Addressing locational disadvantage effectively

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the final output of a synthesis examining the nature of locational disadvantage and ways in which governments can intervene to improve the lives of disadvantaged residents in areas of concentrated poverty and disadvantage.

The report outlines the synthesis methodology used, then explores the complex and contested concept of locational disadvantage. This is followed by discussion of some interventions used in the US, UK and EU to improve the life chances of residents of disadvantaged areas, leading to conclusions about broad principles for achieving lasting improvements. (Detailed summaries of the studies that inform this synthesis are located in the appendix).

Scope and quality of evidence

This synthesis uses a ‘realist’ approach to select and assess the evidence from social science research (R Pawson 2006). The search phase of this study identified 122 studies for possible relevance. From this group, approximately 35 studies were selected, based on their rigour and relevance. Empirical studies, evaluative studies and reviews of major interventions were prioritised. A small number of secondary studies and theoretical papers were also included to provide depth and a framework for debating the various merits of policy approaches to addressing locational disadvantage.

There is a substantial body of research across Western nations around locational disadvantage and approaches for addressing it. However, a few gaps emerged in the literature: little or no evidence from Canada and New Zealand; few studies looking at the effects of ethnicity on locational disadvantage; and no literature addressed the effects of residents’ personal choices on their disadvantage or their ability to benefit from community regeneration initiatives.

This project was designed to examine international evidence only. However, to gain a fully rounded picture of locational disadvantage and the many ways it is and could be addressed locally; a follow-up study of the large body of Australian literature on the topic is recommended.

Definition of locational disadvantage

There are a few broad characteristics which are used in this synthesis to form a working definition of locational disadvantage:

→ Locational disadvantage has two broad components—disadvantage and location. The latter implies the spatial concentration of the former.

Disadvantage takes many forms. For our purposes, these take the form of exclusion from many everyday activities, services and facilities, including:

→ Low skills and conceptions of work leading to poor employment uptake.
→ Poor educational outcomes.
→ Lack of access to recreational, educational, health and other services and facilities.

A precise definition of the term locational disadvantage is probably not possible, given the present state of knowledge in this area—there are inherent difficulties in explaining causality, delineating precisely what constitutes both disadvantage and its locational attributes, and the terms are built around concepts such as community, neighbourhood, social exclusion, and social inclusion which are somewhat vague (see Richardson & Hills 2000; Pawson & Kintrea 2002).
Types of interventions and their outcomes

There have been a broad range of interventions used internationally. These include:

- **Regeneration of aged public housing stock.** In some instances this involves renovation of existing stock, with little or no displacement of existing residents. In other approaches such as HOPE-VI in the US, an entire estate has been razed and replaced with a new, high quality mixed-tenure or mixed-income development (see Popkin et al. 2004; Popkin et al. 2010). Such programs generally provide benefits for disadvantaged households in the form of higher quality housing and safer neighbourhoods, as well as increased access to social and economic opportunities. However, ongoing problems with low employment participation and very poor health require further targeted interventions alongside housing.

- **Relocation and dispersal of public housing tenants.** Examples of this include Moving to Opportunity, Section 8 vouchers and HOPE-VI in the US (Feins & Shroder 2005, Clark 2008). The evidence suggests that these programs may lead to improved housing conditions and a reduction in concentrations of poverty in one location. However, relocated tenants face challenges with being dislocated from their social supports. Furthermore, the simple de-concentration of poverty and disadvantage has not been shown to reduce society-wide levels of these problems: the problem may be less visible, but these individual households continue to struggle. Furthermore, evidence suggests that locating disadvantaged families alongside higher socio-economic groups does not automatically facilitate role-modelling or mentoring.

- **Home ownership programs.** This approach was common in the UK under the Right to Buy program of the 1980s and 90s, as well as current shared equity schemes (Hills 2007). The approach aims to build the capacity of public housing residents to move into home ownership, thereby breaking down the concentration of public housing tenants. This is found to have benefits of higher levels of maintenance and reduced crime and littering.

- **Broader neighbourhood initiatives.** These approaches include economic and commercial development, as well as regeneration and construction of new physical infrastructure and linkages to rest of urban area. They can also incorporate people-based programs. Neighbourhood initiatives can result in improved access to everyday services such as banks, supermarkets, recreation and medical services. In the UK, New Deal for Communities has attempted to combine improved housing outcomes with broader regeneration and other initiatives in disadvantaged locations. Likewise, HOPE-VI in the US has attempted to build more holistic communities by supporting the regeneration of commercial areas and public/private provision of increased facilities and infrastructure to both serve the community and attract other people into the area (Popkin et al. 2004).

- **People-based programs.** These focus on building local skills and greater self-sufficiency. They include employment-readiness, job training, employment brokerage services, health services, parenting support and improved school programs for local children. HOPE-VI in the US was originally intended as a physical regeneration program only. However, policymakers soon realised that the target communities required far more than just housing interventions to address their problems effectively. New Deal for Communities in the UK was designed as a holistic program, allowing communities to design programs to their specific, local needs. Alongside other interventions such as Sure Start (an early childhood program), integrated services such as adult education, health services and child care have been provided in disadvantaged communities to assist residents in improving their life chances (OfSTED n.d.).
The study found clear evidence that interventions into locations of concentrated disadvantage can have significant, lasting, positive effects. Such effects include:

- Higher quality homes.
- Increased security of tenure.
- Increased safety and security at home and in the immediate community.
- Access to stable employment and educational/training opportunities.
- Reduced crime rates.
- Reduced rates of risky behaviour and of psychological distress amongst children and youths.
- Increased and more comprehensive participation in broader society.

In contrast, however, are the cautions mentioned above about dispersal models, which can simply hide the problems of disadvantage, poverty and ill-health by dispersing them throughout the wider community.

**Best practice principles**

A range of best practice principles were drawn from the research evidence. The principles outlined here have broad applicability and transferability to the Australian context. Other principles which are not necessarily relevant have not been included (e.g. principles around racial de-segregation, which is a major problem in the US). Successful interventions include the following elements:

- **Both people- and place-based mechanisms.** The evidence shows that either physical regeneration or people-based programs (e.g. health, employment, recreation, education) in isolation are insufficient to bring major change (Katz 2004; Carpenter 2006; Batty et al. 2010). Both are required simultaneously, and both need to be well-resourced. The evidence suggests that these should be supported by integrated funding models.

- **Macro- and micro-level interventions.** The studies showed that the most successful interventions address both local issues such as dilapidated housing and poor quality social services, as well as linking the estate to the rest of the urban area within which it sits (Katz 2004).
  - Multi-level government policies and interventions that align to produce positive outcomes at the neighbourhood level. Several studies also stress the importance of all levels of government aligning policies and programs to ensure that outcomes at the local level are genuinely beneficial in disadvantaged locations.

- **Genuine community empowerment and involvement at appropriate levels.** Disadvantaged communities may not readily have the capacity to take on major projects. So the research suggests starting small, starting where there is a felt need and gradually building the community’s capacity to participate. Community consultation and empowerment initiatives should also be genuine. This requires coming with an authentic desire to listen and adjust plans accordingly, a readiness to accept that governments and community organisations may not have all the right answers, and the flexibility to adjust programs according to what is actually needed in a given local context (MacLeavy 2009; Batty et al. 2010).

- **Partnership between the public, private and community sectors.** Interventions where partnerships are most effective bring together these three sectors. Private finance can be leveraged for the greater public good, whilst providing the profits needed for private businesses to continue operating. Likewise, community organisations often have a more intimate knowledge of the local context and can assist private and public organisations in building rapport with and understanding of the target community (Fordham et al. 2010).
Long-term, well-resourced programs. Short-term, ‘quick-fix’ programs do not produce sustainable change. Galster’s work on neighbourhood stability demonstrates that it is imperative to have a long-term approach to addressing the complex problems faced by communities in these locations (Galster et al. 2007). Furthermore, communities may take a long time to make a decision about a proposed change, so organisations need to have the patience to allow change to happen organically.

Practices to avoid

The research also demonstrated a number of worst practice principles—approaches to addressing locational disadvantage which are counter-productive and should therefore be avoided:

- **Tokenism in forming partnerships and building community involvement.** If an intervening institution is not genuine about community capacity building and participation, then it should not pay lip service to these concepts (MacLeavy 2009; McInroy 2000). If community involvement is not feasible, then institutions need to be honest about this. Where community involvement is feasible, an attitude of genuine willingness to listen and incorporate their viewpoints should be adopted.

- **Short-term ‘quick fixes’.** As mentioned above, these seldom bring the major change required to address the complex problems faced in disadvantaged locations (Carpenter 2006; Cole et al. 2010).

  - Investing too quickly, beyond the capacity of the community to fully participate. Adequate time should be allowed for the community to understand, accept and own the changes that are needed.

- **Public representations and narratives of disadvantaged locations, which entrench the problem by overly identifying an area as dysfunctional.** Discourses which label the target community as being ‘other’ to the rest of the population tend to cause further isolation (MacLeavy 2009). These should be avoided.

- **Interventions which merely displace the problem.** Approaches which merely move people to new locations do not solve the problems of poverty and disadvantage faced by the residents of these locations (Galster 2002). Rather, they serve to hide the problems in the short term, and may even worsen the housing stress faced by these households (Goetz 2010).

  - **Gentrification.** This can be one outcome of a regeneration initiative, particularly where the aim is to create a new mixed-income, mixed-tenure community in place of the old, distressed estate (Berube 2005; Cameron 2006; Carpenter 2006). Protections need to be put in place to ensure that those on lower incomes or those facing particular disadvantage are not displaced from the neighbourhood. In particular, it is imperative to ensure that an ongoing supply of affordable housing is maintained specifically for this group.

Limitations of this study

This report focuses solely on the international literature around locational disadvantage. The Australian literature was excluded from this study as part of the design.
1 INTRODUCTION—BACKGROUND TO THIS STUDY

1.1 Purpose of this report

HNSW is developing an estates strategy to guide future intervention across all estates in NSW, including in concentrations of social housing where disadvantage may be clustered. This research will provide an evidence base for the estates strategy, and provide guidance about what works. It looks at the questions of how Western governments have approached social exclusion and disadvantage, particularly over the past 20 years; and what lessons these approaches have for successfully responding to place-based disadvantage.

This synthesis documents what is known about the evolution of place-based social inclusion policy and interventions in the UK, US and other relevant jurisdictions. Both the UK and US have a long history of government intervention in this space, so traversing and reflecting on community regeneration approaches over several decades may assist Housing NSW in the development of an estates framework for NSW, and in reducing concentrations of disadvantage in social housing.

Reviews and program evaluations are used here to identify, where possible, the strengths and weaknesses of various strategic approaches and relevant case studies are included to give context and depth to these conclusions. In particular, the synthesis seeks to:

- Provide some definition of locational disadvantage, framed within its contested nature and complexities.
- Document strategic place-based approaches to addressing locational disadvantage in the UK, US and Canada over the past 20 years.
- Document the contexts within which these approaches operate, using case studies to illustrate.
- Identify, where possible, the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches.
- Document, where possible, any outcomes of these approaches.

Given the mature literature around community regeneration, a large body of reviews now exists which documents trends, achievements and setbacks in this space. In particular this synthesis uses the following well-known studies as valuable starting points:

- Katz, Bruce (2004), Neighbourhoods of Choice and Connection, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. This paper provides an overview of community regeneration programs in post-World War II USA and lessons for the UK.
- The Moving to Opportunity literature from the US. This is one of the very few attempts at empirical assessment of a community regeneration program. Whilst some of the results are positive, the literature is contested and effect sizes are small. This literature illustrates the inherent difficulties of measuring the effect of an intervention when complex contextual factors cannot be disentangled from the outcome.
- Research and evaluation of the UK New Deal for Communities regeneration initiatives.
1.2 The structure of this report

The report includes the following chapters:

- **The literature search**: Some commentary is provided in this chapter about the type of literature identified, with observations about its quality, as well as gaps identified.

- **What is locational disadvantage?** This chapter provides an overview of the complexities of this and related terms, as well as addressing fundamental questions of causes and ways to approach solutions.

- **The interventions**: This chapter presents a broad overview of ways in which locational disadvantage has been addressed in the UK, US and EU. Some specific case studies are provided to add depth to more generalised discussion.

- **Best practice principles**: In this chapter, broad findings are presented around principles for the most effective interventions in disadvantaged locations.

- **Gaps in the research**: A few concluding comments are presented around gaps in the literature and proposed directions for future research.

- **Appendix**: Summaries of the studies synthesised in this report are provided in the appendix for further reference. These are divided into several broad themes, within which the studies are presented in alphabetical order of authors.
THE LITERATURE SEARCH: SOME INITIAL COMMENTS

2.1 Synthesis methodology

This synthesis uses a ‘realist’ approach to select and assess the evidence from social science research (R. Pawson 2006). The ‘realist’ approach selects empirical evidence based on its rigour and relevance for testing and refining current understanding about how a given social policy intervention works.

The realist approach can be contrasted to the use of narrow methodological selection criteria, such as ‘only randomised controlled trials,’ and is uniquely designed for the evaluation of social policy interventions (R. Pawson 2002).

The first phase in the methodology has been an assessment of the available literature to identify current existing theories about addressing locational disadvantage, and prioritise the strongest and most relevant for consideration in the second phase. The literature was analysed in depth to ensure program evaluations were foregrounded as much as possible. Qualitative and theoretical papers were only included where they added depth or assisted in building a helpful framework for analysis of the evaluative studies.

In particular, literature was identified to address the following questions:

- What are the outcomes intended from interventions designed to address locational disadvantage?
- What are the mechanisms which are understood to deliver these outcomes?
- What contexts appear to influence the outcomes?

This phase was reported in the Annotated Bibliography provided to Housing NSW on 22 June 2010.

The second phase of the methodology involves reading the selected reports to draw out the findings relevant to the research questions. These are synthesised and present in the current report.

The following search terms were used in the search:

- Social inclusion
- Social exclusion
- UK/US/Canada/Europe
- Locational disadvantage
- Housing estate
- Urban regeneration
- Community renewal
- Government
- Place-based
- Neighbourhood

Research was obtained from the following sources:

- EBSCO Host
- Google Scholar
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Brookings Institution
- Government websites
- University research reports (public domain)
- Academic journals

This report constitutes the final project output for the commissioned synthesis.

2.2 Metrics

An initial 122 studies were identified for possible relevance. These were examined initially for rigour, and then for relevance to the current research question. Of those assessed as relevant to the current project, empirical, evaluative studies and reviews of major interventions were prioritised. Where there was insufficient primary empirical
evidence, secondary studies with rigorous quantitative and qualitative data were selected. A small number of theoretical studies have been included to assist in framing the nature and debates around locational disadvantage.

Of the initial 122 studies identified:

→ 34 were immediately excluded either for lack of direct relevance or for lack of rigour, or due to saturation of the given topic with more appropriate studies.

→ A further 52 were set aside due to limited relevance, but were not excluded during the search phase. This allowed for them to be drawn upon at a later stage of the project where particular areas required further in-depth exploration.

→ A total of 45 references were selected for possible inclusion in the current study. These were reduced to 36 references which were synthesised. This group of 36 included several important evaluation studies which were identified following the presentation of the annotated bibliography, so they will not appear in that earlier report.

The literature identified in this search covered a range of topics relevant to the current study. These include:

→ The nature of social inclusion and exclusion:
  - Theories of power.
  - Discourse about social inclusion/exclusion.
  - Place and its effect upon communities.
  - The importance of adequate housing for improving the life chances of low-income households.

→ Approaches to community regeneration as a means to address location disadvantage:
  - Place-based strategy.
  - Local partnerships.
  - Project evaluation principles.
  - Case studies of community regeneration projects.

→ Community development principles.

The following tables indicate the range of geographies, methodologies, types of studies and topics covered by the studies identified in the search phase. (NB. The numbers in each table may not add up to the total number of 122 studies identified as some studies cover more than one country/method/theme.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location(s) of study</th>
<th>Number of studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe/EU (including studies in individual states)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear/not stated</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 Scope and quality of research

- There is a substantial body of research across Western nations around locational disadvantage and approaches for addressing it.

- A few gaps emerge in the literature:
  - There is very little research available on Canadian community regeneration initiatives. Most of the Canadian studies focused on lessons from elsewhere and how they might be applied in Canada.
  - No studies on New Zealand emerged from the search.
  - Few studies looking at effects of ethnicity on locational disadvantage or on participation in community regeneration projects.
  - No literature was identified on personal choices of residents. It is expected that these may affect an individual’s ability to benefit optimally from the interventions outlined in this study. These would therefore impact significantly on the level of impact a given program has in a community.
3 WHAT IS LOCATIONAL DISADVANTAGE?

Locational disadvantage is a contested and complex term, with a wide variety of largely-unsatisfactory definitions in circulation in policy and academic circles.

Yet there are a few broad characteristics which can be used in this synthesis to form a working definition for the purposes of this synthesis:

- Locational disadvantage has two broad components, disadvantage and location. The latter implies the spatial concentration of the former.

Disadvantage takes many forms. For our purposes, these take the form of exclusion from many everyday activities, services and facilities, including:

- Low skills and conceptions of work leading to poor employment uptake
- Poor educational outcomes
- Lack of access to recreational, educational, health and other services and facilities.

Part of the difficulty in defining locational disadvantage is the sheer complexity of factors involved in causing, interacting with and/or maintaining less-than-optimal life circumstances, particularly where these are linked to distinct locations. These factors include low-income, poor educational attainments, low workforce participation, major health issues, urban planning that isolates certain less-desirable types of housing from the rest of an urban region, and macro-economic shifts.

Orr et al. comment that

Residential environments are multidimensional, and no single measure will capture all the attributes that are important to the life chance of low-income families (Orr et al. 2003, p.xvii).

So it may not be possible to provide one over-arching term with a clear definition. Yet, to not attempt a definition would provide a poor base upon which to build sound policy for addressing the issues at hand.

Therefore, in this chapter we will examine a number of terms used in attempts to define the problem. This will frame the discussion in later chapters of the challenges faced by people living in these locations and some of the ways they can be alleviated.

A number of terms and concepts will be examined here, including social inclusion/exclusion, what constitutes a neighbourhood or community, the spatial nature of much disadvantage, some broad characteristics of the people living in these areas, and whether it is possible to bring lasting, positive change to this segment of the population. Finally, a working definition of locational disadvantage will be proposed, to be used as a basis for the rest of the synthesis.

3.1 Social exclusion and social inclusion

The term social exclusion probably originated in French republican thinking, was spread under the auspices of the EU, and now frequents the pages of policy documents across the Anglophone world (Daly & Silver 2008, p.539). Much academic and policy literature assumes a widely accepted meaning for the term yet definitions are at best vague.

The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Sociology defines social exclusion as

... a rupturing of the social bond. It is a process of declining participation, access, and solidarity. At the societal level, it reflects inadequate social cohesion or integration. At the individual level, it refers to the incapacity to
participate in normatively expected social activities and to build meaningful social relations (Silver 2007).

This is a useful start, but shows some of the complexity and ambiguity of the concept. For example, is it an individual condition or a societal one, or both? Is it a process of decline, or a state of being?

Other authors have attempted to define the term by contrasting it to other related concepts. One contrast is with social inclusion—i.e. social exclusion is the absence of social inclusion. But this term is likewise rarely defined. (Marsh 2004, p.14). In another paper, the authors commented that ‘the approach had concentrated on characteristics of bad neighbourhoods. We need to look at those of good neighbourhoods to see what we are aiming at’ (Richardson & Hills 2000).

Another common contrast is with the term poverty. Pawson & Kintrea suggest that poverty is concerned with distributional issues, whilst social exclusion refers more to relational issues (H. Pawson & Kintrea 2002a, p.645). On this basis, they suggest that social exclusion is ‘the failure of certain citizens to enjoy full citizenship rights’ (p.645). Furthermore, they proposed that a ‘key element of social exclusion is the idea that there are processes and dynamics within society and its institutions which generate relative poverty’ and that ‘a sense of social isolation’ lies at its heart.

Marsh’s 2004 paper on housing and social exclusion in the UK reviews both a wide range of academic literature on the concept of social exclusion, as well as how the term has been applied in recent British social policy documents (Alex Marsh 2004).

He demonstrates significant lack of precision in the way the term is defined and used, and suggests that this leads to unintended outcomes (p.8). Imprecision in both definitions and the use of the term include:

- Referring indiscriminately to ‘both processes and states’ (p.8).
- Whether the nature of social exclusion is described as a structural or behavioural problem, or a combination of the two (p.8).
- Generalising social exclusion as primarily labour market exclusion or as a broader issue (p.8).
- Conflicts between co-existing discourses of social exclusion—for example, ‘redistributionist, moral underclass and social integrationist’ (p.8).
- The role of structure and agency in explaining social exclusion (pp.13–14).
- The role of subjective and objective assessments of exclusion (p.15).
- The differences between groups of poor people located in one geographic area and a ‘poor space’ which ‘does not allow residents access to acceptable levels of services and amenity’ (p.15).

So it is clear, then, that this term is far from having a universally accepted definition or usage. Nonetheless, some common characteristics include:

- Exclusion from normative everyday activities and places.
- Poverty.
- A combination of forces which both cause and maintain this condition – both individual and societal, agency- and structure-related.
- A set of processes and states of being, which produce very negative living conditions and circumstances.
3.2 Neighbourhood and community

Another term which frequents the pages of community regeneration literature is *neighbourhood*. This level of geography is the most common level for regeneration interventions (Carpenter 2006, p.2145). Yet few, if any, authors attempt to define it precisely.

One example of the lack of clarity around the concept can be seen in Katz's influential review of regeneration literature which discusses interventions that aim to reduce poverty and disadvantage in 'distressed neighbourhoods' (Katz 2004, p.7). Whilst he defines these areas as communities with significant concentrations of high or extreme poverty, high levels of unemployment, abnormally high numbers of single-parent families and low levels of educational attainment, he does not establish how to define the spatial boundaries of these distressed neighbourhoods.

Further, the term neighbourhoods are often described as some type of discrete 'community'. Yet, this term is also poorly understood (Lilley 2005, p.63). There are a wide range of ways in which a *community* can be constituted, and many of these do not relate specifically to spatially defined regions. Further, the geographies frequently chosen for regeneration initiatives are ‘criss-crossed by multiple, overlapping social networks …’ (MacLeavy 2009, p.865).

3.3 Locational disadvantage and area-based initiatives

The broad term agreed upon for examining these groups of people and geographies by the project team in this present synthesis is *locational disadvantage*. This term has two broad aspects—disadvantage and location.

Disadvantage generally refers to the inability to compete with higher socio-economic groups for equal access to normative everyday activities and resources. But it is also spatially delimited – conceptualised as 'neighbourhoods suffering from multiple forms of deprivation' (MacLeavy 2009, p.850). Thus, this more spatially oriented term connotes locations with a concentration of poverty and disadvantage. Carpenter explains rather than defines these areas:

... even the most 'successful' cities in terms of competitiveness are afflicted by urban poverty and social exclusion, often spatially focused pockets of deprivation that are home to low-income groups, few economic opportunities and run-down urban environments (Carpenter 2006, p.2145).

The US literature also refers to these locations as *distressed*. In a review of programs aimed at redressing problems in public housing areas, Popkin et al. define this distress as:

- ‘Residents living in despair and generally needing high levels of social and supportive services.
- Physically deteriorated buildings.
- Economically and socially distressed surrounding communities’ (S. J. Popkin et al. 2004, p.8).

Interventions targeting these areas are referred to generically as *area-based initiatives*. Carpenter defines these as 'spatially targeted programs focused on specific neighbourhoods which aim to address the multifaceted challenges of disadvantage' (Carpenter 2006, p.2145).
3.4 Characteristics of disadvantaged locations

Disadvantaged areas share a range of common and concentrated characteristics, albeit with locally defined variations and emphases. These include (Katz 2004, pp.7–8; S. J. Popkin et al. 2004, p.10; Richardson & Hills 2000, p.21; Kintrea 2009, p.11):

- Low levels of employment and work skills.
- Low educational attainment.
- Low income.
- Rundown housing and other physical infrastructure.
- High levels of single-parent families.
- High levels of crime and violence.
- Businesses and services leaving the area.
- Poor health, such as one or more persons in the household having a major illness or disability.
- Low levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy often brought about by negative feedback loops from educational systems and labour markets. This may reduce levels of motivation, leading to poor aspirations.

Katz also suggests that the state of these areas is dynamic: it is unevenly distributed across metropolitan regions and between states; it changes over time; ethnic compositions change over time; and it shifts from one part of the country to the next. Due to this dynamic state, Katz therefore suggests that any policy response needs to be tailored to 'meet the distinct market, demographic and social realities of different places' (Katz 2004, pp.7–8).

There is a broad literature on what are known as area effects or neighbourhood effects—influences on the life chances of residents in areas with concentrated, locational disadvantage. This body of literature is somewhat contested, yet there appear to be some fairly robust, demonstrated links between living in a disadvantaged location and the outcomes in the lives of residents (Berube 2005):

- 'Concentrations of deprivation reduce private sector activity and raise prices for the poor' (p.20).
- 'High levels of worklessness limit job networks and employment ambitions' (p.20).
- 'Schools struggle to educate overwhelmingly poor populations' (p.21).
- 'Poor neighbourhoods stimulate higher levels of crime and disorder' (p.22).
- 'Area-based deprivation exacerbates health inequalities' (p.23).

Despite the importance of these influences, the literature appears to clearly demonstrate 'individual and family characteristics matter more for outcomes than neighbourhood characteristics' (p.23). Research in this area therefore suggests that policy and interventions should address both distressed communities and disadvantaged people simultaneously (p.23).

Concentrated poverty and disadvantage have significant costs:

- Lower quality of life for local residents.
- For broader society—e.g. increased costs of welfare provision and lost economic opportunities to utilise a potential workforce.

A US study quantifies some of the avoidable costs of poverty in the United States and finds that these costs represent a 30 per cent of income burden on each non-low-income household, calculated as a proportion of median income (Oppenheim &
MacGregor 2006). The analysis captures four broad categories of costs: crime, health, unemployment (including welfare support, training and lost economic activity) and existing anti-poverty investments including welfare and housing. It certainly does not capture all the costs of poverty and can therefore be considered a conservative cost-benefit analysis.

Yet the picture is not entirely negative. Areas with concentrated disadvantage tend to have valuable social and economic assets and mutual supports such as ‘community groups, churches, informal support networks’ (Katz 2004, p.12). Richardson & Hills observe that ‘Even in bad areas cohesion is strong; it is trust which is low’ (Richardson & Hills 2000, p.21).

The value of this social capital is frequently underestimated, particularly in strategies where disadvantaged households are relocated to other parts of the broader urban region. Therefore, where strategies involve the dispersal of residents to other parts of the urban region or the importing of new residents into the existing neighbourhood (known as social mix), it is important to protect these assets, lest disadvantaged residents be faced with further, unnecessary challenges.

3.5 Causes of locational disadvantage

In his discussion of the causes of locational disadvantage, Katz is quick to point out that neighbourhoods of concentrated disadvantage are ‘not inevitable’ (Katz 2004, p.8). Katz describes how a range of government and private-sector policies have helped create troubled neighbourhoods in the US since the Second World War (Katz 2004, pp.8–10):

→ The post-war suburban sprawl which has ‘helped create’ concentrated urban poverty was aided by state and federal government policies supporting decentralisation.

→ Supporting road expansion on urban fringe.

→ ‘Red-lining’

→ Taxes favouring newer suburb development over revitalization of older areas; exclusionary zoning.

→ Small local governments contributing to competition between areas for desirable land uses.

Katz suggests that such policies have contributed significantly to the movement of educational and employment opportunities away from concentrated inner city public housing neighbourhoods.

Other authors such as MacLeavy (MacLeavy 2009) suggest that governments and other institutions alike can continue to contribute to concentrating disadvantage and poverty today in a number of ways:

→ Through their use of particular rhetoric or discourse.

→ Poor management of macro-economic shifts.

→ Public policy which favours segregated housing development.

→ Personal choices leading to residential sorting.

These causes will be described in more detail in the next chapter.

