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What is a Mixed-tenure Community? Views from New Zealand Practitioners and Implications for Researchers

Elinor Chisholm , Nevil Piers and Philippa Howden-Chapman

Department of Public Health, University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand

ABSTRACT

Building mixed-tenure communities is increasingly promoted as a way to increase housing supply and improve community outcomes. However, communities described as mixed-tenure vary greatly. The lack of a common understanding of mixed-tenure communities presents a challenge to researchers seeking to evaluate their effects. We identify a range of views from New Zealand stakeholders as to what tenures are present in a mixed-tenure community, what proportion of mixed-tenure communities is public housing, how the different tenures are integrated, where public housing is placed, and how housing is designed. We propose ways to clarify discussions about mixed-tenure communities, and priorities for research.

摘要

作为增加住房供应和改善社区成果的一种方式, 越来越多地提倡建立混合产权社区. 然而, 被描述为混合使用权的社区差别很大. 缺乏对混合使用权社区的共同理解对寻求评估其效果的研究人员提出了挑战. 我们从新西兰利益相关者那里了解了一系列的观点, 包括混合使用权社区中有哪些使用权、混合使用权社区中有多大比例的公共住房、不同的使用权如何整合、公共住房的位置以及住房的设计. 我们建议如何澄清关于混合使用权社区的讨论, 以及研究的优先事项.

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1. Introduction

Replacing public housing with housing for different socio-economic groups has been a focus for governments and housing providers in a number of countries. The notion that socio-economically mixed neighbourhoods result in better outcomes for low-income people has a long history (Sarkissian 1976, Arthurson 2008). In a number of countries, including the United Kingdom (UK), Australia and New Zealand (NZ), providing public housing alongside private housing (“mixed-tenure”) is the primary way of achieving residential socio-economic mix, as low-income people occupy public housing.¹ It is of course a poor proxy, given that residents of private housing can also have low socio-economic status, but it is the one we have. In the USA, the term “mixed-income” is used, as private housing is also used to create socio-economic mix, such as through rent stabilisation and multifamily assisted housing stock, which is federally subsidised private rental housing (Khadduri and Martin 1997). In recent years, different policies have promoted residential socio-economic mix. In the USA, federal programmes have provided tax incentives for city housing authorities to replace public housing complexes with a mix of public and private housing and have relocated public tenants in high-poverty neighbourhoods to low-poverty neighbourhoods. In England and Australia, public housing providers have partnered with developers to redevelop

public housing estates, usually replacing these with communities with less than 30% public housing (Darcy 2013). Building for socio-economic mix has become part of the policy orthodoxy in a number of countries, receiving broad support across the political spectrum (Tunstall 2003). Yet research undertaken with stakeholders in the USA and the UK has found that while respondents often had a clear idea of their own definition for mixed-tenure (in the case of the UK) or mixed-income (in the case of the US) communities, there was no common definition (Khadduri and Martin 1997, Fordham and Cole 2009, Fenton 2010).

In NZ, the idea of tenure mix has a long history (Lane 1966, Schrader 2005), but the concept has recently come to the fore in a number of mixed-tenure developments since 2008, under both Labour and National governments, for the most part on sites formerly predominantly occupied by public housing (Chisholm *et al.* 2020). Public housing is targeted at welfare beneficiaries and people who work in low-paid jobs; tenants pay income-related rent to a maximum of 25% of their net household income, and, excepting particular groups, tenants are required to move out of public housing if their income increases above a threshold (MHUD 2019). The number of public housing units stays the same or increases in the redevelopments (Chisholm *et al.* 2020). However, the development announcements do not state the number of bedrooms in the planned houses, and therefore do not necessarily guarantee that the number of public tenants housed in the community will stay the same or increase.

Redevelopments replace low-density housing with medium-density housing and are planned to respond to a severe shortage of both private and public housing, which has resulted in high rates of overcrowding and homelessness, high private rents, and high house prices (Beehive 2018, Gordon *et al.* 2019, Murphy 2019, Terruhn 2019). Those displaced by mixed-tenure development in Pomare in 2011, and some of those displaced in Tāmaki from 2012 to 2016, moved to public housing elsewhere (McDonald 2015, Stewart 2019); however, current policy is stated to be to rehouse those displaced in the same community where possible (Stewart 2019, Kāinga Ora *n.d.*). The aim of the new agency Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities, which brings together Housing NZ (the government housing provider) with a developer arm, is to build “thriving communities with a diverse mix of public, affordable and market housing” on its land (Twyford 2019); current major redevelopments include Porirua, Northcote and Mount Roskill (Porirua Development, *n.d.*; Terruhn 2019). However, there are no calls to make wealthy areas more socio-economically mixed; indeed, some covenants of new private developments explicitly exclude building public housing (Fredrickson 2018).

