

A Difficult Mix: Issues in Achieving Socioeconomic Diversity in Deprived UK Neighbourhoods

Joanne Bretherton and Nicholas Pleace

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Abstract

This paper explores attempts to enhance social capital, reduce negative area effects and improve life chances in deprived neighbourhoods by promoting social diversity. The paper draws on the results of two recent studies. The first study examined resident perceptions of new, high-density, mixed-tenure housing that was designed to provide socially diverse and cohesive communities. The second study examined the housing allocations policies of UK social landlords, focusing on their attempts to balance their role in housing high-need homeless households with their role in the sustainment of neighbourhood social diversity. After reviewing the results of each study, the paper concludes that the management of perceived, and actual, risks to social cohesion from some poorer households is a central concern in the promotion of socially diverse neighbourhoods.

Introduction

In the UK, deprived urban neighbourhoods are viewed by policy-makers as having a culture of worklessness. This negative culture is held to exist, in a mutually reinforcing relationship, with low levels of legitimate economic activity, poor levels of public order, degraded environments and widespread substance misuse (Ritchie *et al.*, 2005; Fletcher *et al.*, 2008). Public services in deprived neighbourhoods are often overstretched because

they are dealing with spatial concentrations of poverty and, since most people have little money, there is no demand-led incentive for private-sector services to develop. These neighbourhoods are widely viewed as lessening the life chances of the people who live within them. Such concerns about area effects in deprived urban space closely reflect those in many comparable countries and are quite often linked to concerns about

Joanne Bretherton and Nicholas Pleace (*corresponding author*) are in the Centre for Housing Policy, University of York, York, YO10 5DD, UK. E-mail: Joanne.Bretherton@york.ac.uk and Nicholas.Pleace@york.ac.uk.

the spatial concentration of some ethnic and cultural groups in deprived neighbourhoods (Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001; Andersen, 2002; Bauder, 2002; Musterd, 2003; Murie and Musterd, 2004; Robinson, 2005; Musterd and Andersson, 2006; Andersson *et al.*, 2007; Galster, 2007a, 2007b; Kim and Ross, 2009; Dujardin *et al.*, 2008; Ha, 2008).

Although it involved extensive slum clearance from the 1950s through to the early 1970s, more recent British urban policy has aimed to increase social diversity within deprived neighbourhoods (SEU, 2001; ODPM, 2003a, 2005a, 2005b; HM Government, 2006; Bailey *et al.*, 2006; Hills, 2007). Policy is posited on the assumption that, if spatial concentrations of poverty can be avoided, the area effects associated with deprived neighbourhoods should not arise to the same extent. Unemployment, substance misuse, crime and other social problems will still exist, but once they are not spatially concentrated, the strain on public services, risks to public order and other negative neighbourhood effects should be less. The shops will still be open, the streets still safe and risks to private-sector investment should be minimised.

In the UK, academic and policy debate centres on increasing social diversity in deprived neighbourhoods *without* any major displacement of poorer households (Atkinson, 2008). This approach has as much currency with the resurgent right wing of British politics (Davies, 2008; Antrobus, 2009), as with the New Labour governments that held office between 1997 and 2010 (Fletcher *et al.*, 2008; Beatty *et al.*, 2009). The British approach is distinct from the emphasis on dispersal that is found in US urban policy, as it seeks to improve the life chances of poor urban households *in situ* (Brooks, 2005; Busch-Geertsema, 2007; Imbroscio, 2008). The UK has also tried to encourage socioeconomic diversity in new-build housing through mechanisms like Section 106 agreements (Burgess *et al.*, 2008).