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1 This term came from the process of US financial institutions literally marking out poorer sections of the community on a map with a red line, to delineate areas where they would not invest or provide credit services. This practice was outlawed a number of years ago.
3.6 Can disadvantaged locations change?

Even the best-intentioned area-based initiatives are based on a set of assumptions about the nature of the problem at hand, the most useful solution, and how that solution will effect change. Where these assumptions are correct, it follows that the expected outcome will indeed result. However, where the assumptions are wrong or inaccurate, there may be unintended, adverse outcomes. Therefore, it is important to explicitly recognize and understand these theories.

One such theory concerns the way in which a neighbourhood may change as a result of an intervention. It may be logical to assume, for example, that providing better housing or an employment support program in a disadvantaged neighbourhood will result in more satisfied residents, or an increase in workforce participation.

However, work undertaken recently by Galster and his colleagues suggests that neighbourhoods are inherently stable (Galster, Cutsinger & Lim 2007). That is, following on from some external shock—in this case an area-based initiative to address locational disadvantage—the neighbourhood is most likely to revert quite quickly to its previous state, with little or no difference observable.

Yet, ‘stability does not mean stasis. ... persistent change in a wide variety of exogenous forces can lead to significant changes in neighbourhood trajectories’ (Galster, Cutsinger & Lim 2007, p.179). It is the long-term flows of households, property owners and financial resources into and out of a neighbourhood that fundamentally shape what occurs there.’ (p.179).

Furthermore, Quercia & Galster showed that threshold effects—‘a dynamic process in which the magnitude of the response changes significantly as the triggering stimulus exceeds some critical value’ (Quercia & Galster 2000, p.146) – further explain why an intervention with brilliant results in one neighbourhood may fail to produce much (if any) results in another. It is the intensity of the intervention that matters.

Galster and his colleagues make the point quite loudly, therefore, that the implication for policy makers is that ‘short-term, policy-induced ‘quick fixes’ hold little prospect to alter longer-term outcomes for neighbourhoods; sustained effort is required’ (Galster, Cutsinger & Lim 2007, p.179). Furthermore, resources should be ‘targeted strategically’ rather than scattered across a broad area (Quercia & Galster 2000, p.157).

Thus, it is indeed possible to effect major, lasting positive changes in a distressed neighbourhood, but only if they are focused and sustained over a long period of time. This idea will be further discussed and developed in later chapters.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented just a few of the ways in which the task of defining locational disadvantaged is a vast and complex one. There are a range of contributing concepts and factors, which at times appear to defy precise definition. Further research is needed in this area to clarify these terms and their implications for policy, to ensure that policy makers are equipped with the most useful ways in which to frame and therefore address problems.

There are a range of causes, including policies with unintended consequences, the way in which discourses frame the problem, institutional arrangements which lock some people out of opportunity, and personal choices. It is possible to bring positive change to these disadvantaged locations, but only through sustained and targeted interventions, as well as engagement and capacity building to support change and choice.
Despite the difficulties with a precise definition, there are a few broad characteristics which can be used in this synthesis to form a working definition for the purposes of this synthesis:

- Locational disadvantage has two broad components—disadvantage and location. The latter implies the spatial concentration of the former.

- Disadvantage takes many forms, not all of which are included in the present discussion. For our purposes, these take the form of exclusion from many everyday activities, services and facilities, including:
  - Low skills and conceptions of work leading to poor employment uptake.
  - Poor educational outcomes.
  - Lack of access to recreational, educational, health and other services and facilities.

This chapter has attempted to frame the problem of successfully addressing locational disadvantage, by defining broad features of its nature and causes. The following chapter will provide some examples of interventions used in the UK, US and EU to improve the life circumstances of residents in disadvantaged locations, prior to a discussion of best practice principles.
4 INTERVENTIONS

This chapter presents some more detailed discussion on the causes of locational disadvantage. This forms a segue into a range of case studies as well as some more generalised practices seen across programs and jurisdictions, which are designed to address the problems caused in these locations.

4.1 Causes of locational disadvantage

As mentioned in section 3.5, it is important to stress that areas of concentrated disadvantage are ‘not inevitable’ (Katz 2004, p.8). Katz describes a range of government and private-sector policies that have helped create troubled neighbourhoods in the US since the Second World War (Katz 2004, pp.8–10):

- Suburban sprawl, aided by state and federal government policies supporting decentralisation.
- Road expansion on the urban fringe.
- Red-lining[^2] poorer areas for the provision of credit.
- Taxes and planning policies favouring newer suburb development over revitalisation of older areas.
- Fragmented local governments planning activities.

Katz suggests that such policies have contributed significantly to the movement of educational and employment opportunities away from concentrated inner city public housing neighbourhoods. Governments and other institutions alike can continue to contribute to concentrating disadvantage and poverty today in a number of ways:

- Through their use of particular rhetoric or discourse.
- Poor management of macro-economic shifts.
- Public policy which favours segregated housing development.
- Personal choices leading to residential sorting.

These are described briefly in the following sections.

4.1.1 Rhetoric and discourse

In her review of the New Deal for Communities program in the UK, MacLeavy identifies a number of ways in which the way we communicate about locational disadvantage affects both the ways the residents of these areas and others in broader society view the areas (MacLeavy 2009):

- Oppositional framing of a ‘troubled area’ or a ‘failed estate’ against ‘more successful [surrounding] areas’ is often taken up by the media. In Barton Hill, UK, the local media now paints a picture of a socially regressive neighbourhood, as opposed to the more progressive remainder of the city (p.854). Furthermore, developers of new, prestige estates built gated communities where poorer Barton Hill residents were excluded as a result of this type of rhetoric (p.857).

- Such discourse can ‘locate responsibility for dealing with issue[s] within the boundaries of the community’ (p.864). However, this ignores the fact that such

[^2]: The term 'red-lining' came from the literal practice of US financial institutions of drawing a red line around lower socio-economic estates/suburbs (particularly those with high proportions of ethnic minorities) and refusing to provide credit or savings facilities to those communities. The practice has now been outlawed as discriminatory.
issues often have a 'broader societal dimension' which needs to be dealt with beyond the borders of the given community as well as within it.

- As a consequence, where a project fails to yield the expected results, it is easy for the government to lay the blame squarely at the community’s feet, rather than at those of government should a project fail (p.871).

→ It obscures the fact that such neighbourhoods are areas 'criss-crossed by multiple, overlapping social networks …' (p.865), rather than being discrete areas.

In these ways, injudicious promotion of a government program to address the problems at the heart of such communities can inadvertently contribute to increased segregation and pathologisation of locational disadvantage (Tett 2005, pp.7–8).

### Case Study: Barton Hill, Bristol (UK)

MacLeavy (2009) used this example of a New Deal for Communities regeneration project as an example of how rhetoric was used to further segregate the rundown public housing estate from the rest of the city. Discourse coming from central government was intended to promote the positive programs being run in the area. However, oppositional framing of this 'failed estate' to more 'progressive' parts of the city were picked up and touted by local media (p.854). Developers running estate redevelopment programs in nearby areas also adopted this rhetoric, using it to market exclusive, gated developments.

Discourse about the neighbourhood also narrated a story of 'dysfunctional ethnic minority communities,' locating the responsibility solely with them to fix the problems. This glossed over many broader societal issues which had been major contributors to the problems in this small neighbourhood (p.864).

Furthermore, poor conceptions of community, neighbourhood and city in the rhetoric surrounding this project obscured the fact that there are no clear boundaries between this community and surrounding areas. Social and economic networks criss-cross the entire estate. Tensions arose with nearby public housing estates which had received no NDC funding, due to the somewhat arbitrary delineation of Barton Hill as a problem area.

This case study urges great caution in creating public discourses around disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

A range of other authors have raised issues regarding discourse and the construction of disadvantage:

→ High vacancy rates and low demand in distressed neighbourhoods are viewed as a result of de-industrialisation, rather than failure of the state to adequately maintain these areas:

‘mass housing for the industrial working class [of the mid-twentieth century] is not needed as de-industrialisation has decimated this part of the labour force' (Cameron 2006, p.6).

Such a rationale is used to justify the redevelopment of these areas to meet the rising aspirations of the middle class, rather than continuing to provide for those in need of assistance. This approach is not fundamentally concerned with the wellbeing of the latter group, seeking instead to displace the problem.

→ The use of rhetoric around ‘community’ and ‘partnership’ can become a smokescreen for a process in which the community is actually disempowered, and their needs were subsumed beneath the broader desires of the local state (McInroy 2000, p.37).
Thus, in developing any area-based initiative to address locational disadvantage, great caution must be exercised in framing the problem and how the government will tackle it.

4.1.2 Macro-economic shifts

A number of authors point to macro-economic shifts as being a major contributor to the onset of concentrated poverty and disadvantage in particular locations (Carpenter 2006, p.2146). One example of this was the closing of coal mines in many northern English towns during the Thatcher era. It was expected that the workforce in these towns would follow economic activity in other parts of the country. However, these people may not have the resources and desire to uproot from the powerful social bonds and familiarity with the local area that follows from living there for many generations.

Thus, where a government makes assumptions about how a community should adapt and move with changing circumstances, rather than looking at what is really likely to happen, they may contribute to the onset of poverty and distress in these locations.

4.1.3 Public policy

A range of policies can contribute to isolating poorer communities from the best a city has to offer. A range of these were outlined above:

- Exclusionary zoning, which prevents certain (less desirable) types of housing from being developed in an area.
- Taxation policies and funding programs which favour new greenfield development on the urban fringe over the maintenance of high‐amenity inner city areas.
- The fragmentation of planning powers amongst a wide number of small local governments.

Such policies unwittingly serve to segregate cities, thereby marginalising groups with less power or resources to compete.

4.1.4 Poor connection to rest of city

Poor design of street layouts and inadequate public transport linkages from a disadvantaged neighbourhood to the rest of the city can prevent residents from accessing work and other daily activities, as well as a range of facilities available in other parts of the city.

Likewise, poor linkages can prevent people living outside the given community from coming in to patronise local shops and other businesses and services. These commercial operations thereby become unviable and move to other locations, further concentrating the disadvantage in the initial location. A range of case studies included in the appendix demonstrate how poor connections have contributed to concentrating distress, poverty and disadvantage in particular neighbourhoods (e.g. Katz 2004, p.21; Levy et al. 2010, p.8). Conversely, addressing this disconnection through improving physical integration with the surrounding urban area has been a major contributor to successful economic and physical regeneration.

4.1.5 Personal choices, residential sorting and social housing allocation policy

The way in which personal choices affect one’s life chances is one area which is little examined in the literature used for this synthesis. One personal choice issue that is mentioned is residential sorting—the decisions made by an individual household of any income group in selecting the appropriately priced neighbourhood for their budget and household needs (Berube 2005, p.13). This is a two-way process, more ‘successful’ residents choose to move out of a distressed area, whilst those on very
low incomes may choose to move in, so that they can access housing within their budgetary constraints.

Social housing allocation policies can sometimes act against personal choice by offering housing to those most in need only in undesirable locations. Allocations are influenced by the urgency of individual’s need for housing and availability of stock in more desirable locations. So in this situation, social housing applicants may be forced to choose between sustainable, affordable housing in an undesirable location, or continued housing stress paying market rates elsewhere. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 4.

Orr et al. make the point that ‘policy can influence, but it cannot dictate, the residential location of low-income families’ (Orr et al. 2003, p.xvi). Thus, there is always the possibility, that having set up the best possible set of interventions for alleviating locational disadvantage, individuals may still choose to live elsewhere. Programs therefore need to empower residents to see the possibilities and facilitate positive choices by minimising barriers to these choices.

4.2 Historical examples of intervention

In this section, examples of interventions from the US and UK are presented.

4.2.1 United States

The US has a long history of intervention in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In 2004, Katz presented an overview of three distinct strategies employed since the end of World War II (Katz 2004):

→ *Improving the neighbourhood* (pp.13–18): This has been the dominant strategy, flourishing particularly in the 1930–1970s. It utilises an inward-focused place-based approach to ‘make urban communities quality places to live’ (pp.13–14), and is often referred to as ‘community development’. It primarily involves revitalisation of the physical housing stock and improving the economic attractiveness of the community. Improvement of the physical housing stock is primarily achieved through the production of community-based affordable housing, funded through tax incentives (p.15).

  - Whilst this approach has yielded a number of benefits, it is frequently criticised for its limited scale and perspective, confusion of neighbourhood revitalisation with alleviation of poverty, the further concentration of disadvantage through the production of affordable housing, fragmentation of programs between a large number of small not-for-profits, and evaluations which focus on outputs rather than outcomes (pp.16–17).

→ *Expanding opportunity* (pp.13–14, pp.18–20): This people-based strategy seeks to give people greater access to jobs, education and opportunities. It is based upon an intense drive toward desegregation, and includes mobility strategies such as Moving to Opportunity. It generally focuses on improving outcomes for individual families through relocation to new areas.

  - Housing vouchers appear to have been the most sustainable and successful of these approaches. However, research has indicated the outcomes are a mixed bag (p.18):
      - Benefits: greater resident choice, observable improvements in health, employment, education, mental health and reduced juvenile delinquency rates (pp.18–19).
      - Disbenefits: residents face discrimination around access to rental properties in higher socio-economic neighbourhoods, the uneven implementation of program and lack of support services in higher socio-
economic areas hampering successful re-settlement (p.19) and the fragmented and insular administration of voucher programs (p.20).

Transforming the neighbourhood (pp.13–14, pp.20–23): The most recent and most ambitious type of strategy, this approach focuses on ‘fundamentally shifting the socio-economic mix of distressed neighbourhoods’ and creating places that are economically and socially mixed. It is both people- and place-based and, working simultaneously to improve physical place and residents’ opportunities to socio-economic integration with wider community (p.13). The most notable example of this is HOPE-VI.

Achievements: Redeveloped communities were linked to surrounding areas through street grids with townhouses and a variety of forms rather than towers. Commercial regeneration has occurred alongside housing redevelopment. Major public, private and philanthropic investment has been leveraged (21). There have also been sharp declines in crime, as well as improvement in health, educational attainment, employment participation rates and property values (pp.21–22).

Limitations: Early figures suggest that a low proportion of the original tenants are returning to many of these redeveloped sites. There are questions around the fairness of tougher eligibility requirements on ‘hard to house’ tenants (p.22).

Each one of these approaches is informed by its own implicit theories of change, conceptions of the origins and nature of ‘the challenges facing distressed urban neighbourhoods’, ‘perceptions of ‘distress’ … ’ (p.13) and very different concepts of the geography of neighbourhoods and how they relate to broader metro region (p.14).

4.2.2 United Kingdom

MacLeavy (MacLeavy 2009) likewise points to a long history in the UK of interventions in disadvantaged locations. In particular, she highlights two former conservative government programs—City Challenge and Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). City Challenge was based on the theory that it is necessary to involve a wide range of people and organisations in order to restore the run-down area’s ‘competitive edge’ (p.850). SRB built on this by providing one unified source of funding for ‘physically refurbishing estates blighted by unemployment caused by changing patterns of trade and industry’ (MacLeavy 2009, p.850). The more recent New Deal for Communities (detailed in the next section) program was heavily influenced by both of these older programs. Unfortunately, there is little detail on the nature of these older programs in the literature identified for this synthesis.

Case Study: Castle Hill, Birmingham (UK)

This estate was built in the 1960s and originally comprised 5000 dwellings, housing 20 000 people, in 1.5 square miles. However, it began to decline in the 1970s (Levy et al. 2010, pp.5–6). At that time, the community comprised largely white, working class households.

By 1993, the population in the estate had dropped to 11 000—almost half its original population. There were increased levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, compounding the poor health, low employment rates and lack of access to services of the residents (pp.5–6).

In 1993, the Castle Vale Housing Action Trust was established to head a physical regeneration initiative, as a not-for-profit regeneration model. Over the course of 12 years, a total of £270 million was invested in demolishing 32 of the 34 tower blocks and replacing them with low-rise housing, as well the regeneration of local parks and the addition of new facilities, such as a
supermarket, police station, college, and library (p.6). Today, the estate has 2700 dwellings, of which 2000 are owner-occupied (p.7).

Both positive and negative outcomes have resulted from this major, long-term investment (p.8ff):

→ **Positive:** a broad range of new facilities, services and improved linkages with the rest of the city; local residents involved in actively managing the estate; improved safety; and reduction in crime.

→ **Negative:** community management associations are finding increasing difficulty over time recruiting new, younger members as older ones retire; it is difficult to maintain community involvement once the big issues have been resolved; some privately owned properties are not being maintained to community standards; ongoing and unresolved racial tensions between older white residents and newer migrant groups needing accommodation in the area; and some tensions between home owners and renters.

This shows that a long-term program with significant resources can bring positive change to an area. However, it also shows that social mix can potentially bring with it increased community tensions, particularly around ethnic and tenure mix.

### 4.3 Some current initiatives in the United Kingdom, United States and European Union

*Building on the practices and experiences of the past, governments across the UK, US and EU continue to intervene in locations of disadvantage. This section outlines some more recent and current initiatives in these regions.*

#### 4.3.1 Moving to Opportunity (US)

The *Moving to Opportunity* (MTO) program was an experiment sponsored by the Federal US Government Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (Feins & Shroder 2005). Five demonstration projects in five major inner city locations across the country were funded from 1994 to 1998, in census tract locations where more than 40 per cent of the population were poor at the 1990 census. Participants were recruited from public housing estates and needed to comprise households with children under the age of 18 years to be eligible (p.1276). They were then randomly assigned to one of three groups:

→ The *experimental* group. This group received vouchers allowing them to relocate only in census tracts with poverty rates below 10 per cent (as at 1990).

→ The *section 8* group. These households received regular section 8 housing vouchers, which allowed them to relocate anywhere.

→ The *control* group. These people received no vouchers and were required to remain in public housing for the first 12 months of the program, although they were eligible for other assistance such as financial counselling.

The design of this project was intended to provide as close as possible to a randomly-controlled experiment, providing information about the effects of moving to a low-poverty neighbourhood, as opposed to other forms of housing intervention.

In Orr et al.’s evaluation of the program, a number of interim findings are posited (Orr et al. 2003):

→ The most notable achievement of the program was in the area of improved safety and neighbourhood conditions (p.ix).
There was high mobility amongst all three groups (p.vii). It is unclear whether this is a direct result of the program or not. During the pilot, the HOPE-VI program was also introduced and this may have affected MTO participants’ willingness to move (Feins & Shroder 2005, p.1284).

- The authors found that MTO had substantial positive effects on the mobility of families in the experimental and section 8 voucher groups, as well as on the quality of their subsequent neighbourhood(s) (p.viii). The majority of movers relocated to neighbourhoods with lower poverty rates.
- Mobility did not necessarily result in reduced racial segregation (p.viii).

Some improvements in residents’ health were also observed(x), such as reduced rates of obesity, improved mental health in adults, reduction in psychological distress and depression amongst girls. However, there were some increases in risky behaviour amongst boys. This suggests they face greater challenges integrating into a new environment (p.xi).

The impacts on children’s education outcomes had been modest, largely because parents were reluctant to move them from their original schools (p.xii).

- ‘There is no convincing evidence of effects on educational performance; employment and earnings; or household income, food security, and self-sufficiency’ (p.xv).
- ‘There is at least modest evidence that the impacts of the demonstration are becoming more favourable over time’ (p.xv).

Further study by Feins and Shroder suggests that these optimistic findings should be tempered somewhat (Feins & Shroder 2005):

- When tracked over time, the housing outcomes of these families was a little less positive. Whilst the first move under MTO may have resulted in a significantly better neighbourhood, subsequent moves tended to be to much higher-poverty areas (pp.1287–1288).
- The program did not directly address racial segregation, so it had little effect in this important area (p.1289).
- Most importantly, ‘attitudinal variables had striking effects on mobility’ (p.1281).
  - Uncertainty about finding suitable alternative accommodation or liking the new neighbourhood context are ‘negatively related to lease-up [leasing a better home]’ (p.1282).
  - “‘Feeling good” about moving and “dissatisfaction” with current neighbourhood are positively correlated with success[full relocation]’ (p.1282).
  - ‘Positive social ties … to current neighbourhood are predictive of failure to lease-up, as is discomfort with sending one’s child to a majority-White school’ (p.1282).

Clark’s 2008 study likewise suggests that the overall program effectiveness has been far less than was initially suggested (Clark 2008):

- Fundamentally, the underlying assumptions about the causes and effects of concentrated poverty—and hence the benefits of dispersing this—are not consistently borne out in the research literature (p.516ff).
- All the program volunteers were motivated to move, so it is not clear the degree of benefit directly provided by the vouchers (p.522, p.528).
- Some positive changes have regressed over time (p.520). This may be due to the high mobility of these types of households (p.528) or the reluctance to move too far away from social networks and other supports (p.518, p.522, p.532).
Orr et al.’s study masked some significant variations between different program locations (p.529). Clark's spatial analysis found very little difference in mobility patterns between those who received MTO vouchers, as opposed to regular section 8 vouchers (pp.520–521). His analysis also demonstrates that mobility amongst those who received no voucher is remarkably similar to those who received either type of voucher (pp.523–525).

4.3.2 HOPE – VI (US)

The HOPE-VI program ‘replaces severely distressed public housing projects, occupied exclusively by poor families, with redesigned mixed-income housing and provides housing vouchers to enable some of the original residents to rent apartments in the private market’ (S. J. Popkin et al. 2004, p.1).

It grew out of a congressional National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing, established in 1989. The findings of the commission led to the HOPE-VI program, which ‘combined grants for physical revitalisation with funding for management improvements and supportive services to promote residents self-sufficiency’ (p.1). It thereby combines a place-based revitalisation approach with a people-centred approach to supporting residents into improved living conditions.

The program had four key aims:

➔ Improve living conditions for residents of severely distressed public housing estates: This includes raising design and construction standards (p.20), reducing crime levels (p.17), reducing the overall density of housing, improving connections between the estate and surrounding areas, and providing individual home entries for increased safety.

➔ Revitalise sites where distressed public housing is located.

➔ Provide housing for very-low-income families in such a way as there is a de-concentration of poverty and a mixing of different income groups (p.15). This has improved safety and home maintenance (p.22), and provided economic benefits such as cross-subsidisation of affordable housing stock (p.23). The latter benefit has been particularly useful in high-demand, high-amenity areas.

➔ Build sustainable communities.

One additional aim of the program was improved management of public housing stock (p.16).

A key strength of this program has been its flexible nature, which has allowed implementation to evolve over time: from a physical regeneration strategy only into a more comprehensive program of economic integration with the wider community, and greater housing choice in private and public housing markets (p.2). This flexibility has also allowed a far wider range of approaches to be tailored to specific local contexts.

Overall, the HOPE-VI program is seen as highly successful and is providing a model for newer regeneration programs in the US. Popkin et al.’s recent review of the Chicago Housing Authority’s (CHA) HOPE-VI-funded redevelopment (see case study below) shows that there has been significant improvement in the quality of life of the vast majority of former residents’ lives:

We find that, after 10 years, the story for CHA families is far more positive than many observers – including ourselves – would have predicted at the outset (S. Popkin et al. 2010, p.2).

Over half the residents of the former public housing towers have now returned to live in the new mixed development (S. Popkin et al. 2010, p.3) and almost all live in significantly safer neighbourhoods and better quality homes.
Nevertheless, there are ongoing challenges, particularly with residents’ health and ability to access stable employment (S. Popkin et al. 2010, p.2). Theodos et al. (2010) find that such ongoing challenges are best met by a variety of interventions located onsite within a public housing development, or close to public housing. These include employment, education and health services. They need to range from ‘light touch’ services for residents who are striving to manage their own affairs (p.11, p.19) through to more comprehensive ‘wrap around’ services for those who are still in a seriously distressed state of mental and/or physical health (pp.12–13, pp.20–21).

**Case Study: Oakwood Shores, Chicago (US)**

This major public housing estate in inner Chicago had deteriorated by the 1990s into an area with severely distressed housing, overwhelming crime and violence, and nearly absolute gang dominance (Levy et al. 2010, p.15ff). It was a highly segregated community, dominated by African-American residents (p.16).

In 1995, The US Government Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) took over the Chicago Housing Authority and committed HOPE-VI funds to demolish and redevelop large tracts of the estate. In 2000, $35 million was allocated to this estate to redevelop 3000 dwellings on 94 acres. The original residents were relocated to other areas to allow for demolition and could then re-apply for housing in Oakwood Shores. A new range of selection criteria meant that not all of the original residents would be eligible to return. In place of an estate dominated by high-rise public housing towers, a low-rise, mixed-income, mixed-tenure neighbourhood was delivered. Infrastructure, parks and a new elementary school were also provided (p.17).

Some outcomes are as follows:

- **Positive:** Improvements in environmental sustainability and reduction in energy consumption; improved quality of housing for social tenants; the potential for higher-income residents to generate more local business and attract a higher level of services and facilities into the area; and improved safety and relations with local police.

- **Negative:** The neighbourhood is still predominantly African-American, so the redevelopment has done little to address racial segregation; residents from vastly different backgrounds have provided a major challenge for staff managing the redevelopment in knowing how to make the community ‘work well for everyone’ (p.19); and there are ongoing issues with unsupervised children in local parks.

**Case Study: Five points neighbourhood, Denver, Colorado (US)**

Galster et al.’s (2004) evaluation of the impacts of community development initiatives in Denver demonstrated positive outcomes for multiple and concurrent investments across housing, commercial and transport areas. The Five Points neighbourhood in Denver is a loose collection of small neighbourhoods close to the downtown Denver area. During the 1950’s the Five Points housed a thriving African-American community, however, during the 1960s and 1970s, many residents left for the newer, more integrated suburbs on the fringe of the city. The net result was large numbers of abandoned buildings, vacant blocks, ‘open air drug markets’ and a distressed public housing estate (Galster et al. 2004, p.523). Despite these poor community conditions the Five Points contained elements that were extremely conducive to community regeneration; in particular it had
the advantage of containing architecturally attractive homes close to downtown Denver.

By the early 80's the Five Points area was grappling with dormant business districts, rundown residential areas, rising house prices and socio-economic & racial tensions between higher income Whites, moderate income Latinos and the lower income population. In order to address the need for supplying affordable housing to this lower income population, the community development company HOPE invested in low income properties in the 1980's and has since developed 11 residential areas containing 425 units used to house low income and predominantly African American families in the Five Points area.

After HOPE's housing investment programs had finished in the 1990s, advancement towards community regeneration was continued by implementing a light rail transit line through the commercial strip, eradicating problematic public housing and attracting both city and privately funded investments into the redevelopment of commercial property in the Five Points area.

Galster et al.'s (2004) Adjusted Interrupted Time-Series Method (AITS) analysis of the housing market before and after these redevelopments revealed that after redevelopment, 'home prices in the Five Points impact area appreciated in relative terms more than 5 per cent per quarter more than similar homes selling in other low-income Denver neighborhoods' (Galster et al. 2004, p.526). This is compared to the financial worth of housing in Five Points before the completion of these investments, during that time housing remained 20 per cent lower than other low-income areas.

In addressing locational disadvantage this strategy has taken into account the need to regenerate the community holistically. Investments in housing and complimentary investments in transport and commercial trade demonstrated positive outcomes for the financial value of the community and its regeneration.

4.3.3 New Deal for Communities (UK)

The New Deal for Communities (NDC) program was launched in 1998. It is one of the most intensive area-based initiatives ever run in England. Running over 10 years, the program was designed to transform 39 selected, deprived neighbourhoods in England. The population of each area is approximately 9900. The 39 NDC partnerships are implementing local regeneration schemes each funded by, on average, £50 million of program spend. There are six key objectives for each project:

- Transformation over 10 years through holistic change in relation to three place-related outcomes (crime, community, and housing and the physical environment) and three people-related outcomes (education, health, and worklessness).
- ‘Closing the gaps’ between these 39 areas and the rest of the country.
- Achieving a value for money transformation of these neighbourhoods.
- Securing improvements by working with other delivery agencies such as the police, Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), schools, Jobcentre Plus (JCP), and their parent local authority: the Programme is fundamentally rooted in partnership working.
- Placing the community ‘at the heart of’ the initiative.
Sustaining a local impact after NDC Programme funding ceased’ (Beatty et al. 2010, p.5).