A scan of policy documents revealed that despite frequent references to mixed-tenure communities in government, council, and housing provider statements, definitions provided are vague, simply stating that mixed communities or mixed-tenure communities are communities that include a range of tenures (for examples see Auckland Council 2018, p. 110, Department of Internal Affairs 2009, p. 86, Simonsen and Cairncross 2016).² These fail to specify, for example, the scale, degree of mix, or design aspects such as spatial integration of different types of housing. Newly built communities that have been described as mixed-tenure range from a small papakāinga (Māori settlement) in Waimārama (five units, 60% affordable rental and 40% under licence-to-occupy), an apartment building in Christchurch (26 units, 42% public) and an Auckland suburb (Tāmaki, 7,500 units, 33% public) (Stylianou 2013, Te Puni Kōkiri 2017, Tāmaki Regeneration Company 2019).

The idea that mixed-tenure will lead to better outcomes for public tenants is shared by some community housing providers, politicians, developers, and, until recently, Housing NZ (Housing NZ 2013, Todd 2018, Panuku 2019, Chisholm *et al.* 2020). However, the evidence on mixed-tenure communities is weak and mixed as to whether there are benefits for tenants living in public housing. While in some cases mixing tenures has been associated with enabling continued kinship links and some improved health and justice outcomes, it has also been linked to declining social capital, reduced access to services, isolation and stigmatisation (Morris *et al.* 2012, Sautkina *et al.* 2012, Saville-Smith *et al.* 2015). Furthermore, a review of the literature questioned the applicability of this evidence to the NZ context, as much of it has been undertaken in countries with quite distinct urban forms, welfare systems, and historical contexts (Saville-Smith *et al.* 2015, p. 31). This underlines the

importance of conducting NZ research on the effects of mixed-tenure communities. NZ is well placed to make a valuable contribution to this literature due to the major regenerations underway and its uniquely integrated administrative dataset (Milne *et al.* 2019). In order to conduct such an evaluation, we need to have a clear understanding of what to evaluate.

The aim of this paper is to identify how mixed-tenure is understood by the people involved in all aspects of developing mixed-tenure communities in NZ: developers, housing providers, policy-makers, and local and central government politicians. We introduce this paper by looking at different understanding of mixed tenure in the literature. We go on to present the results of an analysis of interviews with key informants active in this space in NZ. We identify key themes as to their views on how mixed-tenure communities are defined, which encompass key design features. These themes cover: what tenures are present in a mixed-tenure community, what proportion is public housing, how are the tenures integrated, where public housing is placed, and what houses look like. We conclude by discussing the different understandings of mixed tenure, how researchers and policymakers can clarify discussions about mixed-tenure communities, and priorities for research. The extent of proposed mixed-tenure redevelopment, and its enormous impact on the lives of former and future residents, demands evaluation of its outcomes. A consistent definition of mixed tenure is a crucial first step of such an evaluation.

2. Defining Mixed-tenure Communities

The research literature on the effects of residential socio-economic mix on social outcomes has considered how to define these communities, using their design as a key differential. The focus of our research is tenure mix, as this is the mechanism for achieving residential socio-economic mix in NZ; however, it is also useful to consider US definitions of income mix, because in the US mixed-income communities seek to achieve the same purpose as mixed-tenure communities in NZ. In the UK, Morris *et al.* (2012) distinguish between two types of residential mix. In the case of “deliberate mix”, tenure or income mix is achieved through government intervention (Morris *et al.* 2012). This term matches a commonly used definition of mixed-income housing in the United States, that is, “a deliberate effort to construct and/or own a multi-family development that has the mixing of income groups as a fundamental part of its financial and operating plans” (Brophy and Smith 1997, p. 5). Examples include the redevelopment of a public housing estate into mixed-tenure housing, or a new apartment building that has, through inclusionary zoning policies designed at encouraging income mix, a proportion of affordable rent-stabilised housing. The other type of mix identified by Morris (2012) occurs as an organic process over time (“organic tenure mix”), simply because a neighbourhood has a variety of housing tenures, or has attracted a variety of people from different income groups. Other authors, in the US context, have conveyed a similar idea with the word “de facto”: “housing with a de facto mixed income character, whether or not it was explicitly developed as mixed-income housing” (Khadduri and Martin 1997, p. 41); they consider projects that have different ranges of income mix within the federally subsidised private rental housing stock.

Another major question relates to the scale of a mixed-tenure community. Communities described as mixed-tenure vary greatly in size, as the NZ examples previously mentioned make clear. Yet mix at the level of the building, housing cluster, or neighbourhood may have different consequences in terms of encouraging conflict or cohesion (Arthurson, 2010). Some researchers differentiate mixed-income housing by whether it is mixed at the project level, or at the neighbourhood level (Brophy and Smith 1997). Other researchers have suggested measuring residential mix at the level of the street or floor, the building or block, the development, the school catchment, or the neighbourhood, which typically includes services or shops (Tunstall and Fenton 2006). The choice in scale can give very different results in terms of assessing mix. In France, an analysis of very small areas indicated a decline in social mix, while using data at the level of 2,000 inhabitant units showed an increase in social mix (Le Galès 2012);

in England, however, considering different-sized areas as “neighbourhoods” did not produce very different results in terms of degree of tenure mix (Tunstall 2011).

