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Please cite this as: Arthurson, K., 2013. Mixed tenure communities and the effects on neighbourhood reputation and stigma: residents' experiences from within. Cities, DOI: 10.1016/j.cities.2013.03.007

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2013.03.007

Mixed tenure communities and the effects on neighbourhood reputation and stigma: residents' experiences from within

Abstract

The research reported here investigated the question of whether implementing mixed housing tenure policies has positive effects in terms of revising negative neighbourhood reputations. Neighbourhood reputation is conceptualised as a key factor that impacts on whether residents' are socially included, as studies have suggested that it may affect residents' health, educational horizons, personal ambitions and pride and feelings of exclusion from mainstream society. The current study encompassed three Australian case study neighbourhoods that had undergone extensive changes to tenure mix through neighbourhood renewal. Data collection involved a survey and in-depth interviews to increase understandings of residents' comparative perspectives about the impacts of mixed tenure on the reputations of their neighbourhood (across different tenure groups). A key finding was that different scales of stigma existed. The broader neighbourhood reputations appeared to have improved but internally an unexpected finding was that residents associated private rental tenure with neighbourhood stigma.

Key words: territorial stigmatisation; tenure mix; social mix; social balance, segregation

Introduction

Current deliberations about mixed tenure neighbourhoods are a reaction to new forms of segregation characterised by spatial concentrations of low income housing in particular neighbourhoods. The work of William Julius Wilson (1987) instigated a fundamental debate about the existence of 'area effects' in neighbourhoods comprised of concentrations of large numbers of marginalised people, such as social housing estates. Simply put this is the idea that living amongst similarly disadvantaged people results in processes that render residents doubly disadvantaged through, for instance, lacking sufficient role models of how to act as good citizens in society. Wilson's specific empirical focus was poor ghetto residents in de-industrialising regions of North America, but these ideas have been used to endorse implementation of mixed tenure policies elsewhere.

While numerous benefits are anticipated for creating mixed tenure communities for some commentators the processes of reordering existing neighbourhoods raises issues of social injustice and has disadvantages, including being detrimental to long established social networks (Arthurson 2012). Some of the articles in this special issue explore these and related issues. The specific topic of the current paper is the question of whether recreating mixed tenure communities in established areas of concentrated social housing improves the poor reputations and stigmatisation of the neighbourhoods.

Wacquant's (2007) concept of territorial stigma, which builds on Goffman's (1963) seminal work (*Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*), provides a good starting point for considering this question. Goffman (1963) grouped stigma into three categories of abominations of the body, blemishes of individual character and tribal stigma (race, nation and religion). Wacquant (2007) argues that a key omission is 'blemish of place' or a poor neighbourhood reputation, which leads to what he terms 'territorial stigma'. As in the situation of tribal stigma, territorial stigma can project a virtual social identity on families and individuals and deprive people of acceptance from others. Consequently 'blemish of place' can add an additional layer of disadvantage to existing stigma that is associated with people's poverty or ethnic origins. In this way stigma is not just associated with the neighbourhoods but also the persons.

Thus in the current study neighbourhood reputation was viewed as an important characteristic that may affect individual residents' opportunities, experiences and social inclusion. It was hypothesized that activities such as neighbourhood renewal that reorder areas of concentrated

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social housing into more mixed communities may be transformative of negative images of place and reduce territorial stigma. In the first section the literature is reviewed to situate the current study within what is already known about some of the causes and harmful effects for residents of living in neighbourhoods with poor reputations and the relationships between neighbourhood reputation, stigma and mixed communities. Then the findings of the current empirical research are explored to assist in understanding whether creating mixed tenure neighbourhoods in areas of previously concentrated social housing contributes to improvements in the reputations and blemish of place of these neighbourhoods along with the associated territorial stigma attached to residents.

The Causes and Pernicious Effects of Blemish of Place and Territorial Stigma

The causes of stigma
A significant causal factor of the poor reputations of concentrated social housing neighbourhoods is the adoption over time of increasingly stringent allocations policies to prioritise high needs and vulnerable households. This policy direction has diminished social diversity within social housing. There is a large body of international literature (see for instance, van Kempen & Priemus 2002; Malpass 2005) that highlights the ways in which social housing has become marginalised from 'mainstream' society, a process commonly known as residualisation. In Australia social housing has moved from accommodating working families to becoming welfare housing.

