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Social-mix policy approaches to urban segregation in Europe and the United States

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1. Introduction

Social segregation, understood as the separation among different social groups, is a worldwide urban phenomenon observed both in developed and developing countries.

Certain aspects of segregation are considered a problem, especially those related to the concentration of disadvantaged groups. Poverty concentration, for instance, is believed to be a mechanism of poverty reproduction that causes high social and economic costs both to the individuals concerned and to the city as a whole.

While most countries in the world do not have the means or the political will to actively address social segregation, the issue received attention in some developed countries. Here, social mix policies have been formulated as a strategy to overcome many problems related to social segregation. Their outcomes have been mixed – some of the problems connected to segregation have been successfully dealt with, while others remain the same.

This paper focuses on social-mix policies implemented in the UK, the USA and the Netherlands. The aim is to present the expected benefits that motivate social-mix policies, examine which of them have actually been achieved, and analyse the factors that determine the usefulness of this approach, its scope and its limitations. The paper is organised as follows: Section 2 introduces the concept of segregation and the problems connected with it in more detail. Section 3 presents the causes of segregation and the role of the state in addressing them. Section 4 describes the idea of the “mixed community”, the expected benefits and strategies for implementation. The policies of the USA, the UK and the Netherlands are described in Section 5. The findings from these case studies are analysed in Section 6. Finally, Section 7 provides some concluding remarks.

2. Social Segregation: Concepts and Implications

In general terms, the concept of segregation is related to idea of distance or isolation among different population groups. The perception that such “distance or isolation” can assume different meanings led White (1983) to distinguish two types of segregation: sociological and geographical. Sociological segregation regards the *lack of interaction* among population groups, while geographical segregation focuses on the *spatial separation* among the groups. These two types of segregation often present a high correlation: physical separation can promote social distance, and vice-versa. However, this

relationship is far from being universal. India's Caste System and the Hacienda System in Latin America, for instance, have been presented as extreme cases that demonstrate the prevalence of strong social distances despite the spatial proximity among the different social groups (Sabatini et al. 2001).

The issue of segregation has received an increasing attention in academic and policy-oriented debates. Several studies emphasize the negative impacts associated to certain types of segregation, especially the ones assigned as outcomes of the concentration of socially disadvantaged groups in urban areas. Such 'disadvantage' can be simply understood as poverty or the combination of poverty with employment status, educational level and racial or ethnic characteristics. Therefore, our use of the term "social group" is to be understood as including all of these criteria.

Geographical and sociological segregation impose barriers to breaking the reproduction of deprivation. A long list of negative effects resulting from the residential concentration of poor households has been registered, including higher unemployment rates, precarious access to urban facilities, and higher exposure to natural disasters and violence. However, it is important to stress that such effects can be related to either of the two types of segregation or to a combination of both.

The problems associated to *sociological segregation* result from the lack of positive relations among different social groups. This absence of interaction can increase prejudice and stigmatization, keep disadvantaged people away from social participation at societal level (Atkinson 2005), and therefore reduce their opportunities for jobs and skill upgrading. Sociological segregation is also related to problems that emerge from the lack of 'social capital' (Cole and Goodchild 2001), or in other words, the lack of a set of informal values and norms that are shared among people and allow cooperation between them (Fukuyama 1995). This view is commonly advocated in contemporary policy discourses and asserts that the lack of social capital between different social groups, also known as 'bridging social capital' (Putnam 1995), impede disadvantaged groups to acquire support networks that could assist their upward mobility.

Another effect that is ascribed to sociological segregation is the lack of positive role models: for a disadvantaged family, interaction with people who are in steady employment and who give importance to education may result in the former acquiring a set of mainstream values from the latter. Such values may raise new patterns of behaviour, aspirations and motivations that contribute, for instance, to better performances in school

and attendance to colleges, or to improved motivation for finding work (Tunstall and Fenton 2006). Rosenbaum et al. (1998) assert that such interaction can also improve crime rates, arguing that illegal behaviour is less commonly disapproved of in areas of deep poverty concentration.

The existence of sociological segregation in places where the different social groups are close to each other (low geographical segregation) can also create a different type of problems that emerge from the constant tension between the groups, like neighbourhood disputes, conflicts over children's play, and the lack of a community sense (Cole and Goodchild 2001; Tunstall and Fenton 2006).