There has also been considerable variation in the degree of mix of communities considered mixed tenure. The Moving to Opportunity experiment in the USA effectively specified non-mixed and mixed-income neighbourhoods: families were eligible to participate if they lived in a neighbourhood with more than 40% poverty (non-mixed), and could use a voucher to move to a neighbourhood with a poverty rate of less than 10% (mixed) (Graif *et al.* 2016). In England, schemes described as “mixed-tenure” range from 95% market housing and 5% affordable housing, to 45% private housing and 55% public rental (Tunstall 2012). Tunstall (2003) points out that different researchers have considered communities as mixed-tenure where the majority of housing is public, where the majority of housing is owner-occupied, or where no one tenure dominates. Her analysis shows that the proportion of English neighbourhoods considered mixed-tenure ranges from 9% to 100%, depending on the definition used; likewise the choice of definition determines whether tenure mix at the neighbourhood level in England can be considered to have increased or decreased (Tunstall 2011).

Finally, researchers have sought to differentiate between mixed-tenure communities in terms of the level of integration between public and private housing. Groves *et al.* (2003) in the UK propose specifying mixed-tenure which is integrated, segmented or segregated. An integrated mixed-tenure community has 1–4 public units among private housing, a segmented one has separate blocks or cul-de-sacs for public and private housing, and a segregated mixed-tenure community has roads or other greater physical separation between blocks of public and private housing. This is an approach taken by a number of researchers in the UK and Australia (Bailey *et al.* 2007, Sautkina *et al.* 2012, Markovich 2015, Stubbs 2017). Australian researchers Van Den Nouwelant and Randolph (2016) identify four typologies. “Block by block” integration separates the tenures as much as possible within the community. “Building by building” means that public and private housing is in separate buildings, but dispersed across the community. “Floor by floor” clusters different tenures in different parts of one building. In “unit by unit”, or pepper-potted buildings, tenures are fully interspersed.

Mixed-tenure is an increasingly important concept in NZ, and yet there are many questions as to what mixed-tenure communities are, and few answers provided by official sources. These factors prompted the current study.

3. Methods

In order to investigate how mixed tenure is understood in NZ, we carried out semi-structured interviews with key informants. We also scanned the literature and relevant NZ policy (including Official Information Act requests; see footnote 1). This research informed the interview schedule and supplied context for our study. We received ethics approval from our University in order to undertake interviews. After initial research into actors and organisations involved in designing, developing or promoting mixed-tenure communities, we formulated a list of people to contact that covered 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 that explored the concept of mixed-tenure communities in NZ, based on their experience, reflections and expertise in the area.

We carried out interviews with 31 people, whose quotes are named in the text: participants E1–E3 were elected representatives at the local government level; participants G4–G16 worked in local or central government, including for local or central government-owned housing providers and developers; participants P17–P21 worked in the private sector, including on contracts to the government or community sector; and participants C22–C31 worked in the community sector, including for housing providers. Participants chose whether to be interviewed via video-conference, phone or in person. Interviews lasted for about an hour and were recorded using a digital voice recorder. Participants were informed that their responses would be anonymised. Following the

interviews, the interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic template analysis. In this method, the template or codebook is iteratively developed with reference both to the interview questions (informed by the literature and theoretical understandings) and the text (Crabtree and Miller 1992, King 2004). We present here key themes which relate to the question of what defined mixed-tenure communities, which often touched on the design of such communities.

4. Findings

The literature showed that important factors for defining and differentiating mixed-tenure communities can include the intention behind the development of the community (deliberate or organic mix), the proportion of public housing present, and the level of integration between the different tenures present. When asked what defined mixed-tenure communities in NZ, our participants raised a number of pertinent ideas, many of which related to the design of these communities. First, participants held diverse perspectives about what tenures were represented in mixed-tenure communities, and how mixed tenure could evolve or be developed in NZ. Second, participants varied as to the appropriate proportion of public housing in mixed-tenure communities. Third, while participants agreed that mixed-tenure communities were spatially integrated, they differed on how to define spatial integration. Finally, some participants had firm views about the design of mixed-tenure communities, including the placement of public housing within those communities.