Inter-related factors are that the post Second World War building programs concentrated the social housing in the form of estates due to the impetus to purchase large tracts of land on the fringe areas of cities and to meet economies of scale in construction. Nevertheless, one important aspect that differentiates Australian social housing estates from European countries is that by comparison they are much smaller as homeownership is by far the favoured tenure. In Australia nationally (as of 30 June 2011) 68.8 per cent of the population owned or were purchasing their own home, 23.7 per cent rented in the private sector, and 3.9 per cent rented from public rental accommodation (SCRGSP 2012: p.7). The first generation social housing is now over fifty years old, ageing and increasingly in need of maintenance. Often the housing is different in form from the privately owned housing in surrounding neighbourhoods and does not meet modern design expectations. In South Australia where the case studies for the current study are located older social housing was often characterised by double unit housing that consisted of two duplexes joined by a shared common wall. The housing was designed for two families with one living on

either side. This 'visibility' along with a lack of housing tenure mix and social diversity of tenants contributes to the stigma of tenants and place. In tandem with these processes, social housing tenants have developed a significant association with crime and anti-social behaviour, welfare dependency and impressions of a detached underclass unwilling or unable to engage with labour market opportunities or mainstream norms and values (Jacobs et al 2011). This situation has not been helped by media depictions that embellish depictions of social housing estates as sites of disorder and crime (Arthurson, 2004).

Postcode stigma and reactions to place of residence

Theoretical conceptualisations of neighbourhood reputation perceive it as a 'collective social' functioning and practice that is 'socially patterned' and impacts on the availability of material resources and other important opportunities (MacIntyre and Ellaway 2000). Thus the way that different groups such as residents, policy makers or the business sector view neighbourhood reputation is interconnected with factors such as service provision. For instance, based on their judgement of the reputation and merit of the neighbourhood, service provider staff may vary the quality of services provided (Hastings 2009). A poor neighbourhood reputation may also influence whether or not companies decide to locate their businesses there explaining in part the lack of quality retail outlets and local employers in stigmatised neighbourhoods (Atkinson & Kintrea, 2001). There is some evidence that employers discriminate against potential employees when they reside in neighbourhoods with flawed reputations. In other words residents experience prejudice based on peoples' negative reactions to their 'postcode' address (Palmer et al 2005; Ziersch & Arthurson, 2005). Schools located in stigmatised neighbourhoods may also experience difficulties in attracting quality teachers (Galster, 2007).

Pride in Neighbourhood and Residents' Self Pride

The experience of living in a stigmatised neighbourhood not only impacts on 'opportunity structures' but it also appears to affect residents' behaviours (MacIntyre and Ellaway 2000: 343). Outsiders' negative characterisations, the blemish of place and consequential territorial stigma may result in residents adopting self-defeating behaviours. The aftermath is described as a downward spiral into despondency that often comprises lack of pride in ones' self, feelings of shame and exclusion from mainstream society along with the curtailing of educational prospects and personal ambitions and experiencing negative health related effects (Murray, 1994; Scrambler, 2009).

Reputation and locational choice

Moreover the association of concentrated social housing neighbourhoods with poor reputations affects who decides to move into or leave these neighbourhoods. In social surveys as many as 46% of low income Australian households living in private rental accommodation (and experiencing housing affordability problems), although eligible for social housing claimed they would never consider applying because of its poor reputation (Burke et al. 2005). Residents with choice often exit stigmatised areas, leaving behind neighbourhoods comprised of those with the least resources (Permentier et al 2008). The remaining residents may then feel trapped in the neighbourhoods adding to the problematic reputations (Kearns & Parkinson 2001).

Does creating mixed neighbourhoods improve neighbourhood reputations and territorial stigma?