Over the past decade, these 39 projects have spent a total of £1.71 billion on approximately 6900 dwellings over the past decade, leveraging a further £730 million of other public, private and voluntary finances (Batty et al. 2010).

The results of this program have been mixed, partly due to some unrealistic goals:

- Batty et al.’s evaluation finds that there was ‘improvement in 32 of 36 core indicators’, with the largest improvements being in the people’s feelings about their neighbourhoods – they are more satisfied that these are quality places to live. The gap has been narrowed between these disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of the country on a range of indicators such as crime levels and some educational attainments (Batty et al. 2010, p.6).
  - ‘More statistically positive change emerges in relation to health than for either education or worklessness especially with regard to improvements in mental health’ (Batty et al. 2010, p.28).

- However, Wilkinson & McLennan find that there have been slight overall improvements in outcomes on one or two indicators, but not for others. This does, however, mask some improvements for particular sub-groups, such as ethnic minorities (Wilkinson & McLennan 2010, pp.36–37).
  - Some negative results were demonstrated for other groups, particularly those who scored higher in initial educational assessments and some ethnic minorities (p.37). Thus, there does not appear to be a clear relationship between NDC interventions and educational outcomes (p.37) (Wilkinson & McLennan 2010, pp.36–37).

4.3.4 Extended services in children’s centres (UK)

Under the Every Child Matters: Change for Children\(^3\) and Sure Start programs, a range of extended services have been funded through children’s centres and schools. These services include (Ofsted n.d., p.23):

- For children: day care, before- and after-school clubs, health-related consultations, social and sporting activities outside school hours.
- For parents: courses on health and healthy living, parent support groups, sporting activities.
- For the wider community: adult education classes, employment services, health services, family fun days, citizens’ advice drop-in services, and sporting/fitness activities.

Ofsted’s\(^4\) research to date shows that extended services provided at children’s centres and schools has been very effective in meeting a wide range of needs in the local community (p.2). The major benefits of the program have been improved self-esteem and confidence, better relationships, raised aspirations and the development of more positive attitudes towards learning (pp.2–3, pp.4–9). Parents who attended training sessions about children’s learning were also more likely to enrol in other courses at their own level (p.15).

There are a range of success factors identified by Ofsted that have contributed to the effective delivery of extended services (p.3–4):
Strongly committed leaders.

A clear understanding amongst workers of their context and how they would improve outcomes for local residents.

Planning prior to delivery of service, which incorporated standards, value for money, long term sustainability and affordability.

Flexibility to gradually build a range of programs reflecting the needs of local communities. Adequate time pre-service to gather information on local needs was also important, as was ongoing consultation with the community.

- Allowing students—particularly at secondary level—and their parents some say in shaping the types of services provided ensured the services were relevant.

Long-term funding allows strategic planning.

Effective partnerships between agencies required a lead coordinator for setting work practices and processes.

Local authorities play a valuable role in disseminating information and assisting with planning for services.

An inclusive approach which provided a range of services in one convenient location.

Good, clear channels of communication.

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**Case Study: Pen Green Centre, Corby (UK)**

This centre is an example of a visionary and unique centre providing extended and integrated services to its community. Initially, funding came only from the local council. However, as the approach gained momentum and recognition, further sources of central government funding enabled the programs to be broadened.

In the 1930s, the town of Corby was a thriving steel town with a teeming population. By the time Pen Green Centre was established in 1983, 'the steelworks had closed, housing estates were boarded up, shops were barricaded with wire grills, and 43 per cent of the male population was unemployed' (Whalley 2007, p.1). Poor nutrition, high infant mortality rates and inadequate housing significantly reduced the quality of life of local residents.

In 1983, a multi-disciplinary team of 6 people were funded by the local council to provide basic health and early childhood services, as well as child care and counselling to just 50 children (p.1). They were provided with a run-down former comprehensive school site in which to base their services.

Initially, there was stiff resistance from the community to yet another service being set up for vulnerable families, which was not what they wanted or needed (p.3). Consequently, much of the early activity of the staff involved building relationships with the community and gaining their input into how the centre should develop. Out of direct input and involvement from the community, the following services were gradually added to basic childcare and early childhood education over the course of the first 14 years (p.5):

- Early years education.
- Extended hours, extended year support services for families.
Flexible, inclusive education programs for children with special needs.
→ Adult education.
→ Community regeneration initiatives and voluntary work.
→ Training and support services for early childhood professionals.
→ A research and development program.

In the late-1990s, additional funding from the New Labour government's early childhood programs (e.g. Early Excellence Centres, Sure Start) allowed the centre to further expand into after-school care and study support for primary aged children and a greater range of adult and tertiary education programs. By the year 2000, the centre had grown to more than 110 staff with a broad range of services supporting 1200 families.

As a result of these programs, the centre has become a ‘one stop shop’ of services for young children and their families in this community (p.5). Pen Green has also developed a culture where staff and parents are able to participate in deep, reflective and practical learning. Parents are also empowered and accepted as competent at parenting rather than needing to rely on experts (pp.7–8).

This centre is an excellent example of how an integrated early childhood centre with a range of extended services can have a powerful impact on the lives of a highly disadvantaged community. Some of the principles for success demonstrated here are:
→ Long-term, committed, passionate senior staff.
→ A long-term approach to developing programs.
→ A willingness to grow and evolve over time to meet the changing needs of the community.
→ Giving the community a genuine voice and tailoring programs according to their wishes and needs.

4.3.5 URBAN-CI (EU)

The URBAN-CI program ‘was launched in 1994, at a time when cities across the EU were facing significant economic, social and environmental challenges’ (Carpenter 2006, p.2147). Slum clearance and public housing programs in the immediate post-war era had significantly improved conditions for the poorest residents. Yet it was clear by the 1980s that large urban areas were facing rapid economic, social and physical decline. Furthermore, many higher-income people were moving from older, inner-city locations to new suburban housing estates, which served to concentrate disadvantaged groups in these older locations.

Until this time, the EU had limited involvement in urban policy. With its limited powers, the European Commission attempted to improve the plight of disadvantaged neighbourhoods through influencing national and regional policy. Therefore, during the period 1994–1999, a relatively small pool of finance was provided through Structural Funds to assist member-states in improving the living environment of residents living in communities blighted by dilapidated housing stock, high unemployment and concentrations of ethnic minorities (p.2148).

The strategy adopted was a combination of place-based and people-based initiatives, depending on the particular local, regional or national context, recognising the need for individual strategies to meet locally specific challenges (p.2148).
Four types of neighbourhoods were specifically targeted; peripheral urban areas, inner cities, historical city centres, and areas that combined characteristics of the other three types.

To be eligible for funding, a total of 118 unique programs across the EU were required to both address the program guidelines and demonstrate that they were responding to national and local contexts. They were also required to incorporate partnership approaches, which involved local authorities and the community both in designing and implementing initiatives (p.2148). Four broad categories of programs emerged (pp.2148–2149):

1. A 'broad integrated approach' (45% of programs),
2. An 'integrated approach with a specific focus, either economic, social or environmental' (26% of programs),
3. A 'flagship approach' (10% of programs),
4. A 'community-based approach' (18% of programs).

All UK programs adopted this approach, which reflected other policies and programs in place concurrently. Integrated programs were implemented in Spain, France and Germany.

A number of findings emerged regarding the usefulness of each approach:

- 'A strong integrated approach may be most suitable in the 'worst' areas of deprivation, where a holistic approach is most effective' (p.2148).
- In areas where there appear to be 'lost opportunities', a flagship approach may act as a catalyst for 'securing sustainable regeneration' (p.2149). These are particularly useful in central locations, but may also encourage further regeneration on a smaller scale in peripheral areas.

### 4.4 Types of interventions—what works?

#### 4.4.1 Physical regeneration

Physical regeneration involves the renewal or redevelopment of existing physical assets within a distressed community, as well as the development of new facilities. It may include the following types of buildings and infrastructure:

- **Housing.** Comprising a range of affordable housing for low-income groups, as well as homes designed to attract owner-occupiers in higher income groups.
- The restoration of derelict local commercial buildings to attract businesses into the area.
- The re-design of street patterns and footpaths to improve linkages between the estate and the rest of the urban region.
- The redevelopment of parks to incorporate and encourage a range of recreation activities.
- **Community buildings.** These include libraries, health centres, community meeting rooms and the like. It is noteworthy that police stations emerged as one of the most prominent of these types of facilities in a large number of studies. The increased physical presence of police, combined with community engagement and relationship-building activities on the part of the police have been one of the most significant and regular features in programs where community safety and security have been a major goal. Police appear to have been one of the most successful agencies at re-engaging with distressed communities.
- **New banks, supermarkets and like commercial services.**
Several studies showed that physical regeneration in isolation is seldom sufficient to transform a disadvantaged neighbourhood (e.g. Berube 2005, p.23; Carpenter 2006, p.2147; Katz 2004, p.13, p.17). Nonetheless, it is a vital ingredient in wider regeneration efforts, which also includes people-focused initiatives and citywide infrastructure and policy programs.

Physical regeneration can have a range of positive impacts, many of which are non-physical:

- Reconnection to the rest of the metropolitan region allows for increased access to jobs, a wider range of education opportunities, recreation activities, as well as other services and facilities (Levy et al. 2010, p.8ff).
- Viable local businesses with connections to the rest of the city can attract significant local business into the area, as well as providing services to local residents. This also increases employment opportunities locally (Levy et al. 2010, p.17).
- Improved housing has been linked to a range of positive health and safety outcomes (Blackman & Harvey 2001, p.580).
- Useable parks and other recreation facilities allow for increased physical activities. This has a range of benefits for both physical and mental health.
- Improved local schools can assist in attracting a broader mix of students. In turn, this can lead to enhanced educational opportunities and outcomes for disadvantaged students (Katz 2004, p.22ff).

**Case study: Murphy Park, St Louis (US)**

This inner urban area of St Louis was home to a large number of public housing towers, built as part of a 1950s urban renewal project. However, by the year 2000, they had 'all the hallmark signs of distress' (Katz 2004, p.23)—extremely low home ownership rates, high unemployment and low incomes. They were also home to a predominantly African-American community.

Katz observes that the significant feature of this revitalisation program was the redevelopment of a local primary school—Jefferson Elementary. A private developer with a strong vision for school-led housing redevelopment raised $US5 million in funds to refurbish the school and greatly enhance the technological facilities and capabilities (p.24). A new principal was hired, a new curriculum developed, and a range of year-round schooling and after-school programs were established. Whilst the neighbourhood is primarily home to low-income households, the redeveloped school has attracted significant numbers of children from higher income families. The school has seen a major improvement in students’ achievements on a range of indicators.

The school is now spurring on demand for housing in the area, which is supporting a range of beneficial private redevelopment initiatives, as well as attracting new services, facilities and businesses into the area.

This case study shows how a creative, non-standard approach to redeveloping distressed communities can have a positive effect on existing residents without overly displacing them.

Whilst physical regeneration can have a powerful, positive impact—in combination with other program areas—there are some risks associated with this approach. Where a rundown estate is significantly beautified, it may have increased attraction to higher-income groups, leading to an increased risk of gentrification (Carpenter 2006, p.2148).
Whilst this may bring increased social mix (discussed in the next section), it may also displace disadvantaged households to other areas with far less amenity. This risk needs to be carefully managed, and a reasonable supply of affordable housing needs to be provided to ensure a balanced demographic is maintained in the community.

4.4.2 Deconcentrating disadvantage—social mix and relocation

Two approaches to improving the life chances of residents in disadvantaged neighbourhoods have become highly popular over the last decade – relocation to a better neighbourhood, and increased social mix within the existing location. The intended outcome of both approaches is to deconcentrate disadvantage (Berube 2005, pp.1–2; Orr et al. 2003).

Relocation

This is provided through such means as the housing voucher program in the US. (See descriptions of this in Orr et al. 2003, Feins & Shroder 2005 in appendix.)

➔ The Moving to Opportunity program did indicate some positive effects in the lives of individual participants. Therefore, this may be one useful initiative, provided it is part of a broader suite of interventions.

➔ However, Galster’s 2002 study of socio-economic efficiencies of relocation programs suggests that there is somewhat thin evidence to support the claim that deconcentrating the poor will improve net social benefits. This only appears to hold where the net result is fewer neighbourhoods with extremely high poverty and more with a modicum of poverty, not more with moderate poverty rates (Galster 2002, p.305).

☐ The policy implication he draws from his findings is that ‘...unless very low-poverty neighbourhoods can be opened up for occupation by the poor, deconcentration efforts should halt, because merely transferring the poor from high- to moderate-poverty neighbourhoods is likely to be socially inefficient’ (p.322). This conclusion should, however, be treated with caution. The author stresses that evidence in this area is thin. Likewise, he has not considered more ethical arguments around distributional equity.

➔ Goetz (2010) likewise suggests that relocation policies sometimes fail to take into account the interruption to social support networks, which may impede people’s ability to experience benefits of relocation (p.152).

Social mix

Berube loosely defines social mix as ‘small places that contain some range of households by income’ (Berube 2005, p.4). It usually also involves a mix of tenures.

➔ This approach is often touted as the answer to solving concentrated disadvantage. It is based on two implicit theories of change:

☐ The first that simplistically predicts that living in close proximity to higher socio-economic groups will generate a positive influence on the life circumstances of disadvantaged groups. However, numerous studies have demonstrated that there is no automatic mixing of different income and tenure groups. In fact, they appear to lead quite separate lives, despite living in the same street or apartment complex (Fauth, Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn 2008, p.121).

➔ There is some evidence that suggests that this approach may be useful: Rosenbaum et al. found that there are four specific mechanisms that facilitate self-efficacy and access to opportunities: a better address, racial integration, ‘middle-class-know-how’ and manageable challenges (Rosenbaum, Reynolds & Deluca 2002, pp.77–80).
The second theory predicts that a market-led approach will lead to more housing choice for disadvantaged residents. However, the increased choices created by new, higher-quality housing are rarely available to those on low-incomes (Cameron 2006, pp.13–14)

➔ **Thus, it is clear that this is no silver bullet.**

The approach has mixed results:

➔ **Positive:**

- A mixed community brings with it the potential for disadvantaged residents to have increased access to a range of services and facilities common in higher socio-economic areas—e.g. a range of businesses, shops, restaurants, better schools, increased health and recreational services.
- The quality of housing and other infrastructure is a vast improvement compared to the estate in its rundown condition.

➔ **Negative:**

- An increase in tenure and racial diversity has led to heightened community tensions in some areas (Levy et al. 2010, pp.26–28).
- An increase in the proportion of owner-occupiers in a regeneration neighbourhood may dilute the social exclusion faced in that locale, but may weaken the outcomes of the program overall (Batty et al. 2010, p.8).
- Gentrification may merely displace disadvantaged residents to other areas rather than addressing their problems (Cameron 2006).

Berube’s detailed study of mixed communities suggests that there is a place for promoting economically mixed communities within regeneration strategies. However, in order to maximise the effectiveness of this type of development, it needs to be a policy objective across the full range of communities, not just severely distressed ones (Berube 2005, p.54).

Berube and several other authors suggest a number of points which must be carefully addressed where social mix is part of a community regeneration strategy:

➔ Empirical research suggests that mixed-tenure neighbourhoods may be desirable to those who live in them, but home owners tend to prefer homogenous neighbourhoods in which their tenure dominates (Berube 2005, p.29). *A social mix initiative therefore needs to be combined with interventions to both make the neighbourhood physically attractive and to build a greater sense of belonging and inclusive community.*

➔ Like all other revitalisation mechanisms, approaches to building healthy mixed communities must be tailored to local conditions (Berube 2005, p.54).

➔ One means of addressing the concentration of disadvantaged groups is the community lettings approach, in which a greater social mix in an area is sought through the letting of some social housing stock to higher-income groups. However, in hard-to-let areas, desirable tenants may not be prepared to live there. This approach also carries the risk that those most in need of housing assistance may be bypassed, thereby being further excluded from adequate housing (H. Pawson & Kintrea 2002a, p.662). *Therefore, it is important to ensure that community lettings are balanced against the needs of the most-disadvantaged residents in the community. It is also important that this intervention be combined with some form of physical regeneration to make the area attractive enough to higher-income tenants.*
Mixed communities must be a sustainable feature of long-term revitalisation and community development strategies, not just a 'flavour of the month' initiative (Berube 2005, p.54).

It is important to coordinate commercial and economic development at the same time as residential revitalisation in order to build more viable communities (Berube 2005, p.52).

Case study: Belmont neighbourhood, Portland, Oregon (US)

This area was once a bustling area, well-connected to the rest of the city by a trolley line (Galster et al. 2004, p.518). However, by the 1980s, it had deteriorated to the point where the commercial district contained large numbers of vacant buildings and a few shops and factories (pp.518–519). Renewed interest in rundown but 'architecturally interesting' homes nearby sparked a sharp rise in previously depressed property prices, placing pressure on low-income households in the area.

An affordable housing organisation—REACH Community Development Inc—began targeting specific neighbourhoods in southeast Portland for redevelopment. Their approach included not only the provision of affordable housing, but also economic development, social services, community building and leadership development. One program in Belmont neighbourhood involved multiple, concurrent investments into the commercial strip of the Belmont neighbourhood.

REACH worked with local businesses to co-invest in improving business facades, signage, and marketing, as well as improving lighting and other safety elements, and assisting business owners with business planning activities (p.520). They encouraged business owners to purchase their property in order to prevent displacement as property prices rose, and encouraged new businesses to start up. A private developer purchased an old, disused dairy site and developed mixed-income housing and spaces for small businesses to operate.

As commercial activity in the area began to increase, home prices began to rise. Through forward planning, REACH had maintained some supply of affordable housing and had helped business owners to put in place plans to allow them to continue to operate in a more expensive property market. This prevented displacement of both commercial activities and low-income households (pp.520–522).

This shows how small-scale development of commercial interests can assist in revitalising a distressed neighbourhood. Likewise, forward planning in acquiring social housing stock and assisting small businesses to attain secure tenure in offices and shops can help prevent displacement due to gentrification.

To ensure a mix of households, developments ‘should proceed from areas of market strength’—i.e. areas well-located in relation to transport, jobs and amenities (Berube 2005, p.29).

Affordable housing units should be ‘phased in’ to neighbourhoods where there is already evidence of gentrification, to reduce resistance from home buyers (Berube 2005, p.29).

In a given ‘mixed’ community, there are different levels of mix—ranging from physically mixed throughout the site to separate enclaves within one site (Berube 2005, p.30). The enclaving of higher income groups and owner-occupiers may therefore have little tangible benefit as a social mix strategy.
A very wide gap between 'subsidised and market-rate households may exacerbate tensions in new mixed-income developments' (Berube 2005, p.31). Therefore, it may be more beneficial to mix more similar income groups than to juxtapose very-low and very-high income groups.

Consideration must be given to the problem of hard-to-house tenants or those facing forced relocation due to redevelopment of former public housing sites. Merely displacing problems and disadvantaged households is an ineffective and arguably an unjust way of addressing concentrated disadvantage (Cameron 2006).

Berube’s research suggests that whilst social mix may assist in revitalising distressed communities, it may be more realistic and helpful in the long run for policy ‘to prevent communities from taking on a detrimental non-mix than to pursue some idealised … mix …’ (Berube 2005, p.4).

- Hills also recommends the approach of ‘supporting mixed-incomes within existing communities’. He suggests there are a range of ways to build the quality of life for existing residents and thereby improve the social mix in a public housing estate. These include finding ways to retain higher-income tenants, allowing tenants to purchase some housing, developing policies that support paid work and the building of the skills necessary for this, and choice-based lettings (Hills 2007, p.203).

### Case Study: Selling Alternate Vacants on Estates (SAVE), Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (UK)

In the 1990s, this social housing association became concerned that one of their estates in York was becoming somewhat residualised and stigmatised (Hills 2007, p.181). This was evident in the increasing number of unlet properties in the area. Former tenants whose situations had improved had moved out of the estate and incoming tenants fell into the highest need categories. To address this problem, the trust began selling alternate properties as they became vacant and using the proceeds to purchase like properties elsewhere around the town. Sales revenue has allowed the trust to maintain the same number of properties, whilst the social mix in the original estate has increased.

This case study shows one way in which social mix can be achieved gradually without large-scale displacement of tenants. However, caution should be exercised in adopting this approach in the Australian context. Where there is not significant investment into regenerating the neighbourhood and marketing some dwellings to higher socio-economic groups, these houses may be sold to former social housing tenants. So the tipping point required to achieve a healthy social mix may not be reached. Furthermore, the sale price of the unit(s) may not bring the required return to allow adequate funding for investment into additional social rental stock in other locations.

Thus, social mix interventions may have a viable and important part to play in revitalising neighbourhoods with concentrated disadvantage. However, careful consideration must be given to building healthy communities, reducing potential tensions (particularly where there is tenure mix), coordinating residential development with economic revitalisation and ensuring that the underlying problems experienced by very low income households or hard-to-house tenants are resolved rather than simply relocated.
4.4.3 People-based programs

There are a range of people-based approaches to revitalising disadvantaged neighbourhoods. These include the regeneration or provision of new schools, employment and skill-building programs, and the use of schools and children’s centres as sites for provision of extended health, community, educational and recreation services. There is also an emerging body of evidence that suggests arts and sports programs as part of a larger regeneration initiative provide a powerful yet safe space for people to explore healthy change. They also provide opportunities for building community and increasing understanding (particularly amongst ethnically diverse communities).

It should be noted here that these interventions cannot be short-term: ‘deep-rooted economic exclusion cannot be addressed by part-time temporary ... opportunities’ (Carpenter 2006, p.2154). Longer-term interventions and sustainable outcomes beyond the life of the project should be the goal.

In this section, we will examine two types of services—employment and extended services.

Employment

The link between neighbourhoods of concentrated disadvantage and high levels of unemployment amongst their residents is somewhat chicken-and-egg: both tend to magnify the other, leading to a downward spiral. In social housing estates, allocation policies which prioritise the most disadvantaged applicants lead to increasing concentrations of tenants who experience difficulty obtaining and maintaining stable employment. Therefore, tenants in these areas often require considerable support, resources and training in order to be job-ready, prior to employment services being able to assist them with finding jobs.

The UK Government’s Social Exclusion Unit reported that concentrated unemployment in disadvantaged neighbourhoods can be caused by factors such as changes in the nature and structure of the workforce and local availability of jobs, residential sorting leading to concentrations of disadvantaged and poorly job-skilled people in particular locations, and the compounding of area effects on individual life chances (Social Exclusion 2004, pp.6–7).

In addition to creating better physical spaces for disadvantaged residents to live, it is therefore also important to assist them to upskill, and then to find and sustain employment. Hills suggests a range of ways in which they can be effectively assisted to find and maintain employment (Hills 2007):

- **Information**: This includes improving coordination between the housing and employment support sectors. It is often the case that one provides information and support in their area with little or no knowledge of how the other sector operates or how one form of support may impact another (p.185, p.191). If employment support programs and staff were to better understand the impact housing assistance can have on employment participation at a range of levels, this barrier to work may be lowered.

- **Integrated housing and employment support programs**: These could help to build a more enabling approach to supporting tenants into the workforce (p.191, p.203).

- **Local employment**: There is greater scope for more provision of local employment (p.192). Many regeneration programs, for example, provide some employment in the form of housing construction and renovation, or community development positions. However, these tend to attract outside employees, because local residents may lack the necessary skills for these jobs. If regeneration projects were linked with skill-building programs, a greater number of jobs could be provided for the local community.


Mobility: Transferring tenancy between different service regions and housing associations is often very difficult. This prevents some tenants from moving to another region to access work. Greater linkages between regional housing authorities to improve mobility options would enable some tenants to improve access to work (p.192).

One-off interventions to get people into a job are seldom effective in achieving long-term success. Ongoing support after a resident has successfully transitioned into a positive change such as ongoing employment can assist them in turning short-term gain into long-term change (Richardson & Hills 2000, p.11).

Extended children’s services

The extended children’s centre services outlined in Section 4.3.4 have been found to be ‘… effective in meeting a range of needs of children, young people and adults in the local community’ (Ofsted n.d., p.2). A range of benefits for children, their parents and the broader community are evident from this program, as outlined above. Schools and children’s centres are one of the best places in the community for recruiting adults (particularly parents) to participate in voluntary and community development activities (Richardson & Hills 2000, p.4). In one case cited by Richardson & Hills, the school setting was used to deliver a university-accredited program in childhood studies to parents of the students (p.4). (See Pen Green case study in Section 4.3.4 for an example of such services in action.)

As noted above, programs need to be long-term in order to achieve sustainable outcomes beyond the program funding timeframe (Carpenter 2006, p.2154).

4.4.4 Neighbourhood focus, alongside broader initiatives

Despite the significant recent focus on deconcentrating disadvantage through dispersal mechanisms, ‘neighbourhood [is] seen as the place where people could most effect change and as the start point for renewal’ (Richardson & Hills 2000, p.16).

There are a range of reasons for this:

→ 'It is at the neighbourhood level...where more pronounced segregation between economic classes if found' (Berube 2005, p.7). Residential sorting mechanisms are particularly strong in very disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

→ 'The smaller the area focused on, the harder to stop 'leakage' to others' (Richardson & Hills 2000, p.18). Thus programs focused on a smaller area will have benefits for neighbouring areas where there is little or no direct investment.

However, there is a need for both micro and macro level programs. 'It is through a combination of [a broad range of] macro and micro policies that those facing deprivation … have the greatest chance of moving out of poverty' (Carpenter 2006, p.2160). Carpenter stresses that interventions need to be simultaneously multi-level: local strategies need to be nested within regional/state strategies, which in turn need to be nested within national ones (p.2159). Additionally, strategies addressing disadvantage at a sub-city level need to be linked with citywide strategies.

Thus, it is important to have a focus on smaller neighbourhood level interventions. But they must be complemented by broader societal interventions which address some of the macro-causes of locational disadvantage.

4.4.5 Home ownership as well as rental housing assistance

In most of the place-based programs cited above, housing interventions have taken a dual-pronged approach to supporting both rental and home ownership initiatives. Thus home ownership needs to be a part of a community regeneration program, with interventions supporting low-income families into home ownership. However, this needs to be very carefully targeted, as not every household has the capacity to
manage the demands of a mortgage and the additional home maintenance issues. An ongoing supply of affordable rental housing needs to be maintained in a healthy, balanced community.

4.4.6 Program Evaluation

A number of evaluation studies pointed to the difficulty of providing a genuinely robust appraisal of the relative success of a program. One study suggested that ‘it can be difficult to measure change’ (Fordham et al. 2010, pp.42–43). It is also difficult to establish the degree to which change would have occurred anyway without the intervention or the degree to which changes can be directly attributed to the intervention (p.42).

It is also important at the outset to establish the difference between measuring program outcomes (i.e. outcomes only for those individuals involved in the program) and population outcomes (outcomes of the program for the broader community or society in which the program was located). The way an evaluation is framed has major implications for which of these two types of outcome are measured.

Galster et al. further outlined a number of difficulties involved in such an undertaking (Galster et al. 2004, p.504):

- Effects can be difficult to measure and may only become apparent after a time lag.
- The most salient indicators for one neighbourhood may not coincide with the best indicators for another area.
- Effects may come from other external sources, such as an intervention in an external region.
- Residents who benefit from the intervention may choose to move out of the neighbourhood, thereby further concentrating local disadvantage and distorting measures of program outcomes.
- There may be multiple, overlapping or discrete interventions in a given neighbourhood over a period of time, so it is difficult to predict which one actually produced a given result.

Galster et al. therefore developed an experimental approach using a quasi-experimental research design, called adjusted interrupted time series (AITS). This method measures pre- and post-intervention outcomes in the community (p.504).