4.1. *The Tenures Represented in Mixed-tenure Communities*

Internationally, mixed-tenure communities have been understood as communities containing both public rental housing and private or owned housing (Tunstall 2003). Among our participants, however, there was a range of views on what tenures were represented in mixed-tenure communities, and how mixed-tenure was or could be achieved in NZ. For some people, mixed-tenure communities certainly entailed both public and private housing. In NZ, public housing is the official term for housing provided by non-profit landlords at income-related (government-subsidised) rent, mainly the government, but also community housing providers (MHUD 2020). (Some participants used the term “state housing” or “social housing”, as terms used for this housing under previous governments (Howden-Chapman 2004, Schrader 2005, Housing Shareholders Advisory Group 2010)). When asked to define mixed tenure, one participant replied: “What that means for us is where housing is being built for use by both the state and by the market” (G8). Others referred to “all three forms of main tenure, being sort of ownership, rental, and social housing, or state housing” (C30); or “mixed tenure across the whole housing continuum, so we mean we want a combination of state housing, private rental housing, affordable rental housing, affordable ownership and then full private housing as well” (G13). Another participant added emergency accommodation, as well as rent-to-own and shared equity schemes to those already mentioned.

Most participants, when asked to define mixed-tenure communities, gave examples of new communities – deliberate mix, to return to Morris’ (2012) distinction. This is likely because the interview was requested as a result of participants’ current work in policy, or in development, or in housing provision in new mixed-tenure communities. However, in the course of interviews, many participants reflected on “organic” mixed-tenure communities: those that provided a range of tenures without having been specifically developed as such. One participant noted that, rather than being a new phenomenon, “NZ actually has [mixed-tenure] models already throughout the country” (G16), pointing specifically to the Star Flats in Freemans Bay, Auckland, which were built by Auckland City Council in the 1960s and sold off in the 1990s. Some of the apartments are now owned privately, and some are owned by Housing NZ (Moore-Jones 2020). Referring to a city that has both high- and low-income neighbourhoods, and public and private housing, one participant reflected: “In many ways Porirua is like a mixed-tenure housing on a large scale, like 50,000 in the city” (E1). This question of scale – whether a mixed-tenure community refers to an entire suburb, a particular development, or somewhere in between – is particularly salient to the discussion of organic tenure mix.

Participants noted a number of ways that mixed-tenure communities had developed organically in NZ. First, as one participant reflected, many NZ streets “have one or two state houses just quietly slotted in” as a result of “a deliberate policy in the late seventies, early eighties to do what we would now call mixed tenure” (E2) (Schrader 2006). One participant noted, “I’ve got some older people next door to us where I live and I know that they’re probably fairly reliant on their benefits and you could say I’m in a mixed-tenure community as such, which is quite normal” (C25). Second, in some public housing communities, when many of those had been privatised in the 1990s (sold to tenants or others) some remained as public housing (Schrader 2006, Olssen *et al.* 2010). So “that’s an example of mixed-tenure community, but that was one that came about as a result of, you know, some history, rather than it was an intentional thing” (C30).

Indeed, although mixing tenures was not the stated purpose of “right-to-buy”, as the policy of state housing privatisation is called in NZ and in other countries, it was a side effect (Kleinhans and Van Ham 2013). As a result of these different policy approaches, as one participant involved in current redevelopments put it, “These communities are already mixed-tenure, so, it’s not a motivator for us to go and make them mixed tenure because we think that will deliver some sort of social benefit, they already are” (G8). Third, a participant noted that mixed-tenure was achieved in NZ through Housing First, which supports homeless people into rental housing (Tsemberis 1999): “without it being an aim, that has resulted in the mixed-tenure approach, because they’re almost exclusively using private landlords [to house people], so they are ending up with those spread right throughout a development” (E2). Fourth, public housing providers may build or lease units situated among private housing.

“And in doing so they’ve created this mixed-tenure community, but without really trying to, without really try to deliberately deliver it, it kind of happens without people even really knowing that it’s happening that much” (G13).

“In actual fact, we’ve been doing mixed, we do mixed tenure everywhere because all sorts of people live in our streets and we don’t know who they are” (C26).

Finally, housing providers might build housing intended for owner-occupiers – rent-to-own or shared equity – in an existing public housing community. Referring to land that had become available in a suburb dominated by state housing, one participant reflected “for us we would want to do something like the shared-home ownership or affordable rental just to create some more diversity within that community” (C26). Several participants suggested that zoning changes could support this. Reflecting on Auckland’s Unitary Plan, one participant noted that “relaxing the planning rules to allow for more diversity in housing types and sizes and affordability [and] ... of itself is a powerful driver towards mixed tenure” (E1). This is because developers, including public housing providers, have greater options to build. Housing NZ submitted to Auckland Council during the drafting of the Unitary Plan, and credits the changes made under the plan for being able to build in greater numbers in Auckland (Collins 2016, Stock 2018).