The findings are inconclusive about whether creating mixed communities improves neighbourhood reputations and territorial stigma. Some studies suggest that increasing the level of home owners in areas of concentrated social housing is associated with enhanced neighbourhood reputations (See, for instance, Martin & Watkinson 2005).Conversely, other investigations report that despite projects being implemented to create mixed neighbourhoods the poor reputations or blemishes of place appear intractable to change (Robertson et al 2008; Hastings & Dean 2003). Hiscock (2002) found that residents of a mixed neighbourhood in Scotland were more than twice as likely to report area reputation as a problem when compared with residents of concentrated areas of social housing. This was a quantitative statistical study using secondary data so the underlying dynamics and processes that were at work were unclear. Another study of ten Scottish mixed neighbourhoods suggested that while homeowners were associated with enhanced area reputations owners tended to identify problems, such as anti-social behaviour as originating from the presence of social housing occupants (Beekman et al. 2001).

Knowledge about the relationship between mixed tenure and reputation and territorial stigma is also garnered from contemporary studies of long established, for twenty years or longer, 'purpose built' mixed neighbourhoods. These areas were constructed with mixed tenure at commencement rather than reordered later as in estate renewal projects. Social housing tenants in these neighbourhoods do not feel stigmatised through tenure, principally because the neighbourhoods are not identified with the presence of social housing by mainstream society (Allen et al 2005). Nevertheless, a small scale qualitative study (Ruming et al. 2004) of a long established mixed

neighbourhood in Australia found that home owners seemed more likely to associate social housing tenants with problems such as anti-social behaviour The nub of the issue was that while the broader neighbourhood reputations were not identified as problematic, stigma appeared more localised and targeted at the individual level of social housing tenants by homeowners within these mixed neighbourhoods.

A key gap in the literature is that there has been little exploration of the extent to which perceptions of neighbourhood reputation and stigma differ between housing tenure groups within mixed neighbourhoods (Permentier et al., 2008). There may be important differences as home buyers, for instance, have made conscious decisions to purchase housing in particular neighbourhoods. Thus their assessments of neighbourhood reputation are likely to be more positive than other tenure groups that comparatively have less choice about where they live (Brown et al 2003). In building on the findings of the existing literature the current study included a survey and qualitative interviews to provide both statistical and nuanced understandings of residents' perspectives. It also analysed the data across the different housing tenure groups: social housing tenants; home owners (owned outright); home buyers (owned with a mortgage); and private renters to inform the spectrum of residents' knowledge and understandings of the dynamics of blemish of place and territorial stigma.

The Case Study Neighbourhoods

To provide a sufficient response rate and also to see if there were variations across areas the data collection was conducted in three neighbourhoods (Mitchell Park, Hillcrest, Northfield) all located within the metropolitan region of the Australian city of Adelaide. As shown in table 1 prior to urban renewal all three neighbourhoods were characterised by socio-economic disadvantage and large concentrations of social housing (27-75%) which was significantly reduced post renewal (10-35%). The neighbourhood mix was reordered through demolition of obsolete social housing and subdividing existing large backyards into a number of smaller allotments to construct two or more houses or a group of units, where once there may have been a single dwelling. New housing and unimproved social housing was offered for private sale to attract home owners into the neighbourhoods. Renewal also involved permanent relocation of some social housing tenants to other neighbourhoods.

Table 1: Concentration of Social Housing Before and After Renewal

Urban Renewal Project			
Social Housing Mix/ Conc.	Mitchell Park	Hillcrest	Northfield
Before (%) *Nos*	75% N=1000	60% N=350	27% N=226
After (%) *Nos*	35% N = 350	10.2% N=118	19.9% N= 238

Source:Phillips 1994; South Australian Housing Trust 2005; City of Port Adelaide Enfield 2010

The questionnaire survey was posted to a random sample of 800 households across the three neighbourhoods and 325 surveys were completed and returned. After accounting for non-deliverables (i.e. insufficient address; empty house, non-residential, n=78) the overall response rate was 45 per cent. Participants for the in-depth interviews were recruited through an expression of interest form, included with the survey questionnaire. Sixty-five residents expressed interest in participating in an interview. As shown in Table 2 forty interviews were conducted with neighbourhood residents across different tenure groups representing a range of ages, income levels and length of residence. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and then collated by drawing together thematic issues in order to identify patterns, similarities and differences (Rice & Ezzy, 1999).