Geographical segregation is connected to another range of negative effects that are outcomes from the physical distance between different social groups. The concentration of low-income 'consumers' in one particular area is unlikely to be able to sustain a strong structure of local businesses and services which could serve as a means to upward mobility by providing local employment opportunities, good schools and day care, sports and leisure facilities. These areas commonly present a poor quality of built and natural environment, bad location or accessibility that impose time consuming trips, and other physical issues that create direct difficulties to the daily life of disadvantaged populations and perpetuate their condition.

A fundamental issue in the analysis of geographical segregation is the idea of *scale*. Some researchers have argued that large and homogeneous sites with poverty concentration intensify social and urban problems like the ones mentioned above (Rodríguez 2001; Sabatini et al. 2001). Some of these problems can be minimized by a simple reduction in the scale of segregation. Sabatini et al. (2001) mention the example of many gated communities emerging in poor areas of Latin American cities. These gated communities, built for middle and upper classes, keep clear and well-protected boundaries that guarantee the sociological segregation between different social groups. However, they are able to bring high quality services and commerce to the poor areas where they are located. According to Sabatini et al. (2001: 9), "poor groups that end up near these projects benefit not only in objective terms (employment, services, urban facilities), but in subjective terms as well (like the sense of belonging to a place that is prospering)".

3. Causes of Social Segregation

The problems ascribed to the concentration of deprivation are unlikely to be resolved without policies that effectively address the causes of segregation. It is impossible to attribute the emergence of social segregation to a single factor: scholars have identified different and complementary mechanisms that influence how different social groups interact and occupy urban spaces. Considering these existent studies, it is possible to identify approaches that focus on four sets of factors: personal preferences, socio-economic factors, land and real estate markets, and the controlling power of the State¹.

The first approach concentrates on *personal preferences*: social segregation can simply increase due to the fact that people tend to prefer living among neighbours similar to themselves. In this way, residents can reinforce their identity through shared values. This is particular true for advantaged families, who usually prefers to live in areas of concentrated wealth, adopting a ‘Not In My Back Yard’ behaviour to keep themselves apart from urban problems related to poverty. Studies on segregation modelling have a strong tradition in considering personal preferences to understand the emergence of the phenomenon (Sakoda 1971; Schelling 1971).

The second approach emphasizes the importance of *socio-economic* factors in reinforcing social distance, and understands social segregation as a result of unemployment, lack of education and other inequalities (Lago 2000; Morris 1995; Turok and Edge 1999; Webster 1999). Jargowsky, for instance, asserts that the growth of the US economy brought positive impacts in areas of poverty concentration (Jargowsky 1997).

The third approach focuses on the dynamics of *land and real estate markets*, and stress how estate agents stimulate competition for land and housing that reinforces the self-segregation of higher income groups and the exclusion of the disadvantaged families (Abramo 2001).

The State can play an active role in mitigating the segregational impact of the second and third factors mentioned, while its capacity to influence citizens’ personal preferences is much more limited and at the same time, politically sensitive. The second approach to segregation calls for state intervention by means of structural macroeconomic policies, such as fiscal and monetary policies; investment in free education and health care

¹ The last three approaches (labour market, land market, and controlling power of the State) are mentioned in Torres et al. (2003).

and provision of legal instruments to combat ethnic discrimination. The State can also establish policies to regulate the land and real estate market. Such policies can act directly on social diversification, e.g., promoting mix-income developments, or indirectly, by stimulating the diversification of land-uses, promoting equal access to public goods, and controlling land speculation (Sabatini et al. 2001).

This discussion leads to the importance of governmental institutions in regulating factors that promote segregation. Governmental *laissez-faire* approaches that ignore the importance of such processes are in fact contributing to the perpetuation and/or intensification of social segregation. In addition, some governmental regulations or interventions can also exacerbate the problem. Therefore, some scholars point out the *controlling power of the State* as another cause of segregation. According to this fourth approach, the State can increase segregation by means of: (a) urban legislation, e.g., exclusionary zoning (Ihlanfeldt 2004), (b) unequal distribution of urban investment (Sugai 2002), and (c) social housing policies that promote the concentration, isolation and stigmatization of poor families (van Kempen et al. 1992; Smith 2002). The following section will present the concept of “mixed communities” which has emerged as a response to this last approach.