In contrast to the views so far discussed, some participants noted that mixed tenure does not necessarily include public housing. One observed that “no one’s saying that mixed-tenure has to offer, you know, has to have a certain percentage of every part of the housing continuum”³ (C23). Others described mixed-tenure communities that do not include public housing. Several participants raised Hobsonville Point as an example of a mixed-tenure community. This is a development of over 3,000 units on former Crown land which has no public housing, despite original plans (Johnson 2012), but where 20% of units have been sold at an “affordable” price (to households within a defined income range), and which includes 47 long-term private rentals (Beehive 2015; New Ground, Capital *n.d.*) Another participant described housing built under the Auckland Housing Accord as mixed-tenure. Under this Accord, developers of 15 or more dwellings were required to provide either 10% of units at a price set below 75% of the median regional house price, or 5% of units at a price that will enable monthly mortgage payments of less than 30% of a median income household; in other words, all of the housing provided was private housing (Murphy 2015). Third, private apartment buildings were

cited as examples of mixed-tenure communities: in one participant's description, "from a mixed-tenure standpoint . . . there are people both renting the expensive units as well as owning them, and there are people who rent the less expensive units as well as own them" (C31). Finally, one participant described one development in this way: "there's no social rental housing there, but there is full mixed-tenure in terms of rent-to-buy, shared home-ownership and private market" (C28). "Rent-to-own" and "shared equity" describe versions of schemes, where by the housing provider owns the property or a proportion thereof, and the tenant or part-owner gradually buys it off them. These participants describe mixed-tenure communities as places where all the units are or will become (in the long term) fully market housing. Such communities will eventually become entirely private, and therefore there is no guarantee residential socio-economic mix will be retained in the long term. Currently, public housing is the primary way of achieving sustained residential socio-economic mix in New Zealand (see footnote 2). For this reason, the next sections discuss aspects related to public housing in mixed-tenure communities: the proportion of public housing, the integration of public and private housing, and the placement of public housing within the community.

4.2. *The Proportions of Public Housing in Mixed-tenure Communities*

For those participants who considered public housing to be a component of a mixed-tenure community, there was some variation as to how much public housing constituted the right level of mix. For one participant, it was "typically maxing out at 20, 25% of social rental households" (C30). To another, it could be "10, 15, 20% of social housing", adding "you can go up on that percentage, if you can control what type of tenants" (C28). To another, it depended on the scale:

"No more than 50%, say if it was, if there were six houses in a development, you could only do three social, three private . . . If there's twenty houses in a development, you could only do as many as six social houses, and the rest would need to be private" (P17).

However, most people discussed having about a third of the housing in a community as public housing, as the following examples demonstrate:

"So the, the unwritten rule I suppose, or the general standard these days is a housing, a healthy housing development is a third a third a third: a third rental, a third assisted home ownership and a third owner-occupier" (G5).

"I think there's again, a good universal international sort of evidence base that says you know, you really should try and keep social housing to at the absolute maximum, about 30% of a neighbourhood" (P20).

The advantage of around a third, in the eyes of one participant, was that this proportion made it viable for developers, in terms of the price they can sell houses for, and "30% is also fairly easy to accommodate" in the development (P18). Other participants thought the proportion of public housing should be limited in order to ensure more homeowners in the community, which they asserted led to a range of positive outcomes such as tidy properties, better amenities, and a supply of good role models for public tenants – assumptions that are disputed in the literature (Chisholm *et al.* 2020). Some participants noted that while they were aware of the 30% rule of thumb, it was more important to consider the site. As one reflected, "It's not a case of 30% of this, 30% of that, 40% is the answer. You want to look at where the site is, what the surroundings are" (G15). Several participants noted that in current redevelopments of public housing in Auckland, the proportion of public housing will be reduced to about a third; however, as one put it "hitting a particular percentage is not what is driving it" (G8). The participant noted that: "the 30% that everybody seems to be wedded to as being a magic number, isn't magic at all, it's just a percentage that the industry has generally settled on, as being not so scary, that it feels about right" (G8). What was more important, to this and other participants, were factors such as how public housing was spatially integrated into the community.

4.3. *The Integration of Public and Private Housing in Mixed-tenure Communities*

All participants agreed that there should be spatial integration of private and public housing in mixed-tenure communities, or as one participant put it, “we want to achieve housing fully integrated throughout the community, not segregated with state housing in some areas, private housing in other areas” (G14). However, there was substantial variation in what people meant by integration or “pepper-potting” of public housing. To some, this meant whole blocks of public housing among private housing:

“So we like the idea of it being these groups of houses being pepper-potted within that neighbourhood. So not all in one area, but scattered within the neighbourhood . . . It might be one lot, which will yield two or three houses, but it might be, I don’t know, six lots, which would yield say twelve houses. And in the case of apartments, obviously, large numbers of houses” (G10).

Other participants, however, specifically excluded such communities from their definition of mixed-tenure:

“Their idea of mixed-tenure was okay, we’ve got two apartment blocks, one is going to be our tenants, and the other’s going to be private, and we’ll separate them by a, a fence anyway, so that’s mixed-tenure . . . [Laughing] And I’m not sure really, I don’t think it actually is” (G11).

