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What is the meaning of ‘social mix’? A case study of implementing social mix policy at Carlton Housing Estate, Melbourne

Abstract

This paper unravels a variety of perspectives about the concept of social mix, drawing on a case study of Carlton estate redevelopment project in Melbourne. The first part provides a theoretical overview of two internationally predominant academic debates around policy interpretations of this concept: namely social mix as a means for promotion of social inclusion; and as a state-led form of gentrification. Within the social mix debates these two arguments are usually presented as one, with social inclusion and reductions of concentrations of disadvantage on one side of the 'social mix policy' coin, and state-led gentrification as the opposite side. This paper contributes to the national and international literature on public housing estate regeneration and social mix policies through exploring the question of whether these two ideas about social mix were shared by different stakeholders at Carlton. Interviews were conducted with public tenants, homeowners and home buyers, private renters and local service providers to explore the diverse perspectives of various stakeholders groups. The study identified that due to the Global Financial Crisis and the developers exerting pressure on government, there was a gradual move away from perceiving social mix as a policy tool for encouraging social inclusion at Carlton, between public housing tenants and private residents, towards a different form of social mix and inclusion. The new form of social mix at Carlton is perceived as a means to harness market capital and attract higher income residents to the inner city.

Key words: social mix, mixed communities, regeneration, public housing, tenure mix, social housing, community renewal

Introduction

Social mix is a somewhat vague concept that is often better explained in more precise terms as income-mix or housing tenure-mix, which are in fact two measurable indicators that when varied may result in social mix (Galster 2007). Much has been written about social mix from different perspectives and geographical locations. There has been a renewed interest internationally over the last twenty years in social mix yet the concept is controversial and divisive in its meanings and influences.

The concept of social mix first appeared in mid-19th century Britain, where it was linked to utopian ideas of connecting across different social classes. Then it reappeared in social justice and egalitarian debates in the UK after the Second World War, and more recently it has become linked to problems of social exclusion in areas of concentrated disadvantage internationally (Arthurson 2012a: 11). In their analysis of social mix policies in Britain since 1979, Goodchild and Cole (2001) show how discourses of social mix vary at different levels of operation: the level of national policy, that of management and regeneration of social housing estates, and the level of social experiences of residents. As argued elsewhere, there is currently a lack of exploration of the different understandings and uses of social mix by various groups, in particular from the viewpoints of disadvantaged public housing tenants that the policies are targeted to assist (Arthurson 2012a: 15). We aim to contribute to addressing this gap in the literature by examining different perspectives of social mix through the lens of various stakeholders involved in a public housing regeneration project in Carlton, Melbourne. The paper commences with an exploration of two dominant policy meanings of social mix as identified in academic critiques, followed by some background information about the Carlton Estate Redevelopment case study that formed the basis of the current research project. In the second half of the paper the findings are presented before the concluding discussion.

The different meanings of social mix

In the academic literature two main contemporary debates dominate discussions about social mix. The first explores the policy use of social mix as a means to promote social inclusion and create a certain kind of community for disadvantaged groups within society. The second debate critiques the policy use of social mix as a euphemism for neo-liberal state-led gentrification processes.

Social mix policy as a remedy for social exclusion

A key academic debate critiques the perspective of policy makers who depict social mix policies as a remedy for social exclusion or as a tool to promote social inclusion and community cohesion; both arguments are situated as two sides of the same coin. In Australia, for instance, scholars have argued that social mix is positioned as a means to address the social exclusion of public housing estates, after

these estates have been framed by housing providers and policy practitioners as socially excluded (Darcy 2010; Doney et al. 2013). An analysis of redevelopment projects in NSW found that one element of the social mix discourse was the construction of public tenancy as disadvantage in and of itself. Thus the creation of a ‘problem’ of concentrations of disadvantage in public housing estates is promoted by government agencies for a variety of reasons, one of which is that it provides a clear focus for intervention (Darcy 2010: 19). Similarly, Arthurson (2002; 2010a) has critiqued the related notions that developing a mixed-income community addresses inequality through reconnecting socially-excluded public housing tenants to mainstream society, and policy makers’ expositions that a balanced social mix is ‘a prerequisite for the development of “inclusive”, “sustainable” and “cohesive” communities’ (2002: 245). In the US, Chaskin (2013) likewise argues that social integration is an anticipated after-effect from new mixed income housing developments built to replace public housing in Chicago. In reality many public residents report experiencing increased scrutiny and intrusion in their lives that generates new kinds of stigma, exclusion and isolation (Arthurson 2013a, 2012b; Ruming et al 2004). An unexpected finding in one study was that although the broader neighbourhood reputations appeared to have improved after regeneration, internally residents associated private rental tenure with neighbourhood stigma (Arthurson et al 2013b).