4. The Idea of ‘Mixed Communities’

The problems arising from high concentration of disadvantaged families and the importance of establishing policies to integrate them with other social groups were first recognised at the end of the nineteenth century. At this time, idealistic projects like the Bournville Village and the Garden Cities were proposed as solutions to urban degradation observed in industrial cities, and expected to accommodate all classes in a more balanced way (Sarkissian 1976).

These ideas were reinforced during the Post War and beginning of the Cold War, when capitalist democracies had to deal with reconstruction and the need for evaluating the social justice of their systems (Sarkissian 1976). The response to that was the creation of New Towns in Britain and America in the context of developing the welfare state and tackling the problem of housing shortage (Cole and Goodchild 2001; Sarkissian 1976).

Contemporary awareness about the importance of minimizing segregation resurged in reaction to research pointing out the negative neighbourhood effects of poverty

concentration and protests from activists and journalists (Cole and Goodchild 2001). As a consequence, many policy makers have realized the need for reducing these poverty concentrations and reviewing their policy strategies. Considering the causes of segregation mentioned in section 3, the policies against segregation started addressing mainly the *land and real estate market* (Sabatini et al. 2001). Traditional public housing strategies that had resulted in homogeneous areas of poverty concentration were recognized as a mistake, and the ideal of ‘mixed communities’ became a target explicitly expressed in many policy discourses (Cole and Goodchild 2001; Smith 2002).

4.1 What is a Mixed Community?

The idea of mixed communities is broad and can carry different meanings. For policy purposes, it focuses on avoiding the concentration of characteristics considered to be problematic (in terms of income, employment status, and ethnicity), and on other factors considered important for establishing means of interaction and support of certain public goods (e.g., age, family size, and presence of children) (Smith 2002; Tunstall and Fenton 2006).

However, characteristics such as type of tenure or quality of housing are very often used as a proxy for these social attributes (Tunstall and Fenton 2006), and many developments base their ‘mixed approach’ on establishing quotas for home-ownership and rents, or for market rent levels and subsidised-rent levels. In the UK, the term ‘mixed community’ is commonly substituted by ‘mixed tenure’ (Tunstall and Fenton 2006).

4.2 Expected Benefits from Mixed Communities

The emphasis on mixed communities as the basis of current anti-segregation policies reflects a set of beliefs about the benefits that these developments can achieve. Most of policies consider mixed communities as a means to improving the life chances as well as the living environment of disadvantaged citizens, as beneficial to the city as a whole. In more detail, the following social benefits are mentioned in the literature as expected benefits of mixed neighbourhoods (Brophy and Smith 1997; Cole and Goodchild 2001; Grant 2001; Smith 2002; Tunstall and Fenton 2006; Wood 2003):

- (a) *Preventing or reducing violence and anti-social behaviour*: Higher-income households have less tolerance to these problems and usually demand the

institution of a set of strict rules to be followed by the community. It is also believed that social mix can reduce the cumulative effect of “deviant” values and behaviour in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Apart from improving safety for all residents, the reduction of crime rates also serves as an argument for designing mixed communities when it comes to gaining public support for new social housing developments.

- (b) *Encouraging social interaction*: Social mix might create social capital, improve social cohesion and establish community activities in the neighbourhood. The creation of these informal networks between employed and non-employed residents may increase the chances of getting a job.
- (c) *Promoting mainstream values*: There is a belief that higher-income households can serve as role models, exerting a positive influence on the behaviour of lower-income residents by promoting motivation, self-confidence, and creating a ‘culture’ of work and education. According to Tunstall (2006: 15), “residents who are not employed are able to observe others going to work, acting as role models to reignite aspirations or to demonstrate the daily patterns needed for work”. This effect can enhance chances of employment and especially extends to children, who may benefit from contact with employed adults and other children who go to school every day.
- (d) *Improving neighbourhood reputation and residents’ satisfaction*: Mixed communities are expected to overcome stigmatization, present higher indices of popularity and satisfaction, and a lower turnover.
- (e) *Enhancing housing quality, commerce, services and infrastructure*: The presence of higher income households usually increases investment in services, commerce and infrastructure, which may improve quality of life, create new opportunities for local jobs and access to good schools. The inclusion of tenants who pay market-rates may also increase the pressure for high quality developments and good maintenance. It is hoped that mixed developments will also profit from cross-subsidisation, where part of the cost of the social housing units is covered by income from market-rate rents or sales, thus reducing costs to the public (Smith 2002).