“Some of it’s for social, some of it’s for private. But inside those blocks it’s not mixed. It’s not pepper-potted. It’s like ‘that’s social, that’s private’” (P19).

Such participants specified that it was important to “start from the principle of mixing them as widely and completely dispersed as you possibly can” (P20). Another guideline for public housing placement was to “to avoid having state housing on both sides of the street” (G8). To one participant, having public housing adjoin at the back was acceptable: “they’re facing different streets, so it doesn’t feel like they’re all together” (P18). Other participants took advantage of their site by situating public housing near the edge of the community: “you can use the existing layout of a suburb to lean on the existing private neighbours to achieve some mixed-tenure” (P17). Public housing could be dotted “all over the place” (C28), or such as in cases where housing was attached, “it is pepper-potted, but almost in little groups” (P18).

There were a number of reasons for clustering public housing within mixed-tenure communities. Situating small groups of small housing together reserved a larger block of land to redevelop in the future and made it easier to provide tenant management services. It also meant that housing providers had fewer private neighbours with whom to manage relationships. Some participants thought that such positioning ensured better sales prices for private housing:

“If we have a social every second house then every second private house is affected by a social. If we have two socials together, then we don’t have so many private houses affected, or in contact with the social” (P21).

Other participants emphasised the benefits for public tenants of neighbouring each other:

“We find that some of our elderly population, it’s better to cluster those people together because they actually draw on support from each other and that’s what makes them more successful in the community” (G13).

Other participants singled out sole parents, families, and people with mental health issues could benefit from living near each other: “If you’ve got mental health issues, it’s nice to know that your neighbours are struggling with those sort of things too” (C25).

4.4. *The Location of Public Housing within Mixed-tenure Communities*

Aside from integration – or otherwise – with private housing, there were a number of other factors determining where public housing was placed within a community. Some participants shared that public houses were placed in less valuable sites. One participant reflected that in private housing, it was important to provide a single-or-double garage and driveway, whereas public housing may have shared car parking, “So sometimes you get a little bit of flexibility with respect to not having to

get vehicle access to the site” (P18). One noted that public housing was more likely than private housing to be on busy roads and “probably in reality, probably where the lesser value properties are” (P21). Similarly, one participant noted that there were many factors that went in to where public housing was situated, but all else being equal, “you’d give the market the view, if they are prepared to pay for it” (G8). One participant said you would not place public housing at the entrance to a laneway, or at the end of a laneway, “because essentially, they can gain a degree of spatial control over access into that space” (P20). Another participant noted that “because people do have more complex needs or are more vulnerable”, public housing was in “quite high visible locations” (G9), rather than down driveways or laneways.

Placement of public housing also took into account the fact that public housing units were more likely to have multiple cars, due to having more adults and teenagers in the home: “the social guy has a lot of cars, so we’ve got to be able to sort of position them carefully, so that they’re not blocking other people’s driveways [and to ensure they do not] try and get on to the lawns” (P21). Corner location could work well for public housing “because then they get two street frontages to park all of those cars” (G9). Car parking by public tenants in communal spaces could lead to disputes with private neighbours, so “you need to be conscious of that, and figure out how to design around it” (P17).

Within mixed-tenure communities, public housing was often located near amenities and in sites which encouraged social interaction. Mixed tenure is “not just putting some social houses in each neighbourhood, it’s making sure that you can have that sort of interaction” (G12). Several participants commented that designing for social interaction was good design, rather than specific to mixed-tenure communities. As one participant put it, “everything that we do in designing housing neighbourhoods should be about facilitating interaction, as well as protecting privacy in the right ways” (P20). In practice, this meant, “you need to have a model where people have daily reasons where they kinda bump into each” (G13).

Participants provided examples of urban design which encouraged social interaction. Communities should contain “really safe and attractive” public space (P18) and low fences “so that you can actually see your neighbours when you’re out the front of your house” (G13). To compensate for a lack of private space, higher buildings should adjoin “a very high quality street, or the town centre, or it’s fronting onto a school ground or ideally onto a park” (G8). One participant said it was important to locate public housing near town centres, community facilities, schools, and transport amenities, “so that their residents can- you know because they have low income – so that they can catch a bus, they can walk, they can cycle very easily” (G9). Similarly another participant noted that in larger communities, “we wouldn’t want to put the people you know who are looking for an affordable lifestyle, right out on the perimeter where it’s actually going to cost them more to get anywhere” (P18).