A related depiction of social mix policies is as a tool to construct a specific kind of mixed community, one in which neighbours interact with each other and form bonds of different kinds that include both strong and weak ties (Chaskin & Joseph 2010). Researchers have examined various characteristics, including the formation of social capital, that are claimed as important for the development of such a community, while questioning policy makers’ claims that social mix can advance such characteristics (Arthurson 2010a). The argument for enhancing social capital is that people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods may have close-knit social networks which provide social support but are limited in their ability to reach beyond their immediate social networks through ‘leveraging’, ‘weak ties’ or ‘bridging’ relationships (Curly 2009; Kleit 2010; Ziersch & Arthurson 2007). The assumption here is that living in mixed-income communities may provide opportunities to interact with people who have more diverse social networks, and in turn auxiliary benefits from such interaction (Chaskin & Joseph 2010: 303). However, Patulny and Morris (2011: 3365), using data from the 2006 Australian General Social Survey, found that social housing residents are likely to have more diverse social networks than private residents by all measures. This finding raises concerns around the effectiveness of the social mix policy as a tool to change already heterogeneous networks.

On weighing up the findings about the linking of the concept of social mix to social inclusion, there has been little exploration of whether residents and other stakeholders involved in these communities share, or are even aware of, policy makers’ perspectives of social mix as a planning tool for facilitating social inclusion (Arthurson 2010a; Galster 2007).

Social mix as a euphemism for state-led gentrification

The second and related academic inquiry identifies social mix policies as a euphemism for state-led gentrification processes. Protagonists argue that class based policies and plans that promote gentrification are rhetorically and discursively disguised by policy makers as social mixing using ‘morally persuasive and neutered terms.... such as “mixed communities”, “social mix” and “diversity” [to] politely avoid the class constitution of the process involved’ (Lees et al 2011: 1). An example of this is the strategy of reclaiming public housing complexes for mixed-income developments that has been dubbed ‘controlled gentrification’ or ‘positive gentrification’ (Rose et al. 2013): This refers to ‘public policy that harnesses private capital and market forces to attract higher-income residents, and generate neighbourhood revitalisation while attempting to reduce segregation and foster inclusion’ (Chaskin & Joseph 2010: 481). As one of the main opponents to this form of state-led gentrification, Lees (2008: 2451) questions whether attracting middle-income people into inner city neighbourhoods is a positive thing. She argues that gentrification causes mostly negative effects, such as displacement of low-income groups and that ‘it is ironic that a process that results in segregation and polarisation – gentrification – is being promoted via social mix policies as a positive solution to segregation’ (2008: 2463).

Many other studies illustrate that what underlies the construction of the mixed communities’ debates is often state-led gentrification disguised under the name of social mix (August 2014; Bacque et al. 2011). For instance, the UK, New Labour government’s ‘mixed communities’ initiative represented a shift towards a more neo-liberal ideology with a renewed focus on concentrated poverty as the cause of deprivation. It supported processes of gentrification and promotion of middle-class homeownership as appropriate solutions, with expectations that the presence of middle-class residents would benefit low-income residents that were not displaced from the neighbourhoods (Lupton & Fuller 2009: 1025). Similarly, McLeod and Johnstone (2012) explored how the ‘Housing Market Renewal’ initiative sought to inscribe privatisation by increasing the numbers of owner-occupiers and raising property values via legally enforcing compulsory purchase of housing. The researchers concluded that ‘Housing Market Renewal’ is ‘an archetypical case of late neo-liberalising accumulation by dispossession that licensed state-orchestrated gentrification’ (McLeod & Johnstone 2012: 1). In summary, many scholars believe that the idea that social mix policy can enhance the creation of community is unsubstantiated and perhaps unattainable. Furthermore, scholars have called for policymakers to end the practice of disguising state-led gentrification processes in the name of social mix policies.