As part of this method, the authors proposed overcoming some of the barriers to robust evaluation by focusing on one of the ‘most fundamental challenges’: establishing a counterfactual situation against which to measure actual outcomes. This is the outcome indicator for what would have occurred if the given intervention had not taken place (p.505). The establishment of a counter-factual situation must include the following criteria (p.506):

- Comparison of an indicator before and after an intervention.
- Use of a time-series indicator.
- The measurement of both absolute change and comparison of this to a ‘control neighbourhood’.

They argue that their method, whilst in preliminary stages of development, has strong potential for assisting policymakers and academics in assessing intervention impacts. However, there are two caveats to this claim. Firstly, for the method to reliably estimate a counterfactual situation, it needs ‘substantial numbers of frequently recurring observations in the area before and after an intervention’ (p.531). Secondly, it needs a ‘well-behaved trend in the indicator before an intervention’ (p.532).
These studies suggest that it is important to build in evaluation processes and data collection from the beginning of a program, and to adequately resource as a fundamental part of the program. They also suggest that there is a need to improve data collection to enable more accurate evaluation of programs and any causal links between interventions and outcomes. This is currently an area lacking in the literature, but constantly highlighted.

4.4.7 The role of housing and tenure in reducing concentrated disadvantage

Housing can both contribute to and alleviate concentrated disadvantage. Pawson & Kintrea outline two ways in which this can occur (H. Pawson & Kintrea 2002b, p.646):

- ‘Processes which deny the opportunity for some households to access housing are a key source of social exclusion’.
- ‘The housing system’s distributional role in allocating housing resources among those who have access to housing can provide great benefits to one group of people, at the same time disadvantaging another. The location of a particular type of housing can lock it into a ‘geography of opportunity’ which determines whether the household will have access to quality education, employment, local shops and safe streets (Berube 2005, p.25). Social housing applicants may therefore be forced to choose between stable housing in an undesirable location on the one hand, and living in an area with higher amenity and opportunities on the other.

Social housing still has a vital role to play in creating healthy, diverse communities. It continues to provide assistance for those on very low incomes who cannot compete in the open housing market – namely, ‘a decent home for all at a price within their means’ (Hills 2007, p.1).

However, Hills suggests that ‘a more varied menu’ for both prospective and existing tenants' would assist in improving a range of outcomes – both housing and non-housing-related. This varied menu includes providing a range of products and tenure opportunities, such as choice-based lettings, shared-equity ownership and the ability to review a tenant's circumstances and move between tenures as their situation changes would increase the reach of the social housing sector in ensuring decent homes for all (Hills 2007, p.204).

Social housing allocations

In a review of housing allocations processes, Pawson & Kintrea found that allocations can contribute to reinforcing disadvantage by producing spatial concentrations of socially excluded households and by ‘confirming the residualisation of council housing’ (H. Pawson & Kintrea 2002b, p.646). A number of factors contribute to the role of housing allocations in social exclusion processes:

- Recent emphasis on needs as a key eligibility criteria mean only the most disadvantaged gain access to this housing (p.648). This concentrates the most disadvantaged into specific geographic locations where social housing is available.
- The prioritisation of transfer applicants may prevent the under utilisation of some stock, but leaves only the less desirable properties available for those coming into the sector (p.649). Additional selection criteria may also lead to discriminatory practices in selecting new tenants for a property and results in a ‘take it or leave it’ offer to tenants (p.650). This may not necessarily produce the best housing outcome for that household.

Affordable housing policy for supporting low income households

In Katz’s review of 70 years of social housing policies, three broad approaches to housing assistance are examined and assessed against a range of principles of affordable housing provision for their effectiveness (Katz et al. 2003):
Rental assistance (p.ix):

- This should play a central role in any housing strategy.
- This type of intervention requires deep, long-term subsidies to reach the neediest households.
- Programs should avoid clustering of low-income households and include interventions to raise the incomes of these families. Location plays a 'critical role in determining the effectiveness' of these programs. It also has a range of other effects on family wellbeing.
- Building more dwellings is not necessarily the most cost-effective solution for governments. Where new dwellings are being constructed, these should be dispersed throughout healthy neighbourhoods with access to a range of facilities and opportunities.

Home ownership assistance (p.x):

- Efforts to expand access to credit facilities should proceed cautiously.
- These programs have yielded some very positive results. Many families have been provided with assistance which has helped them overcome otherwise insurmountable barriers to home ownership.
- The most successful initiatives have been federal rather than local ones and have resulted from pressure being placed upon lending institutions to more adequately meet the needs of low-income home buyers.
- However, they also have some serious shortcomings. Not every low-income family has the capacity to sustain the requirements of a home mortgage and may make poor decisions if pushed prematurely into this tenure.
- Buyers need to be carefully informed of all the risks prior to accessing home ownership assistance programs.

Land-use and other regulatory policies (pp.x-xi):

- These are commonly neglected in housing strategies at state and local levels. However, they have powerful potential for reducing or increasing barriers to achieving adequate supplies of affordable housing.
- Growth controls and inclusionary zoning, if carefully implemented, can assist in increasing the supply of affordable housing.
- The biggest constraint on the effective use of these tools is fragmented planning authority. The most optimal efforts at using these tools effectively are regional in nature.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has described a number of major community regeneration programs across the United Kingdom, United States and the European Union. Successful programs tend to incorporate both place- and people-based interventions, and link local interventions with broader regional initiatives.

Social mix has been promoted in recent years as a silver bullet to the problems of concentrated disadvantage. Whilst it has a definite and potentially very positive role in addressing such problems, it is by no means a silver bullet and must be used with great caution and in conjunction with a range of other interventions.

The next chapter will draw out some principles from the programs and interventions types described in this chapter. This will provide a framework around which Housing
NSW can assess proposed interventions when reviewing its estates’ strategy and broader initiatives around preventing and reducing concentrations of disadvantage.
5 BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

This chapter focuses on broad principles of best practice which can be drawn from the reviews and evaluative studies synthesised in this report. These principles are applicable across both major cities and rural/regional settlements. They have also been selected for their ready applicability to the Australian context. Where contextual factors are not directly applicable to interventions in Australia—e.g. the racial segregation issues of the US— they have not been included in this chapter.

5.1 People-based and place-based

The two broad types of policy mechanisms available to address locational disadvantage are people-based and place-based. Programs such as Moving to Opportunity, HOPE-VI and new Deal for Communities have tried various combinations of both types of approaches. However, it seems clear from the research literature that it is vitally important to have elements of both present in any effective regeneration program.

Katz's 'central defining principle' for moving forward with addressing locational disadvantage is the goal of 'creating neighbourhoods of choice and connection' (p.25)—neighbourhoods where a broad mix of socio-economic groups are attracted to settle and raise families. This principle 'treats people and place policies as fundamentally intertwined and mutually reinforcing' (Katz 2004, p.26).

Whilst place-based outcomes are arguably easier to achieve, evidence from one evaluation suggested that it is not possible to definitively prioritise either place-based or people-based approaches in isolation. Rather, it suggests that both are needed (Batty et al. 2010, pp.38–39).

Each approach has its own advantages and disadvantages:

- **Place-based mechanisms** are aimed at improving the physical environment. Whilst this has a number of benefits for the residents, it risks increasing the attractiveness of the area to external investors, thereby potentially triggering rising property prices, gentrification and displacement of lower-income residents (Carpenter 2006, p.2147).
  - Where there is the risk of gentrification, it is imperative that regeneration policies include strategies to maintain a reasonable supply of affordable housing. Attention also needs to be paid to ensuring that increasing property prices do not push small businesses out of the area.
  - Greater attention also needs to be given to the sequencing of people- and place-based interventions. Batty et al.'s evaluation suggests that a program should not 'press ahead on all fronts from the outset', but should instead take a more staged approach (Batty et al. 2010, p.39).

- **People-based mechanisms** provide direct support to individuals, such as employment services, training, child care and counselling. These allow individuals to directly benefit from programs. However, there is the inherent risk that once the individual's life circumstances have improved, they will choose to move to a better neighbourhood, thereby contributing to further concentration of disadvantage amongst those who remain behind in the target community (Carpenter 2006, p.2147).

There are three other important factors that need to be considered in using a dual people- and place-based approach:

- It has also become clear from the evidence that economic and commercial development needs to take place alongside housing and people-based programs.
A solid commercial base in a neighbourhood can bring many services and facilities to a community which government and the non-profit sectors cannot provide.

- Programs need to focus on three broad groups in a community – those who are likely to stay in that location regardless of outcomes, those who will move out of the given neighbourhood as soon as personal circumstances permit, and those who may be looking at moving into the neighbourhood sometime in the future (Quercia & Galster 2000, p.147). An attractive, high quality community needs to be developed to ensure that all three groups are facilitated to remain there should they wish.

- It is important that links are built to the surrounding urban area. This reduces the need to replicate services and facilities in the program neighbourhood which could easily be accessed in nearby areas. It also allows residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods to access work and other opportunities available to the rest of the population.

### 5.2 Long term, comprehensive and well-resourced programs

A number of studies pointed to the need for early intervention to prevent serious decline (e.g. Quercia & Galster 2000; Richardson & Hills 2000, p.9).

Where this opportunity has been missed, the existing body of evidence strongly points towards the need for sustained, long-term, comprehensive and well-resourced programs. A number of findings point to this broad principle:

- **A small number of focused efforts.** 'The need and opportunity for transformative neighbourhood strategies applies to a small number of places, and ... success demands a considerable commitment of time and money' (Berube 2005, p.46).

- **Stability is needed to attract and maintain a core group of stakeholders.** 'Neighbourhood policy needs to be implemented in an integrated, accountable, and sustainable fashion' (Katz 2004, pp.34–36). Stable, long-term and predictable policy which facilitates integration and accountability (p.36) are required to attract sustainable, long-term stakeholders in both the private and not-for-profit sectors.

  - Timeframes and spatial remits for regeneration schemes 'should reflect their objectives' (Batty et al. 2010, p.8, pp.41–42). Some suggest that the 10-year timeframe for New Deal for Communities was not long enough (Cole et al. 2010).

  - Programs should allow adequate time for a ‘year zero’—i.e. a pre-planning phase which sets in place the necessary relationships and allows for proper collection of the data necessary to plan for a locally responsive program (Batty et al. 2010, p.8; Fordham et al. 2010, p.12).

  - A long time horizon allows regeneration partnerships to change their approach as needed.

  - Time is needed to establish the relationships necessary for leveraging other sources of funding.

  - Time-scales for programs addressing locational disadvantage need to be sufficiently long enough to allow for community engagement and local capacity building (Carpenter 2006, p.2159).

- **Realistic targets are important.** Batty et al.’s evaluation of New Deal for Communities suggests in hindsight that some of the targets were not achievable, particularly given the limited timeframe and resources (Batty et al. 2010, p.8).

- **Engagement takes a lot of time.** 'Engaging the community in regeneration programs always takes much longer than anticipated' (Carpenter 2006, p.2155).
This factor had not been built into program timeframes and led to some funding being spent rapidly—rather than necessarily on the best items—towards the end of project timelines, or being spent on larger projects with 'less of a community focus' which were easier to administrate (p.2155).

→ Adequate and generous resourcing is vital (Carpenter 2006). Limited resourcing severely hampers the ability of a program to have a major, positive impact (Carpenter 2006, p.2159).

5.3 Social mix useful, but not a silver bullet.

As discussed at length in Chapter 4, social mix can be a valuable component of a strategy to address locational disadvantage. However, it must be carefully and thoughtfully applied, alongside a range of interventions to ensure those disadvantaged residents who wish to stay in the project location are able to, and that they are empowered to make other positive changes in their lives (such as taking up employment and training opportunities) to enable them to better fit with higher income groups moving into a mixed neighbourhood.

The research also suggested that social mix strategies work best in high amenity, high-demand areas, and that social housing should be phased in gradually.

5.4 Empower and involve the local community

To truly achieve lasting, positive change in the lives of disadvantaged communities and individuals, it is crucial to genuinely empower and involve these people in the change process.

However, it is also important to start at the level of their capacity. This may mean initially starting with very small initiatives, only building up later to larger projects as their capacity and desire for change increases.

A number of important points supporting these two principles have emerged from the studies synthesised in this report:

→ A community does not have one unified viewpoint. There may be underlying tensions which need to be addressed to facilitate major change (MacLeavy 2009, pp.865–866).

→ Involvement in regeneration programs is time-consuming and resource-heavy. Therefore programs need to be paced to allow residents to sustain their involvement over long timeframes (MacLeavy 2009, p.859).

→ The community dimension needs to be firmly established from the outset: who is the community? What do they actually need assistance with? What are their priorities? What level of community participation can and will be realistically established? (Batty et al. 2010, p.9).

→ Expectations need to be carefully managed—inflated views of what can be achieved may lead to disillusionment and a reduction of trust (Batty et al. 2010, p.9).

→ The community want to have their views heard, but they are not necessarily the best stakeholders to deliver outcomes. Therefore, community partnerships should be carefully and strategically targeted (Fordham et al. 2010, p.20).

→ The role of community was seen by a range of stakeholders as a positive feature of the program. The community were essential in ‘driving strategic change’ in some locations and in validating or critiquing interventions (p.36). They also assisted in delivering some interventions in a few projects (Fordham et al. 2010, p.37).
Some projects found it difficult to maintain a balance between community desires and professional advice on what was needed in a location (Fordham et al. 2010, p.40).

Community involvement is recognised as one strategy for ensuring the ongoing sustainability of regeneration initiatives (McInroy 2000, p.24). However, some of the rhetoric around community involvement often ‘merely creates an illusion of collaboration and the level of real … community empowerment is sometimes far less than claimed …’ (p.24). Therefore, government must be genuine about empowering local decision making and other efforts, or there is little point involving the community.

- ‘Trust amongst participants is central to this process’ of building social capital (Carpenter 2006, p.2154).
- ‘Honesty has been the best policy’ with tenants, who are more likely to trust a local authority if they are straight in their dealings with tenants (Richardson & Hills 2000, p.5).
- ‘Rhetoric [often stresses] ‘community’, but if the reality involved large lumps of money not much would change. Resources need to match the scale of what people can relate to and control’ (Richardson & Hills 2000, p.27). The point here is not that large amounts of money shouldn’t be spent. Rather, the authors suggest it should be set aside to gradually send through to the community, as their capacity increases to the point where they can manage it appropriately.

Starting small, with projects initiated out of community need appears to be a highly effective strategy in building community trust and support for larger projects (Richardson & Hills 2000, p.8–9).

- Community members’ involvement in a project is often triggered by an issue that affects them directly (p.10).
- Recognition of contributions by community members builds more sustainable levels of involvement (p.10).

**Case Study: Garnet Hill, Glasgow (UK)**

Garnet Hill in Glasgow is an example of a problematic culture-led redevelopment project—i.e. where a park was redeveloped as a city wide showcase of the cultural achievements of the city.

The park discussed in this case study was a derelict site covering half a street block in inner city Garnet Hill, which had become vacant after a tenement building collapsed (McInroy 2000, p.29). It lay untended for almost five years, despite repeated calls from the local Community Council⁵ to convert the site into a much-needed local recreation facility (p.29).

However, repeated requests for the City Council to remediate the site were ‘blocked’—until in 1989 it was Glasgow’s turn to serve as European City of Culture (p.30). The City Council were approached by the Goethe Institute who wanted to create a ‘lasting momento’ of this status (p.30). The Institute suggested that a city park would be an appropriate project, so the City Council began searching for a site.

The Garnet Hill site was selected, largely due to its proximity to the central city area and due to the multicultural composition of the surrounding neighbourhood. Its location and cultural makeup provided an ideal

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⁵ A Community Council is a representative body of residents, which forms part of the structure of local government in Scotland.
marketing opportunity for a City of Culture (p.30). So the aim of the City Council was, from the outset, to produce something with much broader appeal as a 'cultural space', rather than a local park (p.31).

The landscape architect chosen to design the site ‘viewed the opportunity via a personalised and artistic lens’ through which he interpreted what the community wanted (p.31). Public consultation consisted of a meeting in which the finished design was presented to the Community Council and the local community (p.33). The architect presented a physical model which was used to explain the development and ‘to some extent to coerce [the community] into a particular way of looking at the space’ (p.33). The City Council then merely sought the agreement of the community in order to implement the design.

The Community Council were then handed the responsibility of maintaining the park, despite the fact that it was largely unusable for the local community. A number of tensions between the Community Council and local residents arose as they sought to manage the high maintenance schedule, and the community began to use the park for activities for which it was not designed (p.35).

The park thus became ‘a constrained and restrictive space’, which did not meet residents’ needs for a place to romp and run.

This is an example of a tokenistic approach to involving the community in redevelopment. It shows some of the adverse consequences that can result.

Thus, community involvement and empowerment is vital in regenerating distressed communities. However, it must be genuine and must start where they are at—both in terms of their capacity and their willingness to get involved.

5.5 Flexibility, evolving, locally tailored solutions

The most successful strategies for addressing locational disadvantage are those that have been allowed to flex and change over time, particularly to suit local contextual issues (Katz 2004, p.39). It is important to allow for the continual identification and adaptation of best practices for effective community building (Levy et al. 2010, p.28).

Richardson & Hills also stress that services need to be locally-responsive services (Richardson & Hills 2000, pp.5–6). They also point to the need for guidance but not dictation from central funding agencies: ‘You cannot prescribe mechanisms centrally, but can give a structure or a ‘toolkit’ for local action’ (p.22).

5.6 Macro and micro together

Another important principle for addressing locational disadvantage is the need for both macro- and micro-level interventions at the same time (Carpenter 2006, p.2156). These need to be coordinated to ensure that they all work in the same direction, rather than contradicting each other, and they need to involve multiple agencies across all of the public, private and community sectors.

The studies raise a number of pertinent issues that support these contentions:

- ‘Broader national, state, and local policies need to align with the goals of neighbourhood policy’ (Katz 2004, p.28). Policies at all these levels have helped to create and perpetuate severely disadvantaged neighbourhoods, so it is important for them to proactively facilitate and encourage the revitalisation of these geographies.
‘The dynamics of locality matter’ (p.39). It is unlikely that one set of interventions will overcome all the issues across a range of locations. Likewise, an intervention in one given location needs to factor in the ‘wider policy and market contexts’ within which it operates (Batty et al. 2010, p.39).

‘Neighbourhoods and neighbourhood policy need to be set within a metropolitan context’ (Katz 2004, p.26). That is, governments need to recognise that the metropolitan area is now the ‘geography of opportunity’, which defines where households will live, work, learn, and play. Whilst the geography of a neighbourhood is a convenient administrative unit for interventions to alleviate disadvantage, they operate within a broader metropolitan context and they need to relate to the educational, employment, housing and other opportunities of this broader context.

5.7 Partnerships

Following on from this joined-up approach, genuine positive partnerships need to be developed. No one single agency or sector has the capacity to deliver all of the outcomes needed to reduce concentrated disadvantage. A range of qualities are needed in appropriate partnerships:

‘Personal attitudes and informal skills [e.g. emotional intelligence]’ may be more important than technical skills in achieving positive regeneration outcomes (Fordham et al. 2010, p.21).

Having key staff who live in the regeneration area means they have a personal stake in getting the program right. This may have a highly positive effect on the program outcomes (Fordham et al. 2010, p.22).

Leadership and vision are important in ‘driving through the complex processes’ of a regeneration initiative (Fordham et al. 2010, p.23).

- Continuity of senior staff in service-delivery agencies is ‘associated with positive benefits’ to the local community (Batty et al. 2010, p.8).

Succession and sustainability strategies need to form part of initial planning. Planning for sustainability also needs to include financial viability of ongoing management of regenerated housing and other infrastructure (Batty et al. 2010, p.9).

Where the rules for the partnership are ‘set from above’ the community ‘derives little benefit’ (Tett 2005, p.6).

‘It is important to distinguish between involvement and empowerment and between strategic power and operations power’ (Tett 2005, p.6).

‘Processes of inclusion and exclusion characterise partnerships’(Tett 2005, p.6)— i.e. structures and power largely determine who does and does not have the ability to make decisions.

Project partnerships can leave a lasting legacy of collaboration and networking (Carpenter 2006, p.2156).

Thus, partnerships are an important ingredient in successful community regeneration strategies. But they must be genuine in intent, with appropriate power-sharing between all stakeholders.

5.8 Value for money?

Programs designed to address locational disadvantage are costly. Therefore, it is entirely appropriate to question whether they produce value for money for governments and their taxpayer-base. Batty et al.’s study demonstrated that ‘value for money assessments, based on a shadow pricing methodology, show that monetisable
benefits which can be attributed to [these] programs are substantially greater than costs’ (Batty et al. 2010, p.35). Fordham et al. also suggested that despite the difficulties in accurately assessing the impact of regeneration interventions, stakeholders generally felt that these programs produced place-based changes (Fordham et al. 2010, pp.42–43).

This chapter has presented a wide range of principles for successful interventions into locations with concentrated disadvantage. It is vital to incorporate both place- and people-based interventions concurrently, to address both macro- and micro-issues, to involve and empower the community at appropriate levels and to build genuine partnerships. Studies also indicate that well-resourced, long-term, flexible programs produce genuine value for the money and effort invested.
6 FURTHER RESEARCH/GAPS

There are a number of issues surrounding locational disadvantage and policy interventions to address that require further research:

- The conceptualisation of the problem, leading to clearer definitions. Greater clarity of the nature of the problem would assist in the development of effective interventions.

- Evaluation methodologies that could be used to quantify the benefits or otherwise of particular interventions. These would be valuable in terms of justifying whether or not to invest in an area, and if so how much investment is warranted.

- Limited information on community regeneration and locational disadvantage in New Zealand and Canada: neither of these countries are represented in this synthesis, due to the absence of studies. It may be of value to the broader area of locational disadvantage research, policy and practice community in Australia to have examples from a broader range of Anglophone countries.

This report has focused solely on international examples of interventions for addressing locational disadvantage. There is also a large body of high quality research on the nature of disadvantage in Australia and Australian interventions. These studies were excluded from this synthesis, based on the advice of Housing NSW. The authors therefore recommend that—in order to achieve a balanced and fully relevant overview of this field—a further synthesis of the Australian context and approach be conducted, and then a comparison of local and foreign approaches carried out. This would assist in exploring implementation issues and the transferability of international findings to the Australian context.

Furthermore, this study has largely focused on evidence from sociological and macro-economic studies. The community development literature is now well established as a distinct field of study. A further synthesis of evidence from this field would be greatly beneficial in exploring the more effective ways of working with communities to assist them in improving their life chances of the longer term. In particular, it is recommended that participatory development approaches be closely examined.
7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is clear from the studies presented here that interventions into locations of concentrated disadvantage can have significant, lasting, positive effects. Such effects include:

- Higher quality homes.
- Increased security of tenure.
- Increased safety and security at home and in the immediate community.
- Health improvements.
- Access to stable employment and educational/training opportunities.
- Reduced crime rates.
- Reduced rates of risky behavior and of psychological distress amongst children and youths.
- Increased and more comprehensive participation in broader society.

Successful interventions include the following elements:

- Both people- and place-based mechanisms.
- Marco- and micro-level interventions.
- Genuine community empowerment and involvement at appropriate levels.
- Partnership between the public, private and community sectors.
- Multi-level government policies and interventions that align to produce positive outcomes at the neighbourhood level.
- Long-term, well-resourced programs.

However, programs need to avoid the following practices:

- Tokenism in forming partnerships and building community involvement.
- Short-term 'quick fixes'.
- Discourses which entrench the problem by overly identifying an area as dysfunctional.
- Investing too quickly, beyond the capacity of the community to fully participate.
- Interventions which merely displace the problem.
APPENDIX: THE STUDIES

This appendix provides detailed summaries of each of the studies utilised in this synthesis. They are grouped into several broad themes, within which the studies are presented in alphabetical order of authors’ surnames.

Theoretical concerns


In this study, Galster (Galster 2002) reviews empirical literature to explore whether there are links between deconcentration of poverty and net socio-economic efficiency. Whilst the literature is somewhat thin, he finds that

… based on empirical evidence related to a very general set of models that makes no claims about distributional equity, tenuous support can be given for the hypothesis that deconcentrating the poor will improve net social benefits, but only if the result is fewer neighbourhoods with extremely high poverty and more with a modicum of poverty, not more with moderate poverty rates (p.305).

The policy implication he draws from this is that ‘...unless very low-poverty neighbourhoods can be opened up for occupation by the poor, deconcentration efforts should halt, because merely transferring the poor from high- to moderate-poverty neighbourhoods is likely to be socially inefficient' (p.322). This conclusion is somewhat tentative and to be treated ‘with the utmost circumspection' as there are a number of assumptions built into the author's modelling and the empirical evidence is somewhat weak.

This study suggests that a policy focusing solely on dissipating low-income households across a broader metropolitan region is not likely to have as positive an impact as may be expected. Other studies in this synthesis do show some genuine benefits to social housing tenants who choose to relocate from high-poverty neighbourhoods.

Therefore, taken together these studies suggest that engineering social mix by relocating poorer households should only be one very small component of a broader regeneration strategy which also provides for physical regeneration and improved access to everyday activities such as work, education and recreation in the original deprived neighbourhood.


In this study, the authors explore the effects on neighbourhoods of external, transient shocks (Galster, Cutsinger & Lim 2007). They examine whether the neighbourhood will quickly re-establish its original state, or whether changes will result. Whilst they stress the preliminary nature of their findings, they show that stability will generally quickly be re-established in the original state for most indicators. Other indicators take longer to return to their original state, particularly in high-poverty neighbourhoods.

They review a number of studies on theories of neighbourhood change to show the long history of academic interest in this topic. However, they show that whilst a range of theories have been proposed, there has been few attempts to analyse how indicators change internally within the neighbourhood once they have been upset from a stable condition, and in which direction changes are driven (p.169). They suggest four types of dynamic properties at work in a neighbourhood upset by external shocks, as demonstrated in neighbourhood outcome indicators:
Stability—‘a neighbourhood outcome indicator is stable if, upon being upset by some transient external force, the indicator tends to return towards its original state’ (p.169).

Multistate stability—‘a neighbourhood outcome indicator is multistate stable if, upon being upset ..., the indicators tend to gravitate towards a different, yet stable, state’ (p.170).

Instability—‘a neighbourhood outcome indicator is unstable if, upon being upset ..., the indicator tends to diverge progressively from its original state’ (p.170).

Threshold instability—‘a neighbourhood outcome indicator evinces threshold instability if it exhibits stability over some range of values, but becomes unstable past a certain threshold point’ (p.170).

Econometric models are used to test a range of socio-economic indicators across time—measured in yearly intervals. The chief finding of the study is that for most of the indicators studies, they ‘demonstrated an adjustment process that converges quickly to a stable state’ (p.174) even when the external shock ‘was quite large in magnitude’ (p.176). They ‘did not discover instability or threshold instability in any of [the] neighbourhood indicators [studied]’ (p.174). They also found that the adjustment period for a range of indicators was significantly slower in high-poverty neighbourhoods (p.178).

Whilst the authors caution against inferring from these findings that there is so much inertia in a neighbourhood that they cannot be altered, their findings do point towards some important issues (p.179):

- ‘It is the long-term flows of households, property owners and financial resources into and out of a neighbourhood that fundamentally shape what occurs there.’
- ‘Stability does not mean stasis. ... persistent change in a wide variety of exogenous forces can lead to significant changes in neighbourhood trajectories.’
- The implication for policy makers is that ‘short-term, policy-induced ‘quick fixes’ hold little prospect to alter longer-term outcomes for neighbourhoods; sustained effort is required.’

This study demonstrates that sustained, focussed intervention is required to make a significant difference in the state of a neighbourhood.

Why housing matters


Blackman and Harvey (2001) found that physical improvements made over a five year period as part of a neighbourhood renewal project significantly improved the mental health outcomes of adult residents. Increased perceptions of safety and a decrease in draughty housing are cited as changes that produced the most significant outcomes (p.580).