4.3 Strategies for Developing Mixed Communities

In promoting the integration among different social groups, three strategies are currently the most intensely pursued: dispersal of poverty, regeneration of troubled neighbourhoods, and regulation for new developments. The first one is considered as a ‘people-based’ strategy, while the others are ‘place-based’ strategies.

Strategies for promoting integration through the *spatial dispersion of poverty* focus on moving low-income households out of distressed areas into middle-class neighbourhoods. This ‘people-based strategy’ is adopted in some American housing programmes, like Moving to Opportunity, in which low-income households receive housing vouchers that are used to rent private dwellings in areas with a poverty rate of less than 10 percent (Smith 2002).

The second strategy focuses on the *regeneration* of problematic public housing by improving local services, demolishing high density constructions, building high-quality houses, and encouraging middle class households to move into these areas.

The third strategy consists in regulating *new developments* by requiring mixed occupancy as a condition for approval and/or funding. Section 106 of the UK’s Town and Country Planning Act 1990, for instance, allows local authorities to negotiate with developers for a certain amount of affordable units in new developments in exchange for planning permission (Claydon and Smith 1997).

5. Social Mix Policies: USA, UK and the Netherlands

The idea of mixed communities has been expressed in varied forms and contexts. They can carry different concepts of mix (Section 4.1), different motivations (Section 4.2), and different strategies (Section 4.3). According to Smith (2002), mixed-community projects can still vary in many other aspects, like tenure type, population served, location, management, and scale. The following sections provide case studies of desegregation policies in three different countries.

5.1 United States

American social mix policies first emerged in the 1960s under the influence of the Civil Rights movement. Such ideas were reinforced during the 1980s, with the publication of several American studies that pointed out negative neighbourhood effects arising from the

isolation of poor black households in inner-city areas (Ellen and Turner 1997). Social housing developments which had resulted in the geographical isolation of very poor households were then severely criticized and recognized as a failure. In response, policy makers shifted their strategies towards the encouragement of mixed-income neighbourhoods, either through restructuring social housing areas or by distributing housing vouchers to facilitate poverty dispersion (Grant 2001). Several important programmes for poverty deconcentration can be mentioned: the Section 8 programme (1974) based on the distribution of housing vouchers; HOPE VI (1993) for the renewal of distressed neighbourhoods, and the Moving to Opportunity demonstration project (1994), which distributed vouchers under different conditions.

5.1.1 The Section 8 Programme

The Section 8 programme was approved in 1974 and established the distribution of housing vouchers to poor families for subsidising part of their rent payment in the private market (Grant 2001). The programme represented a step forward in American housing policy, which till then had focused on financing developments that accentuated the concentration of poor families. In 2005, approximately 1.9 million families received Section 8 subsidies (HUD 2006).

Despite concerns about families who were using their vouchers to move into poor areas similar to the ones they had left (Rosenbaum and DeLuca 2000), some studies assert that Section 8 promoted some poverty dispersion, and suggest that families who moved from high- to low-poverty neighbourhoods experienced better housing conditions (Turner et al. 1999). Varady (1998) investigated the residential satisfaction of 200 assisted families and observed an improvement in perceived safety and general satisfaction. However, Turner et al. (1999) point out that some poor families encountered prejudice in the recipient neighbourhoods caused by concerns that they might bring problems associated with their neighbourhoods of origin.

Regarding the establishment of social networks, Kleit (2001) noticed that dispersed residents had a greater diversity in their neighbourhood social networks and more access to different sources of information. However, the residents located in clustered housing felt closer to their neighbours and used their networks more frequently to find jobs.

Resulting from a judicial battle between a community activist and Chicago Housing Authorities, the *Gautreaux Assisted Housing* programme was a variation on

Section 8. The programme offered housing vouchers to encourage inner-city poor black families to move into majority-white neighbourhoods (Grant 2001; Rosenbaum and DeLuca 2000). This particular aspect was an advantage in relation to the standard Section 8 programme, since it avoided situations where subsidised families moved into another poor neighbourhood (Rosenbaum and DeLuca 2000).

The Gautreaux experience operated between 1976 and 1998, and assisted about 7000 families to leave distressed neighbourhoods (Rosenbaum and DeLuca 2000). Available units were randomly assigned to these families, who were invited to visit the dwellings and informed about the advantages and disadvantages of living in the new place.