There is evidence to support the British approach. Poverty exists at some level in almost all British urban space, but in neighbourhoods where it is less spatially concentrated, socioeconomic problems tend to be lower. Corporations, mapping household expenditure patterns using GIS for marketing purposes, have produced detailed maps of a highly spatially fragmented urban Britain, in which small enclaves of different classes often live next to one another (Burrows, 2008). While there is evidence that the middle classes in cities occasionally 'fort up' in gated communities (Atkinson and Flint, 2004; Atkinson, 2006), urban Britain is much more often characterised by micro enclaves of more affluent households that are neither physically isolated nor gated. The fragmented, highly socioeconomically mixed neighbourhoods of much of urban Britain *contain* significant poverty without being *defined* by that poverty (Burrows, 2008). Where this greater social diversity exists, the negative area effects that are evident in the deprived neighbourhoods of urban Britain are less prominent (SEU, 2001).

These ideas have been subject to critical scrutiny. The Communitarian origins of some US thought, which has influenced British policy, have been criticised, as in some of the US literature good neighbourhoods only seem to be places where White, Christian, middle-class people would want to live (Lupton and Tunstall, 2008; Imbroscio, 2008). There is also evidence that the effects of spatially concentrated deprivation can be inconsistent and that in some instances they do not actually seem to be present (Buck, 2001; Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Kearns, 2002; Atkinson and Kintrea, 2004; Brannstrom, 2004; Murie and Musterd, 2004; Andrews and Reardon-Smith, 2005; Middleton *et al.*, 2005; Ritchie *et al.*, 2005; Cheshire, 2007; Fletcher *et al.*, 2008). In addition, some research has suggested that the life chances of poorer households in socially diverse neighbourhoods are not necessarily any better than

in deprived areas (Kearns, 2002; Andrews and Reardon-Smith, 2005; Robinson, 2005; Cheshire, 2007; Graham *et al.*, 2009).

Mapping, measuring and isolating tangible neighbourhood effects within often highly fragmented and highly interconnected cities can be difficult (Cole and Goodchild, 2001; Lupton, 2003; Bates, 2006; Galster and Booza, 2007; Burrows, 2008; Imbroscio, 2008; Flint, 2009a). Beyond the questions of how exactly one might clearly map and then target deprived 'neighbourhoods' in highly fragmented urban space (Bates, 2006; Burrows, 2008), it is also not entirely clear what exactly the social mix within an optimally diverse neighbourhood should look like (Andersson *et al.*, 2007; Galster, 2007b; Busch-Geertsema, 2007).

The promotion of neighbourhood social diversity is posited, in part, on the idea that there can be a positive cultural influence from working households on workless households (Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Middleton *et al.*, 2005). However, while many British urban neighbourhoods are socially diverse, this positive 'social capital'—the employed 'encouraging' the unemployed to get back into work, setting a positive example via social interaction—is not always evident. One reason for this may be that, although different socioeconomic classes often live very close to one another, they do not share the same housing and are often socially disassociated (Atkinson, 2008; Kintrea *et al.*, 2008).

Questions about the promotion of socioeconomically mixed urban neighbourhoods also arise because of the tendency of more affluent households to cluster together in large numbers. Spatial sorting by socioeconomic class in the UK has not occurred simply because more affluent owner-occupiers want to avoid poorer households (Bauman, 2000). It is evident that high housing costs have also driven the processes of suburbanisation and gentrification (Atkinson and Bridge, 2004; Atkinson, 2006 and 2008). However, there

is strong evidence of an inclination among more affluent owner-occupiers to live in socioeconomically homogeneous suburban enclaves and to resist encroachment by poorer households into those enclaves (Young and Kramer, 1978; Bevan, 2000; Cloke *et al.*, 2002; Atkinson and Flint, 2004; Atkinson, 2006; Burrows, 2008; Mooney, 2008). Similar trends are equally evident outside the UK (Schelling, 1971; Davis, 1990; Jordan, 1996; Bishop, 2008; Musterd, 2003 and 2008). This gives rise to the criticism that attempting to promote social diversity in urban neighbourhoods goes against the demonstrable preferences of many more affluent households.