This study sought to describe and measure the relationship between neighbourhood renewal initiatives and mental health outcomes in North East England. Household interviews were undertaken prior to the commencement of the renewal project and five years later, upon completion of the project. Renewal activities included environmental improvements such as repairs to footpaths and roads, better street lighting and landscaping of council areas. Many households were eligible for discretionary grants to refurbish their homes and repairs were also undertaken to improve heating and security conditions in individual dwellings. Many of the same residents were interviewed at both intervals, creating a longitudinal data set (Blackman & Harvey 2001, p.573).
The first round of data collection involved interviews with 749 adults and 253 children (<16 years old), representing 70 per cent of occupied dwellings. Five years later, 394 adults and 131 children were interviewed (representing 62 per cent of occupied dwellings), 235 of whom also participated in the first set of interviews. Whilst the overall population of the area decreased over the study’s duration, the demographics and socioeconomic composition of the neighbourhood changed little. The most significant changes to the area were environmental and related to the renewal project. (Blackman & Harvey 2001, pp.574–575).

After controlling for other variables, residents reported increased satisfaction with their individual dwelling; ‘dampness’ and ‘draughtiness’ decreased significantly. Their perceptions of the neighbourhood ‘as a nice place to live’ increased significantly (from 49% to 62% for the longitudinal data set); perceived safety of the area almost doubled and actual crime fell from 25.5 per cent to 15.3 per cent (Blackman & Harvey 2001, p.577).

The greatest statistical health outcome for adults was a decrease in smoking, which for the longitudinal data set went from 71.6 percent to 21.9 per cent (Blackman & Harvey 2001 578). This is particularly interesting because the national smoking figures remained stable during the same period. Whilst the authors cannot link the reduction in smoking to the neighbourhood renewal projects, there is evidence to suggest that those with greater mental health problems smoke more, thus a reduction in reported mental health issues may be correlated with the reduction in smoking (p.580).

The study found that diagnosed mental health issues and ‘trouble with nerves’ in adults significantly decreased (by just over 10 percentage points each) while visits to the GP decreased marginally.

After controlling for other variables, those adults who reported feeling unsafe in the neighbourhood were 2.35 times more likely to report mental health issues and those who reported serious draughts in their homes were 2.28 times more likely to experience mental health issues than those reporting no or minor draughts (Blackman & Harvey 2001, p.579).

When analyzing the data related to the children participants, the researchers found improvements in mental health occurred, but that these were statistically unrelated to the renewal activities. The main factor in the improvement of children’s mental health was an improvement in their parent/s mental health (Blackman & Harvey 2001, p.581).

This study demonstrates that urban regeneration can create beneficial health effects in residents through improvements to the physical amenity of the housing (reducing damp and draughts) and improvements to the neighbourhood (better lighting and landscaping of shared space). The study found that the mental health of residents improved, rates of smoking declined, there was a reduction in neighbourhood crime levels and residents had increased feelings of safety and satisfaction.


This research study examined the long-term effects of a neighbourhood mobility program on adult wellbeing in the United States (Fauth, Leventhal, & Brooks-Gunn 2008, p.119). The mobility program examined is the Yonkers Project, which was a 1985 court ordered relocation of some public housing tenants from areas of concentrated poverty to areas experiencing less socioeconomic disadvantage in New York City (p.121). New public housing dwellings were constructed in largely white,
middle-class regions of the city, which accommodated 200 randomly selected families in public housing or on the waiting list.

An initial study conducted two years after the relocation found that the adults who moved into the low-poverty neighbourhoods were more likely to work and less likely to receive welfare than those adults who had remained in the original high-poverty neighbourhoods (p.121). However, those that had moved reported fewer formal and informal neighbourhood social ties than the control group and whilst there were small improvements to the physical health of the adults who had relocated, there were no reported mental health improvements (p.121).

This subsequent study evaluated the physical and mental health outcomes of the relocated group seven years after their move (p.121). Most participants were in their early forties, female and three quarters were African American with the remainder being Latino (p.122).

Similarly to the first study Fauth, Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn (2008) find that ‘movers’ are more likely to be employed and less likely to be receiving social security than ‘stayers’. Movers also reported significantly higher collective self-efficacy and less neighbourhood disorder and danger (p.124).

Significantly however, both groups reported similar levels of physical and mental health (p.125). However, those that worked and did not collect welfare reported marginally better health outcomes and fewer depressive or anxious symptoms than those who were not in the labour force (p.125). Similarly, collective efficacy was positively correlated with better physical and mental health.

In contrast to the first study, the authors find that movers had just as many friends and relatives as stayers (albeit in different neighbourhoods) that they saw often and were supportive in times of need (p.126). However, movers still reported less strong or close ties in their neighbourhoods than the stayers (p.126).

The authors conclude that whilst the link between better health outcomes and neighbourhood location was weak, they expect this to strengthen over time. They also suggest that the self-reported health data may have produced downwardly biased results as ‘movers’ may be comparing their health status with their middle-class neighbours (p.127).

This study provides evidence that neighbourhood is not the strongest influence on people’s health outcomes. It also indicates that increased social mix is not necessarily an outcome of re-locating poorer households into low-poverty neighbourhoods. While it found that people who re-located to the low-poverty neighbourhoods did maintain higher employment rates, it is not clear that the neighbourhood was the key causal factor.


This study finds that housing deprivation leads to a 25 per cent greater risk of disability or severe ill-health once researchers controlled for other variables, such as standard of living, behaviour, genetics and socioeconomic status. It also found that those who experienced housing deprivation as children are at greater risk of developing ill health as an adult regardless of their present housing situation.

Marsh et al. (2000) used longitudinal data from the National Child Development Study collected in Great Britain. The first survey was conducted in 1958 and detailed health and living conditions of 17,415 babies born that year. Follow up surveys were then conducted in 1965, 1969, 1974, 1981 and 1991 (11 407 people participated in the last sweep). The definition of housing deprivation varied between surveys and as a result
the researchers created their own index based on the statistically significant associations of each sweep. 

The study's housing deprivation index included lack of outdoor space, overcrowding and restricted access to bathrooms, cooking facilities and hot water.

This study provides strong evidence of the link between the physical quality and amenity of housing in childhood and poor health in adults. It indicates that urban regeneration programs which improve the physical shelter and amenity of housing for families can have long-term benefits in reducing disease in adults.


This research study (Rosenbaum, Reynolds & Deluca 2002) examines the effects of the Gautreaux Program, the predecessor to the Moving to Opportunity program that randomly relocated low-income families from areas of concentrated disadvantage to census tracts with less than 10 per cent poverty in Chicago (pp.72–73). More specifically, this study seeks to ascertain which neighbourhood effects increase a person’s self-efficacy. ‘Self-efficacy’ is defined as the degree to which an individual feels they have control over their own life and events that happen to them (p.71).

Rosenbaum, Reynolds and Deluca (2002) draw on qualitative research collected from interviews with 100 mothers and children in 1998 that were relocated in the mid-1990s (the Gautreaux Program has been in operation since 1976) (p.74).

The researchers find that there are four specific features of suburbs that facilitate self-efficacy and access to opportunities: a better address, racial integration, ‘middle-class know-how’ and manageable challenges.

The first is a ‘better address’. A number of interviewees reported that a change of residential address meant that the family was no longer marred by the stigma of the housing projects, which resulted in family members attaining better jobs and securing credit from banks that assisted in managing debt more economically (p.77). This change of location also resulted in a move to a larger labour market with better job opportunities. The authors comment that this results in a greater sense of control over one’s future employment and facilitates financial planning (p.77).

Secondly, the authors find that movement to the suburbs facilitated racial integration because it gave participants the opportunity to mix with people from other races. Many interviewees commented that their children’s efficacy improved because they were exposed to white people. Often participants only exposure to white people was via celebrities and television personalities, which gave them a skewed understanding of how successful white people actually were in society (p.78).

One Gautreaux child reported that before moving to the suburbs, she thought all white people were as beautiful as the models who appeared in magazines, and so she thought she was very ugly in comparison. When she moved to the suburbs, it was a great revelation to discover that most white people did not look like magazine models. Many white people were ugly, and she felt better about herself. (p.78).

Thirdly exposure to ‘middle-class know-how’ fostered efficacy. Many of the participants had aspirations and wanted to better their lives however most had no idea of how to go about doing this. Exposure to ‘middle-class know-how’ where teachers, neighbours and friend’s parents knew how to complete college applications or knew

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6 In the United States racial integration of neighbourhoods is rare (73) and the ‘suburbs’ tend to be predominately white, middle-class family neighbourhoods whilst the inner-city tends to be dominated by low-income African American families.
how to access information when they did not know an answer enabled participants to learn these skills, which resulted in a greater sense of self-efficacy (pp.78–79). For example, one participant said

most of her son’s friends were “into school, into talking about college, not gangbangers”. When these friends made visits to college, her son went along, something he would not have done otherwise. (p.79).

Finally, manageable challenges encouraged efficacy. While many participants faced significant challenges whilst living in the projects, many of these challenges did not enable the participant to take control of the situation and change the outcome. For example drug and violence problems rarely allowed the victim of such assaults to confront the perpetrator to change the situation or use formal channels (such as the police) to remedy the situation for fear of retribution and an escalation of violence (p.79). However, participants found they were able to trust police in the suburbs and their concerns were taken seriously. In addition, threats or harassment were often isolated instances and as such perpetrators could be easily identified and the situation remedied (p.80).

This study identifies some of the concrete mechanisms through which the neighbourhood relocation of poor families can provide benefit for these households. These include access to a ‘better address’, less racial and socio-economic segregation, exposure to better social services and reduced exposure to crime. It also accordingly suggests that lack of social acceptance in the ‘new’ neighbourhood could limit the effectiveness and benefit of this intervention.


The study reviewed seventy-two evaluations of public health housing interventions in the United States between 1990 and 2000. Whilst most evaluations found positive, statistically significant health improvements following the intervention, only 14 per cent reported that their intervention was ‘very successful’. Saegert et al. (2003) found that technological interventions (i.e. smoke alarms) were most successful when the technology was inexpensive, effective and durable. They are particularly effective when accompanied by behavioural change/knowledge training and can be implemented by an individual without assistance from a third party.

This review study further establishes that improvements to the physical qualities of housing can assist in generating improved health outcomes from urban regeneration initiatives.


This American study examined the outcomes for those households in Oakland and Berkley, California that received Section 8 vouchers7 and moved to the suburbs compared with those voucher recipients who used the vouchers to re-locate within their original area (pp.355–356).

Varady and Walker (2003) find that both movers and stayers experienced very few adjustment problems in their new neighbourhoods and the vast majority of participants reported that their relationship with their neighbours and landlord was excellent (80%)

7 ‘Section 8’ is a government subsidy that pays the difference between a certain percentage of household income and market rent, allowing recipients to find their own accommodation in the private rental market.
and 83% respectively). Eighty-six percent of parents reported that their children’s adjustment to school was excellent or good (p.365).

Seventy-five per cent of movers believed their new house was superior to their old house, compared with 68 per cent of stayers (p.367). Similarly, 75 per cent of movers reported an improved neighbourhood compared with 50 per cent of stayers and 70 per cent of movers felt safer in their new location as they perceived the neighbourhood to have a lower crime rate than their previous neighbourhood, whereas only 46 per cent of stayers felt the same way (p.379). Suburban movers were also more likely to report better access to shopping facilities and job opportunities (p.370).

_This study indicates that households that move into neighbourhoods with less socioeconomic disadvantage report feeling safer and perceive that there are more educational and job opportunities._

**Transatlantic reviews**


This paper reviews a range of economic and policy literature from both the US and UK to assess the rationale for renewed interest in mixed communities and implications of using this approach in community regeneration schemes (Berube 2005).

In the last decade, there has been renewed interest in the UK around the concept of _mixed communities_, as a means of de-concentrating poverty (pp.1–2). Whilst there is no clear definition of _mixed communities_, the author loosely describes them as 'small places that contain some range of households by income' and goes on to suggest that it may be more realistic and helpful in the long run for policy ‘to prevent communities from taking on a detrimental non-mix than to pursue some idealised.... mix...’ (p.4).

He makes a number of observations about mixed communities, which are salient to the present synthesis:

→ 'It is at the neighbourhood level...where more pronounced segregation between economic classes is found' (p.7).

→ Rising inequality and declining social mobility are part of the 'macro' picture of socio-economic segregation. Yet 'micro' decisions by individual households of all income groups in selecting the appropriately priced neighbourhood for their budget may contribute even more directly to segregation and concentration of deprivation than macro policies. This process is known in the literature as 'residential sorting' (p.13).

- Residential sorting may mean that more 'successful' residents in regeneration communities may choose to leave for better locations, thereby 'diluting local improvements' (p.13).

→ The 'area effects' literature describes a range of influences deprived neighbourhoods have on their residents:

- 'Concentrations of deprivation reduce private sector activity and raise prices for the poor' (p.20).
- 'High levels of worklessness limit job networks and employment ambitions' (p.20).
- 'Schools struggle to educate overwhelmingly poor populations' (p.21).
- 'Poor neighbourhoods stimulate higher levels of crime and disorder' (p.22).
- 'Area-based deprivation exacerbates health inequalities' (p.23).
Despite the importance of these influences, the literature appears to clearly demonstrate 'individual and family characteristics matter more for outcomes than neighbourhood characteristics' (p.23).

Therefore, the research in this area suggests that policy should address both distressed communities and disadvantaged people simultaneously (p.23).

Adequate housing in itself is insufficient to improve the life chances of deprived households. However, its location does essentially define a 'geography of opportunity' which determines whether the household will have access to quality education, employment, local shops and safe streets (p.25).

Empirical research suggests that mixed-tenure neighbourhoods may be desirable to those who live in them, but home owners tend to prefer homogenous neighbourhoods in which their tenure dominates (p.29).

To ensure a mix of households, developments 'should proceed from areas of market strength'—i.e. areas well-located in relation to transport, jobs and amenities (p.29).

Affordable housing units should be 'phased in' to these neighbourhoods to reduce resistance from home buyers (p.29).

In a given 'mixed' community, there are different levels of mix—ranging from physically mixed throughout the site to separate enclaves within one site (p.30).

The wider the gap between 'subsidised and market-rate households may exacerbate tensions in new mixed-income developments' (p.31).

'The need and opportunity for transformative neighbourhood strategies applies to a small number of places, and ... success demands a considerable commitment of time and money' (p.46).

'Neighbourhoods in the middle often function in a policy blindspot' (p.51). Whilst a large proportion of resources are poured into the neediest communities, more modest levels of investment into lower-poverty neighbourhoods may prevent increasing concentrations of poverty developing in these locations.

It is important to coordinate commercial and economic development at the same time as residential revitalisation in order to build more viable communities (p.52).

A number of conclusions are drawn from the research reviewed in this study (p.54):

There is a place for promoting economically mixed communities within regeneration strategies. In order to maximise the effectiveness of this type of development, it needs to be a policy objective across the full range of communities, not just severely distressed ones.

Like all other revitalisation mechanisms, approaches to building healthy mixed communities must be tailored to local conditions.

Mixed communities must be a sustainable feature of revitalisation and community development strategies, not just a 'flavour of the month' initiative.

This study finds that mixed communities can form a viable part of a regeneration strategy, provided they are carefully managed, and used as part of a wider, more balanced suite of interventions to addressing disadvantage.


This study uses evaluations of two redevelopment initiatives in the US and UK to contrast the approaches and outcomes of the UK New Deal for Communities and the
US HOPE-VI programs (Levy et al. 2010). A redevelopment site in Castle Hill, Birmingham (UK), was compared to the redevelopment of a former public housing estate in downtown Chicago (US).

→ Castle Hill, Birmingham (UK):

- This area was built in the 1960s and originally comprised 5,000 dwellings, housing 20,000 people, in 1.5 square miles. However, it began to decline in the 1970s. At that time, the community comprised largely white, working class households.
- By 1993, the population in the estate had dropped to 11,000. There were increased levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, compounding the poor health, low employment rates and lack of access to services of the residents (pp.5–6).
- In 1993, the Castle Vale Housing Action Trust was established to head a physical regeneration initiative.
- Over 12 years, a total of £270 million was invested in demolishing 32 of the 34 tower blocks and replacing them with low-rise housing, as well the regeneration of local parks and the addition of new facilities (e.g. supermarket, police station, college, and library) (p.6).
- Today, the estate has 2,700 dwellings, of which 2,000 are owner-occupied (p.7).
- Both positive and negative outcomes have resulted from this major, long-term investment (p.8ff):
  - Positive: a broad range of new facilities, services and improved linkages with the rest of the city; local residents involved in actively managing the estate; improved safety; and reduction in crime.
  - Negative: community management associations are finding increasing difficulty over time recruiting new, younger members as older ones retire; it is difficult to maintain community involvement once the big issues have been resolved; some privately owned properties are not being maintained to community standards; ongoing and unresolved racial tensions between older white residents and newer migrant groups needing accommodation in the area; and some tensions between homeowners and renters.

→ Oakwood Shores, Chicago (US):

- This major public housing estate in inner Chicago had deteriorated by the 1990s into an area with severely distressed housing, overwhelming crime and violence, and nearly absolute gang dominance (p.15ff). It was a highly segregated community, dominated by African-American residents (p.16).
- In 1995, The US Government Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) took over the Chicago Housing Authority and committed HOPE-VI funds to demolish and redevelop large tracts of the estate. In 2000, $35 million was allocated to this estate to redevelop 3,000 dwellings on 94 acres. The original residents were relocated to other areas to allow for demolition and could then re-apply for housing in Oakwood Shores. A new range of selection criteria meant that not all of the original residents would be eligible to return. In place of an estate dominated by high-rise public housing towers, a low-rise, mixed-income, mixed-tenure neighbourhood was delivered. Infrastructure, parks and a new elementary school were also provided (p.17). Some outcomes are as follows:
- **Positive**: Improvements in environmental sustainability and reduction in energy consumption; improved quality of housing for social tenants; the potential for higher-income residents to generate more local business and attract a higher level of services and facilities into the area; and improved safety and relations with local police.

- **Negative**: The neighbourhood is still predominantly African-American, so the redevelopment has done little to address racial segregation; residents from vastly different backgrounds have provided a major challenge for staff managing the redevelopment in knowing how to make the community ‘work well for everyone’ (p.19); and ongoing issues with unsupervised children in local parks.

➤ The authors draw a number of conclusions from this comparative study (pp.26–28):

- A number of similarities in approach and outcomes were evident:
  - The goals of redevelopment were similar in both of these countries (p.26)—physical improvements to housing and infrastructure, lifting the safety and security of the neighbourhood, raising the level of wellbeing in the community, and increasing the racial and economic diversity.
  - Both communities underwent major physical transformation. Now, both communities face the challenging task of transforming the community.
  - Changes in tenure and racial mix in both communities have led to tensions.

- However, there were two notable differences:
  - The racial composition of the two neighbourhoods was in stark contrast.
  - Redevelopment in Birmingham required approval of the residents and guaranteed every resident’s right to return to the estate, whereas in Chicago the residents had limited input and right of return.

- Three lessons relevant to other community redevelopment initiatives were drawn from these case studies (p.28):
  - Continuously identify and adapt best practices for effective community building.
  - Support for staff to provide youth programs is vital for both the redevelopment site and the surrounding community in re-establishing healthy, functioning neighbourhoods.
  - Larger forces such as societal economic downturns can sidetrack community building efforts, so it is vitally important for community development service providers to have contingency plans and financial reserves to weather these challenges.

*This study highlights the similarities between UK and US regeneration approaches, as well as both similarities and differences in the outcomes. This suggests that one approach in different contexts may produce a variety of results.*
UK programs

New Deal for Communities evaluation studies


This report synthesises evidence presented in a series of evaluation studies conducted jointly by the Department and Sheffield Hallam University (Batty et al. 2010). The 39 local partnerships involved in the New Deal for Communities (NDC) program have spent a total of £1.71bn on approximately 6,900 projects over the past decade. A further £730m of other public, private and voluntary finances was leveraged.

The authors find that there was ‘improvement in 32 of 36 core indicators’, with the largest improvements being in the people’s feelings about their neighbourhoods – they are more satisfied that these are quality places to live (p.6). The gap has been narrowed between these disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of the country on a range of indicators such as crime levels and some educational attainments. In particular:

- ‘More statistically positive change emerges in relation to health than for either education or worklessness especially with regard to improvements in mental health’ (p.28).

Some lessons that the authors draw from the NDC for future community regeneration programs include:

- Realistic targets are important – in hindsight, some of the targets set for NDC were not achievable, particularly given the limited timeframe and resources (p.8).
  - ‘Government, local authorities, and the regeneration policy community in general, need to recognise inherent limitations which operate on all regeneration programs’ (p.37).

- An increase in the proportion of owner-occupiers in a regeneration neighbourhood may dilute the social exclusion faced in that locale, but may weaken the outcomes of the program overall (p.8).
  - ‘...place-based interventions tend to remain within the NDC area; there is an argument that, having enhance their skills through NDC funding projects, some residents who benefit from people-related interventions will leave the area taking their ‘outcomes’ with them....’ (p.27).

- Timeframes and spatial remits for regeneration schemes ‘should reflect their objectives’ (p.8, pp.41–42).

- Programs should allow adequate time for a ‘year zero’ – ie a pre-planning phase which sets in place the necessary relationships and allows for proper collection of the data necessary to plan for a locally responsive program (p.8).

- Continuity of senior staff in service-delivery agencies is ‘associated with positive benefits’ to the local community (p.8).

- Effective chairing of partnership boards is essential. Boards should focus on strategic rather than operational issues and provide any necessary training and capacity building for community representatives (p.8).

- The community dimension needs to be firmly established from the outset: who is the community? What do they actually need assistance with? What are their
priorities? What level of community participation can and will be realistically established? (p.9)

- Expectations need to be carefully managed – inflated views of what can be achieved may lead to disillusionment and a reduction of trust (p.9).

- Succession and sustainability strategies need to form part of initial planning. Planning for sustainability also needs to include financial viability of ongoing management of regenerated housing and other infrastructure (p.9).

- ‘Ultimately, community engagement requires consistency, dedication and commitment. Nevertheless, key stakeholders working in NDC partnerships, are largely of the view that placing the community ‘at the heart’ of regeneration initiatives is the right approach to adopt’ (p.33).

- ‘Value for money assessments, based on a shadow pricing methodology, show that monetisable benefits which can be attributed to the program are substantially greater than costs’ (p.35).

- Whilst place-based outcomes are arguably easier to achieve, evidence from this evaluation does not point definitively to either place-based or people-based approaches in isolation. Rather, it suggests that both are needed (pp.38–39).
  - Greater attention needs to be given to the sequencing of people- and place-based interventions. The evaluation evidences suggests that a program should not ‘press ahead on all fronts from the outset’ (p.39).

- ‘The dynamics of locality matter’ (p.39). It is unlikely that one set of interventions will overcome all the issues across a range of locations. Likewise, an intervention in one given location needs to factor in the ‘wider policy and market contexts’ within which it operates (p.39).

- ‘It is not always possible to improve places to the benefit of all existing residents’ (p.40).

This program evaluation shows that the New Deal for Communities regeneration program has been largely successful in achieving a range of improvements for disadvantaged communities. However, it is important to ensure that realistic timeframes are set and that adequate planning and genuine engagement of all stakeholders takes place.


This report forms part of a suite of evaluations of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) program (Cole et al. 2010). It particularly focuses on outcomes in the realm of physical redevelopment. Evidence in this report is drawn from longitudinal household survey data from the NDC areas and from detailed local research in six NDC areas.

Two key lessons emerge from the case study areas (p.14):

- Housing interventions have the potential to make dramatic changes in the nature of a neighbourhood, as well as in its population and profile. However, the 10-year timeframe for NDC did not prove long enough in most locations to deliver the comprehensive outcomes sought.

- Project teams need a dose of pragmatism in developing activities and projects which are achievable, given their level of ‘competence, authority and resources’ (p.14). Partnerships were essential to leveraging and improving outcomes, as
were positive relationships with local housing and planning agencies, who had the ability to block or delay progress.

Outcomes were significantly determined by external housing market conditions and housing market cycles. Likewise, the benefits accrued in a small neighbourhood due to redevelopment of housing and other physical infrastructure tend to ‘leak out’ to adjacent areas. These benefits include ‘overall quality of life, satisfaction with the area and their willingness to stay put rather than move away’ (p.14). Physical improvement were thus perceived to bring more than just physical benefits.

*This evaluation showed the powerful positive impact housing regeneration can have beyond the physical realm.*


This report forms one of a series of evaluation studies conducted by Sheffield Hallam University on behalf of the UK Department for Communities and Local Government (Fordham et al. 2010). In particular, it assesses the important components of a neighbourhood-level regeneration program. A wide range of longitudinal and change data—including household surveys in the project areas—is analysed to provide evidence to support the findings in this paper (p.9).

However, the authors recommend care in interpreting the findings in two areas: firstly, whilst there are common themes across the 39 project areas, there are also 39 distinct narratives at work; secondly, it is unlikely that either the authors or local project stakeholders will be able to fully explain the reasons for success due to the wide range of other factors and influences in operation in these areas (p.10).

Some of the key findings are as follows:

- **The dynamics of a 10–year strategy:**
  - There were a large number of ‘setting up’ activities, for which inadequate time was allowed. These need to be factored into timeframes (p.12).
  - The certainty provided by a longer timeframe allowed opportunities to learn and experiment with approaches needing extended implementation periods, such as regeneration of social housing stock (p.13).
  - One planning approach that worked well in a number of locations was master-planning. This is a ‘device for building support for a sequence of actions that may unfold over several years’ and it ‘represented a ’neutral’ arena within which agencies were collectively able to agree how the area should be developed’ (pp.15–16).
  - There was a commonly held view that regeneration needs a long time – problems which took generations to build also need generational timeframes to fix (p.16).
  - A long time horizon allowed regeneration partnership to change their approach as needed.
  - Time is needed to establish the relationships necessary for leveraging other sources of funding.

- **Organisation and skills needed:**
The community want to have their views heard, but they are not necessarily the best stakeholders to deliver outcomes. Therefore, community partnerships should be carefully and strategically targeted (p.20).

A key message emerging from the study is that ‘personal attitudes and informal skills [e.g. emotional intelligence]’ may be more important than technical skills in achieving positive regeneration outcomes (p.21).

Having key staff who live in the regeneration means they have a personal stake in getting the program right. This may have a highly positive effect on the program outcomes (p.22).

Leadership and vision are important in ‘driving through the complex processes’ of a regeneration initiative (p.23).

Working with agency partners to deliver change:

‘NDC partnerships have been able to influence the scale, scope and speed of regeneration by facilitating other organisations to invest in their area, rather than directly spend a great deal of NDC program resources’ (p.25).

The most important relationship for NDC project teams has been with the local authority (p.26).

Some agencies have consistently proved more supportive of the NDC approach than others. The police seem particularly notable for their commitment to improving neighbourhood outcomes (p.28). Individuals in partner agencies are also important to the relative success or failure of an initiative (p.31).

Working with the local community:

In areas where there have been previous regeneration initiatives, it was possible to build in the experience gained in order to improve the potential outcomes of NDC initiatives (p.34).

The enormous task of setting up community partnerships, combined with the lack of community capacity in some areas for these relationships, suggests that the central government underestimated the scale of difficulty faced by local project teams (p.35).

The role of community was seen by a range of stakeholders as a positive feature of the program. The community were essential in ‘driving strategic change’ in some locations and in validating or critiquing interventions (p.36). They also assisted in delivering some interventions in a few projects (p.37).

Sometimes, the geographies selected for projects did not match the natural boundaries and dynamics of local communities. This facilitated a ‘grab for resources’ in some locations (p.38).

‘It is not universally the case that the local regeneration program necessarily reflects community attitudes and aspirations’ (p.39).

Some projects found it difficult to maintain a balance between community desires and professional advice on what was needed in a location (p.40).

Sustaining community involvement over a 10-year timeframe was a particular challenge (p.40).

Impact and change:

Assessing the impact of any regeneration program is problematic: ‘It can be difficult to measure change’ (p.42). It is also difficult to establish the degree to
which change would have occurred anyway without NDC can be or the degree
to which changes can be directly attributed to an NDC intervention (p.42).

- Despite these difficulties, stakeholders generally felt that NDC had genuinely
introduced place-based change (p.43), although some felt that the area
designated by the central government for the programs should have been
larger (p.45).