Rosenbaum (1995) carried out an evaluation of the Gautreaux programme by comparing the outcomes of families who moved to middle-income white suburbs, to others who moved to black inner-city neighbourhoods. The study found that adults who moved to suburbs experienced higher employment, although no differences in pay or hours worked were noticed. Children who moved to the suburbs had more chances of finishing high school, attending college and, if not in college, they were more likely to have jobs with good remuneration and benefits. The families who moved to suburbs also enhanced their likelihood of interacting and building friendships with white neighbours.

Another study conducted by Rosenbaum (1995) indicated that Gautreaux mothers who moved to suburbs obtained higher rates of employment. Rosenbaum and DeLuca (2000) complemented these evaluations with their finding that low-income families who moved into neighbourhoods with higher rates of education were more likely to leave welfare assistance. These results suggest the potential of poverty dispersion programmes in avoiding negative influences of distressed neighbourhoods, improving educational and employment opportunities, and reducing welfare dependence.

5.1.2 HOPE VI

HOPE VI (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere) is a combination of people- and place-based strategies to promote social mix. The programme started in 1992 and has invested about \$500 million annually in replacing distressed public housing with mixed-income neighbourhoods. Until the end of 2004, the HOPE VI programme had demolished around 63,000 distressed units and more than 20,300 units were redeveloped (Atkinson 2005). Since most projects are renewed at a lower density and with fewer social housing

units (Berube 2005), the original residents of these developments have four different options:

- Return to the same area after the redevelopment process,
- Use a Section 8 voucher to rent a dwelling in the private market,
- If available, move to another public housing area,
- Receive other forms of benefits or leave assistance.

The 165 HOPE projects founded until 2004 vary widely in relation to the type of mix they try to accomplish: 21 sites dedicate all their units to public housing, while 72 sites committed half or fewer of their units to public housing (Berube 2005). Some of the sites will provide only rent-tenure dwellings, and others will mix rent-tenure with affordable or market-rate dwellings for ownership (Berube 2005).

Evaluations of HOPE VI impacts usually point out a positive balance. A review of the programme conducted by Popkin et al. (2004) emphasises the accomplishments of the project in building mixed neighbourhoods with well-designed and high-quality housing. The renewed places experienced a reduction in poverty and crime rates, improving the well-being of residents and reducing risk factors. Similar benefits were also verified in a study about changes in HOPE VI sites in St Louis, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, and Louisville (Turbov and Piper 2005).

Studies about residents who received housing vouchers to move into mixed neighbourhoods reported the advantage of living in areas with improved opportunities (Clampet-Lundquist 2004) and the feeling of being in a safer neighbourhood (Popkin et al. 2004). However, HOPE VI tenants who relocated had experienced the loss of neighbourhood friends. Clampet-Lundquist (2004) compared the social ties of residents who used Section 8 vouchers to move into mostly white suburbs with residents who moved into another public housing development. She observed similar problems to rebuilding their social networks in both groups, with some residents reporting that they felt less secure and more isolated after the relocation. Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum (2000) also noticed loss of social ties, but observed that residents who move to the suburbs reported more interaction with neighbours than others who moved to high-poverty areas and preferred to keep some isolation in order to avoid negative influences.

5.1.3 Moving to Opportunity (MTO)

Moving to Opportunity (MTO) is a demonstration programme created in 1994 in which the participants receive housing vouchers for different types of neighbourhoods. MTO participants are families with children who previously resided in social housing or received Section 8 housing subsidies. The families were randomly assigned to three groups (Grant 2001; Rosenbaum and DeLuca 2000):

- Experimental group, who received mobility counselling and housing vouchers restricted to use in areas with less than 10 percent of poverty;
- Comparison group, who received a regular housing voucher with no geographical restriction;
- Control group, who received no assistance and remained in public social housing.

Some studies were conducted to evaluate the first results of the MTO in Baltimore, Boston and Los Angeles (Hanratty et al. 1998; Katz et al. 2001; Ludwig and Ladd 1998). Ludwig and Ladd (1998) evaluated MTO impacts on educational opportunities in Baltimore. Analyses indicated that children in experimental- and comparison-group families presented better performances in school.