This discussion of two debates around social mix policies shows that the use of such policies is a contested terrain and that there is often divergence between the aims of the policies and the ‘communities’ resulting from these policies. Less well scrutinised within the literature is consideration of the diversity of different stakeholder views about social mix that exists in a single redevelopment area. This approach enables in-depth investigation on the perspectives of social mix and triangulation

of results, through combining several methods of data collection in order to verify the results. It is this gap that we aim to address.

The Carlton Public Housing Estate

The suburb of Carlton is located in the north eastern boundary of the City of Melbourne, only two kilometres from the Central Business District. When the 2011 Census was conducted it was home to 14,401 residents, of them 1,715 (12%) were public housing tenants that lived in the Carlton Housing Estate (ABS, 2014). The Carlton Housing Estate spans 7.5 hectares over three sites: Lygon, Keppel and Elgin. The Carlton Estate Redevelopment project is the largest public-private partnership redevelopment project in Victoria. The project includes redevelopment of both public and private housing units replacing eight walk-ups (apartment blocks of four storeys without lifts), construction of a retirement village and aged-care centre, development of new public parks, gardens and landscaping, and gradual renovation of existing high-rise public units.

The research project focused on the Stage 1 redevelopment at the Lygon site, including the building complex with public housing and private units, as this was the only stage of the overall redevelopment that was completed when the research project commenced. The walk-ups had not been upgraded since the time of their construction other than carrying out periodic maintenance (DHS 2009; 2011) and thus were deemed appropriate for demolition at the start of the redevelopment project in 2006. The Lygon site (Stage 1) was completed in August 2011 and both public and private residents have moved into the new housing. The new units are more diverse in size and comprise a majority of one and two bedroom units, and fewer three and four bedroom units. As shown in table 1, in total, there is 84 new public units compared with 128 prior to redevelopment.

Table 1: Number of public and private units in the Lygon Site of Carlton Estate, pre-redevelopment and post-redevelopment

<i>Housing Estate</i>	<i>Pre-redevelopment</i>		<i>Post-redevelopment</i>	
	Public units	Private units	Public units	Private units
Lygon estate – stage 1	128	0	84	98

(Source: DHS 2009)

In place of the walk-ups, the new complex (post-redevelopment) contains three adjacent buildings that sit on the same block in a U shape, each facing a different street and together enclosing an internal outdoor garden. The largest of these buildings is a public housing building of eight storeys, while the other two, located on either side, are private apartment buildings of four storeys all with separate entrances and car parks.

Exploring social mix at Carlton

The research project was completed in 2013 and included both qualitative and quantitative methods: observations on the Estate and at community events while taking field-notes; in-depth interviews with tenants that relocated and moved back to the redeveloped building, and with tenants who decided to stay away; a survey of tenants; interviews with service providers; a survey of residents living in the suburb of Carlton; and interviews with private residents in the two private buildings within the complex. The findings from the qualitative data collection are presented here. Interviews were conducted with a total of 51 participants, of them 31 public housing tenants, ten private residents, and ten service providers (Table 2). Participants were asked about their views of social mix, day-to-day experiences of it, and whether they supported the idea in practice and the way it has been realised in the Carlton redevelopment. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The interview scripts and field-notes data were coded according to themes that emerged during analysis with the software NVivo. For analysis, the “Framework” method was used (Ritchie & Spencer 1999), which consists of five stages of analysis: familiarisation, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting, and mapping and interpretation.

Table 2: Participants in the research N=51

	<i>Interviewed</i>
Public housing tenants who live on the Estate or lived there before redevelopment	31
Private residents who live in the redeveloped complex	10
Service providers	10
Total	51

The various understandings and expectations for social mix at Carlton estate

In this section the findings are examined in light of the policy debates identified earlier of social mix policies as a means for social inclusion and creation of community or as a state-led gentrification process, in order to ascertain whether there are any similarities, differences or overlapping debates between different stakeholders’ perspectives.

The evolution of social mix at Carlton Estate

In announcing the commencement of redevelopment Stage Two (Keppel St Site) at Carlton estate during ‘Social Inclusion Week’ the Victorian Minister for Housing said:

Social Inclusion Week highlights local communities and looks at ways every Victorian can feel included in the community.... The building of these new units certainly did that, and the mix of private and public residents here in Carlton is a prime example of how we can create diverse, welcoming, inclusive communities on our housing estates (Media release, 2012).

