

Making Mixed-Income Neighborhoods Work for Low-Income Households

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Abstract

Mixed-income housing policies such as Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere, or HOPE VI, are an outcome of historical processes that have limited the scope of subsidized public housing in America, leading to disinvestment in government housing programs in favor of reinvestment in market-based solutions. The underlying assumption has been that reinvestment deconcentrates poverty and addresses other perceived failures of traditional public housing. Although they provide some benefits to lower income residents, such initiatives have not produced many of the outcomes for which their advocates had hoped. The goal of this article is to reinvigorate the conversation about how, and if, mixed-income housing policies can be implemented in ways that work with and for the benefit of low-income populations. The article draws on literature about public housing and mixed-income development to posit ways that mixed-income initiatives might be combined with other programmatic efforts to foster upward trajectories for those experiencing poverty and to create public housing environments where people can thrive in all aspects of their lives. In the final section, we reimagine mixed-income housing in ways that could result in more inclusive communities—a reimagination that we suggest may better meet the original goals of such programs without dismissing the inherent limitations of solving entrenched poverty.

Introduction

The goal of this article is to reinvigorate the conversation about how, and if, mixed-income housing policies can be implemented in ways that work with and for the benefit of low-income populations. In part, this effort is motivated by the more critical treatments of mixed-income development that fundamentally challenge this agenda toward city building as incapable of achieving both place-based and people-based goals. These critiques suggest that, rather than achieving balanced development that effectively addresses the problems of concentrated urban poverty, mixed-income development schemes are more properly seen as veiled efforts at gentrification, appropriating inner-city neighborhoods with renewed market value for development that disproportionately benefits capital interests and the middle class. In light of these critiques, we ask: Can the twin goals of improving neighborhood conditions and assuring opportunities for low-income people be simultaneously realized? How can mixed-income initiatives be combined with other policy instruments to address poverty in a more holistic manner? What types of community are possible in a mixed-income environment?

In cities across the United States, public housing developments and entire neighborhoods have been sites for mixed-income and mixed-tenure initiatives aimed at transforming urban areas. Proponents of these policies frame mixed-income housing as a route toward building better neighborhoods that will promote poverty amelioration by supplying low-income, “workforce,”¹ and higher income housing products to attract socioeconomic mix (Cisneros and Engdahl, 2009). Alternatively, opponents frame mixed-income housing development as a tool for gentrification founded on the displacement of low-income populations from target neighborhoods under the banner of poverty deconcentration (Bridge, Butler, and Lees, 2012; Lees, 2008). A third position is that many mixed-income initiatives might create some neighborhood change and provide some response to urban poverty but that its effects are more modest than either the gentrification-oriented critics or poverty-deconcentration champions suggest (Fraser, DeFilippis, and Bazuin, 2012). These multiple perspectives on the promise and limitations of mixed-income development strategies arise in part because mixed-income policies and programs, although grounded in a recognition of the deleterious effect of concentrated urban poverty and operating from a set of broad assumptions about the potential benefits of income diversity and neighborhood restructuring, lack a coherent intervention model built from a clear theory of change. Instead, they pull together elements of initiatives (neighborhood planning, architectural design, social-service provision, and “community building” strategies) that seek to materialize certain spatial and social imaginaries of what neighborhoods and public housing developments ought to be.

These contemporary imaginaries are based on ideas about how the built environment might engender certain forms of sociality and how certain forms of sociality might produce locality in line with the dominant political-economic mode (that is, welfare capitalism and post-welfare capitalism) and assumptions about civil society (that is, regarding neighborly interaction and associational engagement). Whereas public housing began by housing a “submerged middle-class” of families who were still connected to the formal economy (Friedman, 1966: 646), since the 1960s it has

¹ *Workforce housing* typically refers to properties that are priced for households earning 80 to 120 percent of the Area Median Income for a city or county.

transformed into a place where incomes are low or nonexistent, rendering it out of sync with the dominant American culture that stresses employment as a prerequisite for exercising citizenship rights such as access to subsidized housing. It is not surprising that the sociological theory of concentrated poverty leading to social pathology (for example, Kasarda, 1990; Wilson, 1987) has been applied to housing policies, most notably the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Moving to Opportunity and Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE VI) programs. Deconcentrating poverty is a central component of both these policies. Although both programs seek to relocate households to higher income neighborhoods, the HOPE VI program has also razed 254 public housing developments and rebuilt them as mixed-income communities. Research to date has not provided much evidence that living in a mixed-income environment alone propels people out of poverty and into the workforce (Chaskin et al., 2012) or breaks down social barriers (Brophy and Smith, 1997; Buron et al., 2002; Chaskin and Joseph, 2011, 2010; Graves, 2010; Kleit and Manzo, 2006; Tach, 2009). Employment or participation in an educational program has nonetheless become a requirement for working-age adults to gain entry to these new developments (Popkin, Levy, and Buron, 2009).