A related difficulty is that social diversity in deprived urban neighbourhoods is only enhanced by gentrification up to a point. If owner-occupiers arrive *en masse*, then housing costs start to go up. This can drive out welfare-benefit-dependent households who are not in social housing, then the lower-income working households who could previously have rented privately or bought homes (Atkinson, 2006 and 2008). Relatively unbalanced urban neighbourhoods, in which large numbers of affluent owner-occupiers and private renters live alongside a residue of poorer households in social housing, can be the result (Galster and Booza, 2007). The promotion of social diversity in deprived neighbourhoods is therefore an attempt to *control* gentrification processes that, if left unchecked, might force out many poorer households as housing costs rise.

One answer to these criticisms is to point out that it is not just owner-occupiers who want to live in quiet, ordered, environmentally attractive urban space with good infrastructure and a strong labour market (Burrows and Rhodes, 1998). British urban policy in the past two decades has, whatever the difficulties it confronts, consistently sought to create diverse, cohesive and attractive urban space where people *want* to live. The UK has also not tried to deal with

spatial concentrations of urban poverty by removing existing neighbourhoods, but has instead sought to improve the life chances of all its citizens (Atkinson, 2008), rather than gentrifying deprived areas (Neidt, 2006; Imbroscio, 2008).

This paper explores the operation of policies promoting social mix in British urban space from different standpoints. The first standpoint is that of residents within mixed-tenure urban housing that was deliberately managed by social landlords to promote socially balanced neighbourhoods. The second standpoint is that of social landlords who were attempting to reconcile their role in housing poorer households with their more recent role in promoting economically and socially balanced neighbourhoods.

The paper draws on two recently completed studies. The first study looked at residents' views of new mixed-tenure housing that was purposively designed to enhance social diversity and found tensions and resident dissatisfaction resulting from attempts to design a social mix into new urban housing. The second study explored a policy tension within British urban policy from the perspective of social landlords. This tension resulted from one set of expectations being placed on social landlords to promote socially diverse neighbourhoods while they were also being expected to rehouse formerly homeless people, whose presence was widely perceived as potentially increasing negative area effects if those landlords were expected to rehouse this group in significant numbers. The results of the studies are reviewed and the implications for policy and further research are discussed.

The Two Studies

This paper explores the promotion of social diversity through two pieces of original research, drawing both on published reports and on new analysis. Both of the studies focused on housing associations (HAs) which

are 'third sector', that is charitable and voluntary, social landlords receiving significant subsidy from the state. They are the major mechanism through which the UK government seeks to provide new affordable housing. HAs have a leading role in the policy pursuit of urban social diversity, as many deprived neighbourhoods contain significant social housing stock (Malpass, 2005; Hills, 2007).

Study 1 examined eight new-build, mixed-tenure, high-density housing schemes, all but one of which were developed by HAs within the past decade (Bretherton and Pleace, 2008). Seven of these schemes were designed, literally, to build new socially diverse housing in deprived urban neighbourhoods, the eighth was a private-sector development that had received planning permission because it provided mixed-affordability housing. The schemes were specifically intended to attract 'key workers', such as teachers, nurses, social workers and other middle-income groups, among whom urban housing was widely seen as both unaffordable and unattractive (CABE, 2005), to live alongside poorer social renters. Most offered a mixture of social renting and low-cost homeownership (partly owned by the resident and partly rented from the housing association, which in most cases means the property is 25 or 50 per cent owned by the resident), as well as full-price homes sold on the open market at a profit to help subsidise the cost of the development (GLA, 2001; Cope, 2002; ODPM, 2003b; Allen *et al.*, 2005).

The Study 1 research was designed to learn the views of the residents of eight purposively selected schemes. Criteria for selection included being typical in size, location, tenure spread and dwelling density; schemes also had to have been occupied for a minimum of three years. The oldest of the eight schemes in which fieldwork took place was completed in 2001 and the most recent in 2006. A number of the schemes had won major architectural awards. All had been built at a density of at least 40 housing units per hectare, rising to

120 units or more for two of the schemes. Three schemes were located in London.

The research drew on the support of an advisory panel of leading architects and CEOs from major HAs. A mixture of methods was used to elicit resident perspectives. This paper draws on the semi-structured interviews and week-long diaries residents kept about their homes and is based on responses from 41 residents. Participation in the research was strictly voluntary and anonymous, both for the households and the HAs. The fieldwork for the research pre-dated the recession and subsequent falls in house prices.