Clearly this statement depicts the view that social mix (in the specific form of housing tenure diversity) was seen as a means to achieve social inclusion of public housing tenants into the wider community.

In interviews, service providers at Carlton provided numerous examples of how early on in the redevelopment processes the policy perspective depicted social mix as a remedy for social inclusion. During initial discussions between the Carlton community and policy makers, especially in justifying privatisation of public lands, the (then Labor) Government promised a ‘social mix’ project that would be realised as an integrated private/public housing mix. This is commonly termed a ‘salt and pepper’ model that encompasses a blend of different housing tenures within the same buildings (see Levin et al 2014). A letter published by the Carlton Residents Association (CRA) in 2006, the organisation that represents the wider community living in Carlton, cited the local MP, suggesting that this form of social mix ‘will break down the public housing ghetto’. When building commenced in 2010, however, from the perspective of the CRA, ‘the [Labor] Government had reversed its stated policy of social inclusion and implemented a model of intentional segregation on the Estates’. Further, it was suggested that this ‘will inevitably further isolate and alienate public tenants’ (CRA 2014).

At that stage what had changed was the model or scale of implementation of social mix. The envisaged ‘salt and pepper’ arrangement that would have physically mixed public housing and private units within the same buildings had been abandoned. From the perspective of the CRA social mix was linked to social inclusion but only in the specific form of public and private residents living in the same buildings. So while there was a shared vision between the CRA and policy-makers of social mix as linked to social inclusion there was a difference in perspective about its practical scale of implication.

During the design phases of the project, the developers changed the configuration of buildings and units. The final design resulted in construction of three separate buildings, one for public tenants and two solely for private occupants, positioned around an internal courtyard with each building fronting a different street. From the perspective of the Carlton public housing community, this form of social mix combined with a community garden which was only accessible to the private residents and the three buildings having separate entrance doors, foyers and car parks reduced opportunities for productive social interaction between the different housing tenure groups.

Local service providers’ views of social mix

The idea of social mix as an important means to achieve ‘social inclusion’ was also often expressed in interviews with local service providers. They talked about the Carlton Redevelopment Project as promising a ‘true social inclusion project’ for public housing tenants within the larger community. In articulating their understandings of this idea they referred to the Office of Housing’s (i.e. Department of Human Services, DHS) social mix policy within the framework of a ‘social inclusion’ agenda,

which offered an opportunity to ‘break down social barriers’. Like the CRA, service providers envisaged the original social mix model as a ‘cutting-edge’ project for demonstrating the benefits of social mix, whereby:

it was going to [...] break down social barriers, break down the barriers of the ‘us and them’, private/public, because of the great vision of having private and public residents living together.

The CRA, local service providers and staff of community agencies commonly imagined the ‘social inclusion’ project as comprising a ‘salt and pepper’ mix of residential units within the same building.

All the 14 estates around the inner city have become ghettos basically and two of the underlying principles of the redevelopment was to physically try to break down the barriers ...where rich and poor can mix and that would be helped if we had a mix of public and private, on the principle that we didn’t lose any public housing...

Service providers frequently talked about their shared feelings of optimism at the beginning of the project. They felt that something was about to change in the community for the better but agreed that this opportunity was lost along the way as the project progressed. They contended that the reason for the change in model of social mix and loss of focus on social inclusion was the Global Financial Crisis, which happened at the time government was securing private investors for the redevelopment project. This pressured government to compromise on the original vision of ‘salt and pepper mix’ in order to procure private capital to support the redevelopment project.

I’m not privy to commercial in confidence stuff that existed but that really got people off on the wrong track... because that wasn’t part of years of consultation but when it came to the crunch and the global financial crisis they were – they just could not get the cash from the banks etcetera, so that really tightened their demands on the government and the government then had to more or less like it or lose it.

As the redevelopment project began to take shape, most service providers realised that there was a retreat by policy makers from the earlier envisaged form of a ‘salt and pepper’ mix. In the words of one service provider:

The company that was doing the development, suddenly had a lot of power in their negotiations with the Office of Housing because the developers were falling like flies because they didn’t make a profit out of it so the Office of Housing Human Services backed away and gave into their demands to have a private courtyard there. They shouldn’t have done that, they should have stuck to the principles of diversity on the estate, rich and poor.