This article draws on literature about public housing and mixed-income development to posit ways that mixed-income initiatives might be combined with other programmatic efforts to foster upward trajectories for those experiencing poverty and to create public housing environments where people can thrive in all aspects of their lives. Since its inception, public housing has been proffered as some version of a safety net or, more negatively, as housing of last resort (Henderson, 1995). The ideological frames that lie behind these orientations present poverty as a temporary and individual issue, the remedy for which is acquiring the requisite skills to reenter the workforce and move back into private-sector housing. We think this individualist focus is a mistake. Structural factors—from the shifting nature of economic opportunity (and constraint) under global capitalism to the enduring effects of racism and racial inequality and the uneven distribution of quality public goods like education—fundamentally shape individuals' experiences of poverty and their access to avenues out of it.

In its early incarnation, the government designed public housing to provide a safety net for people who were made (temporarily) surplus by the capitalist system (Vale, 2000). Today, the housing safety net relies largely on market actors and public-private partnerships. Most people who receive housing subsidies are part of the Housing Choice Voucher Program, which provides the private sector with guaranteed rents for workers with insufficient wages to move into the private sector without state support (Vale and Freemark, 2012). As Nguyen, Rohe, and Cowan (2012: 461) pointed out, project-based public housing developments have faced “substantial cutbacks of federal funds for housing and the adoption of neoliberal housing policies, [with] many local public housing agencies [turning] to social entrepreneurs to maintain their existing housing.”

In recent times, the most significant transformation in the delivery of public housing is the HOPE VI program. Descriptions of the program may be found elsewhere (Abravanel, Levy, and McFarland, 2009), but a brief summary is that it aims to accomplish four primary goals: to (1) improve housing conditions by providing reinvestment in the public housing stock; (2) provide safe, decent housing for people who cannot provide it for themselves; (3) move people away from dependence and toward independence by facilitating entry into private job and housing markets; and (4) stabilize

and improve the neighborhoods in which HOPE VI complexes are located. To accomplish these goals, the HOPE VI model has relied heavily on developing public-private partnerships for financing, management, and other aspects of the program.

Many observers in academic and policy circles consider HOPE VI a success; public-private partnerships have been forged, blighted housing has been replaced with attractive mixed-income developments, and poverty has been reduced at the redeveloped sites (Cisneros and Engdahl, 2009). Important critiques of HOPE VI, however, center around the rationale used for tearing down housing that might have been renovated and the forced displacement of tens of thousands of people who never returned to the redeveloped sites (DeFilippis and Fraser, 2010; Goetz, 2012a). Goetz (2012b) examined three discourses about public housing that have legitimated its demolition: (1) the pathologizing of public housing, (2) the proposition that neighborhood effects of concentrated poverty create social ills, and (3) the notion that public housing is simply obsolete. The discourse of public housing as obsolete refers to the buildings being outdated and in disrepair but also “outdated notions of government control and direction that are embedded in the public housing program” (Goetz, 2012b: 3). The discourse of obsolescence not only puts forth a description, but it is also performative in the sense that it suggests that the state cannot produce adequate housing, which is the appropriate domain of the private sector. As a performative act, the discourse of obsolescence legitimates state withdrawal from providing public housing and, in its place, makes the claim that something essential about the private sector—its efficiency and flexibility—makes it superior. In this way, the cutbacks of federal funding for and the privatizing of public housing seem logical and appealing.

The private sector has not been a good steward of public housing, however, in part because the real estate interests that comprise the sector are not legally compelled by the state to perform a public function. This condition renders the provision of adequate amounts of low-income housing a likely unattainable goal; the private sector may choose to participate in developing affordable housing, but it rarely does so unless the state provides deep discounts. Indeed, the number of vacant housing units in the United States would easily house most U.S. citizens, but citizenship rights to housing are eschewed by the private sector and not supported by the U.S. government.