Study 2 was a national-level exploration of the role of HAs in housing statutorily homeless households in England, which was commissioned by government (Pleace *et al.*, 2007). Local authorities have a legal duty to house certain households, containing dependent children and certain 'vulnerable' groups, if they are to be found 'statutorily' homeless. HA housing, accessed by direct referral and through shared allocation systems in which many social landlords participate, is one of the main means by which local authorities discharge this duty (Pawson *et al.*, 2009). There is an expectation that HAs should make available one half of their available lets to local authorities and take a leading role in helping to tackle homelessness (Housing Corporation, 2003; CLG, 2005; Housing Corporation, 2006; CLG and the Housing Corporation, 2008).

Study 2 was commissioned because levels of HA activity in relation to statutory homelessness appeared to be generally low and structurally similar HAs were behaving inconsistently. Government suspected that high levels of sustained worklessness and sometimes high support needs, including substance misuse (Kemp *et al.*, 2006; Pleace, 2008), was one reason for apparently low levels of HA enthusiasm in engaging with statutorily homeless households. Alongside this, tensions between housing significant

numbers of homeless households and the expectation that HAs would deliver cohesive, ordered and socially diverse neighbourhoods, were thought likely to exist.

Study 2 comprised a statistical review of national-level administrative data, including the Regulatory and Statistical Returns Survey (RSR), the Continuous Recording System (CORE) and statistical returns on statutory homelessness (PIE). An on-line survey was conducted of all HAs that had housed and/or rejected at least one statutorily homeless household (144 responses, 41 per cent response rate) and local authorities were also surveyed (212 responses, 62 per cent response rate). Detailed fieldwork was conducted in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool and two mixed urban/rural areas, with 22 semi-structured focus groups being undertaken with 150 housing managers from 31 HAs and 16 local authorities (Pleace *et al.*, 2007).

Study 1: Resident Views of New Mixed-tenure Housing Schemes

Prior to fieldwork commencing on Study 1, it had been expected that residents in the eight schemes would report that they found it difficult living at what were relatively high-density levels by UK standards. However, when the interviews with residents in the eight schemes were completed, there was strong evidence that careful architecture meant residents were not really aware of living at a high density. Neighbouring estates and housing were often viewed as being higher density than the schemes, although those schemes always at least matched, and often exceeded, the dwelling densities around them. This sense of space was achieved by design which meant that residents did not feel overlooked, such as curved and asymmetrical shapes and green open space. Where there was any sense of being 'overcrowded', it was related to high child density and to

insufficient car parking, rather than the architecture. High levels of natural light and efficient insulation, coupled with large central living areas, often led residents to describe their accommodation in very positive terms, although housing costs were sometimes viewed as quite high.

Owner-occupiers often had negative attitudes towards social diversity within their schemes. Some of those respondents in low-cost homeownership arrangements, or who were owner-occupiers, took the view that the housing investment they had made was 'devalued' through proximity to poorer 'renters'. Being next to 'renters' undermined the sense that these households had of making a positive investment by buying a house, lessening the sense of financial and emotional security that often accompanies homeownership (Somerville, 1997; Cheshire, 2007). The sales material provided by HAs was criticised by some respondents for not making the presence of social rented tenants on site much more explicit

They also hadn't made it clear that the part we would be in is also the first two, I think three, floors of people who are totally rented ... It felt like well why didn't you make that clear because you've divided us from the totally private [market-value owner-occupied] flats ... we spent all this money and you never even told us there's a possibility ... please understand it's not me being snobbish (low-cost homeowner).

Owner occupiers also reported that social and private renters were a source of 'disruption'. A crucial perception among these owner-occupying respondents was that, unlike themselves, 'renters' had no sense of 'investment' and did not 'care' for their homes (Saunders, 1990; Somerville, 1997)

Seventy per cent of our building rent and they don't give a monkey's [do not care] (owner-occupier).