Even with the realisation that a salt and pepper mix of units within the same buildings would no longer eventuate, it was hoped that at the very least the buildings’ occupants would share some common open space between the buildings, whereby residents would meet one another when walking by, ‘so you would have this interconnectedness’. However, this vision did not eventuate with the new arrangement of buildings and open space.

Some service providers suggested that the specific design of three separate buildings with a homogenous social mix within each building resulted from the developer's campaign to secure sales of units to private buyers in the economic downturn. In this perspective is the beginnings of a state-led gentrification discourse about social mix. Specifically, a homogeneous arrangement of units within each building is deemed more likely to conceal the public housing component of the project, and in a more market-driven agenda prevent negative impacts on sales and profit (Rowlands et al 2006). As one service provider remarked:

I walked into the sales office, a lot of community members did. I did it just as an experiment, they didn't know who I was. [...] I wanted to find out about the units and the guy immediately told me how great it was, sell, sell, sell, sell. [...] He promoted the space first, along with how amazing it would be to live there, said 'here's a private space for residents as well'. [...] They weren't selling it as one of the most amazing opportunities for social inclusion, one of the most amazing opportunities to experience, on a deep level, being in a multicultural community, getting to know people who are black and getting to know people from another country and know people on a different social level. No, it's not about that it's about getting an inner city unit [...].

Moreover, in the end no public shared open space was created where tenants and private residents could interact. Instead, an open private space, positioned between the three buildings, is accessible only to private residents and not public tenants. This internal space has become a space of contention. It is visible from the balconies of units in all three buildings, including the public housing building, which means that public housing tenants can watch over the garden but not access it.

One of the local service providers said that in order to prevent public housing tenants from accessing the garden, a retaining wall was built that also separates the public housing tenants from their neighbours, the private residents.

There's a space there, a courtyard that is called Viva Retreat...and Viva Retreat in that courtyard for private residents so the wall, it was argued, necessary and everyone agreed, everyone understood the wall is necessary because it's a retaining wall, you know, the land goes down. Fine, okay, you have to have that wall and that was where the Office of Housing stopped explaining it at one point and we asked 'well, why can't you have access, a ramp, stairs, something?;' I've seen – you know, we put people on the moon and it doesn't cost that much to – it doesn't cost a space program amount to put stairs in when you're building something, when you're building the infrastructure from scratch; it's not expensive.

Clearly in these perspectives is recognition that social mix is utilised as a euphemism for state led gentrification. Respondents contended that there was a gradual move away from perceiving social mix as a policy tool for encouraging social inclusion towards using a different form of social mix as a means to harness market capital and attract higher income residents to the inner city. The original vision for social mix (as expressed on the DHS website) anticipated that 'the three sites will have a mix of public and private buildings'. In the current version of the DHS website - some eight years after the redevelopment project started - social mix is no longer mentioned and is not on the agenda of

DHS as a policy approach for reaching social inclusion but rather as a necessary but unstated byproduct of the private sector financing mechanism (Shaw 2011).

Public housing tenants' understandings about social mix at Carlton

Most of the public tenants interviewed were not interested in or concerned about whether social mix existed at Carlton estate. Some did, however, welcome the idea of having a wider mix of residents beyond public housing tenants residing there and perceived social mix as a potential tool for building 'community', rather than talking about 'social inclusion'. Nevertheless, they suggested that this ideal for social mix was difficult to realise in practice. This was an interesting finding given that these residents since the redevelopment live with and experience social mix in their everyday lives. Public tenants felt that part of the problem was that private homeowners and renters neither had the time or inclination to socialise or build community with public tenants:

I don't see a private resident sitting down and having a cup of coffee with a housing resident. I mean let's face it, it's just the way it is because to live there privately, it's a lot of money for rent and whoever lives there privately obviously they're at a good paying job, they have a certain company that they keep and I don't think they'll be mixing with the housing residents (female, aged 40+).

I don't know, are they a bit different to us? I don't know. Very busy people, may not have enough opportunity, may not have enough time. (female, aged 30+).

Nobody like gets in the mix of the community so I find it – like it's good that they're trying to make an effort to try to change it and that, but it won't work out how - like the concept you know? (male, aged 20+).