Table 2: Interview Respondents' Demographics

Demographic	*Social Housing*	*Owned Outright*	*Owned with Mortgage*	*Private Rental*
Tenure (Nos)	14	10	6	10
Gender (Nos) Male Female	 4 10	 4 6	 - 6	 5 5
Age (Nos) 20-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61-70 71-80 >81	* - - 5 3 1 - 1	 - 1 - 4 4 1 -	 1 1 4 - - - -	* 3 3 1 - 2 - -
Length of Residence (Nos, years)	*			*

< 1	5	-	1	2
1-3	-	2	2	1
4-9	-	2	1	2
10-15	3	1	-	-
16-20	-	2	1	1
>20	2	3	1	-
Income (Nos)	*			*
130,000+	-	1	-	-
78,00-103,999	-	-	-	1
52,000-77,999	-	2	1	1
41,600-51,999	-	2	2	1
36,400-41,599	-	-	2	1
31,200-36,399	-	2	1	-
20,800-25,999	2	-	-	1
10,400-15,599	5	2	-	1
nil	1	1	-	-

*Denotes incomplete data as questions not answered by as all respondents

Survey Findings

Stigma and the Neighbourhood

Survey respondents were asked to rate how strongly they agreed with a series of five statements through ticking a box aligned with a scale, which ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Each statement (shown in Table 3) related to processes and dynamics of experiencing blemish of place and territorial stigma as identified in the literature review. For instance the statement that 'this neighbourhood has a poor reputation' was utilised to address the point that little is known about the extent of any differences in perspectives about neighbourhood reputation across individual housing tenure groups. Residents' perceptions of their neighbourhoods are also strongly influenced by how they think outsiders view it (Blokland, 2008) so the statement that 'people react positively to where I live' was included. Other statements related to territorial stigma encompassing discrimination due to housing type, whether they liked living there and expressions of pride in the neighbourhood, as the latter aspect has been associated with experiencing health related effects of stigma.

As summarised in Table 3 below, the only significant association found was between tenure and rating of pride in the neighbourhood (Chi-squared=12.093, n=293, p=.047, Cramer's V=.148). While most respondents gave favourable ratings the exception was private renters where fewer agreed, and more gave neutral responses. The means suggested homeowners (owned outright) (2.26) on average were most proud and private renters (2.71) least proud of their neighbourhoods. Average agreement scores were significantly different for tenure groups (F=2,981, df=3,289, p=.032) although actual differences between groups were quite small (eta squared η^2=.030). Post

Hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the main mean differences were between homeowners (2.26) and private renters (2.71).

Table 3: Summary of survey findings on levels of agreement with statements about neighbourhood stigma across housing tenure groups

Statement	Social housing % (abs)	Private rental % (abs)	Owned outright% (abs)	Owned with mortgage % (abs)	Strength of association
This neighbourhood has a poor reputation					Non-Significant - Owned outright most likely & private rental least likely to agree
Agree	18 (9)	38.7 (12)	26.1 (30)	28.7 (27)	
Neutral	40 (20)	19.4 (6)	27 (31)	28.7 (7)	
Disagree	42 (21)	41.9 (13)	47 (54)	42.6 (40)	
I am discriminated against due to my type of housing					Non significant - Private renters least likely & social housing most likely to agree
Agree	6 (3)	0	1.8 (2)	4.3 (4)	
Neutral	28 (14)	12.9 (4)	11.5 (13)	19.1 (18)	
Disagree	66 (33)	87.1 (27)	86.7 (98)	76.6 (72)	
I am proud of this neighbourhood					Significant **-** Owned outright most & private renters least proud
Agree	58.8 (30)	35.5 (11)	65.5 (76)	66.3 (63)	
Neutral	35.3 (18)	61.3 (19)	30.2 (35)	28.4 (27)	
Disagree	5.9 (3)	3.2 (1)	4.3 (5)	5.3 (5)	
I like living in this neighbourhood					Non significant- Private renters least likely & owned outright most likely to agree
Agree	78 (39)	74.2 (23)	86.1 (99)	85.3 (81)	
Neutral	14 (7)	22.6 (7)	12.2 (14)	9.5 (9)	
Disagree	8 (4)	3.2 (1)	1.7 (2)	5.3 (5)	
People react positively to where I live					Non significant- Owned with mortgage most likely & owned outright least likely to agree
Agree	38.8 (19)	36.7 (11)	31.6 (36)	40.9 (38)	
Neutral	53.1 (26)	40 (12)	57.9 (66)	46.2 (43)	
Disagree	8.2 (4)	23.3 (7)	10.5 (12)	12.9 (12)	

Source: Arthurson 2011

Interview Findings

In-depth interviews were conducted to build on the survey findings through providing more nuanced interpretations of residents' viewpoints. In particular, the aim was to try and understand why private renters expressed less pride in the neighbourhood than other tenure groups.

