are disproportionately Māori and Pasifika, and homeowners are disproportionately New Zealand European. The term ‘pepper-potting’, used by participants to describe integrating public with private housing, is also used to describe the historical practice of placing Māori owner-occupied or public rental home in streets of European New Zealanders in order to encourage assimilation (Harris 2007; Hill 2009). Researchers have warned of the potential negative connotations of the use of the term ‘pepper-potting’ in the context of mixed communities due to this history (Waldegrave, Thompson, and Love 2013). As that participant reflected:

“The kind of racial implications are not always adequately explored. And is this just that – more of the same, of pepper-potting for the purposes of assimilation? And if we’re all

going to be cohesive in our living in a similar kind of way, well which way? Is it a Māori way? Is it a Pasifika way? Is it a Pākehā [New Zealand European] or middle class way?" (C27).

Observing how state tenants were educated about living in pepper-potted suburbs in the 1960s, the participant noted: 'it was really like patronising, and it's like well, is this different?' (C27). The connection between assimilative policies of the past and mixed community initiatives has also been made in the Australian context (Arthurson 2010a).

Conclusion

While our participants held a range of views, across the breadth of them, they cover much of the diverse international policy and research discussion on mixed communities. Participants supported mixed communities for increasing both private and public housing supply, as well as contributing to housing choice and a more tolerant society. They shared strategies for using neighbourhood design, tenancy management practice and community development activities to encourage a well-functioning community. They expressed hope that living alongside homeowners would provide public tenants with positive role models, and contribute to a tidier neighbourhood, and better amenities, while reducing stigma.

As discussed in conjunction with the findings, a number of these effects are not well supported by the current evidence base. Participants expressed concern about the privatisation of public land, the displacement of public tenants, and the disruption of public tenants' community ties. They expressed fears that public tenants would be marginalised and stigmatised in mixed communities. They also shared concerns that community development activities would exclude public tenants, and that resident education could be assimilative. A number of these risks have played out in redevelopments in other countries and deserve attention from New Zealand housing providers and policymakers, as well as researchers. While the international evidence base provides important insights, researchers have warned of the difficulty in transferring these insights to New Zealand's very different urban context (Saville-Smith, Saville-Smith, and James 2015).

There are a number of limitations to this research project. First, as previously noted, mixed communities in New Zealand and internationally vary in terms of spatial scale, proportion of public housing, and design. Our participants spoke in general terms about the advantages and challenges of mixed communities, so we are not able to ascertain what type of mixed community they believe would lead to negative or positive outcomes. Second, due to our small sample size, and our choice of open-ended interview questions, we have not come to any conclusion about whether the participants' positions (as employed in the community, government, or private sector or as an elected representative) correlated with their knowledge or expectations about their effects of mixed communities. However, as indicated in the findings, many of the findings were broadly held across all or several of the sectors. We note the fact that a number of participants had previously worked in other of the sectors represented, and drew on this experience in answering the questions. New Zealand's small housing sector and close movement and communication between private, public, elected and community workers may contribute to greater shared understandings than might exist in a larger country. A final and major limitation to our study was that, due to our focus on the 'implementers' of mixed

communities, we did not interview people living in mixed communities. We are currently planning to undertake such interviews in a number of communities.

The uncertainty about the applicability of the international evidence base to New Zealand, added to the high hopes and fears associated with the development of mixed communities, make a strong case for further research. Such research should test whether the implementers' predictions play out, what strategies work to minimise harms and maximise benefits, and what type of spatial scale, design, and tenure mix is most likely to lead to positive outcomes. Such research must include the perspectives of those displaced by and resident in mixed communities.

Notes

1. Houses termed 'affordable' are sold to people who earn under a certain income. In developments built under the Labour-led government, affordable housing will be under the Kiwibuild initiative. To be eligible for Kiwibuild, people must be first-home buyers and earn up to NZD\$90,000 if single, and up to NZD\$120,000 as a couple (Leahy 2018). To be eligible for Tāmaki affordable housing, families should spend below 30% of household income on mortgage payments (Tāmaki Regeneration Company, n.d.). To be eligible for northern Glen Innes affordable housing, qualified purchasers were first-home buyers with incomes below \$130,000 for couples or \$85,000 for individuals (Collins 2017). Community housing providers running rent-to-buy or shared equity schemes, which also aim for affordable ownership, have different eligibility criteria.
2. Official Information Act requests for policy documents related to mixed communities received by the first author on 25 February 2020 and Matthew Klomp on 30 June 2016 resulted in only two documents: a literature review (Saville-Smith, Saville-Smith, and James 2015) and a briefing which mentioned mixed tenure in the context of a proposed fund for community housing providers (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development 2019).
3. The participant did not give examples, but examples of covenants in other new developments in New Zealand include rules against loud noise such as fireworks and against parking vehicles on lawns (Hendricks 2019).

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