I don't believe that they would do that if they were buying it. There's somebody who constantly brings in a trolley from Tesco's and then just leaves it in the corridor ... (low-cost homeowner).

I don't think there should be social housing personally ... It should all be key workers (low-cost homeowner).

Negative feelings tended to run highest when, as is common in the UK (Jones, 2009), different tenures of housing had distinctive designs, varying in style, size, standard of finish and amenities. In schemes where there was an architectural distinction between owner-occupied, low-cost homeownership and rented units, a strong sense of difference and division was reported by many residents. This could be as acute for social rented tenants as for other residents who could sometimes feel as if they were 'marked out' and were demeaned by more affluent owner-occupiers

Everybody knows who moves in, they know which one is gonna be homeowner, shared ownership or what ... Or there's a slight design difference or a bigger garden ... or there's an extra shower and so basically even though they're trying to integrate, they're not because they've already set a difference (social rented tenant).

There's a slight resentment. Everything is magnified though isn't it? Everything is seen ... So you're exposed completely ... everyone knows your business in a way (social rented tenant).

Other research has also suggested that crime, anti-social behaviour and vandalism, alongside 'failing to care' for housing, are strongly associated, in the popular imagination, with social and private renters (Rowlands *et al.*, 2006). Study 1 suggested that these feelings may be particularly acute for households that are struggling to afford homeownership, or which are only able to afford part-ownership.

While in many respects low-cost homeowners are in the same circumstances as social rented tenants in terms of partly renting from a housing association and sometimes having physically similar properties or that are in the same location in the development, they were much 'closer' to owner-occupiers in their perceptions of social mix than the social rented residents.

Where an architectural distinction between tenures was not evident, tensions were lower. However, when fieldwork was conducted in a scheme without architectural distinctions between tenures, the owner-occupiers were found to be surprised that there was a social mix. When told there were social tenants living among them, the owner-occupiers reacted by saying there had been no problems "so far" as a result of this. These negative attitudes towards social renters appeared to be pre-formed. There was a belief that social renters would present a source of anti-social behaviour and would neglect their homes and the environment. These attitudes persisted, despite owner-occupiers having been unwittingly living alongside social renters and not encountering any problems. Some low-cost homeowners also reported feeling 'deceived' by HAs about the presence of social renters within their schemes.

The owner-occupiers and those in low-cost homeownership arrangements often feared they would be subject to crime by the inhabitants of the urban space surrounding their scheme. These respondents often viewed their schemes as 'under siege' by the residents of the deprived neighbourhood within which their homes had been built

18.50: Youths have moved to top of path under No. 10's or is it 11's doorway. At top of path saw completely uprooted bollard [short posts used to delimit an area] and upturned shopping trolley. Couldn't help but link all this. Phoned police to report vandalism. Might have known the bollards would barely last a week (low-cost homeowner diary entry).

I think the community is maybe slightly bound together by the 'common enemy', which is the surrounding area (low-cost homeowner).

There were low levels of interaction between different socioeconomic groups within the schemes. This was related in part to design, in that communal facilities were not always present on site, but it was more often seen in terms of socioeconomically distinct households not wishing to mix with one another.

It doesn't mix, we just tolerate each other (low-cost homeowner).

The last time I actually met someone, a new person, I know they were imbued with enthusiasm about [the scheme], and a community where things take place, and then I met them again a couple of months later and they looked thoroughly depressed and just shrugged her shoulders and I said it's the culture of the place (low-cost homeowner).

Despite the reported discontent with social mix, the eight schemes offered many advantages for owner-occupiers. These centred on convenient location, proximity to work, good design and being relatively affordable. The positive aspects of these schemes meant that owner-occupiers were both being attracted into them and also opting to stay. This finding has to be seen in a context of constrained choice, in the sense that other, perhaps preferable, housing options were not affordable, or meant an unacceptable commute. However, it was interesting that the discontent of the owner-occupiers with social mix was not sufficient to mean they all wanted to live elsewhere. Social mix, while it evidently produced owner-occupier discontent, did not lead to abandonment of the schemes by owner-occupiers.