Neighbourhood reputation and pride in the neighbourhood

Across all three neighbourhoods social housing tenants, homeowners (owned outright) and homebuyers (owned with mortgage) were in agreement that creating more mixed communities through reducing concentrations of social housing and increasing levels of home ownership, had assisted in reducing the previously poor reputations associated with their neighbourhoods.

> ..Hillcrest had a really, very bad name many years ago because it was all Housing Trust [i](H40, owned outright, 4-9 years).

> ..when we first moved here [in 1973] the police told us it was called the Bronx (MP45, owned outright, 20+years).

It was also pointed out that the poor neighbourhood reputations had not completely diminished. At Mitchell Park particular streets were highlighted where social housing was still concentrated as problematic parts of the neighbourhood with blemished reputations. These areas were frequently referred to as 'the SAHT[ii] part of the neighbourhood' and sometimes labelled 'danger zones' and 'bad places'.

> [I] don't like to stereotype or whatever but there are some bad areas, streets I don't like to walk down at night [name of street] being one of them… (MP43, owned with mortgage, 4-9 years).

> There are one or two streets that I wouldn't want to live in. That's mainly probably because they are Housing Commission homes….When you look at the home and the way it has been let go, you wouldn't want to live next to somewhere like that I think (MP118, private rental tenant, < 1 year)

Other residents at Hillcrest and Northfield appeared more concerned about the increased mix of private rental housing detracting from neighbourhood pride: Specifically investors were purchasing newer houses for sale and the older non refurbished social housing without a commitment to upgrading it, but merely to rent on the private rental market.

> Probably we have more trouble with the private rental ones, of the old transportable ones[iii] - one down the street here (H35, social housing, 10-15 years).

We have one next door [private rental] and they don't look after it, he couldn't care less (N161, owned outright, 20 + years).

Aside from these issues similar to the survey findings respondents generally expressed feelings of pride in the three revitalised neighbourhoods. For social housing tenants this was related to implementation of more mixed communities along with upgrading of their housing, which made it 'less visible' or identifiable as social housing. It was still acknowledged though that the neighbourhood stigma had probably not completely disappeared especially from the perspective of people living outside of the areas:

I know a lot of people would say you wouldn't want to go and live there [Mitchell Park] but err, I think it is just wonderful the development that has happened………. The houses that are obviously privately owned and the trust houses that I would imagine that have come into private ownership they all seem to be blending in so well together and taking pride (MP2, social housing, < 1 year).

Discrimination because of the type of housing
While the survey findings in relation to feeling discriminated against due to the type of housing tenure lived in were not significant, in interviews it was clear that there was stigma attached to social housing tenants that emanated from other local residents across the three areas.

Why is there no housing trust [social housing] in Mitcham or Burnside [wealthy neighbourhoods]? Why does there have to be a mix of SAHT and homeowners in Mitchell Park (MP1, owned outright, 1-3 years).

This situation was moderated, however, because stigma related to the social housing tenure, as noted before, is substantially reduced in mixed communities due to efforts made to blend the regenerated or new social housing with private housing so that it is less distinguishable. The following quote illustrates this point:

And he said 'ah I'd never tell anyone this is housing trust'….. But there's nothing, no one would know, you know, they'd just think, ah a nice group of units. All the garden out the front was established by the trust and it's all nice and neat and tidy (MP2, female, social housing, < 1 year).

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There are a minority of people who go into trust homes and don't look after them and I think by separating them and splitting them up and putting them in a development area where there's private rental, trust, whatever, is a good idea because then you don't know which is the, a lot of people here don't know which are housing trust homes and which are not. My house certainly does not look like a HT [housing trust] home (H2, social housing tenant, 16-20 years).