Private interests have substantially shaped the state’s position on public housing (Hunt, 2009; Vale, 2000). One need only review the history of debates on public housing to glean the private sector’s attempts to stop the state from entering into what the National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB) claimed was its domain. During the 1930s, NAREB launched a campaign that skillfully linked homeownership to nation building and forcefully promulgated the message that public housing was “a dangerous socialist experiment which threatened free enterprise and the traditional American values of government” (Parson, 2007: 17). This campaign was taken to cities across the country to speak out against government-owned public housing, reiterating to people that homeownership was the hallmark of American “exceptionalism” and individualism (Gotham, 2002; Vale, 2000; Williams, 2003).

This campaign constituted the context within which public housing developments were built after the Housing Act of 1937,² and it is arguably still operative today. Not long after the Act was

² *The Housing Act of 1937*. Public Law 75–412.

passed, “[a] growing number of anti-New Deal politicians elected to Congress between 1938 and 1942 cut off funding for the public housing program. . . . During World War II, Congress funded housing for defense but banned its use for low-income households. Not until the passage of the Housing Act of 1949 did Congress authorize any more public housing” (Von Hoffman, 2000: 303).

Throughout the 1950s, real estate interests continued to affect public housing policy through the enforcement of income limits that radically changed the population composition of developments. During this era, any semblance of public housing being mixed by incomes faded. Pressure from real estate interests, rapid suburban housing growth, and the introduction of public housing policies (such as income-based rents) that targeted those with very low or no incomes dramatically reshaped the public housing landscape. As Friedman (1966: 651) put it, public housing “was relegated to the permanent poor in the city . . . [and] was exclusively for those who were certainly, indisputably, and irreversibly poor.”

Simultaneously with the exodus of higher income and White residents from many inner-city public housing developments in large cities, racialized images of public housing as a breeding place for social ills began to shape the American imagination. In a study of media portrayals of public housing between 1950 and 1990, Henderson (1995) found that—

The “implied messages” embedded in public housing photographs were fairly clear by the late 1960s: welfare-dependent African-Americans subverted the objectives as well as the actual structures of public housing. While these images were probably part of a broader trend that witnessed increased depictions of African-Americans in the popular press during the late 1960s, they nevertheless advanced stereotypes that demeaned both public housing and those who lived in it. (Henderson, 1995: 27)

Critiques of public housing were manifold, from pointing toward the atomizing effects of large-scale housing projects like Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis (Yancey, 1974) to less sympathetic attacks that condemned public housing tenants as being problem families associated with an internal “culture of poverty” that was transmitted from generation to generation. Henderson continued—

During the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, the popular press perpetuated the almost entirely negative image of public housing that had emerged in the mid-1960s. This image was maintained by using stark visual imagery and simplified explanations of complex and often ambiguous policy issues. One of the period’s dominant motifs was that public housing re-created rather than eliminated slums. (Henderson, 1995: 40)

These images continually reappeared in press coverage during the 1970s through the 1980s, a period when Congress did not appropriate enough funds for the maintenance of public housing developments and passed legislation that unintentionally created large gaps between tenant rents and maintenance and operation costs for many public housing authorities (Fraser, Oakley, and Bazuin, 2012).

Vale and Freemark (2012: 382) summarized the different periods of public housing as an initial 25-year period of accommodating “the upwardly mobile working class between 1935 and 1960, and thereafter the worthy elderly”; 30 years of “consolidation of the poorest into welfare housing between 1960 and the mid 1980s, coupled with efforts to introduce direct private sector

involvement in public housing and other programs”; and, since the late 1980s, an effort “to return more of public housing to a less-poor constituency, while furthering growth in other kinds of both deep and shallow subsidy programs through mixed-finance projects and tax-code intervention.” Many scholars view recent changes to public housing policy like the HOPE VI program, which has mixed-income housing as a central feature, as an ideological shift back to the initial role public housing played; that is, to house an upwardly mobile, “submerged” middle class alongside those who are experiencing greater poverty but have employment (Fraser, Oakley, and Bazuin, 2012; Heathcott, 2012; Nguyen, Rohe, and Cowan, 2012; Vale and Freemark, 2012). The next section provides a brief overview of the challenges posed by establishing mixed-income developments under policies like HOPE VI.