These arguments around the nuances of how social mix works in practice echo public residents' sentiments in other studies. Chaskin and Joseph (2010) and Arthurson (2010b) found that public tenants did not expect to interact with private residents or that it would lead to the development of 'community'. At Carlton public tenants said that the new mix of residents did not affect them much in their everyday lives as there was no real mixing occurring between them and private residents. They expressed the view that while it would have little effect on their lives social mix would impact more negatively on private residents moving into the estate.

I feel sorry for them. I mean you're paying \$400,000 for a small flat and you're living next to commission homes, you know? (male, aged 60+).

Private residents' views and experiences of social mix

Viva Carlton is an urban neighbourhood that actively encourages interaction between residents with an open landscaped space between two buildings. The development comprises two low-rise buildings of 46 and 44 apartments, each with studio, one and two-bedroom configurations (Citta Property Group 2014).

This statement appeared on the private developer's website (Citta Property Group 2014), for the first stage development at Lygon site, seemingly to attract prospective private buyers to Carlton estate. It is

interesting to note that there is no mention of the idea of social mix or the public housing building, which is an integral part of the same development and situated right next door to the two private buildings. This seems attributable in part to the changing face of social mix to reflect the later more market driven agenda for the redevelopment process.

Most of the private residents that were interviewed also reflected the developer's vision for a more upmarket or gentrified neighbourhood, which has little relationship to the original vision of social mix and social inclusion across different housing tenure groups. As one of the interviewees pointed out, most private residents did not choose to live at Carlton estate (Viva Carlton) with the specific aim of engaging with public tenants:

It's not on my agenda. Never was my intention moving in here but I am open to it, yeah. I wouldn't go out of my way to befriend people from the other blocks. From this block I can understand because we're all in the same [private residents] building (female, aged 30+, owner-occupier).

Far from depicting a viewpoint of social mix as linked to social inclusion private residents also reinforced public housing tenants' views around how social mix [dis] functions in practice. In interviews they often stated that they had little in common with their nearby public housing tenants neighbours:

Actually to be honest I think we are quite separated, I mean the people living in the public housing building and me and my friends living in that apartment. Actually we don't have some communication; for me, yeah I think we are totally separated (male, aged 20+, renter).

Yeah so there's three buildings, so I wouldn't go out of my way to create a friendship. I live here so - but in this [private] building I definitely would because I feel like I'm closer to these people and they're - you know, they share my building so we want to protect the same asset I don't feel bad about living next to people in commission housing, I just - it is us and them very much so, especially when there's damage to property and you feel that it doesn't hurt them like it hurts you because - I mean we're invested in this property (female, aged 30+, owner-occupier).

In the current study when asked what they thought about the original vision for Carlton of a 'salt and pepper' mix, common responses by private residents were:

I'm not sure we would have purchased here in the first place. I mean I've had stuff stolen from the car park downstairs - I'm not sure... you know. (male, aged 30+, owner-occupier).

It's funny but just recently the investment part of my brain goes 'oh well, hang on ...if I was in a building where it was also public housing what sort of control would there be and how would I protect my investment?' It's a selfish way of looking at things but I guess it's a reality if you're paying a lot of money to buy a property. I think there'd have to be a lot of thinking around that (female, aged 30+, owner-occupier).

Similar to other study findings these perspectives about social mix highlight that far from social mix as social inclusion private residents perceive an inherent distinction between 'us' - the private owners

who purchased their properties - and 'them' – public tenants who pay subsidised rents to government for their housing (Arthurson 2012a; Lelevrier 2013).

Some private residents had a slightly different view about social mix. These residents participated in 'Eco-Carlton' a project funded by the City of Melbourne, DHS and Environment Victoria that coordinated interested private and public residents from all three buildings to meet together and learn about the special environmental features installed in the buildings. The idea was that some residents would eventually become local 'environmental champions' (CCW 2014). Residents that participated in these workshops stated that they could see that having wider social mix on the estate was worthwhile. Having said this though, many believed that this initiative was not enough to maintain ongoing social interactions and that more community development work was needed:

...either someone really passionate needs to just do it and manage it or it needs to be managed and promoted. Like the Environment Victoria workshops, I can see that was a big thing there to get people together but that was actually quite a commitment. (female, aged 30+, owner-occupier).