This evaluation suggests some effective ways of working to achieve genuine, long-
term, positive change in disadvantaged communities. In particular, it suggests long
time frames with a solid setting-up phase and the need for authentic partnerships
between agencies and with the local community. It also stresses the importance of
adequate evaluation processes to assist with informing future initiatives.

MacLeavy, J. (2009). (Re)Analysing Community Empowerment: Rationalities
and Technologies of Government in Bristol's New Deal for Communities. Urban
Stud, 46(4), 849–875

In this paper, the author evaluates one New Deal for Communities (NDC) project in a
run-down neighbourhood of Bristol (MacLeavy 2009). She uses this case study to
explore the ways in which NDC discourse around community empowerment are used
to frame new types of local governance and the extent to which these genuinely
constitute local empowerment. She finds that an "advanced liberal" form of rule' has
been established in which the government influences citizens through the decisions
they make in their local community (p.851).

One of the central tenets of the NDC urban regeneration program is the goal of
empowering and mobilising local communities to become involved in designing and
implementing regeneration schemes. The policy posits that community engagement is
the means for renegotiating and redistributing power structures at the local level to
allow those experiencing locational disadvantage to rise (p.849). (Locational
disadvantage is conceptualised as 'neighbourhoods suffering from multiple forms of
depprivation' (p.850))

The author points to a long history in the UK of interventions in disadvantaged
locations. In particular, she suggests that two former conservative government
programs influenced the design of NDC—City Challenge and Single Regeneration
Budget (SRB). City Challenge was based on the theory that it is necessary to involve
a wide range of people and organisations in order to restore the run-down area's
'competitive edge' (p.850). SRB built on this by providing one unified source of funding
for 'physically refurbishing estates blighted by unemployment caused by changing
patterns of trade and industry' (p.850).

NDC builds on the concepts of partnership inherent in these approaches by putting
communities 'at the heart' of regeneration schemes' (p.850). The program focuses on
designated areas of poverty in small neighbourhoods of 1000–4000 people. Funding
is offered directly to communities—via local NDC boards—for programs that involve
community members.

These projects are expected to draw in participants from every local service as well as
a broad range of individual residents. The aim is to engage and mobilise every citizen
to take responsibility for the wellbeing of their local community (p.850). MacLeavy
suggests that this is a 'new social contract' between the national government and
citizens in disadvantaged communities (p.850), embodied in the notions of 'community
empowerment' and 'collective action'. These are used to progressively transition
central government's role to an indirect form of rule:

The state under New Labour is no longer seen as the provider of urban
regeneration, but rather an enabler of non-governmental institutions, such as
community partnerships, that are now seen to be taking on this responsibility (p.851).

In particular, the community are called to take charge of their own affairs and become more 'enterprising', 'responsible' and 'active' (p.852). Community partnerships are intended to bridge the gap between disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Britain in order to "unleash" the 'latent' capacities of local economies and foster a local entrepreneurial culture (p.852). However, there are a number of problems with this discourse used to 'empower' local communities:

- The rhetoric used to promote NDC has now been adopted by the media and has taken the form of 'oppositional framing' which juxtaposes 'failed estates' with more 'successful' ones nearby (p.854).
  - In the case of the Bristol neighbourhood of Barton Hill, the discourse in the local media now also paints a picture of a socially regressive neighbourhood, as opposed to more 'progressive' parts of the city.
  - This type of discourse was also adopted by the project steering committee, further serving to demarcate the neighbourhood from the rest of the city (p.857).
- The process of pulling in residents to become involved required a high level of time and resourcing, which resulted in the steering committee and the community being compelled to act as if they were an NDC community long before any commitment of funding (p.859).
  - This resulted in a high degree of burnout amongst committee members.
- 'The discourse of 'neighbourhood' is used to narrate dysfunctional ethnic minority communities....' and 'locates responsibility for dealing with this issue within the boundaries of the "community"' (p.864). However, this ignores the fact that such issues often have a 'broader societal dimension' which need to be dealt with beyond the borders of the given community as well as within it.
- 'New Labour's discourse of community... obscures the fact that the area delimited by NDC categorisation is criss-crossed by multiple, overlapping social networks...' (p.865).
- The starting point of residents in a highly disadvantaged area is ignored in trying to achieve self-determination:
  - Existing conflicts within the community are glossed over (p.865). For example, there are deep division between the various ethnic minorities living in Barton Hill, which were exacerbated when one group received funding for an initiative under NDC and another did not (p.866).
  - There is evidence of competition for funding between individuals and institutions having arisen in Barton Hill (pp.865–866).
- Due to the rhetoric of individual and local community responsibility for NDC projects, it is easy for the government to lay the blame squarely at their feet, rather than at those of government should a project fail (p.871).

MacLeavy concludes that the processes of involving local communities in determining the course of NDC projects does not constitute genuine empowerment. Rather it allows the central government a new means of controlling and directing the affairs of citizens from the distance.

This study suggests that great caution should be exercised in forming discourses around disadvantaged locations. Care must be taken to ensure that in promoting the benefits of community regeneration programs, the rhetoric does not effectively serve
to compound existing negative stereotypes and further demarcate this 'failed' area from the rest of the urban region.


This evaluation study provides further evidence on the outcomes of the New Deal for Communities program, focusing particularly on educational attainment (Wilkinson & McLennan 2010). It utilises longitudinal data to analyse what impact NDC had on educational outcomes of children living in NDC communities (p.5). One issue which emerged early in this review is 'the extent to which NDC interventions were school-based or area-based' (p.7). Presumably if they are area-based it is reasonable to expect a lower direct impact than if they were school-based. Likewise, population turnover as a result of housing and other regeneration 'could reduce the observed impact of the NDC program' (p.33).

The key findings were:

→ There have been slight overall improvements in outcomes on one or two indicators, but not for others (p.36). However, this masks some improvements for particular sub-groups, such as ethnic minorities (pp.36–37). Some negative results were demonstrated for other groups (p.37). Thus, there does not appear to be a clear relationship between NDC interventions and educational outcomes (p.37).

→ This may reflect the fact that some subsets of children living in these areas benefitted more than other children from interventions not primarily focused on schools (p.38).

→ It may also reflect the fact that the necessary data for showing a causal link is not available (p.40).

→ Thus, it may not be possible to accurately assess the direct impact of NDC on educational outcomes.

This study shows the inherent difficulties in attempting to attribute causal links between an intervention and an outcome. It does not appear possible to show that NDC had any direct impact on educational outcomes.

Other UK studies


Cameron draws on empirical qualitative evidence from regeneration studies in the northeast of England to examine links between regeneration initiatives and broader housing market renewal (Cameron 2006). He explores these links at both neighbourhood and regional levels. Cameron used both existing case study data as well as conducting forty interviews with stakeholders in one renewal area (p.4).

He argues that housing market renewal does little to improve the lives of existing residents. Instead, he suggests, it may reinforce the tensions between community-led renewal initiatives and the restructuring of housing markets, demographics and tenure at the neighbourhood level.

Discourse around the use of housing market renewal to regenerate an area has now shifted beyond addressing the immediate issues in a neighbourhood to encompass a wider ‘modernisation’ agenda relating to neighbourhood, city and regional levels’ (p.4). This new focus has been justified largely on the basis of low demand and high vacancy rates as well as ‘market failure’ to correct these problems (pp.4–5). The problem of high vacancy rates and low demand are perceived as resulting from rising
aspirations and the failure of social housing to meet those aspirations – ie that ‘mass housing for the industrial working class [of the mid-twentieth century] is not needed as de-industrialisation has decimated this part of the labour force’ (p.6).

Thus the housing market is portrayed as requiring ‘restructuring to meet the needs and aspirations of the growing middle class’ (p.6). This reasoning is used to ‘justify a claim that it represents a more holistic approach to neighbourhood regeneration’ (p.6). The assumption implicit in this reasoning is that improving the physical condition of a neighbourhood will automatically ‘improve the income and economic welfare of existing low-income residents’ of housing market-led renewal areas (p.6).

However, this approach is not fundamentally concerned with the wellbeing of existing residents of declining areas, seeking to solve the problems of a geographic locale by attracting new, higher-income groups. It also conflicts with other UK government initiatives—which devolve power to the existing local residents—by seeking to look beyond their needs and aspirations (p.10). New Deal for Communities and other such programs are seeking to bring both physical and social renewal together, whereas the market-led approach brings the focus squarely back to physical interventions alone.

The market-led approach is also argued to provide more choices to residents about their housing. But in reality, the new choices will not be available to low-income groups (p.13). Thus, the approach is not a genuinely holistic one which will ‘transform the housing and economic prospects of existing low-income residents’ of a declining neighbourhood (p.14).

A housing-market renewal approach also assumes that the housing market can operate as a distinct economic engine to generate economic activity at a local level. However, this view is somewhat contentious in the UK context. The author suggests it ignores the viewpoint that the amount of housing in an area reflects ‘the level of economic activity and employment’ already in existence (p.8), instead assuming that stimulating housing can induce growth. Yet, recent planning policies using housing allocation to stimulate declining areas have demonstrated that the “predict and provide’ [model] over-estimated housing need and imposed unacceptably high targets for housing and housing land” in some regions and seriously under-predicted in other areas (p.9). Thus this approach appears to be an inaccurate means of assessing housing need.

This study shows how discourse is used to justify an approach to neighbourhood regeneration which does not genuinely address the needs of the existing low-income, disadvantaged residents. Rather, it attempts to solve the problem by largely displacing it. Therefore, caution is required when utilising this approach, to ensure that the needs of these residents are actually met and that they are empowered in the process.


In 2006, John Hills was commissioned by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to undertake a review of social housing to answer the question of what role this sector could play in 21st century housing policy (Hills 2007). This report is Hills' response to that question. He uses a range of demographic data and other studies to attempt to demonstrate the benefits and challenges of providing social housing in the UK.

He concludes that social housing has the same role in the 21st century that it has had over the past half century or so – namely, providing ‘a decent home for all at a price within their means’ (p.1).

He presents three main issues around ongoing provision of subsidised housing for low-income earners (p.1):
It is not difficult to make an argument for sub-market social rental: it avoids discrimination in the open housing market; it is affordable for low-income earners; and it provides higher quality housing for this group than they would otherwise procure.

However, the strengths of these arguments vary from region to region, depending on whether it is a high-cost, high-demand area or not.

The social housing system in the UK is rationed, and 'there are inherent costs to a rationed system' (p.1). These include sharp differences in treatment of those who qualify for assistance and those who do not, limitations on mobility (e.g. to access work opportunities), lack of consumer choice of housing, and potential for fraudulent activities to prove eligibility. Hills suggests that these costs do not outweigh the benefits, but the social housing system needs to be designed to minimise their impact (pp.1–2).

The report raises a number of other issues pertinent to the current study:

It is well-known that residents of public housing estates tend to have lower employment rates than the general population. There are a range ways in which this can be improved:

- **Information**: Improved coordination between the housing and employment support sectors. It is often the case that one provides information and support in their area with little or no knowledge of how the other sector operates or how one form of support may impact another (p.185, 191). If employment support programs and staff were to better understand the impact housing assistance can have on employment participation at a range of levels, this barrier to work may be lowered.

- **Integrated housing and employment support programs** could help to build a more enabling approach to supporting tenants into the workforce (p.191).

- **Local employment**: There is greater scope for more provision of local employment (p.192). Many regeneration programs, for example, provide some employment in the form of housing construction and renovation, or community development positions. However, these tend to attract outside employees, because local residents may lack the necessary skills for these jobs. If regeneration projects were linked with skill-building programs, a greater number of jobs could be provided for the local community.

- **Mobility**: Transferring tenancy between different service regions and housing associations is often very difficult. This prevents some tenants from moving to another region to access work. Greater linkages and improved mobility would enable some tenants to improve access to work (p.192).

Four directions where policy could be fine-tuned to meet the needs of low-income earners into the next century are (pp.203–204):

- 'Increasing attention given to the existing stock and tenant population' – existing tenants and stock must not be forgotten in the efforts to bring increased numbers of social housing units to the market.

- 'Supporting mixed-incomes within existing communities' – there are a range of ways to build the quality of life for existing residents and thereby improve the social mix in a public housing estate. These include findings ways to retain higher-income tenants, allowing tenants to purchase some housing, developing policies that support paid work and the building of the skills necessary for this, and choice-based lettings.

- 'Supporting livelihoods' – housing and employment support need to be integrated and where policies conflict, this needs to be rectified.
'A more varied menu' for both prospective and existing tenants – providing a range of products and tenure opportunities, such as choice-based lettings, shared-equity ownership and the ability to review a tenant's circumstances and move between tenures as their situation changes would increase the reach of the social housing sector in ensuring decent homes for all.

This study demonstrates that social housing has a continuing, vital role to play in regenerating public housing estates and building the life chances of residents. A broader range of products and a more flexible approach to allowing tenants to move between areas and tenures would broaden the reach of social housing.


Marsh’s paper reviews both a wide range of academic literature on the concept of social exclusion, as well as how the term has been applied in recent British social policy documents (Alex Marsh 2004). He argues that theoretical imprecision around the use of this term can lead to spurious putative links between social problems and initiatives to effectively address them (p.8). Some areas of imprecision are as follows:

- The indiscriminate use of the term ‘to refer both to processes and to states’ (p.8).
- The nature of social exclusion as a structural or behavioural problem, or a combination of the two (p.8).
- The nature of social exclusion as primarily labour market exclusion or as something encompassing a broader range of factors (p.8).
- The wide range of co-existing discourses of social exclusion – for example, ‘redistributionist, moral underclass and social integrationist’ (p.8).
- The role of structure and agency in explaining social exclusion (pp.13–14).
- A recognition of difference.
- The nature of social *inclusion*, ie ‘what it would mean to be included’ in ‘mainstream society’. This is fundamentally important for assessing the efficacy of programs aimed at reducing social exclusion (p.14). ‘Inclusion’ and ‘mainstream’ are largely ill-defined terms.
- The role of subjective and objective assessments of exclusion (p.15).
- The differences between groups of poor people located in one geographic area and a ‘poor space’ which ‘does not allow residents access to acceptable levels of services and amenity’ (p.15).

Marsh then reviews a range of policies issued by the UK Blair Government around addressing social exclusion, particularly in the context of housing. A number of problems with the application of the term social exclusion to housing policy emerge:

- The underlying assumption that housing policy and social housing can play a role in reducing social exclusion is problematic when some of the issues being addressed are ‘not really about housing at all’ (p.9). It is not automatically a given that improving housing conditions for those on very low incomes will automatically improve the level of social capital in a given community.
- An over- or under-emphasis on housing markets, social landlords or processes can lead to under- or over-estimates in the degree of ‘impact that changes in housing policy can have upon the [underlying] problem’ (p.10).
- A focus upon social housing can potentially overlook the issues faced by those renting in the private sector, which may even be greater than those faced by public housing residents (p.10).
There is little clarity around the links between social exclusion and housing (pp.10–12).

- The way in which social exclusion is conceptualised largely determines who is (or is not) socially excluded. For example, is the plain fact that a household is renting (either privately or socially) automatic grounds for considering them socially excluded? This approach would fail to take into account the precarious housing conditions faced by some in home ownership (pp.10–11).

- There is little clarity around whether social exclusion constitutes exclusion through or from housing (p.13). Homelessness could be conceptualised as exclusion from housing, whilst living in an estate with poor access to jobs, services and the like could potentially exclude residents through housing.

Causality is poorly defined: e.g. ‘does [homelessness], in and of itself, constitute, cause, or result from exclusion?’ (p.11).

Clearly then, a far more nuanced approach to defining social exclusion is needed in order for the term to be genuinely useful in either a policy or academic context. Marsh concludes that whilst it is unclear at this stage whether the term ‘social exclusion’ is actually a useful construct for policymaking, there is a need for far greater precision in its use if it is to meaningfully contribute to reducing poverty and social inequality, and in building more balanced, connected communities (pp.19–20).


This report reviews evidence to demonstrate ways in which accessibility of transport can impact on social inclusion (Centre for Transport Studies, MacDonald & Institute for Transport Studies n.d.). It then develops and tests a model for planning transport services.

Two key concepts are emphasised (p.3):

- ‘Inadequacies in transport provision (either in terms of access to the system itself or the level of service provided by the system) may create barriers limiting certain individuals and groups from fully participating in the normal range of activities. [This includes] key activities such as employment, education, health care and shopping ... ’.

- ‘The transport system itself may generate disbenefits (in the form of environmental and social externalities) that bear disproportionately on certain individuals and groups.’

There are a range of ways in which a lack of access to suitable transport can affect individuals (pp.16–17):

- Physical exclusion—a lack of physical, cognitive or linguistic access to the available transport system.

- Geographic or spatial exclusion—inability to access transport due to shortcomings in the spatial distribution of transport services or the design of transport services relative to public spaces.

- Exclusion from facilities—inability to access particular facilities based on their location relative to transport services.

- Economic or financial exclusion – the inability to afford transport services.

- Time-based exclusion – a lack of match between the requirements of an individual and the timetabling of transport services.

- Fear-based exclusion – a lack of usage of available transport services due to fears for personal safety.
These factors may inhibit an individual’s ability to utilise transport systems to engage in everyday activities, such as attending work or health appointments.

The authors propose a range of short-term ways in which transport planners and service providers can improve the access of disadvantaged individuals and communities to transport services. However, they advocate a longer-term approach incorporating the development of clear indicators of how access to transport can improve the life chances of disadvantaged people and activity-based modelling techniques used in planning appropriate levels of need and hence matching these to the appropriate levels of transport service delivery.

*This study shows a range of ways in which lack of adequate access to transport services (public or private) can inhibit the ability of individuals in disadvantaged communities to participate in everyday life activities. This suggests that broader metropolitan transport planning is a vital part of improving the life chances of residents in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.*


In this paper, the author uses the case study of a culture-led urban park redevelopment in Glasgow, Scotland, to reflect on how language and power structures affected the delivery of a public space that was of limited benefit to the local community (McInroy 2000).

Useable public spaces are a vitally important part of the physical infrastructure that makes up a functioning community, and recent social inclusion initiatives in the UK have aimed to increase the involvement of the community in designing and maintaining these spaces.

Community involvement is recognised as one strategy for ensuring the ongoing sustainability of regeneration initiatives (p.24). It is also a ‘response to criticisms of urban regeneration initiatives’ (p.24). However, some of the rhetoric around community involvement often ‘merely creates an illusion of collaboration and the level of real … community empowerment is sometimes far less than claimed…’ (p.24). The author of this paper argues that terms such as ‘partnership’, ‘cooperation’ and ‘the people’ are used to obscure an agenda ‘more concerned with power over the local urban landscape and promotion of [such spaces] for capital investment and impressing artistic elites’ (p.25). In the case study presented, he suggests that there was little genuine intention to consult with or involve the people.

The park discussed in this case study was a derelict site covering half a street block in inner city Garnet Hill, which had become vacant after a tenement building collapsed (p.29). It lay untended for almost five years, despite repeated calls from the local Community Council to convert the site into a much-needed local recreation facility (p.29). Not only was the site an eyesore and home to the ‘biggest rat colony you’ve ever seen’ (p.30), but community sporting and passive recreation facilities were lacking. So the Community Council’s request was based on both a practical need and the desire to improve the image of the local community (p.30).

However, repeated requests for the City Council to remediate the site were ‘blocked’ – until in 1989 it was Glasgow’s turn to serve as European City of Culture (p.30). The City Council were approached by the Goethe Institute who wanted to create a ‘lasting momento’ of this status (p.30). The Institute suggested that a city park would be an appropriate project, so the City Council began searching for a site.

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8 A Community Council is a representative body of residents, which forms part of the structure of local government in Scotland.
The Garnet Hill site was selected – having come to prominence through the community’s requests – largely due to its proximity to the central city area and due to its multicultural composition. Its location and cultural makeup provided an ideal marketing opportunity for a City of Culture (p.30). So the aim of the City Council was, from the outset, to produce something with much broader appeal as a ‘cultural space’, rather than a local park (p.31).

The landscape architect chosen to design the site ‘viewed the opportunity via a personalised and artistic lens’ through which he interpreted what the community wanted (p.31). Public consultation consisted of a meeting in which the finished design was presented to the Community Council and the local community (p.33). The architect presented a physical model which was used to explain the development and ‘to some extent to coerce [the community] into a particular way of looking at the space’ (p.33). The City Council then merely sought the agreement of the community in order to implement the design.

This ‘peculiar approach to the concept of ‘partnership’ took responsibility for the park away from the Community Council and turned the body into passive onlookers (p.33). The community’s desire for a functional urban space were also subverted by the City Council’s ‘attempts to readdress wider notions concerning overfunctionalist urban space’ (p.34).

The park ultimately received a number of accolades, but resulted in a space which had limited useability for the local community. Furthermore, the Community Council were then required to take responsibility for monitoring and maintaining a park which did not meet their needs. This created a number of divisions in the community:

➔ It required large amounts of maintenance, due to some of the complicated infrastructure installed.
➔ Grassed areas were not designed for sports activities. So energetic youths needing space to ‘rampage’ (p.35) came into conflict with the Community Council charged with maintaining it.
➔ It became the site for a range of unacceptable social behaviours such as late night drinking and drug-taking.

The park thus became ‘a constrained and restrictive space’, which provided breathing space for city office workers rather than meeting the everyday recreation needs of the local residents (p.35). It was ‘designed to control behaviour rather than to be a site of unfettered interaction’ (p.36).

The use of rhetoric around ‘community’ and ‘partnership’ thus became a smokescreen for a process in which the community was disempowered, and their needs were subsumed beneath the broader desires of the local state. The government failed to link their planning to the ‘social realities and everyday spatial desires and practice’ of the community (p.37). The author concludes that for culture-led strategies to genuinely create inclusive public spaces, governments need to work beneath and through the rhetoric, and to ground local public space in the local context, ... to acknowledge and accommodate the variety of local perspectives and needs (p.37).

*This study demonstrates one approach to regeneration where the potential for positive and inclusive community outcomes was thwarted by token public consultation and the maintenance of power structures which sought to control rather than facilitate public behaviour. It suggests that a more successful approach would have given due consideration to the desires of the local community, creating a park which met their needs.*
This paper outlines findings from a survey of extended services at 20 schools and children’s centres in England (Ofsted n.d.). The survey was conducted in 2005–06, and assessed the factors contributing to successful implementation of these extended services.

These services include (p.23):

- For children—day care, before- and after-school clubs, health-related consultations, social and sporting activities outside school hours.
- For parents—courses on health and healthy living, parent support groups, sporting activities.
- For the wider community—adult education classes, employment services, health services, family fun days, citizens’ advice drop-in services, and sporting/fitness activities.

This research found that these services ‘were effective in meeting a range of needs of children, young people and adults in the local community’ (p.2). The major benefits for students and their families were (pp.2–3, pp.4–9):

- Improved self-esteem and confidence.
- Better relationships.
- Raised aspirations.
- The development of more positive attitudes towards learning.

It was also found that if parents ‘attended sessions about children’s learning, they were more likely to enrol in courses at their own level.’

A range of success factors for effective delivery of these services were identified (pp.3-4):

- Strongly committed leaders.
- A clear understanding amongst workers of their context and how they would improve outcomes for local residents.
- Planning prior to delivery of service, which included standards, value for money long term sustainability and affordability.
- Flexibility to gradually build a range of programs reflecting the needs of local communities. Adequate time pre-service to gather information on local needs was also important, as was ongoing consultation with the community.
  - Allowing students—particularly at secondary level—and their parents some say in shaping the types of services provided ensured the services were relevant.
- Long-term funding allows strategic planning.
- Effective partnerships between agencies required a lead coordinator for setting work practices and processes.
- Local authorities play a valuable role in disseminating information and assisting with planning for services.
- An inclusive approach which provided a range of services in one convenient location.
- Good, clear channels of communication.
This government evaluation of extended children’s centre- and school-based services shows the potential for schools and early childhood centres to become focal points for providing a much wider range of services to the community. They have powerful potential to greatly improve the lives of individuals and households in disadvantaged communities at a very concrete, practical level.


This review explores the ways in which social housing allocations contribute to or counter social exclusion (H. Pawson & Kintrea 2002a). In particular, it evaluates two strands of policy: choice-based allocations and community lettings, the latter being aimed at broadening social mix in housing estates (p.644).

The authors contrast the term ‘social exclusion’ to poverty: the former being related to distributional issues whereas the latter concerns relational issues (p.645). Whilst they acknowledge that the term ‘social exclusion’ is a contested one, they define it as ‘the failure of certain citizens to enjoy full citizenship rights’ (p.645). They further posit that a ‘key element of social exclusion is the idea that there are processes and dynamics within society and its institutions which generate relative poverty’ and that ‘a sense of social isolation’ lies at its heart (p.645).

They outline two ways in which housing can contribute to social exclusion (p.646):

- ‘Processes which deny the opportunity for some households to access housing are a key source of social exclusion’
- ‘The housing system’s distributional role in allocating housing resources among those who have access to housing’.

Social housing allocations can contribute to reinforcing these problems by producing spatial concentrations of socially excluded households and by ‘confirming the residualisation of council housing’ (p.646). A number of factors contribute to the role of housing allocations in social exclusion processes:

- Recent emphasis on needs as a key eligibility criteria mean only the most disadvantaged gain access to this housing (p.648).
- The prioritisation of transfer applicants may prevent the underutilisation of some stock, but leaves only the less desirable properties available for those coming into the sector (p.649). Additional selection criteria may also lead to discriminatory practices in selecting new tenants for a property and results in a ‘take it or leave it’ offer to tenants (p.650). This may not necessarily produce the best housing outcome for that household.

Social landlord’s allocation policies may be contributing to social exclusion in three main ways (p.650):

- ‘Through denial of access to certain applicants’.
- ‘Through the creation or perpetuation of spatial concentrations of deprivation within the social housing stock’.
- ‘By confirming the role of social housing as a residualised, welfare sector’.

One means of addressing the concentration of disadvantaged groups is the community lettings approach, in which a greater social mix in an area is sought through the letting of some social housing stock to higher-income groups (p.662). However, one of the main difficulties with this is particularly in hard-to-let areas: where the desirable tenants may not be prepared to live there. This approach may also mean that those most in need of housing assistance are bypassed and thus further excluded if social housing is given to less needy tenants (p.662).
The authors conclude that social housing allocations do indeed contribute to the further exclusion of some disadvantaged households. However, the dual role of providing housing to the needy and balancing communities means there is no easy solution to this dilemma (p.663).

*This study shows that social housing allocation policies can contribute to further concentrating social exclusion in geographic areas. However, this concentration needs to be balanced against the immediate practical need of these households to be housed.*


This paper provides qualitative evidence from consultations with residents and service providers in a disadvantaged community about the potential of the *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* (Richardson & Hills 2000). Consultations consisted of two focus groups, and were used to gauge their views on the potential for the strategy to have a major impact in alleviating locational poverty and deprivation.

Some of the key findings are:

- There was clear consensus amongst participants that a range of underlying, national structural problems, such as the economic backdrop, would impede the ability of the strategy to achieve major results on a local level (p.2).

- 'Action should be taken at the level at which problems affected people’ (p.2).

- There was an 'underlying concern with the difficulties of shifting existing power balances in favour of communities' (p.2).

Some learnings emerged from practitioner presentations at the focus groups. While not necessarily generalisable, they are presented as anecdotal depth for the purposes of this present synthesis:

- The best place to recruit parents is via school yards, as they drop off and pick up their children (p.4).
  - One project also had a major breakthrough in providing childhood studies training accredited with a university, based out of the local school (p.4).

- 'Honesty has been the best policy' with tenants, who are more likely to trust a local authority if they are straight in their dealings with tenants (p.5).

- Tailored, locally-responsive services are viewed as the best means of meeting the needs of local communities (pp.5–6).

- 'Residents' first instincts in getting involved [in interventions] is to be of practical use’ (p.7). Regeneration programs would be wise to allow people to get involved at this level first and then later on assess whether they might have the desire and capacity to be involved in other areas.