When residents reported that they did want to move, the social mix within the schemes was rarely given as a reason. A wish or desire for alternative housing was sometimes linked to changes in household composition, such

as the addition of a partner and/or child or a change of job. Other reasons were because of crime and anti-social behaviour in the area surrounding their scheme or the location of the development in terms of local facilities. The desire to live within a mono-tenure environment with other owner-occupiers was not given as a reason.

However, in some senses, the owner-occupiers in Study 1 were perhaps not 'typical', in that they had already opted to live in urban space in which housing costs were very high. Whether many of the owner-occupiers in monocultural middle-class British suburbs could be attracted to this form of urban living may be debatable.

Study 2: Housing Statutorily Homeless Households in Socially Diverse Neighbourhoods

Tackling homelessness is not just about providing accommodation for homeless households accepted by local authorities. It is also about building sustainable, mixed and balanced communities. Balanced communities help promote social cohesion and equality, avoiding concentrations of deprivation and addressing social exclusion and community cohesion (Housing Corporation, 2006, p. 10).

Before it was replaced in 2008, the Housing Corporation summed up what was still government policy at the time of writing. HAs had a leading role in 'tackling' homelessness, which had to be reconciled with a responsibility to ensure that the neighbourhoods they managed were cohesive and socially diverse.

Central government was aware of the levels of sustained worklessness and economic exclusion among statutorily homeless households. Consequently, instructions were issued to HAs and other social landlords to avoid spatial concentration of statutorily homeless households, to minimise any potential threat to neighbourhood social diversity (CLG, 2005). Over time, concern

grew within central government that HA responses to requests to house statutorily homeless people, while variable, appeared generally rather unenthusiastic.

In England, the numbers of statutorily homeless households are quite low in many areas outside London and they have also fallen rapidly due to a greater emphasis on prevention (Pawson, 2007). However, while HAs would not be expected to make a great many housing lets to statutorily homeless households, 20 per cent of HAs were found to be making no lets to homeless people at all. Overall, 75 per cent of HAs were making less than 25 per cent of their available lets to statutorily homeless households.¹ HA activity was also not correlated with relative levels of statutory homelessness (rates at which statutory homelessness occurred per 1000 population). The HAs were both generally *less* active in housing statutorily homeless households than central government thought reasonable and the rates at which they made lets to homeless people were not correlated with rates of statutory homelessness (Pleace *et al.*, 2007).

The interviews with local authority and HA staff showed that there were perceived tensions between promoting social diversity in deprived neighbourhoods and housing statutorily homeless households. Housing often long-term-workless homeless households was seen as a risk to optimal social mix within neighbourhoods which HAs managed, or within which they had significant levels of housing stock

If you start putting people in one area because they're hard to let then that is not the way to deal with homeless people. It's a case then of disturbing the community, you need a balanced community. If we are getting homelessness applicants all the time through the nominations and if we have only a small estate in an area, it will gradually fill up with those people and become difficult to manage, difficult and expensive to maintain (HA housing manager).

The most striking finding, however, was the view HA staff often took about housing homeless people with high support needs, who were seen as representing unacceptable risks to neighbourhood cohesion. This related specifically to individuals whose homelessness was associated with substance misuse, mental health problems, offending, anti-social behaviour and previous tenancy problems, particularly those homeless people who exhibited most or all of these characteristics. Social landlords often took the view that it was only by *excluding* this group that social diversity and cohesion could be maintained in a neighbourhood, as other households would be driven out by even small numbers of this high-cost, high-risk population. There was a belief that a sufficient spatial concentration of this group would push a neighbourhood to ‘tipping point’, that it would *create* a socially unbalanced space which would adversely affect the people who lived there and spiral downwards as economically active households left

Single-people households, especially male, as there is almost always a problem; there must be for them to be accepted as homeless in the first place (HA housing manager).