This perspective concurs with the idea of social mix as a means to enhance social capital through participation in local organisations and initiatives with common meetings, shared norms and activities that encourage positive social relations and bonds between members of different groups (Graves 2010; Tach 2009). This was similar to the findings of Allen et al (2007) in two middle class neighbourhoods, which found that the 'spoiled identity' of social housing tenants was managed through middle class residents emphasising the similarities rather than differences between them. Nevertheless, in the case of Carlton the bonds between residents in different tenures have not been maintained beyond the duration of the organised activities of the Eco-Carlton initiative.

Conclusions

This paper examined a diversity of perspectives about social mix at the redeveloped Carlton housing estate, including from tenants, homeowners and service providers. The framework for analysis was two different understandings of social mix as outlined in academic debates that critique policy perspectives about social mix. That of social mix as social inclusion and developing community, and social mix as a state-led gentrification process. We were interested in ascertaining whether or not these policy perspectives about social mix were shared by various stakeholders at Carlton Estate. In exploring this, a limitation of the current study was that no interviews were conducted with the relevant Department of Human Services government policy makers at Carlton estate. While it was our intention to interview policy-makers they declined our requests to participate in the study.

Initially, it seems that the Carlton Residents Association (CRA) and service providers shared policy-makers' vision of social mix as a means for social inclusion for public housing tenants. This discourse expressed optimism about having a mix of housing tenures in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, members of the CRA and service providers were specific about the requisite scale of implementation of social mix. From their perspectives social mix was only linked to social inclusion if it involved implementation of a model of 'salt and pepper mix', whereby public and private residents resided in the same buildings. The idea of a salt and pepper mix was envisaged as a positive contribution to reducing stigma and the poor reputations associated with the estate when it comprised concentrated social housing. In interviews service providers portrayed the model of social mix as moving over time from a shared vision for social inclusion between different housing tenure groups to a state led form of gentrification that converted publicly owned land to private ownership, to enable project viability in the face of economic downturn.

Public tenants generally were not interested in, or thought much about social mix. When they mentioned it they generally perceived social mix in diverse ways to the social inclusion visions imagined by service providers and the CRA in the current study. Some tenants mentioned that they understood arguments about social mix leading to social inclusion. However, as found in other studies (Arthurson 2012a; Lelevrier 2013) their perspectives on social mix were more practical and framed by their day-to-day experiences of living with social mix. They said social mix was unlikely to work in practice and in some instances they reflected private residents' qualms about living amongst public tenants. Private residents predominately depicted social mix (in the form of housing tenure) as a way to distinguish themselves from public tenants, rather than evoking an image of social inclusion. They drew on perspectives about social mix to highlight the perceived inherent distinction between 'us' – private owners who purchased their properties - and 'them' – public tenants who pay subsidised rents to government for their housing (Lelevrier 2013). Specifically they were against a salt and pepper mix and linked this to a lowering of the value of their properties. Some said they would not have purchased housing on the estate if they were aware of an integrated model of social mix being adopted. In particular, in relating their understanding of social mix they often expressed the view that they worried about whether their investment in private housing at Carlton was worthwhile due to the presence of public housing. Nevertheless, some private tenants articulated an ideal of social mix as 'building community' (rather than using the term social inclusion). Commonalities were experienced between public and private residents when they worked together on a shared project 'EcoCarlton'. This experience led some residents to express the view that social mix was worthwhile, although the connections between the housing tenure groups were not maintained once the project ended.

Although it is still early in the day given the timeframe for the project, it appears that over time for public authorities a state-led gentrification discourse overtook the original social inclusion ideals as they sought to capitalise on the potential value of the land at Carlton. Given the concerns articulated by many private tenants about the value of their housing, due to the continued presence of social housing, it seems apt to refer here to Ley and Dobson's (2007) term of 'blocked gentrification'. In effect, implementing a social mix with an enduring and visible concentration of public housing is a factor that may delay the trajectory of gentrification. From this viewpoint both the stigma attached to social housing, and its ongoing establishment in the neighbourhood slows the potential for additional housing to become available on the private market, acting as a brake on the gentrification processes.

At the Carlton Redevelopment project there was a gradual move away from perceiving social mix as a policy tool for encouraging social inclusion between public housing tenants and private residents towards a different form of social mix and inclusion. The new form of social mix is perceived as a means to harness market capital and attract higher income residents to the inner city.

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