An interesting finding was that previous social housing tenants who had only recently become home owners often through purchase opportunities provided from the development of the mixed communities projects were then keen to differentiate themselves from the social housing tenure:

A lot of them are trouble. It puts your [house] value down, I think, if you've got them [social housing tenants] all around. A lot of people don't notice who they are, but I do (H55, owned with mortgage but previously social housing tenant, 16-20 years).

People react positively when I tell them where I live, and like living in the neighbourhood

Responses across the three neighbourhoods revealed that a long history of neighbourhood blemish can be difficult to change.

I think it's wonderful. I say 'I live at Mitchell Park' and people sort of raise an eyebrow and then suddenly they remember 'ah that's right there's been a huge development going on there hasn't there?' and you say 'yes it's so good, it's like living at Mawson Lakes [iv] with all the fancy houses! (MP2, social housing, < 1 year).

At Hillcrest and Northfield respondents often commented that both neighbourhoods had benefited indirectly from marketing and promotion of an adjacent and desirable new private housing development called Oakden. From this perspective people from outside tended to associate Oakden with these adjoining areas and were more likely to view them positively.

If I say I live at Hillcrest they kind of look down their nose, but as soon as I tell them it's on the border of Oakden they go ahh… because it's trendy and new and modern and more expensive (H7, owned with mortgage, 1-3 years)

[Oakden] was a very upmarket sort of sales promotion thing and that. They then started Hillcrest advertising when they did the redevelopment right next door to Oakden. They attached it to that. You saw it becoming more pleasurable, more likeable, more upmarket as things progressed (H35, social housing, 10-15 years).

Discussion and Conclusions

The findings add to our understandings of residents' perspectives about neighbourhood reputation and territorial stigma across individual housing tenure groups. Generally residents were in agreement that introducing mixed tenure into the neighbourhoods had positive effects. For social housing tenants the improved design of social housing was a critical factor. It was unclear why private renters expressed less pride in the neighbourhoods than other groups. The other key finding was that residents expressed stigma at different scales within these mixed communities. These topics are considered in turn and the discussion also incorporates any differences found between the three case study neighbourhoods.

Introducing increased numbers of homeowners into the tenure mix

Bearing in mind that the three neighbourhoods previously experienced a blemish of place it appears at least from the points of view of residents that with implementation of the mixed communities, and specifically increased numbers of homeowners, that the overall reputations of the neighbourhoods had improved. This finding is consistent with a number of other studies (Beekman et al 2001; Atkinson & Kintrea (2001). However, a limitation of the current study was that it was not possible to conduct a before and after measure of neighbourhood reputations. Nevertheless, in the in-depth interviews many of the original social housing tenants that had relocated temporarily out of the neighbourhoods and then later moved back, talked about how the stigma previously attached to the neighbourhoods was much improved after the renewal projects. Likewise, homebuyers reported that they would not have considered living in the areas before the mixed communities projects were implemented due to the poor reputations previously associated with the neighbourhoods.

The design of social housing

From the viewpoint of social housing tenants in the current study mixed tenure appears to have a greater chance of success where there is little or no difference in the quality and appearance of

social housing as compared with private housing. Social housing tenants described how the stigma against their tenure was moderated in the new mixed communities as physical improvements to social housing made it blend into the neighbourhood and less distinguishable. In other words it is important to design the housing to blur the distinctions between tenures. This helps to accentuate similarities between residents rather than differences and in turn counters the potential for prejudice to occur against social housing tenants on the basis of tenure (Holmes 2006).

Housing tenure and stigma

At Mitchell Park there was a strong perception from homeowners and also some private renters that social housing was associated with residual stigma attached to particular streets or parts of the neighbourhood. In contrast residents at Hillcrest and Northfield while aware of the stigma attached to social housing more commonly perceived the increases in private rental in the two areas as problematic. They raised the issue of the high turnover of tenants in private rental as an important factor that detracted from pride in the neighbourhoods. It was noted that private rental housing was often poorly maintained as its function was merely to obtain a rental income for absentee landlords. From these residents' perspectives private rental housing was associated with stigma in mixed tenure neighbourhoods.