- Starting small, with projects initiated out of community need appears to be a highly effective strategy in building community trust and support for larger projects (pp.8–9).
  - Community members' involvement in a project is often triggered by an issue that affects them directly (p.10).
  - Recognition of contributions by community members builds more sustainable levels of involvement (p.10).

- 'Early intervention to prevent serious neighbourhood decline is key’ (p.9).
Ongoing support after a resident has successfully transitioned into a positive area such as ongoing employment can assist them in turning short-term gain into long-term change (p.11).

'Neighbourhood [is] seen as the place where people could most effect change and as the start point for renewal' (p.16).

Making links between disadvantaged neighbourhoods and economic and social opportunities in the broader urban region require much greater attention (p.18).

'The smaller the area focused on, the harder to stop 'leakage' to others' (p.18).

- Residential sorting mechanisms are particularly strong in very disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

'Even in bad areas cohesion is strong; it is trust which is low' (p.21).

'You cannot prescribe mechanisms centrally, but can give a structure or a 'toolkit' for local action' (p.22).

'The approach had concentrated on characteristics of bad neighbourhoods. We need to look at those of good neighbourhoods to see what we are aiming at' (p.23).

'Rhetoric stressed 'community', but if the reality involved large lumps of money not much would change. Resources need to match the scale of what people can relate to and control' (p.27).

'There was no mystery about what had gone wrong – vulnerable people put all together with no support and the neighbourhood tips' (p.27).

This study provides qualitative anecdotal evidence from community development practitioners and residents of disadvantage neighbourhoods of what the core issues are in regeneration, as well as some simple solutions.


This analysis of employment assistance programs by the Social Exclusion Unit (Social Exclusion 2004) suggests that ‘although there are significant differences between regions in terms of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity rates, there is far more difference within regions. The variation is greatest at the smallest levels of geography – between districts and wards. This report uses new data to look at worklessness on a street-by-street basis’ (p.3, emphasis in original text).

The data shows that:

- in the worst affected 1 per cent of streets, more than half of all adults are out of work and on benefits, and, in some places, almost all adults are out of work and on benefits;
- worklessness in the worst tenth of streets is 23 times higher than in the best;
- the worst affected tenth of streets account for 716,000 people on unemployment or incapacity benefits. This is more than a quarter of the national total. Almost 4.5 million people live in them altogether; and
- self-employment in these areas is half the rate of England as a whole (p.3).

The report argues that – based on area effects literature – the life chances of those living in areas with concentrated unemployment are far poorer than those living in

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9 ‘For the purposes of this report, concentration of worklessness describes the 10 per cent of Census Output Areas – the equivalent of a street or block of flats – with the highest rates of people on certain working-age benefits’ (4).
other areas of the UK (p.4). The types of people living in areas of concentrated unemployment face:

- "multiple disadvantages", such as substance misuse and a disability;
- low aspirations for work and study, and extremely narrow travel horizons; and
- two or three generations out of work in the same family and neighbourhoods’ (p.5).

They are also highly likely to belong to an ethnic minority, have few or no job qualifications, be suffering a long-term illness, and have high unpaid care demands placed upon them (pp.5–6).

A range of causes for concentrated unemployment are identified (pp.6–7):

- Changes in the nature and structure of the workforce and local availability of jobs.
- Residential sorting—leading to concentrations of disadvantaged and poorly job-skilled people in particular locations.
- Area effects—the compounding effects on an individual of living in a neighbourhood with concentrated disadvantage.

The document then proposes a way forward in addressing concentrated unemployment. These include (pp.7–10):

- More employment assistance.
- Improved housing choice and social mix.
- Initiatives to support self-employment.
- Employment support services.
- Improved dissemination of information for jobseekers and employment agency staff.

This report provides evidence as to the nature and causes of concentrated unemployment in the UK. However, it does not provide evidence of successful approaches to addressing this problem.


This policy document (Social Exclusion 2003) utilises evidence from a number of sources to discuss several connections between access to transport and social exclusion. It then provides a statement of interventions the UK government of the day intended on using to improve the access of socially excluded communities to transport and hence to broader everyday activities.

There are three broad connections between access to transport and social exclusion:

- People may not be able to access services as a result of social exclusion (p.1).
- Problems with transport provision and the location of services can reinforce social exclusion (p.1).
- The effects of road traffic also disproportionately impact on socially excluded areas and individuals through pedestrian accidents, air pollution, noise and the effect on local communities of busy roads cutting through residential areas (p.1).

A lack of access to transport can prevent residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods from accessing work; learning; healthcare; food shops; and social, cultural and sporting activities (p.2). This impacts individuals directly, as well as impacting on the
costs for government and the general community in improving the life chances of these communities (p.2).

Some of the underlying causes for poor transport outcomes in disadvantaged communities are (p.3):
- Historically no one has been responsible
- Previously, social costs not given any real weight in transport policies
- Public spending on public transport has been too fragmented
- Land-use planning policies allowed very dispersed settlement patterns
- Potential solutions have been held back

This policy statement provides evidence around the costs to the broader community of failing to provide adequate access to transport in disadvantage neighbourhoods.


The concepts of ‘collaboration’ and ‘partnership’ are featured in many contemporary UK government initiatives to address social exclusion (Tett 2005). In this qualitative review of research on partnerships for community regeneration, Tett argues that whilst the ‘benefits of partnerships are extolled [in policy statements] ... the costs to community groups are minimised’ (p.1). Some of the hidden costs include (p.2):
- Time spent in meetings.
- Resources spent on management of partnerships.
- The disproportionate use of one partner agency’s resources over another.

Furthermore, the author cites a range of recent studies which demonstrate that partnerships intended to empower community members in the process of social and economic regeneration are not having their intended impact (p.2):
- The culture and behaviour of private and public sector entities often does not facilitate the types of involvement sought by community members.
- Community members may not have the resources and organisational skills required for involvement in the decision making approaches offered.

Whilst partnerships offer one important way of working to tackle social exclusion, there are a number of barriers to effective partnership cited in the study – e.g. differences in funding mechanisms, different cultures, views and values, perceived power differentials, lack of appropriate resources and accommodation, and inflexible organisational cultures (p.4). For agencies to work together there needs to be some loss of freedom to act individually, and the commitment to invest scarce resources where it is unclear who may receive the kudos for achievements (p.4).

Nevertheless, the literature surveyed by Tett yields some principles for effective partnership:
- ‘Partners [need to be] clear about why they are collaborating together;
- Partners [need to] have agreed which areas of their work will be done together and which will still be done separately;
- The unique contribution each partner brings to the relationship [needs to be] recognised;
- Staff [need to] have time to work together to develop a common sense of purpose;
- Shared ownership of the project [needs to be] developed and people [need to] trust each other;
→ The component organisations and individuals [need to be] committed to learning from each other and changing their own ideas as a result’ (p.5).

→ Partnerships need to be based on shared interests, clear mechanisms for building trust and negotiating differing views (p.8).
  - ‘They should be set in the context of longer term strategies for community development that offer strategic possibilities for renewal’ (p.8).

→ All partners – including target communities – should have equal and maximum access to information to enable them to make informed decisions (p.9).

→ Community-sector organisations and workers should use their knowledge of the local community to broker linkages and alliances in the community (p.9).

→ Those with particularly powerful positions in the partnership (e.g. the funding body) should be very careful not to use language which is impenetrable to community members (p.9).

→ All members of the partnership need to have the confidence to accept that whilst some conflict in a participatory development context is inevitable, it can be worked through (p.9).

→ An audit culture runs counter to community empowerment and trust-building (p.10).
  - It professionalises the objectives of a program, thereby potentially taking it out of an achievable realm for disadvantaged community members.
  - It ‘places powers into the hands of those who can interpret the rules’ (p.10).
  - It leads to a technical bias.
  - Thus, the literature reviewed here suggests that ‘small achievable gains as part of an overall longer term strategy’ may be better than big, challenging objectives (p.11). It is also important that community organisations be allowed to respond to policy objectives ‘as far as possible on their own terms and at a manageable pace’ (p.11).

A number of other principles surrounding partnerships emerge from this study:

→ Where the rules for the partnership are ‘set from above’ the community ‘derives little benefit’ (p.6).

→ ‘It is important to distinguish between involvement and empowerment and between strategic power and operations power’ (p.6).

→ ‘Processes of inclusion and exclusion characterise partnerships’ (p.6)—i.e. structures and power largely determine who does and does not have the ability to make decisions.

→ There are differences in the influence each partner has over the direction a project takes (pp.7–8):
  - Community groups often have limited access to information.
  - Additional resources are often only provided for a limited time and must be spent quickly, thereby limiting the types of initiatives that gain funding in a location. This also limits the sustainability of some initiatives, perhaps favouring one project over another.
  - Community members may only be involved in implementing a project rather than setting the agenda. So the given agenda may not accurately reflect the needs and aspirations of the community.
Where inter- and intra-community groups compete for funding under area-based initiatives, these processes may contribute to further 'fragmentation and inequality'.

Where solutions are presented in terms of the family and the community, without addressing broader social-economic structures that cause exclusion, these may serve to further 'pathologise' these groups of people (i.e. entrench the view of these people as abnormal).

The demands for quick wins, community partnership make it difficult for an entire community to adequately be included in the program. Thus, some groups tend to receive a concentration of funding and intervention while others miss out.

The predetermination by funders of who constitutes the ‘community’—however ill-defined this may be—exacerbates the difficulties of representing and addressing the needs of the whole community.

Tett concludes that a collaborative partnership approach to community regeneration has the potential to build stronger communities, but only where partners have the capacity to participate, are clear on the goals and processes to be used and where there is genuine sharing of decision-making power (p.12). However, partnerships will do more harm than good where the ‘rhetoric of collaboration ... also mask[s] a new configuration in which community voices are marginalised’ (p.13).

This study suggests a number of important factors for effectively using a partnership approach to empower local communities involved in regeneration initiatives. There must be a genuine desire on the part of funding bodies to work at a pace and level that is sustainable, embedded in long-term regeneration strategies and where decision-making is shared.

**US programs**


This paper provides a review of a number of evaluations of the US *Moving to Opportunity* (MTO) program (Clark 2008). In particular, Clark provides statistical and spatial re-analysis of the program outcomes on a city-by-city basis. Clarke suggests caution in interpreting data from MTO evaluations. He posits that many evaluative studies are overly optimistic about program outcomes, and that data was aggregated at too high a level in the Orr et al. (2003) study. This has obscured some important local differences in outcomes. It also failed to statistically test the differences between MTO vouchers and another similar voucher program – Section 8 vouchers (p.519).

Whilst there have been some positive results for individual families, he questions the overall effectiveness of the program for a number of reasons:

- Fundamentally, the underlying assumptions about the causes and effects of concentrated poverty – and hence the benefits of dispersing this – are not consistently borne out in the research literature (p.516ff).
- All the volunteers for the program were motivated to move and many of the control group who did not receive a voucher have moved to better living environments (p.522, 528). So it is not clear the degree of benefit directly provided by the vouchers.
- There has been some regression of positive changes over time – ie those who initially moved to neighbourhoods with better homes, facilities and amenities were
not able to maintain the positive change over time (p.520). Two possible reasons for this are:

- The types of households targeted by the program are highly mobile and they tend to have less ability and resources to make positive choices on subsequent moves (p.528).
- There was a distinct reluctance among them to move too far away from neighbourhoods where families, friends and other supports are located (p.518, 522, 532).

There were marked variations between different cities in the outcomes of the program, which suggests that local demographics have a major effect on program outcomes (p.529). This was borne out by Clark’s spatial analysis in a way that previous statistical analyses could not detect — Clark mapped the movement of tenants across individual cities to show the various migration patterns for those that received MTO vouchers, section 8 vouchers and no voucher (pp.523–525). He found very little difference between those who received MTO vouchers, as opposed to regular section 8 vouchers (pp.520–521). The maps provided in the paper also demonstrate that mobility amongst those who received no voucher is remarkably similar to those who received either type of voucher (pp.523–525).

This study suggests that caution is needed in interpreting evaluations of the MTO program and that initial optimistic analyses missed some crucial points, such as the true cause of mobility amongst program participants and the need to look carefully at differences between specific project locations — the project was more beneficial in some cities than in others.


This study provides an assessment of the Moving to Opportunity program in the US (Feins & Shroder 2005). In particular, it assesses (p.1) the impact of a one-off intervention of subsequent housing mobility of project participants; and (p.2) the difference made by moving to a better neighbourhood (p.1275). This paper analyses a sample of 4248 households, as utilised by the US Government's interim evaluation (Orr et al. 2003). Given that the strongest motivation for participation in the program was to improve the safety and neighbourhood quality for participants, the findings suggest that the program was largely successful.

The Moving to Opportunity (MTO) program was an experiment sponsored by the Federal US Government Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Five demonstrations projects in five major inner city locations across the country were funded from 1994 to 1998, in census tract locations where more than 40 per cent of the population were poor in 1990. Participants were recruited from public housing estates and needed to comprise households with children under the age of 18 years to be eligible (p.1276). They were then randomly assigned to one of three groups:

- The experimental group—this group received vouchers allowing them to relocate only in census tracts with poverty rates below 10 per cent (as at 1990).
- The section 8 group—these households received regular section 8 housing vouchers, which allowed them to relocate anywhere.
- The control group—these people received no vouchers and were required to remain in public housing for the first 12 months of the program, although they were eligible for other assistance such as financial counselling.
The design of this project was intended to provide as close as possible to a randomly-controlled experiment, providing information about the effects of moving to a low-poverty neighbourhood, as opposed to other forms of housing intervention.

The study finds that:

- ‘Attitudinal variables had striking effects on mobility’ (p.1281).
  - Uncertainty about finding suitable alternative accommodation or liking the new neighbourhood context are ‘negatively related to lease-up [leasing a better home]’ (p.1282).
  - ‘Feeling good’ about moving and ‘dissatisfaction’ with current neighbourhood are positively correlated with success[ful relocation]’ (p.1282).
  - ‘Positive social ties... to current neighbourhood are predictive of failure to lease-up, as is discomfort with sending one’s child to a majority-White school’ (p.1282).

- There were relatively high mobility rates in all three groups of participants. Whilst this may have been influenced by the initial desire of all participants to move away from unsafe living environments, other factors such as the presence of HOPE-VI initiatives may have also been a factor in these mobility rates (p.1284).

- There was a tendency for subsequent housing relocations to be to move to higher poverty neighbourhoods. The main reasons for this appear to be (pp.1287–1288):
  - The desire for a larger home.
  - Leasing problems with landlords.
  - Safety issues were a problem in a small number of instances.

- The program contributed little to racial desegregation (p.1289).

- Whilst most of those who moved did relocate to areas with relatively high poverty rates, the majority still moved to areas with reduced poverty compared to the control locations (p.1289).

- Four to seven years after the initial move, ‘significant differences [in the locations chosen by experimental movers] remained, although they were smaller than the initial differences’ (p.1291).

- Offers of housing assistance tied to dwellings in high-poverty areas often distorted the housing choices of very poor families with children (p.1292).

- There were substantial program effects (i.e. improvements) on a number of ‘measures related to neighbourhood conditions and safety’ (p.1293). Clear improvements of great importance to participants were experienced relative to control locations. However, the authors stress one caveat to this program outcome: HOPE-VI projects were being concurrently conducted in a number of MTO locations, so it is not necessarily clear where the causal links lie.

In conclusion, the authors are cautiously optimistic about the effects of the MTO program on participants safety and housing quality. However, their one caveat is that ‘observed ‘neighbourhood effects’ may result from self-selection’ – all the participants were motivated to move from the control locations due to the perceived lack of safety and poor quality housing, so this may temper the positive results of the program somewhat.

This study suggests that a range of benefits emerged from the MTO program, chiefly around neighbourhood safety and the improvement in neighbourhood quality overall for those who moved.

In this paper, Galster et al. present an econometric method they have developed for measuring the impacts of place-based approaches to revitalisation (Galster et al. 2004). They particularly attempt to answer the question of whether these interventions make any demonstrable difference which can be causally contributed to the given program (p.502).

The approach used is a quasi-experimental research design, using an *adjusted interrupted time series* (AITS) method to measure pre- and post-intervention outcomes in the community. A number of challenges to quantifying program impacts are outlined (p.504):

- Effects can be difficult to measure and may only become apparent after a time lag.
- The most salient indicators for one neighbourhood may not coincide with the best indicators for another area.
- Effects may come from other external source, such as an intervention in an external region.
- Residents who benefit from the intervention may choose to move out of the neighbourhood, thereby further concentrating local disadvantage and distorting measures of program outcomes.
- There may be multiple, overlapping or discrete interventions in a given neighbourhood over a period of time, so it is difficult to predict which one actually produced a given result.

The authors propose to overcome these challenges by focusing on one of the ‘most fundamental challenges’: establishing a *counterfactual situation* against which to measure actual outcomes. This is the outcome indicator for what would have occurred if the given intervention had not taken place (p.505). The establishment of a counterfactual situation must include the following criteria (p.506):

- Comparison of an indicator before and after an intervention.
- Use of a time-series indicator.
- The measurement of both absolute change and comparison of this to a ‘control neighbourhood’.

They argue that their method, whilst in preliminary stages of development, has strong potential for assisting policymakers and academics in assessing intervention impacts. However, there are two *caveats* to this claim. Firstly, for the method to reliably estimate a counterfactual situation, it needs ‘substantial numbers of frequently recurring observations in the area before and after an intervention’ (p.531). Secondly, It needs a ‘well-behaved trend in the indicator before an intervention’ (p.532).

Several US case studies are used to test the efficacy of the AITS approach to establishing a counter-situation:

- **Belmont neighbourhood, Portland, Oregon:**
  - This area was once a bustling area, well-connected to the rest of the city by a trolley line (p.518). However, by the 1980s, it had deteriorated to the point where the commercial district contained large numbers of vacant buildings and a few shops and factories (pp.518–519).
  - In the early 1990s, a renewed interest in ‘architecturally interesting’ but run-down homes in a nearby area spurred a sharp rise in property prices, which bypassed Belmont’s commercial district. An affordable housing organisation—
REACH Community Development Inc.—began targeting specific neighbourhoods in southeast Portland for redevelopment. Their approach included not only the provision of affordable housing, but also economic development, social services, community building and leadership development.

- One such program involved multiple, concurrent investments into the commercial strip of the Belmont neighbourhood. REACH worked with local businesses to co-invest in improving business facades, signage, and marketing, as well as improving lighting and other safety elements, and assisting business owners with business planning activities (p.520). They encouraged business owners to purchase their property in order to prevent displacement as property prices rose, and encouraged new businesses to start up. A private developer purchased an old, disused dairy site and developed mixed-income housing and spaces for small businesses to operate.

- Home prices in the area began to rise as the business district was revitalised and new businesses began moving in. However, some supply of affordable housing was maintained and business owners were able to continue operating despite rising rental charges, due to the long-term leases and/or property purchase activities REACH had encouraged them to take on (pp.520–522).

- Galster et al.’s AITS model shows that the combination of REACH’s revitalisation initiatives and the dairy redevelopment had a strong impact on property values, due to the improvements to the commercial district and availability of a wider range of quality homes (p.523).

→ *Five Points neighbourhood, Denver, Colorado:*

- During the 1950s, this loose collection of small neighbourhoods close to the Denver downtown area was a thriving African-American area. However, during the 60s and 70s, many residents left for the newer, more integrated suburbs on the fringe of the city. The net result was large numbers of abandoned buildings, vacant blocks, ‘open air drug markets’ and a distressed public housing estate (p.523).

- Despite being quite run down, the neighbourhood contained some ‘architecturally attractive’ homes close to the downtown area, both factors making it an appealing area for regeneration efforts. Rising demand for revitalised housing brought in a range of higher income groups, bringing with them rising house prices and the potential for resulting displacement of poorer households. HOPE Communities – a faith-based community development corporation – began acquiring affordable rental properties as well as initiating a range of other rental and homeowner assistance projects over the course of the 1990s. In particular, they acquired two tower blocks of deteriorated ‘garden apartments’, which they either renovated or selectively demolished and redeveloped (pp.525–526). A range of complementary investments coincided with their efforts: a new light-rail line, and a range of commercial redevelopments.

- The AITS model demonstrates that the range of property improvement initiatives had a positive impact ‘of considerable magnitude’ on local property prices – a proxy for desirability of the area.

This study demonstrates that the AITS model has significant potential as a tool for quantitatively assessing the impacts of a revitalisation initiative in a distressed neighbourhood, provided the data inputted into the model contains sufficient pre- and post-intervention observations and clear pre-interventions trends.

Katz’ paper provides a historic survey of trends in policy and programs aimed at reducing poverty and disadvantage in ‘distressed neighbourhoods’ (Katz 2004). Whilst Katz does not clearly define the geography of ‘neighbourhood’ as such, he does define distressed communities as those which have significant concentrations of high or extreme poverty, high levels of unemployment, abnormally high numbers of single-parent families and low levels of educational attainment (p.7).

Given the recent post-war history of decentralised settlement and employment opportunities in American cities, these neighbourhoods are generally inner city areas in older cities. This inner-city focus may not necessarily resonate with the setting of such communities in Australian cities and towns.

**Characteristics of areas of concentrated poverty**

The early sections of the paper outline some characteristics of concentrated poverty in the US:

→ *Concentrated poverty is dynamic* (pp.7–8)—it is unevenly distributed across metropolitan regions and between states; it changes over time; ethnic compositions change over time; and it shifts from one part of the country to the next. Due to this dynamic state, Katz therefore suggests that any policy response needs to be tailored to ‘meet the distinct market, demographic and social realities of different places’ (p.8).

→ *Poverty is not inevitable* (pp.8–10)—the post-war suburban sprawl which has ‘helped create’ concentrated urban poverty was aided by state and federal government policies supporting decentralisation: for example, supporting road expansion on urban fringe; red-lining poorer areas for the provision of credit; taxes favouring newer suburb development over revitalization of older areas; exclusionary zoning; and small local governments contributing to competition between areas for desirable land uses (9-10). These policies have contributed significantly to the movement of educational and employment opportunities away from concentrated inner city public housing neighbourhoods.

→ *Concentrated poverty has significant costs* (pp.10–12)—a significant body of research on ‘neighbourhood effects’ demonstrates that these communities face lower educational attainment, a spatial mismatch between low-skilled workers and low-skill jobs, negative health consequences, higher crime rates, and adverse effects on the economic life of these communities. However, such studies may also underestimate some of the valuable social and economic assets and mutual supports contained in these distressed neighbourhoods, such as ‘community groups, churches, informal support networks’ (p.12).

Katz concludes his overview of the characteristics of areas of concentrated poverty in the US by suggesting that ‘its causes are complex, but are due, substantially, to major government policies’ (p.13).

**Three different strategies for addressing locational disadvantage in the US**

His historical overview of responses to concentrated poverty outline three distinct strategies – *improvement, opportunity and transformation*. Each one is informed by its own implicit theories of change, conceptions of the origins and nature of ‘the challenges facing distressed urban neighbourhoods’, ‘perceptions of ‘distress’...’ (p.13) and very different concepts of the geography of neighbourhoods and how they relate to broader metro region (p.14).
Improving the neighbourhood (pp.13–18)—this is the dominant strategy and particularly flourished in the 1930–1970s, with a place-based focus on 'making urban communities quality places to live' (p.13). With a largely inward focus (p.14), it is often referred to as 'community development' and primarily involves revitalisation of the physical housing stock and improving the economic attractiveness of the community. Improvement of the physical housing stock is primarily achieved through the production of community-based affordable housing, which is funded through a range of tax and legislative vehicles, such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit and the Community Reinvestment Act (p.15).

Katz outlines a number of criticisms of this approach:

- There is the limitation of 'scale and perspective' – ie whilst a large number of new homes have been provided, they pall in comparison to the sheer numbers needed (pp.16–17).
- These programs also confuse neighbourhood revitalisation with the alleviation of poverty: simply building housing in poor neighbourhoods will not provide access to jobs and other opportunities needed to help lift people out of poverty (p.17).
- The production of affordable housing in poorer neighbourhoods assists with further increasing concentrations of poverty in these areas (p.17).
- Existing funding arrangements have encouraged the development of a large number of small not-for-profit developers, which are costly and inefficient to run (p.17).
- Program evaluations focus on outputs rather than outcomes and do not take into account broader goals of poverty alleviation and access to opportunity (p.18).

Expanding opportunity (pp.13–14, 18–20)—this is a people-based strategy that seeks to give people greater access to jobs, education and opportunities. It is based upon an intense drive toward desegregation, includes mobility strategies such as 'Moving to Opportunity', and generally seeks first and foremost to improve outcomes for individual families by providing assistance to move the family out of the distressed neighbourhood (p.13). Assistance includes housing vouchers to provide for relocation to areas with more opportunity, workforce programs to link residents with job opportunities, school choice programs (p.18).

- Housing vouchers appear to have been the most sustainable and successful of these approaches. However, research has indicated the outcomes are a mixed bag (p.18): they allow for greater resident choice, observable improvements in health, employment, education, mental health and reduced juvenile delinquency rates (pp.18–19). Yet, residents face discrimination around access to rental properties in higher socio-economic neighbourhoods, the uneven implementation of program and lack of support services in higher socio-economic areas has hampering successful re-settlement (p.19) and the fragmented and insular administration of voucher programs (p.20). Some studies have shown that increased isolation and reduced social supports have in some instances resulted from relocation, placing a serious strain on some families (p.20).

Transforming the neighbourhood (pp.13–14, 20–23)—this is the most recent and most ambitious type of strategy. It focuses on 'fundamentally shifting the socio-economic mix of distressed neighbourhoods' and creating places that are attractive to a diverse range of residents and business owners. It is both people- and place-based and it works simultaneously to improve physical place and residents' opportunities to socio-economic integration with wider community (p.13).
The primary vehicle for this type of strategy is the HOPE-VI program. This is a major federally-funded program which aims to revitalise distressed communities by demolishing old high-density public housing and replacing it with lower-density, better-designed communities that are more integrated into the wider community and economy (p.20). Economic integration is a ‘central feature’ of the program, which aims to attract a broader social mix, with higher income renters and homeowners being attracted to settle in the neighbourhood, alongside a social housing tenants (p.21).

- **Achievements:** Some features of the redeveloped communities were street grids with townhouses and variety of forms rather than towers; some commercial properties rather than just housing; and the leveraging of major public, private and philanthropic investment (p.21). There have also been sharp declines in crime, as well as improvement in health, educational attainment, employment participation rates and property values (pp.21–22). Significantly, in one case study cited in this paper, the centrepiece for the redevelopment was not housing, ‘but a reconstituted school’ (p.23).

- **Limitations:** Despite some impressive achievements, early figures suggest that a low proportion of the original tenants are returning to many of these redeveloped sites. Some questions remain around how agencies are managing the relocation of ‘hard to house’ residents of the former high-density developments against the new higher eligibility/ and screening requirements in the new developments (p.22).

At the time this paper was written, the program was still fairly new, but initial evaluations were showing encouraging outcomes (p.21).

**Katz’ proposal for a unified approach to neighbourhood policy:**

**neighbourhoods of choice and connection**

Notwithstanding a range of successes across these three types of strategies, Katz suggests that it is time to move to a more coherent and unified approach to neighbourhood policy (p.25).

His ‘central defining principle’ for moving forward with addressing locational disadvantage is the goal of ‘creating neighbourhoods of choice and connection’ (p.25)—neighbourhoods where a broad mix of socio-economic groups are attracted to settle and raise families. This principle ‘treats people and place policies as fundamentally intertwined and mutually reinforcing’ (p.26). Under this central principle, Katz suggests a range of principles that need to be incorporated:

- **‘Neighbourhoods and neighbourhood policy need to be set within a metropolitan context’** (p.26). That is, governments need to recognise that the metropolitan area is now the ‘geography of opportunity’, which defines where households will live, work, learn, and play. Whilst the geography of a neighbourhood is a convenient administrative unit for interventions to alleviate disadvantage, they operate within a broader metropolitan context and they need to relate to the educational, employment, housing and other opportunities of this broader context.

- Neighbourhoods are also highly diverse, so it is important for flexible approaches and funding models which allow a locally-tailored response to be delivered (p.28).