Mixed-Income Housing and Its Discontents

Before exploring the challenges of mixed-income development approaches to public housing reform, it is crucial to note that public housing throughout its history has endured ideological, political, economic, and cultural factors that have worked against it. In particular, the emptying out of central-city neighborhoods near public housing complexes in the 1950s and 1960s and racial discrimination intersected to promote the enabling conditions for representations of, and attitudes toward, public housing that were deeply disadvantaging to public housing residents. With the onset of the Nixon Administration in 1969 and the 1973 oil crisis, the operating and maintenance budget subsidies received by public housing authorities from the federal government began to shrink. During the 1980s, public housing declined because of depreciation of the housing stock and became a signifier for social pathology. Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that, redevelopment under the HOPE VI program notwithstanding, the specter of “the projects” haunts public housing authorities. It is also not surprising that most HOPE VI developments follow a relatively conservative path, having had to adapt to the devolution of responsibility for raising operating and maintenance costs for their housing stock (Kleit and Page, 2012). In addition, although the evidence is insufficient to claim that institutional isomorphism exists among housing authorities, since the 1980s, the trend of public housing authorities becoming hybrid organizations that seek out private capital for investment in their portfolios is certainly growing (Nguyen, Rohe, and Cowan, 2012). Speaking about public housing authorities’ strategies to become solvent by relying heavily on low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC), Kleit and Page (2012: 15) concluded that even “with the combination of LIHTC and vouchers, pressures to break even as an organization while meeting federal requirements for a portion of their units can make the arrangement barely sustainable.” The consequences of this move toward hybridization or privatization of housing management and units, respectively, can be an issue. As Kleit and Page (2012: 5) further suggested, “diversification of an agency’s housing stock can be symptomatic of a retreat from serving very low-income households.” This retreat translates into selective occupancy that is reminiscent of previous phases of public housing (Vale and Freemark, 2012).

HOPE VI and other mixed-income approaches to remaking public housing embrace this trend toward privatization. Although the promotion of mixed-income housing initiatives varies slightly in content, intent, and design, it inevitably comes back to a stylized vision of helping the poor in addition to significant reliance on market-oriented strategies to promote their relocation into

neighborhoods where they can live in proximity to moderate- and middle-income households. Although the theoretical antecedents are more nuanced, this conceptual model is based on the neighborhood effects perspective, which posits that the disadvantaging effects of individual-level poverty are exacerbated when living in highly concentrated areas of poverty, cut off from institutional and relational ties that characterize flourishing communities (Wilson, 1987). Researchers have identified the routes through which mixed-income housing might achieve such outcomes, and social networking figures prominently among them (Joseph, Chaskin, and Webber, 2007). Empirical studies to date, however, suggest that these proposed routes for increasing life opportunities for low-income residents have proven to be elusive, and it is unclear how these residents benefit from the relational, political, and economic resources that higher income households may bring to an area (Chaskin and Joseph, 2011; Levy, McDade, and Bertumen, 2011).

Parallel to these findings, case studies focusing on the everyday realities of residents living in mixed-income public housing developments have found multiple obstacles to building cross-class ties and social networks based on a sense of community (Chaskin and Joseph, 2010; Graves, 2011; Kleit, 2005; McCormick, Joseph, and Chaskin, 2012; Sedlak, 2008; Varady et al., 2005). These empirical findings are not surprising given that HOPE VI neglects any specification on why or how cross-class alliances would emerge. This aspect of HOPE VI has informed arguments that the call for mixed-income housing may actually be a state-led effort to colonize former public housing developments to prepare neighborhoods for market reinvestment (Hackworth, 2005). In Bridge et al., 2012, the central questions about mixed-income housing initiatives revolved around the contention that mixed-income policies may be less about helping people in poverty and more about neighborhood revitalization for the middle classes. Although gentrification occurs around some HOPE VI developments, in many cases it is a protracted, and often unsuccessful, process (Fraser, DeFilippis, and Bazuin, 2012), further complicated by the Great Recession of 2008. Nonetheless, although some initiatives may not be successful at promoting neighborhood revitalization, doing so is a stated goal of the program. One need only look to Chicago and Atlanta to see examples of rapid gentrification around areas that were considered no-go zones during the 1980s (Keating, 2000; Patillo, 2008). Even in smaller cities, mixed-income development has led to clear instances of dramatic increases in housing values (Bair and Fitzgerald, 2005; Fraser et al., 2003; Voith and Zielenbach, 2010; Zielenbach, 2003).