4.5. The Quality and Style of Housing in Mixed-tenure Communities

For some participants, living in housing that was not obviously public reduced the chance they would experience stigma. Prejudice against public tenants has a long history in New Zealand (Schrader 2006): As one participant said, “public housing doesn’t have a good perception or reputation in New Zealand; there’s a lot of stigma that sort of attached to it” (C25). Participants argued that it was important for public housing to be “tenure blind”: to look the same as private housing: “so as you walk down the street . . . we want people not to be able to detect if a house is a state house” (G14). To one participant, “there’s less potential for that kind of perceived slight [such as] a preconceived idea that if you have tenants on your back boundary they’re going to hurl all their garbage over the fence or whatever” (P18). It was helpful to public tenants that their housing did not identify them as public tenants, as it meant they were not subject to this prejudice: 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” (C28). Or, as another participant put it:

“They look around, they’re in the same kind of house as everyone else, you know. . . . So that’s important for them in terms of- you’re actually sending them a message about how we value them” (C23).

Blind tenure was seen as advantaging the developer as well as the tenant; because there is “always a reluctance of people to live next door to Housing NZ tenants, [blind tenure] reduces that devaluing of the market tenure product” (G10).

In contrast, other participants thought that blind tenure did not necessarily protect against stigma. Even when private and public housing is identical, “anybody who lives there will figure out which is which” (P20); “it’s not blind to the people that live there” (C30). There were a number of other signifiers of public housing: “everybody starts to say, yeah, we can tell by the cars or the way that the rubbish is there or what have you” (C25). In addition, some participants eschewed the term for connoting that “we’re going to fix places and these people, by making them disappear, by making the tenure of their homes blind” (G8). It did not matter if public housing was identifiable, what mattered was “the housing form should have . . . a similar quality and anybody should be happy to live in it” (G8).

5. Discussion

Our findings show a shared understanding that mixed-tenure communities should contain a range of tenures and should be well designed, but disagreed on a number of details. Some participants specified that mixed-tenure communities must contain public housing, while other participants consider communities with no public housing, but with private rental, affordable ownership, shared equity, or rent-to-own housing, as mixed-tenure. This is a distinct understanding of the concept; reviewed studies use the terms “mixed tenure” to refer to communities which include an element of public, or retained affordable rental (Morris *et al.* 2012, Sautkina *et al.* 2012). In order for mixed-tenure communities to remain mixed, “it is not enough to specify a desired mix when a new project opens; the mix must also be carefully monitored and managed for decades afterward” (Vale 2006, p. 265). In NZ, communities without public housing will eventually be entirely in private hands and cannot guarantee housing for low-income groups in the long term; their “mix” is therefore unsustainable (for exception, see footnote 2). While interviews often focussed on communities specifically developed as mixed tenure, there was general recognition that tenure mix existed in many places. For example, a number of participants described some small groupings of public housing developments as mixed tenure because private housing surrounded them. Researchers, as already noted, have usefully distinguished studies of “organic” and “deliberate” tenure mix (Morris *et al.* 2012).

Key informants had a variety of opinions as to the appropriate amount of public housing in a mixed-tenure community, its siting, and its spatial and visual integration. Participants agreed that public housing should be of the same quality as private housing. Although some people cited particular ideal proportions of public housing in a community, such as a third, others said it depended on the site and its surroundings. Research reviews find no ideal proportion of public housing for mixed-tenure communities (Saville-Smith *et al.* 2015). Participants had specific and varied ideas about where public housing should be placed within a community, determined by factors such as neighbours, ability to control space, proximity to amenities, the value of the site, and accessibility of parking. Opinions varied as to how integrated – or “pepper-potted” – public and market housing should be in a mixed-tenure community. This topic has received much attention in the literature, because these design aspects may affect community interactions, and “almost all the assumed benefits of housing diversification and social mix are expected to arise from social interactions” (Kleinhans 2004, p. 377). The evidence on whether mixed tenure encourages interactions between social groups in mixed-tenure communities is, in the words of one reviewer, “extremely variable” (Saville-Smith *et al.* 2015, p. 26). Despite this mixed evidence, and the potentially important impact of spatial integration on

social mix, many studies about social mix do not provide information on spatial integration (Sautkina *et al.* 2012).

Finally, while participants agreed that public and private housing should be of a similar high quality in mixed-tenure communities, some participants had firm views that private and public housing should be indistinguishable in order to prevent the stigmatisation of public tenants. Overseas scholarship on mixed-tenure design emphasises that public and private housing be of the same quality and a similar form, avoiding, for example, a tower block of public housing next to low-rise units of market housing (Schubert and Thresher 1996, Brophy and Smith 1997, Tunstall and Fenton 2006, Tach 2009). Research undertaken in the mixed-tenure community Waimahia indicates that blind tenure does not prevent people from knowing who lives in public housing, or protect against prejudice (Witten *et al.* 2018). The question of whether such design protects against stigma or encourages social interaction between different groups has received little attention in the literature; in addition, it is difficult to separate the effect of this as opposed to other interventions, such as well-integrated private and public housing, or community development initiatives (Sautkina *et al.* 2012). The importance, in the eyes of some participants, of each of these design impacts means that they should be accounted for in future studies of mixed-tenure communities.