- **‘Broader national, state, and local policies need to align with the goals of neighbourhood policy’** (p.28). Policies at all these levels have helped to create and perpetuate severely disadvantaged neighbourhoods, so it is important for them to proactively facilitate and encourage the revitalisation of these geographies.
‘Neighbourhood policy needs to embrace economic and demographic diversity in both cities and suburbs’ (p.31). Katz strongly advocates for building communities that are ethnically and economically mixed.

‘Neighbourhood policy needs a new mix of private and community sector action in both cities and suburbs’ (p.32). Genuine revitalisation will not succeed where the not-for-profit sector is the sole actor, although its role is crucially important. The private sector also needs to be engaged and attracted to invest in these communities (p.34).

‘Neighbourhood policy needs to be implemented in an integrated, accountable, and sustainable fashion’ (p.34). Stable, long-term and predictable policy which facilitates integration and accountability (p.36) are required to attract sustainable, long-term stakeholders in both the private and not-for-profit sectors.

Lessons for the UK from the US experience

Katz proposes a number of points for policymakers to consider in developing policy to address locational disadvantage (pp.39–41):

The perspective and approach used should attempt to answer the questions of how to ‘position a neighbourhood in the broader market; how... to link residents to employment and educational opportunities’, rather than primarily tackling the question of how to improve housing for the poor (p.38).

Situating initiatives within the ‘broader spatial context’ and tailoring policies to the ‘distinct market realities of disparate places’ is important (p.39).

Broader policies need to align to ensure that local neighbourhood regeneration initiatives are optimised (p.39).

Diversity needs to be embraced and strengthened in ‘mixed-use, mixed-income, mixed-tenure developments’ (p.40).

The private sector needs to be engaged in revitalisation efforts. Additionally, the not-for-profit sector’s role and mission need to be reframed (p.40).

Implementation needs to be strengthened through genuinely joined-up services with both strong accountability and flexibility of local delivery (p.41).

This paper demonstrates a range of causes of locational disadvantage, as well as outlining three broad approaches in the US for addressing the problem.


This review of seven decades of housing strategies in the US examines trends and findings, which provide lessons in the provision of affordable housing going forward (Katz et al. 2003). The study brings together the considerable resources, depth of knowledge and research quality of the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institutions.

Three broad approaches to housing assistance are examined and assessed against a range of principles of affordable housing provision for their effectiveness:

Rental assistance (p.ix):

- This should play a central role in any housing strategy.
- This type of intervention requires deep, long-term subsidies to reach the neediest households.
- They should avoid clustering of low-income households and include interventions to raise the incomes of these families.
Location plays a ‘critical role in determining the effectiveness’ of these programs. It also has a range of other effects on family wellbeing.

- Building more dwellings is not necessarily the most cost-effective solution for governments.
- Where new dwellings are being constructed, these should be dispersed throughout healthy neighbourhoods with access to a range of facilities and opportunities.

**Homeownership assistance (p.x):**
- Efforts to expand access to credit facilities should proceed cautiously.
- These programs have yielded some very positive results. Many families have been provided with assistance which has helped them overcome otherwise insurmountable barriers to home ownership.
- The most successful initiatives have been federal rather than local ones and have resulted from pressure being placed upon lending institutions to more adequately meet the needs of low-income home buyers.
- However, they also have some serious shortcomings. Not every low-income family has the capacity to sustain the requirements of a home mortgage and may make poor decisions if pushed prematurely into this tenure.
- Buyers need to be carefully informed of all the risks prior to accessing homeownership assistance programs.

**Land-use and other regulatory policies (pp.x–xi):**
- These are commonly neglected in housing strategies at state and local levels. However, they have powerful potential for reducing or increasing barriers to achieving adequate supplies of affordable housing.
- Growth controls and inclusionary zoning, if carefully implemented, can assist in increasing the supply of affordable housing.
- The biggest constraint on the effective use of these tools is fragmented planning authority. The most optimal efforts at using these tools effectively are regional in nature.

The authors conclude that whilst there are serious gaps in the evidence base, there are nonetheless a range of lessons which can inform affordable housing policy and provision going forward:

- 'Housing strategies should be tailored to local market conditions' (p.xii)—housing priorities differ from region to region, so a one-size-fits-all policy approach will not meet the needs of everyone everywhere.
- 'Housing markets are regional, so housing policies should [also] be [regional]' (p.xii)—housing policies should factor in broader metropolitan and state-wide influences on housing outcomes.
- 'Income policy IS [sic] housing policy' (p.xii)—policies that assist people to improve their incomes will also alleviate demand for other housing affordability assistance.
- 'Regulation can be a powerful policy tool' (p.xiii)—where tools such as 'zoning policies, land use restrictions, development fees, subdivision and design requirements, building codes, rent controls...' (p.xiii) and the like are thoughtfully applied, they can have a powerful, positive effect on the supply of affordable housing.
'Race matters' (p.xiii)—particularly in the historical, racial context of the US, policies which fail to explicitly target the reduction of racial segregation will not have any real impact in reducing this problem.

'Implementation matters' (p.xiv)—effective implementation is absolutely vital. Even the best strategy will fail to produce positive results if not implemented adequately.

This review provides an overview of some important principles for affordable housing strategies. Such strategies should be a key part of any intervention to reduce concentrations of disadvantage.


This paper provides an interim evaluation of the *Moving to Opportunity* (MTO) program in the US (Orr et al. 2003). The evaluation was conducted at the midpoint of a 10-year research program into the long-term outcomes of this intervention (p.vi). As such, the findings may necessarily be of a preliminary nature.

They outline a number of findings:

- Members of all three groups of participants in the experiment have moved. These may be a direct result of the MTO program, or it may be causally related to other factors (p.vii).
- MTO was found to have substantial positive effects on the mobility of families in the experimental and section 8 voucher groups, as well as on the quality of their subsequent neighbourhood(s) (p.viii). The majority of those who moved, relocated to neighbourhoods with lower poverty rates.
- Mobility did not necessarily result in reduced racial segregation (p.viii).
- The most notable achievement of the program was in the area of improved safety for and neighbourhood conditions (p.ix).
- Some improvements in residents' health were also observed, including (p.x):
  - Reduced rates of obesity
  - Improved mental health in adults.
  - Reduction in psychological distress and depression amongst girls.
  - However, there was some increases in risky behaviour amongst boys. This suggests they face greater challenges integrating into a new environment (p.xi).
- The impacts on children's education outcomes has been modest, in large part because parents were reluctant to move them from their original schools (p.xii).
- 'There is no convincing evidence of effects on educational performance; employment and earnings; or household income, food security, and self-sufficiency' (p.xv).
- 'There is at least modest evidence that the impacts of the demonstration are becoming more favourable over time' (p.xv).

Three major policy implications emerge from this study:

- 'policy can influences, but it cannot dictate, the residential location of low-income families' (p.xvi).
- 'the poverty rate, while important, may be an overly simplistic way to characterise neighbourhoods. Residential environments are multidimensional, and no single measure will capture all the attributes that are important to the life chance of low-income families' (p.xvii).
To the extent that the problems faced by poor families in public housing estates are a result of family characteristics, ‘the appropriate policy response is to address these characteristics directly’ (p.xvii).

This study suggests that providing families in areas of concentrated disadvantage the subsidised means to relocate to lower-poverty areas makes a tangible difference in the quality of their neighbourhood environment and safety, as well as in some aspects of health. However, it does not appear – in and of itself – to be causally linked with improved educational, employment or income.


This paper is a review of multiple evaluations of the US Government’s HOPE-VI urban regeneration program (S. J. Popkin et al. 2004). The review was jointly conducted by the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution. The authors find that the program has been largely successful in improving outcomes for residents, although – only a decade into the program – they suggest it is still too early for definitive findings on the impacts of interventions.

The HOPE-VI program ‘replaces severely distressed public housing projects, occupied exclusively by poor families, with redesigned mixed-income housing and provides housing vouchers to enable some of the original residents to rent apartments in the private market’ (p.1).

Severely distressed public housing is defined in terms of a focus on residents:

- ‘residents living in despair and generally needing high levels of social and supportive services;
- Physically deteriorated buildings; and
- Economically and socially distressed surround communities’ (p.8).

These neighbourhoods are also predominantly minority women and children, with high levels of single-parent, female-led households. They have extremely low incomes (p.8) and are dominated by very high levels of crime and disorder (p.10).

The program grew out of a congressional National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing, established in 1989. The findings of the commission led to the HOPE-VI program, which ‘combined grants for physical revitalisation with funding for management improvements and supportive services to promote residents self-sufficiency’ (p.1). It thereby combines a place-based revitalisation approach with a people-centred approach to supporting residents into improved living conditions.

Its four key aims were to:

- Improve living conditions for residents of severely distressed public housing estates. This includes raising the standard of design and construction to reduce ongoing maintenance problems (p.16) and reducing levels of crime (p.17). Improvements to physical design have greatly increased resident satisfaction with the neighbourhood, and have included (p.20):
  - Overall reductions in housing density.
  - Connecting the estate to surrounding areas through the introduction of street grids and footpaths.
  - Safety features such as housing facing the street and having individual home entry points.
  - Housing facades that improve the aesthetic look and feel of the neighbourhood.
→ Revitalise sites where distressed public housing is located.
→ Provide housing for very-low-income families in such a way as there is a de-concentration of poverty and a mixing of different income groups (p.15).
  - ‘Income mixing has been a hallmark of HOPE-VI sites…’ (p.22). These have produced economic benefits, enhanced safety and improved maintenance of homes (p.22).
  - Mixed-income redevelopments have also allowed for significant cross-subsidisation of affordable housing stock in these areas. However, this has been shown to be useful only in contexts where there are ‘very tight housing markets or where the developer requires little or no profit’ (p.23).

→ Build sustainable communities.

The program also aimed to improve the management of public housing through public-private management arrangements and reforms to asset management strategies (p.16).

One of the initiative’s strengths is that it has been shaped more through the implementation process than through legislative acts. That is, it has been allowed to evolve over time from a physical redevelopment effort into a more ambitious strategy that allows for more comprehensive economic integration with the surrounding communities and greater resident choice in the private housing market as well as in government-subsidised housing (p.2). This more flexible orientation has also allowed a very wide range of approaches in different contexts, so that local interventions have been tailored specifically to their context.

This is viewed by the authors as a positive feature of HOPE-VI, although it has complicated attempts to evaluate the program overall. A large number of evaluation studies exist, but there is little consistency between them due to the varied nature of individual programs. Some of the successes outlined in this review include (p.3, 5):

→ Improved housing stock and reduction in the number of severely distressed areas (p.47).
  - This comprises factors such as better quality housing and neighbourhood design and construction, improved community facilities such as parks and enhanced amenity (p.3, 5).
→ Vouchers have assisted many to relocate to improved neighbourhood and housing circumstances (p.3, 5, 48).
→ The benefits of revitalised housing estates have had a flow-on effect on surrounding areas (p.3, 42).
  - There have been improvements in community institutions and physical infrastructure in some surrounding communities as a result of HOPE-VI projects (p.42). These include services such as local libraries, parks, police stations, supermarkets, banks, and restaurants.
  - Some studies have noted health improvements in surrounding neighbourhoods. However, it is not clear the degree to which HOPE-VI projects have necessarily caused these improvements (pp.42–43).
  - Some increase in home-ownership rates has been noted by some researchers (p.43).
  - Crime rates have been reduced (p.44). Some authors suggest this has contributed to revived or strengthened housing markets.
→ There have been positive changes in the perception of public housing in some areas.
The program has allowed for significant leverage of public, private and community-sector funding to achieve greater outcomes than would have resulted from just one funding source acting in isolation (p.24).

- One notable finding of the review is that those projects with activities addressing both broad regeneration and community service needs ‘have the greatest chance of leveraging …funds’ outside federal funding sources (p.25).
- The long-term viability of mixed-finance initiatives is also an unresolved issue, as local housing authorities now need to service mortgages over 40 or more years with below-market rental incomes, whilst maintaining financial feasibility (p.25).

However, not all the results are positive. Some former public housing residents have not benefitted from redevelopments – there have been instances of residents re-housed in the same or worse conditions (pp.3–4, 29–30). Furthermore, in some projects residents have not been adequately involved in planning and implementing relocation strategies (pp.3–4, p.40, 49).

The evidence on mixed-income communities is varied. Whilst this has brought economic and amenity improvements to formerly run-down estates, there is little evidence that low-income residents are benefitting from the hoped-for mentoring and role models of living in close proximity to higher-income households (p.23).

The authors therefore recommend that the HOPE-VI approach should continue, but advocate for improved supportive and relocation services, particularly with the provision of ‘long-term counselling and support to vulnerable families in conjunction with housing assistance’ (p.5).

A number of further issues are highlighted for improvement:

- A number of households who have been moved out of project areas exhibited disruptive behaviour which has rendered them ineligible to return. The issue of how and where to house these ‘hard to house’ families requires urgent attention. Some of these families are now at significant risk of homelessness (p.34).
- Some families who have accepted vouchers for relocation are experiencing difficulty finding landlords in higher-income neighbourhoods who will accept the vouchers (p.35). Others are struggling to maintain higher housing costs in these neighbourhoods (pp.33–34).
- There has been an overall loss in the absolute numbers of public housing units. HOPE-VI has yet to address: (a) whether this is an acceptable/unacceptable situation; and (b) how growing numbers of people requiring housing assistance will be provided for (p.50ff).
- There have been significant lag-times between provision of funding and delivery of the strategy in a number of locations. This is often due to significant resident opposition and even litigation in some circumstances. The program is yet to adequately deal with and reduce these lag times.
- The authors suggest that ‘the issue of race must be a central element in any discussion of the program’s impact on residents and communities’ (p.8). However, this does not appear to be an implicit consideration anywhere in the design of the program.

This review demonstrates that overall, the HOPE-VI program has been highly successful in improving severely distressed public housing estates. The successes of the program are largely due to its flexible and evolving nature, and its combination of place-based and people-centred approaches.

This paper critically reviews a number of empirically demonstrated threshold effects in the context of neighbourhood change (Quercia & Galster 2000). The authors define the threshold effect as ‘a dynamic process in which the magnitude of the response changes significantly as the triggering stimulus exceeds some critical value’ (p.146). That is, when a given behaviour is shared by a particular proportion of the neighbourhood, incidence of the behaviour will rise exponentially. This effect is used to explain why a neighbourhood revitalisation intervention may have excellent outcomes in one area, but fail to produce any tangible difference in another.

A change in neighbourhood characteristics implies ‘a change in one (or more) of three population groups – *out-movers, in-movers* and *stayers*. Each of these three groups may be influenced in different ways by the conditions that trigger threshold effects (p.147):

→ Out-movers – when neighbourhood conditions deteriorate to an intolerable point, this group of better-off residents will tend to move out to higher quality environments.
→ In-movers – negative conditions in the neighbourhood may reach a point where prospective movers will be deterred from moving into the neighbourhood, unless effectively forced to by a lack of alternatives.
→ Stayers – ‘the likelihood that any given individual will engage in certain types of behaviours may increase much more rapidly when the average incidence of such behaviours in the neighbourhood passes the threshold’ (p.147).

The paper outlines six distinct mechanisms in extant theories of neighbourhood change through thresholds may be generated:

→ *Collective socialisation* – such theories posit that ‘a sufficiently powerful social group can influence others to conform to its customs, norms, and behaviours. Such an effect can occur to the degree that (1) the individual comes in social contact with the group, and (2) the group can exert more powerful threats or inducement to conform to its positions than competing groups’ (p.147).
  - Threshold effects occur when this group’s influence moves beyond a particular ‘critical mass’ to be able to influence the behaviour of the majority in the community.
→ *Corner solutions models* – These models suggest that ‘actors in a residential environment can make marginal (incremental) changes, up to a point, in response to changes in a neighbourhood attribute. After a certain critical value (threshold), actors will not be able to make marginal changes to adjust behaviour in a satisfactory manner. Instead, they will respond by undertaking a different strategy which represents a discontinuous change in behaviour’ (p.148).
  - Threshold effects occur where a resident perceives that others are making moderate change (e.g. investing in small-scale improvements to their respective homes) and makes similar changes.
→ *Collective efficacy* – This is ‘the capacity for collective action by neighbours to monitor and supervise youth and protect the public order’ (p.148).
  - The authors suggest that a threshold effect is implied here: if the collective capacity for action is eroded, it may reach a tipping point where social controls become ineffective in maintaining public order, and disorder spirals upward.
→ *Gaming models* – This model suggests that ‘for actors, the costs and benefits of alternative courses of action are uncertain, depending on how many other actors
choose various alternatives. The individual’s expected payoff of an alternative is based on the number or proportion of others who must make a decision before the given actor does’ (pp.148–149).

- The threshold implied here is one of observed prior action leading to the given actor’s behaviour.

→ **Preference models** – These models propose that ‘actors in a residential environment will respond if the aggregate behaviour of others (or an exogenous event) raises an undesirable neighbourhood attribute above the level they find tolerable. An endogenous process can be triggered once the attribute reaches the critical value (threshold)’ (p.149).

- Racial tipping is one example of this type of model. This occurs where one racial group starts to move into a mixed neighbourhood in increasing numbers, which motivates other groups to start moving out. In the US, examples of this have shown that where a particular racial group reaches a particular proportion (threshold), other groups will continue move out until the neighbourhood almost completely constitutes the former group.

→ **Contagion models** – The principle of these models is that ‘if actors live in a community where some of their neighbours exhibit non-normative behaviours, they will be more likely to adopt these behaviours themselves. In this way, social problems are believed to be contagious, spread through peer influence’ (p.150).

- Where the incidence of this behaviour passes some critical point (threshold), it will spread ‘explosively’ (p.150).

The authors continue on to review a range of studies that have investigated the presence or absence of threshold effects, and outline a range of statistical tests which are typically used to empirically demonstrate the presence of threshold effects. The findings of this review suggest that threshold effects do exist in reality and that they need to be taken seriously by policymakers.

The overarching implication of their findings relates to spatial targeting of revitalisation initiatives:

‘If thresholds were indeed a significant feature of neighbourhood dynamics, then programmatic resources will not achieve the maximum positive social impacts if they are widely scattered across neighbourhoods; rather, they must be targeted strategically’ (p.157).

Other significant findings that emerge from the study are:

→ Whilst thresholds can be defined for individual neighbourhoods, there is ‘no single, generalisable value for the tipping point’ (p.157). Rather these are influenced by local ‘neighbourhood and metropolitan-wide contexts’ (p.157).

→ When a ‘neighbourhood passes into a certain range of disadvantage, the likelihood of a wide variety of problematic behaviours increases and desirable behaviours decreases dramatically’ (p.159). For most neighbourhoods in the studies reviewed here, this level of disadvantage would place the neighbourhood in the top 2-3 per cent ‘highest poverty and/or nonprofessional worker rates’ (p.159). However, some thresholds occur at much lower levels.

→ Some behaviours, when they reach a threshold, will tend to reinforce a downward trajectory for that neighbourhood, compounding the disadvantage experienced by residents and making successful interventions a much greater challenge to achieve.

*This paper suggests that threshold effects do influence behaviour in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The authors recommend that policymakers should be sensitive to*
these effects and consider them when planning for concentrated interventions into specific high-needs locations rather than evenly dispersing resources and programs across wide geographic areas.

However, they do indicate that whilst the evidence on thresholds to date is compelling, much further quantitative investigation is needed before this concept can be generalised and used as a tool for accurately anticipating threshold effects.

EU programs


In this study, Carpenter provides an ex-post evaluation of the EU URBAN I Community Initiative (URBAN-CI) to discuss the benefits and disbenefits of area-based initiatives (ABIs) (Carpenter 2006). She defines ABIs as 'spatially targeted programs focused on specific neighbourhoods which aim to address the multifaceted challenges of disadvantage' (p.2145). Across Europe, ABIs may be initiated at the 'national, regional or local levels, according to the particular context' (p.2145).

ABIs are one way in which governments attempt to address locational disadvantage, which the author describes in the following way:

...even the most 'successful' cities in terms of competitiveness are afflicted by urban poverty and social exclusion, often spatially focused pockets of deprivation that are home to low-income groups, few economic opportunities and run-down urban environments (p.2145).

Carpenter also shows that while there were already a number of area-based initiatives (ABIs) underway in member states, the URBAN-CI program modelled an innovative way of addressing some of the issues facing deteriorating estates in European cities today.

...while the impact of the program was necessarily limited due to the resources available, the program nevertheless did have an influence at a local, regional and even national level in some cases, bringing changes in the policy responses to urban deprivation within some individual member-states (p.2146).

Carpenter's evaluation is framed with a useful theoretical discussion of the causes of deprivation and the ways in which ABIs may be beneficial to deprived communities. A range of authors have provided evidence to show that spatial concentrations of poverty are brought about by major shifts in economic conditions, such as globalisation processes, economic restructuring and market economies which do not distribute wealth evenly (p.2146). These causes would suggest that macro interventions are needed to alleviate poverty. These require transformations such as a major re-distribution of wealth.

A large number of other authors argue that living in a deprived neighbourhood 'compounds the disadvantage' of these residents, thereby suggesting micro explanations of the causes of poverty and the means for reducing it. Micro effects include physical isolation of a neighbourhood from the rest of the urban region, low quality housing, and low quality services (p.2146).

ABIs tend to be used at the micro level to address localised causes of disadvantage. However, there are multiple mechanisms used within ABIs to address the problems found in these areas. In particular, the two main types of interventions are place-based and people-based schemes (p.2147). Each has their own advantages and disadvantages:
Place-based mechanisms are aimed at improving the physical environment. Whilst this has a number of benefits for the residents, it risks increasing the attractiveness of the area to external investors, thereby potentially triggering rising property prices, gentrification and displacement of lower-income residents.

People-based mechanisms provide direct support to individuals, such as employment services, training, child care and counselling. These allow individuals to directly benefit from programs. However, there is the inherent risk that once the individual's life circumstances have improved, they will choose to move to a better neighbourhood, thereby contributing to further concentration of disadvantage amongst those who remain behind in the target community (p.2147).

Therefore, Carpenter argues that interventions should combine both place- and people-based mechanisms, as well as a combination of micro and macro policies (p.2147). She recommends national level policies to address larger structural causes of poverty and urban deterioration alongside more localised programs.

The program

The URBAN-CI program 'was launched in 1994, at a time when cities across the EU were facing significant economic, social and environmental challenges' (p.2147). Whilst slum clearance and public housing programs in the immediate post-war era had significantly improved conditions for the poorest residents, it was clear by the 1980s that large urban areas were facing rapid economic, social and physical decline. Furthermore, many higher-income people were moving from older, inner-city locations to new suburban housing estates, which served to concentrate disadvantaged groups in these older locations.

Up until this time, the EU had limited involvement in urban policy. With its limited powers, the European Commission attempted to improve the plight of disadvantaged neighbourhoods through influencing national and regional policy. Therefore, during the period 1994-1999, a relatively small pool of finance was provided through Structural Funds to assist member-states in improving the living environment of residents living in communities blighted by dilapidated housing stock, high unemployment and concentrations of ethnic minorities (p.2148).

The strategy adopted was a combination of place-based and people-based initiatives, depending on the particular local, regional or national context, recognising the need for individual strategies to meet locally specific challenges (p.2148).

Four types of neighbourhoods were specifically targeted – peripheral urban areas, inner cities, historical city centres, and areas that combined characteristics of the other three types.

To be eligible for funding, a total of 118 unique programs across the EU were required to both address the program guidelines and demonstrate that they were responding to national and local contexts. They were also required to incorporate partnership approaches, which involved local authorities and the community both in designing and implementing initiatives (p.2148). Four broad categories of programs emerged (pp.2148–2149):

- A 'broad integrated approach' (45% of programs),
- An 'integrated approach with a specific focus, either economic, social or environmental' (26% of programs),
- A 'flagship approach' (10% of programs),
- A 'community-based approach' (18% of programs).
All UK programs adopted this approach, which reflected other policies and programs in place concurrently. Integrated programs were implemented in Spain, France and Germany.

A number of findings emerged regarding the usefulness of each approach:

- 'A strong integrated approach may be most suitable in the 'worst' areas of deprivation, where a holistic approach is most effective' (p.2148).
- In areas where there appear to be 'lost opportunities', a flagship approach may act as a catalyst for 'securing sustainable regeneration' (p.2149). These are particularly useful in central locations, but may also encourage further regeneration on a smaller scale in peripheral areas.

**Findings from the evaluation**

A number of learnings emerged from Carpenter's evaluation:

- Community involvement in programs is of vital importance (p.2154).
- 'Deep-rooted economic exclusion cannot be addressed by part-time temporary employment opportunities' (p.2154). Longer-term interventions and sustainable outcomes beyond the life of the project should be the goal.
- 'Trust amongst participants is central to this process' of building social capital (p.2154).
- 'Engaging the community in regeneration programs always takes much longer than anticipated' (p.2155). This factor had not been built into program timeframes and led to some funding being spent rapidly – rather than necessarily on the best items – towards the end of project timelines, or being spent on larger projects with 'less of a community focus' which were easier to administrate (p.2155).
  - Timelines therefore need to incorporate adequate community engagement and capacity building.
- The program did not provide clear guidelines on the aims and objectives. Confusion amongst some member states around what was required of them led to trust being undermined in some instances (p.2155).
- Some programs were highly complex, which reduced the ability of some communities to participate. A number of project sites therefore initiated community drop-in centres to provide information to community members and allay concerns. Other projects provided 'jargon-free' guides for local communities to explain the projects being conducted in their neighbourhoods. Such approaches to including the community assisted in building trust between residents and project staff (p.2155).
- The program helped to build awareness amongst policymakers 'that urban deprivation [is] a challenge with many facets and [demands] a multiagency, multilevel approach to devise integrated solutions to address those challenges' (p.2156).
- 'One of the most important legacies of the URBAN program has been [the] partnership working, which has paved the way for the formation of lasting relationships' (p.2156).
- 'Multi-sector partnerships are critical for the management of integrated urban regeneration schemes, as long as a balance can be struck between inclusivity and complexity' (p.2157).
In a small number of instances, ABIs funded under URBAN-CI displaced problems rather than solving them:

- Gentrification in some locations led to displacement of original, low-income residents (p.2158).
- In one location, safety improvements made in one community led to the displacement of a red-light district into an adjacent community.
- In a project in Marseille, an increase in rental and home-purchase costs has led to increased local taxes. Whilst this has some positive aspects in terms of funding local infrastructure and services, it has also placed increased pressure on lower-income groups to maintain affordable housing (p.2158).

There are a number of implications of these findings for Housing NSW:

- Time-scales for programs addressing locational disadvantage need to be sufficiently long enough to allow for community engagement and local capacity building (p.2159).
- Limited resourcing severely hampers the ability of a program to have a major, positive impact (p.2159).
- Partnerships are crucial to the success of a program. These relationships need to be developed with local governments, community organisations, private investment interests and the community (p.2159).
- A broad range of initiatives and programs are needed to effectively address locational disadvantage and link disadvantaged neighbourhoods to the rest of the urban landscape:
  - These need to be multi-level: local strategies need to be nested within regional/state strategies, which in turn need to be nested within national ones (p.2159). Additionally, strategies addressing disadvantage at a sub-city level need to be linked with citywide strategies.
    - There is a need for both micro and macro level programs. 'It is through a combination of macro and micro policies that those facing deprivation...have the greatest chance of moving out of poverty' (p.2160).
    - Locally-driven place-based strategies need to be complemented with people-based mechanisms.
  - 'The key is to build up coherence between different levels of government and their strategies'.
    - As these policies are developed and applied to different contexts, they need to move in the same direction (p.2160). At a national level, structural issues such as unemployment, skills and training, and economic restructuring need to move towards the same goals as local physical regeneration and other initiatives – namely, breaking the downward cycle of concentrated poverty and disadvantage (p.2160).

This study demonstrates a number of important principles for effectively intervening in disadvantaged neighbourhoods to achieve genuine reductions in the levels of poverty and disadvantage. Of key importance are partnerships, community engagement and coherent linkages between government policies and programs at all levels.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