A growing number of studies have examined the realities of low-income residents returning to redeveloped HOPE VI sites (Chaskin and Joseph, 2011, 2010; Kleit, 2011; Levy, McDade, and Bertumen, 2011). A common starting point for these examinations has been to ask: do mixed-income environments engender meaningful resident engagement across income lines and, if so, does this social interaction effect positive changes in the lives of low-income residents? These studies report that social relations among HOPE VI residents that cross class lines tend to be rare. In addition, although some benefits accrue to low-income residents by virtue of the relative safety and quality of the built environment compared with that of the public housing communities from which they moved, the possibility of promoting access to the social networks and resources of higher income neighbors in ways that might promote instrumental gains, such as access to employment or information about schools, services, or other resources, generate no clear benefits (Chaskin and Joseph, 2011, 2010; Fraser and Nelson, 2008; Kleit, 2011; Tach, 2009).

Multiple case studies find that residents tend to interact with their neighbors based on perceived characteristics in common (Levy, McDade, and Bertumen, 2011), and that, in some cases, “management encouraged social distance between market-rate and subsidized neighbors” (Graves, 2010: 127). Indeed, subsidized renters in mixed-income developments are often the objects of intensified surveillance and discipline, in part because site management is charged with drawing middle-income residents into these developments to capture enough ground rent to offset the costs associated with a devolved public housing program (Kipfer and Petrunia, 2009). Enhanced social control emerges in these contexts, even when little social interaction takes place between residents of dissimilar backgrounds or class lines. The effect of such control is often felt disproportionately by relocated public housing and other low-income residents, whose actions are constrained by the privatization of space and by heightened surveillance and the establishment and monitoring of stringent rules curtailing a broad range of behaviors, access to space, and use of space (Chaskin and Joseph, 2012).

In many cases, disputes around whether residents should have the right to occupy public space are raced, gendered, and classed. For example, studies find that market-rate residents tend to identify young African-American men as a threat simply because they are exerting a right to convene and converse in public space (Chaskin and Joseph, 2012; Fraser et al., 2012). In a sense, this finding should not be surprising, because society at large has a long history of making such identity categories the foundation for direct and indirect discrimination (O’Connor, 2002; Vale, 2000). The regulation of belonging is distinct among differing groups. DeFilippis and Fraser (2010: 144) noted that “for mixing to have a role in making our cities more just, the people being mixed need to be in proximity on their own terms and those terms need some level of equivalence or comparability.” As numerous studies have demonstrated, however, this is simply not the case for the HOPE VI program (DeFilippis and Fraser, 2010). Thus, the broad consensus among those who have studied social networks in HOPE VI developments is that improving the life opportunities of low-income residents cannot hinge on social mixing (Chaskin and Joseph, 2011, 2010; Graves, 2011; Kleit, 2011).

An alternative orientation to how mixed-income housing might operate is needed. Rather than assuming that low-income people will benefit from merely living near more well-off people, research on mixed-income housing initiatives suggests that, to the extent that low-income residents benefit from living in these contexts, it is because of improved housing in a safer place and, in some cases, access to better schools and neighborhood amenities. Moving beyond a principal focus on the potential of mixed-income communities to improve the lives of low-income residents by virtue of their proximity to higher income neighbors, consideration of how mixed-income housing should operate requires attention to strategies that might be put into practice to support low-income residents.

(Re)Imagining Mixed-Income Public Housing Developments

It is apparent that mixed-income housing initiatives alone do not necessarily engender the benefits for low-income public housing residents assumed in policy circles. Although it is not fully acknowledged among advocates of such programs, this shortcoming is in part because of the limitations of housing provision in the context of a much broader range of challenges that people experiencing poverty face. More specifically, the provision of housing is not directly tied to (although it is often dependent on) people being employed, nor does living in a mixed-income environment alone

promote social relations among income groups that foster social support systems and information exchange about employment opportunities. Although some mixed-income development efforts acknowledge the need for broader neighborhood improvements (amenities, commercial activity, public space, and schools), most have back-ended a focus on these aspects of development in an effort to build out the residential components of these developments, to the extent they plan to address them at all.³ HOPE VI mixed-income housing developments rely heavily on housing as the principal developmental input and on mechanisms of social control to achieve neighborhood quality of life, thus inhibiting resident participation, engagement, interaction, and, ultimately, social cohesion (Chaskin and Joseph, 2010). This can lead to a sense of social isolation and political disenfranchisement for low-income residents in these contexts (Chaskin, Khare, and Joseph, 2012; Fraser, DeFilippis, and Bazuin, 2012; Lucio and Wolfersteig, 2012). In the absence of these aspects of holistic community, active citizenship becomes both formally and informally discouraged, which can lead to conflicts and hierarchies concerning the expectations of how people use space and neighborhood amenities (Chaskin and Joseph, 2012).