If you keep putting vulnerable people with support needs, keep putting them into the same area, you are not going to sustain that area. That area is going to be a problem. And what you need, where we have been most successful, is where we have been able, rather than pepper-potting rented in development terms, actually, is where we are able to pepper-pot those people with support needs... (HA housing manager).

I think it is discriminatory because it is largely those that are vulnerable that are discriminated against by the exclusions ... they [HAs] are discriminatory against young people as a group, as there are disproportionate numbers of young people who are affected by that, they are discriminatory against other

groups who may have mental health issues, who might have other support needs (HA housing manager).

When a statutorily homeless household had support needs, HAs did not always feel confident that the National Health Service or social services would provide the support they required. While HAs could be reassured about housing statutorily homeless households with high needs if a support package were in place, they became concerned when a package of support was not in place and, even when support was present, were worried that it might be withdrawn. This finding was linked to wider debates about the appropriateness of a primarily housing-led welfare response to homeless people with multiple needs (Pleace, 1995; Kemp *et al.*, 2006; Pleace and Minton, 2009)

We go back to council [local authority] and say maybe this is not the right allocation, what we will do is be honest with them and say these are the reasons why, and they can appeal against it and ask for further information and we are more than willing to provide. We still do take another nomination [referral] off of them, but not that particular one—and I think—we’ve been told to do that by our legal advisors basically, why take on the risk? (HA housing manager).

In England, the majority of statutorily homeless households are families, usually headed by a lone mother, often with young children. While these homeless families are often workless, these households are generally no more likely to be characterised by high support needs, or issues like substance misuse, than the general population (Pleace *et al.*, 2008). It was the case that the HAs had some concern about housing too many workless homeless households in one area for fear of negative neighbourhood effects. However, their main concerns focused on the sub-group of ‘high-cost, high-risk’ homeless households who were often workless, but

who were also characterised by high support needs and challenging behaviour.

Discussion

Study 2 and Study 1 reported very similar findings from quite different standpoints. Both studies found that economically and socially marginalised groups were viewed as an inherent 'threat' to neighbourhood cohesion and attractiveness. In Study 1, owner-occupiers perceived this threat as coming from social renters. In Study 2, social landlords perceived the same threats to neighbourhood cohesion and attractiveness as coming from statutorily homeless households.

Study 1 showed that attempts to facilitate social mix through building socially diverse housing often have to deal with owner-occupier perceptions that poorer households are *inherently* bad neighbours. Owner-occupiers in the schemes were apprehensive about the welfare dependency and low incomes of their immediate neighbours and they often feared the poorer people in the deprived neighbourhoods surrounding them.

Clearly, for the owner-occupiers in Study 1, visible signs of poverty created real unease. Some of the research findings presented here, and elsewhere, show that careful architecture and area management can obscure the extent of social diversity and reduce owner-occupier concerns (Allen *et al.*, 2005; Bailey *et al.*, 2006; Rowlands *et al.*, 2006; Bretherton and Pleace, 2008). However, if owner-occupiers have to be 'fooled' into thinking they are living in more socially heterogeneous environments than is actually the case, then questions arise about both the ethics and the effectiveness of what is actually an attempt at spatial social 'integration' by stealth (Andrews and Reardon-Smith, 2005; Cheshire, 2007).

Yet, if owner-occupiers are clear that poorer households will be their immediate neighbours, but can still be persuaded to move into and then stay within new mixed-tenure urban

schemes, then positive outcomes could result. The key to success may depend on what the nature of the social diversity being sought actually is.

If neighbourhood social diversity must involve generating interclass social capital to overcome 'cultures of worklessness', then the eight Study 1 schemes could only be a partial success at best. There was little sense of community or social interaction between classes in the schemes. If lack of exposure to positive 'social capital', due to owner-occupier social disassociation, explains why poor households do not always benefit from living in more socially diverse neighbourhoods (Graham *et al.*, 2009), then the spatial proximity of different classes offered by the Study 1 schemes was not enough to improve the life chances of their poorer residents.