We have not assessed whether participants' positions (as employed in the community, government, or private sector or as an elected representative) connected to their views about how mixed-tenure communities were defined and designed, for two reasons. Firstly, the open-ended nature of our interview questions, and the nuances of participants' responses, meant that it was not possible to group the responses into categories. Secondly, many of our participants had previously worked in other of the sectors represented and drew on this experience in answering the questions.

6. Conclusion

Our aim in this study was to explore how people involved in housing provision define mixed-tenure communities. Our findings indicate disagreement around the tenures represented in these communities, the proportion and placement of public housing, and its spatial and visual integration with other housing. This aligns with research undertaken with stakeholders in the USA and the UK, which found that while respondents often had a clear idea of their own definition for mixed-tenure or mixed income, there was no common definition (Khadduri and Martin 1997, Fordham and Cole 2009, Fenton 2010). We suggest that researchers, housing providers and policy-makers should distinguish between types of mixed-tenure community, including: deliberate or organic; integrated, segmented, or segregated; scale (i.e. including mix at the development or neighbourhood level), and sustainability (i.e. whether there are mechanisms to ensure the long-term retention of low-income housing). If not, the term "mixed tenure" risks becoming meaningless, simply a code for "the kind of community we intend to build". Despite the fact that the term is associated with ideas of a less segregated society (Sarkissian 1976, Chisholm *et al.* 2020), it could easily be (mis)used to promote communities which actually exclude poor people (see Ruming 2014). Our findings make the case for the use of clear and consistent language to describe mixed-tenure communities.

Consistent and clear language not only has the advantage of clarifying what people mean when they talk about mixed tenure, but offers researchers the opportunity to provide evidence on mix in its different forms. One recent review found that "what appears to be missing is a real 'gold standard' quasi-experimental study of social mix" (Morris *et al.* 2012, p. 13). The authors argue that such a study would: include both organic and deliberate tenure mix; consider individual and community-level outcomes; take account of contextual factors and resident experiences; investigate dynamics prior to and post redevelopment; and include control sites where a similar intervention had not occurred. To this already substantial research challenge we might add the exploration of different spatial configurations (where public housing is segregated, segmented or integrated with private housing), what sites public housing occupies within the larger development, and "alternative" neighbourhood definitions, to ensure that research focuses on areas that fit residents' social realities (Tunstall 2011, Graif

et al. 2016). If this research challenge is not taken up, we risk foregoing evidence with local and international relevance on what matters in the development of mixed-tenure communities. Without this evidence, we risk investing resources that could be more usefully spent elsewhere.

Proposed redevelopments in NZ offer an opportunity to explore a number of these avenues. For example, the projects that are part of the Auckland Housing Programme range in scope from single properties to large-scale developments involving more than a thousand units; larger developments tend to be segmented into “superblocks”, with one block constituting public housing. The Tāmaki Regeneration Company, in contrast, tends to place public housing among private housing. NZ also has many areas where, because of historic public housing policies, “organic” tenure mix exists. This natural experiment, coupled with NZ’s uniquely integrated administrative dataset (Milne *et al.* 2019), offers researchers the opportunity to answer many of the questions that remain on how tenure mix – both organic and deliberate – affects social outcomes, and the importance of scale, proportion and placement of public housing, and visual and spatial integration of public and private housing. Such evidence could contribute to policy targets for communities that support best outcomes for residents and ensure that projected public housing demand is met.

Notes

1. In NZ, apart from provision of public rental housing, there are other ways that residential socio-economic mix could be retained in the long-term. However, these are not in common use. One example is the community land trust or ground lease model, in which a trust owns the land and leases out exclusive occupation rights; the sale price, if the lessee sells their interest, is restricted to ensure continued affordability. A Queenstown trust is offering this product under the name Secure Home under a 100-year lease (Mitchell 2018). This philosophy has some similarities with arrangements for building housing on Māori land (Livesy, 2012).
2. Official Information Act requests for policy documents related to mixed communities by Matthew Klomp on 30 June 2016 and by the first author on 25 February 2020 resulted in only two documents: a literature review (Saville-Smith *et al.* 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 housing continuum is a term often used in NZ to refer to a range of different tenure options, including emergency housing, public renting, private renting, rent-to-buy, shared equity, and ownership (Mitchell 2018).

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Co-author Philippa Howden-Chapman is currently on the board of Kāinga Ora (formerly Housing New Zealand), which employs some of the participants. Since the interviews were conducted by the first author and undertaken prior to Howden-Chapman’s appointment to the board in July 2018, we do not believe that this constitutes a conflict of interest.

Social Media Handles

- <https://twitter.com/elinorchisholm>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/elinorchisholm/>

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ORCID

Elinor Chisholm  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6720-0283>

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