Based on previous research, we suggest that a variety of potential interventions could overcome these obstacles and perhaps subsequently lead to improved socioeconomic status. Broadly, we conceptualize potentially effective interventions as being in four realms: (1) housing, (2) social services and supports, (3) employment, and (4) neighborhood life. These domains are certainly interrelated and, we believe, all tend to reinforce well-being and quality of life. Some of these recommendations would likely require major policy interventions by the state, and other strategies, based on some examples of what public housing authorities are currently doing, could be implemented without a great deal of additional resources being advanced.

Regarding housing, many HOPE VI developments currently include homeownership opportunities for moderate-income and higher income populations. Although they arguably provide a foundation of residential stability in these communities, many market-rate buyers consider these properties as investments and may plan to live in them for a relatively short period (Joseph and Chaskin, 2010). Subsidized for-sale units that exist in some sites are contractually constrained from being sold at market rates for a period of years after purchase, but over time the access that owners have to the market, the potential volatility of the market, and the uncertainty surrounding contractual arrangements and broader relationships of responsibility between owners and housing authorities suggest that income mix may be difficult to sustain (Abravanel, Levy, and McFarland, 2009). The stability of lower income residents in these contexts is yet more difficult to ensure. Lease compliance requirements often extend beyond timely payment of rent and adherence to lawful behavior to include a range of (often relatively minor) behaviors that can place tenants at risk of eviction (Chaskin and Joseph, 2012). Residents who are successful in these contexts are often expected to move on if they can get effectively established in the workforce and establish some level of self-sufficiency. In some cases, subsidized renters who go through “the program” at HOPE VI sites are given homeownership

³ This more narrow focus on housing has been expanded in HOPE VI’s successor, the Obama Administration’s Choice Neighborhoods demonstration program, which explicitly seeks to support investment beyond housing and social services for low-income residents and to include an emphasis on dimensions of community health, including education, public assets, transportation, and access to jobs.

classes and assistance to save toward the down payment for a house through individual development accounts. Although some sites have units set aside for potential purchase by relocated public housing residents, most of those who do eventually buy their own homes (relatively few to begin with) have to leave the complex. Given that studies of existing HOPE VI sites have shown that, at times, cleavages among homeowners, market-rate renters, and subsidized renters occur in part because of the perceived lack of investment in the development that renters may have because they have no equity stake in their units (Chaskin and Joseph, 2011), and given the benefits of residential stability for aspects of neighborhood well-being such as safety and density of acquaintanceship networks (Freudenburg, 1986; Sampson and Groves, 1989), we suggest that subsidized renters should be supported to make them eligible to buy the HOPE VI unit they occupy. To support likely sustainability of this income mix over time, this lease-to-purchase program could be implemented through a shared-equity housing model operated by a community land trust (CLT). A CLT is “a nonprofit organization that utilizes public and private funds to provide affordable home ownership opportunities for low-income households” (Thaden, 2010: 2–3). The CLT would retain title to the land, meaning that the prospective owner needs to pay only for the building or a unit within the building. Moreover, the CLT can ensure the long-term affordability of the unit by providing some of the initial downpayment for the house. If the homeowner sells the property, the CLT gets its money back plus a portion of any appreciation to put the funds back into the property and sell to another low-income individual (Thaden, 2010). Using this model in HOPE VI developments would assist renters toward homeownership if they so desire. Homeownership could create longer term, more stable communities; provide incentives for low-income renters to contribute to the community; and also help renters build wealth. In tandem, public housing authorities will likely need to develop new complexes to provide subsidized units within a mixed-income environment; if mixed-income housing strategies show any promise in spurring reinvestment in their surrounding neighborhoods, rolling development provides the opportunity to sustain this promise over time and spread it across more neighborhoods.