There is, of course, a difficulty in interpreting these findings as indicating a 'shortfall' in positive 'social capital' because the different classes within the Study 1 schemes did not interact. The potential issue centres on the suggestion that social capital both has the potential to exist in this *specific* form and that it can in fact be *facilitated* into existence. The idea that balanced cohesive neighbourhoods can create 'communities' in which the employed classes encourage long-term-workless and marginalised people towards social and economic norms is very attractive, but the evidence base on the meaning, nature and effects of social capital remains disputed (DeFilippis, 2001; Robinson, 2005).

Conversely, if neighbourhood effects are mainly a function of the spatial concentration of poverty, then there are more grounds for optimism. Ordered and prosperous owner-occupied neighbourhoods in Britain are, after all, generally *not* characterised by large amounts of social capital and household ties to specific neighbourhoods are often very limited (Savage *et al.*, 2005). Even if social capital is *not* evident, and even if socioeconomic spatial sorting is actually still occurring but at

a micro level (Burrows, 2008), more socially diverse neighbourhoods still tend to be better places to live than neighbourhoods in which there is a clear spatial concentration of poverty. On this basis, while the Study 1 schemes may not have been perfect, they could still lessen negative neighbourhood effects, simply because they create greater neighbourhood socioeconomic diversity.

Study 2 showed that, for HAs, statutorily homeless households were viewed as an inherent risk to neighbourhoods. From the perspective of some HAs, certain categories of household had to be present in very low numbers, or entirely excluded, to maintain neighbourhood cohesion.

The findings of Study 2 relate to wider questions about how much surveillance of high-cost, high-risk sub-groups is acceptable in order to maintain neighbourhood social diversity. This includes questions about the management of anti-social and criminal behaviour among existing social tenants through more coercive forms of care, such as compulsory treatment for substance misuse (Pleace, 2008), as well as the role of criminal justice systems in managing spatially concentrated poverty. The filtering of potential tenants by social landlords, which was the focus of Study 2, is an integral part of these debates (Pleace, 1995; Jones *et al.*, 2006; Croucher *et al.*, 2007). Flint has described these interrelated questions as centring on the growing role of social housing in regulating conduct (Flint, 2009b).

It is worth noting that surveillance can be beneficial and supportive (Dornan and Hudson, 2003). For example, information can be shared to facilitate joint working between social landlords, health and social care providers and the criminal justice system to provide co-ordinated packages of services that facilitate independence and minimise risks (Pleace and Minton, 2009). However, such responses have resource implications and, if there are few resources in place, social landlords may,

as Study 2 showed, resort to crude metrics that simply ban entire broad categories of household from their housing because they represent potential 'risks' to neighbourhood diversity and cohesion.

The ability of more vulnerable and chaotic households to access positive social capital, within 'socially diverse' neighbourhoods that both fear and seek to regulate them, is questionable. Further research might usefully investigate how a balance between regulation and access to positive social capital can be combined for high-cost, high-risk groups.

Achieving social diversity at neighbourhood level is clearly not just a matter of developing an 'optimal balance' (Galster, 2007b). The management of perceived risks is clearly also an important factor in facilitating urban social diversity. A key consideration is how to present a deprived urban neighbourhood as a space that owner-occupiers view as acceptably attractive and safe, while avoiding the kind of displacement of poor households that can occur with unchecked gentrification. Management of perceived risk must also not undermine the quality of life of poorer households through excessive regulation of their lives. Poorer households should not be unnecessarily constricted by the, supposedly supportive, socially diverse neighbourhoods that are intended to improve their situation.

The correct balance is not easy to achieve. Owner-occupiers will be attracted by good urban housing in convenient locations with decent infrastructure at reasonable cost, but their decisions to move into, and remain within, more deprived urban areas will often also depend on how safe they feel. In addition, it cannot be presumed that even engineered social diversity will automatically lead to the development of interclass social capital, although how far this is an issue depends on how much weight is given to the role of highly localised cultural norms in either sustaining or counteracting poverty.

Note

1. Source: CORE returns for 2006/07. See: <https://core.tenantservicesauthority.org/>. Authors' analysis.

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