It is unclear why these differences emerged across the case study neighbourhoods. It may be related to the fact that at Mitchell Park the new mixed tenure community consists of a higher level of social housing (35%) than at either Hillcrest (10.2%) or Northfield (19.9%). In contrast in the latter two neighbourhoods there appears to be a higher level of purchase by private landlords. This emerging feature of mixed tenure communities in Australia is an important aspect for consideration in future studies.

Private renters and pride in the neighbourhood

The interviews also sought to explore in more detail the key significant difference in survey responses to the statement about pride in the neighbourhood. The finding that homeowners were most proud of their neighbourhoods was consistent with previous research (Brown et al 2003) but it was unclear why private renters were least proud of the four groups. In some instances private renters appeared to be simply seeking affordable rent and as their situations were semi-permanent they may have felt more detached from the neighbourhoods than other tenure groups. Other studies suggest that experiences of stigma are associated with a lowering of pride in individuals

(Scrambler 2009). Perhaps private renters internalised some of the stigma attached to their tenure, although in survey responses there were no significant differences between the different tenures to the question about feeling discriminated on the basis of their housing.

Other broader contextual factors at play are that escalating housing affordability problems over the past decade mean more Australians are renting for longer periods of time than in the past. The delayed opportunities for homeownership may have important ramifications for mixed tenure communities in a nation where home ownership is by far the preferred housing tenure. In Australia the private rental tenure has previously been small and viewed as a transitory step before entering homeownership. The current findings pose questions about the viability of mixed communities where more private renters may be moving through without a long term commitment to making the neighbourhoods better places to live. These are all important topics for investigation in future research.

Scale of operationalising stigma

In the current investigation rather than viewing the neighbourhood as a whole as stigmatised the stigma was operationalised at a finite scale. From the point of view of residents the broader reputations or blemish of place appeared to have improved but a territorial type of stigma was localised and targeted at individual groups and housing tenures. It was associated with specific clusters of social housing and private rental located in particular streets and parts of the neighbourhoods. The findings thus pose the question of why residents adopt these different scales of stigma in mixed neighbourhoods.

Reutter et al (2009:300) in their Canadian study of low-income neighbourhoods found that respondents living in poverty had a profound sense of stigma consciousness and they talked about 'being labelled' and 'looked at and treated differently'. Coping strategies included engaging in forms of cognitive dissonance, such as distancing themselves from other people in the same or similar situations. In the current study residents appeared to assign stigma to those in the socioeconomic strata below them. Previous social housing tenants, for instance, who had become home owners, often through purchase opportunities provided through the development of the mixed communities projects were keen to differentiate and detach themselves from the social housing tenure. Consistent with these findings earlier research conducted in the Hillcrest case study area. (Biggins & Hassan 1998: 39) found that the highest approval for the new mixed community came from low-income earners (79.4 per cent) while middle-income earners approved

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the least (40 per cent), which represented 25 per cent fewer than those residents on high incomes. Hence, where social distance was least, that is, from the point of view of middle-income earners, there was greater disapproval of the reconstituted mixed community. It seems middle-income residents wanted to distance themselves from low-income residents in the income strata below them. In combination, these findings on stigma consciousness may also assist in explaining some of the more nuanced processes at work in Hiscock's statistical study reported earlier, which found that residents of a mixed neighbourhood in Scotland were more than twice as likely to report area reputation as a problem when compared with residents of concentrated areas of social housing.

Taken as a whole the findings raise serious questions not only about territorial stigma but also about social cohesion and collective efficacy in mixed neighbourhoods. They also challenge current government policies supporting delivery of affordable housing through leasing of private rental dwellings from private landlords. Furthermore if current targeting policies are pursued to limit social housing to only high need and complex tenants then it is going to make it difficult for policy makers to create viable mixed communities as over time the stigma attached to social housing in these types of neighbourhoods is likely to increase rather than dissipate.

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[i] H = Hillcrest, MP = Mitchell Park, N = Northfield, and years reflects period of residency in area

[ii] SAHT refers to the South Australian Housing Trust, which was the State Government body that provided public rental housing.

[iii] Transportable housing refers to some of the older type of social housing, which has often been sold for private rental and was originally constructed from kit form.

[iv] Mawson Lakes is a modern housing development in Adelaide that this respondent, and many other South Australians, consider a very desirable place to live