Homeownership is not (nor should it necessarily be) an option for everyone, however. Anyone moving into homeownership needs sufficient income, stability, and capacity to maintain payments and their property and needs access to loan instruments that tailor financial burden to ability to pay over time. For some, homeownership will not be an option for any of a number of reasons. In HOPE VI developments, some public housing residents will choose or need to stay in a subsidized rental situation. Often these residents face multiple barriers to employment such as childcare, transportation, and health issues (Popkin, Levy, and Buron, 2009). HOPE VI has had a positive effect on creating better public housing environments characterized by less crime, but the program’s limited funds for community and social services have not translated into “gains in employment, earnings, or health” (Theodos et al., 2012: 518). Whether striving for homeownership or simply to support stability and well-being, services and supports for public housing residents need to be enhanced. Indeed, studies have found that in the isolated cases in which effective and intensive services have been provided, they have produced positive results (Popkin et al., 2010). The supports have included financial supports, social services (counseling, job training, and case management), child care, health care, and transportation services. Whereas transportation may be a more difficult problem to solve, child care seems relatively simple; HOPE VI complexes can be built with facilities that can be operated as childcare cooperatives, potentially priced based on parents’

income and staffed by qualified people from the neighborhood. In addition to these cooperatives, we suggest that additional elements would include youth activities and after-school programs.

On the financial front, a key concern for public housing residents is the ability to save money on utility bills. In regular public housing, the housing authority largely covers utilities, but in HOPE VI sites, the tenants are responsible for paying their utility bills. Housing authorities in several locales implemented two interventions: using energy-efficient appliances and building materials and instituting weatherization programs that lower heating and cooling bills. For example, in High Point, Seattle, Washington, the HOPE VI sites use geothermal technology to provide low-cost heat and air conditioning and, in Nashville, Tennessee, they use solar panels to provide energy for elderly residents in public housing highrise buildings.

Regarding employment, job training also needs to be refocused. In particular, successful programs to move public housing residents to better paying jobs have often included vocational training that goes far beyond simply helping connect residents to potential training programs or even officially sponsoring such programs. One intervention would be to replicate some features of the Chicago Family Case Management Demonstration, including a mechanism to make work pay a decent wage. The demonstration included efforts to effectively pay employers to hire residents through temporarily subsidized salaries.

The Transitional Jobs program, a more intensive version of the model used citywide by Chicago Housing Authority's Opportunity Chicago workforce initiative, was aimed at helping residents with little or no work experience connect to the labor market. The program relied on intensive employment and interview training, rapid attachment to the workforce, 3 months of subsidized employment, and continued counseling and advocacy support for residents throughout the first year of employment (Popkin et al., 2010).

Similarly, in Seattle, a related effort kept contact with both employees and employers after a resident had been placed in a job, identifying skill areas in which the resident was deficient and providing additional training. It is not sufficient to help a public housing resident learn some computer skills or how to be a nurse's assistant, update their résumé, and do some practice interviews; employers may need additional guarantees or incentives to take a risk on relatively inexperienced, unproven employees.

Finally, regarding neighborhood life, the literature makes clear that simply ensuring that residents of different class backgrounds live in proximity to one another is not sufficient to ensure either community cohesion or the kinds of effective social network benefits for lower income residents for which mixed-income policies had hoped. Some basic tools for enhancing communication and access among residents (many of which are being experimented with in sites across the country) may help in this regard. These tools might include something as simple as a neighborhood directory listing residents' contact information and some information about them (employment, interests), periodic newsletters with profiles of residents focusing on their professional training and achievements, or providing free developmentwide wireless Internet access to encourage people to access information that is available on the web. They might also include occasional social events focusing on creating opportunities for networking. These kinds of interventions are sometimes difficult to pull off, however, given the ways in which residents tend to sort into or out of particular groups

and activities based on their interests and perceptions of who such efforts are geared toward, and in light of cross-class tensions that have been generated in many of these contexts (Chaskin and Joseph, 2012, 2010).

Beyond these efforts, greater intentionality and investment might focus around amenities, organizational infrastructure, and neighborhood spaces. One example is the community garden, numerous examples of which have sprouted up across the country. In the John Henry Hale HOPE VI development in Nashville, the Farm in the City not only attracts people from different income groups to interact but provides participants with fresh fruits and vegetables that would otherwise cost a great deal of money at the grocery store. Broader economic development could also be promoted (partially contingent on the specific economic context) by building mixed-use spaces with, for example, retail on the bottom levels of buildings and apartments above. This type of development is typically lacking in HOPE VI sites, missing an opportunity to create spaces of sociability, employment opportunities, and service provision typically needed in any community. It might be possible to incentivize these kinds of spaces, in part, by providing small business grants for local entrepreneurs and leasing them space at below market rates if they meet certain social obligations, such as supplying the community with fresh fruits and vegetables or hiring a certain number of residents.

Cultivating these kinds of places and projects—gardens, stores, coffee shops, and recreational facilities—could potentially help move mixed-income developments from being largely residential complexes to vibrant neighborhoods that provide activity space for instrumental exchange and casual interaction. The creation of these kinds of collective amenities may still fall short of promoting an inclusive and vibrant neighborhood life, however, if the fundamental tensions we noted previously—around perceptions of crime, safety and disorder, and the ways in which different groups choose to occupy and appropriate space for different activities—continue to exist between public housing residents and homeowners (Chaskin and Joseph, 2012). Here, addressing the issues of governance and participation is important. Some interventions to promote solidarity and community between and within income groups might include shaping inclusive neighborhood associations that promote the broad participation of residents across incomes and housing tenure and that operate beyond the purview of individual homeowners' associations. Clear expectations for participation, funding for community members to run and operate a variety of outreach and engagement activities, and effective technical assistance to residents to train officers and engage in community organizing and community building activities would strengthen this agenda and help shape more effective associations. These ambitions are, however, hard to implement in practice, particularly in the context of significant inequality (Briggs, 1998; Chaskin, 2005). Simply creating mechanisms for inclusive participation does not ensure their success, and it is important to explicitly take into account social difference and unequal access by guaranteeing representation of marginalized social groups (Young, 2000).

Conclusion

High-quality, mixed-income housing has some potential to improve living conditions and a range of outcomes for low-income populations who have heretofore been functionally restricted to class-segregated neighborhoods of limited opportunity. The literature is clear, however, that the improvements associated with mixed-income living have been limited. We have proposed some

changes to mixed-income development practice, highlighting the intersection between mixed-income neighborhoods and opportunities around homeownership, social-service provision, and employment and neighborhood life. We are hopeful that effective implementation of such changes can improve outcomes so that low-income populations are better served by mixed-income housing programs.

Beyond these technical adjustments to mixed-income housing policies and practices, we raise the possibility of a more wholesale revisioning of housing and work that might be achieved through a combination of three significant changes: a living wage, a guaranteed income, and adequate provision of affordable housing. Many people in HOPE VI public housing have decent jobs, many after completing training programs to which they gained access through HOPE VI-affiliated services. Even with their successes, they do not make enough money to leave public housing, let alone purchase their own house (see Bazuin, Oakley, and Fraser, 2012; and Popkin et al., 2010 for additional details). HOPE VI essentially trains people to be members of the working poor. This problem is a symptom of a longstanding problem whereby increases in the cost of housing nationwide have far outstripped increases in wages. This problem has been particularly acute for people at the lower end of the income spectrum. The concept of the living wage—that people who work full time should earn enough to pay for their basic needs—is instructive here. It is possible that the government could transform the minimum wage into a living wage, but it will likely face considerable opposition. Rather, an effective living wage would require a social change about the value of work. An alternative could be some sort of guaranteed income, perhaps implemented through an expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Regardless, for increases in wages to reduce the need for public housing effectively, a commitment to expand the pool of affordable housing options is also needed. A considerable shortage of affordable housing exists, in part, because lower priced housing has much less profit potential for developers, mortgage brokers, and banks. Government could make significant strides toward filling that shortage through inclusionary zoning and other policy options that incentivize the construction of affordable housing.

Although briefly stated, the broader vision we have begun to outline here underscores the extent to which mixed-income housing approaches to poverty alleviation and neighborhood redevelopment are conservative approaches that do little to address the broader structural conditions under which many working people still do not earn enough money to make autonomous choices about important aspects of their lives or to meet basic needs. Poverty is related to housing, and the concentration of poor people in marginalized neighborhoods is deeply problematic. To solve this problem, we need to shape policies that can support workers to earn a living wage and that emphasize a broader policy focus on the kinds of structural barriers that public housing residents and other low-income populations face, including the need for significant institutional investment in education, access to technology, and issues of discrimination. These kinds of concerns obviously move well beyond the purview of housing authority responsibility and capacity, and they suggest an emphasis on policies operating at different levels and across different spheres of action. Mixed-income neighborhoods are not a panacea. At worst, they may exacerbate inequality and operate as a veiled mechanism for gentrification that disproportionately benefits the middle-income households and relocates—and resegregates—the poor. At best, they are a potentially useful but limited option in the face of complicated problems that American society has yet to find the political will to tackle more comprehensively.

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