Katz et al. (2001) conducted a study for Boston in order to evaluate the effects of the MTO programme on employment rates, family safety, health and child behaviour problems. The results suggested that health, safety, and child behaviour problems improved in the experimental and comparison group. Children from the experimental group presented less asthma attacks, reduced injuries, and criminal victimizations. However, comparisons among the three groups demonstrate no significant difference in employment, earnings, and welfare dependence. Unlike the Boston study, a MTO evaluation in Los Angeles (Hanratty et al. 1998) observed gains in employment and earnings among households from experimental and comparison groups. The study also noted benefits in relation to crime rates and perceived safety among these groups.

A more recent study conducted for all experimental sites of the MTO programme – Baltimore, Boston, Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York – found significant positive impacts in safety, neighbourhood quality and no loss in social ties (Feins and Shroder 2005).

In general, evaluations of programmes that focused on the dispersion of poverty using housing vouchers were positive, although there are some criticisms about the highly selective eligibility criteria for participants. Atkinson (2005) highlighted the fact that these programmes selected only ‘good tenants’, who were more likely to have better employment and educational performances anyway.

5.2 United Kingdom

British housing policies have a long tradition in building strategies to promote socially mixed neighbourhoods. However, these policies were discontinuous, emerging from different historical contexts and related to specific types of motivations and demands. According to Cole and Goodchild (2001), the most important phases in British policies for social mix are the post-war period, with the construction of ‘New Towns’, and the current Labour government elected in 1997. During the 1950s, the ideas of social mix were embedded in a context of housing shortage and intents of providing universal welfare, while the contemporary ideas of social mix developed since 1997 are the response to serious problems identified as results of poverty concentration. Other initiatives for social mixing were established between these two periods, but they were mainly localized and discontinuous.

Understanding reconstruction after World War II as an opportunity to overcome old urban problems, The New Towns Act 1946 introduced an ideological concept of planning that should bring together and serve all social groups both in destroyed areas and in new settlements. Inspired by the Garden City Movement, the New Towns projects were subsidised by the government, based on the principle of establishing neighbourhoods with different housing tenures and social groups that should not differ very much from each other (Heraud 1968). The idea consisted in constructing mixed neighbourhoods for about 5,000 residents, enough to sustain some local facilities like a primary school, and these neighbourhoods should be grouped into districts of about 15,000 – 20,000 residents, which would offer other facilities like a secondary school (Cole and Goodchild 2001).

Despite the principle that neighbourhoods should have varied dwellings to cover a wide social spectrum, the ‘mixing’ ideal stopped at local level. Heraud (1968) describes that a Study Group of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning recognized the possibility of conflicts arising from indiscriminate mixing of dwellings and encouraged the constitution of sub-units of about 100-300 households within the neighbourhood, where

households of similar social class would live together (Heraud 1968). This decision, explicitly segregationist, contradicted the original expectations from New Towns. Although the New Towns presented a social balance as a whole, their heterogeneity was the result of many homogeneous residential areas with distinctive social characteristics, in other words, segregation on a smaller scale.

In a comparison between Crawley, a New Town, and Oxford, a traditional city, Heraud (1968) applied segregation indicators and observed a decrease in segregation between some social classes in Crawley. However, the author also pointed out that “no direct evidence can be brought to bear on qualitative changes in class relationships” (Heraud 1968: 53). The decrease in segregation observed in Heraud’s study might be the result of the reduction in the scale of geographical segregation, which in itself can have some positive results, as mentioned in Section 2. However, the lack of improvement in relations between different social classes indicates the failure of the project in minimizing sociological segregation, which is usually reinforced with the existence of geographical segregation, even on a small scale.

Several criticisms were addressed to the New Towns policies during the 1950s. While some studies criticised their incapacity to promote social interaction, others focused on the advantages of living in homogeneous places by arguing that they propitiate the construction of ‘communities’, since people feel better and interact more with others of similar social groups (Cole and Goodchild 2001). These results might have contributed to the gradual disappearance of social mix ideals in British housing policies from the end of the 1950s onwards. The State gradually transferred the responsibility for new housing construction to private agents, who built for owner-occupation, but retained a strong role in housing provision, especially for those who did not intend or could not afford to buy a house (Cole and Goodchild 2001; Murie 1998). In the late 1970s, one in three households lived in public housing, which was still characterized by a reasonable mix in terms of age, income, occupation and household type (Murie 1998).

During the 1980s, however, the government established the ‘Right to Buy’, a policy of tenure diversification that allowed and encouraged tenants to buy their dwellings (Wood 2002) and promoted a continuous reduction in the total stock of social housing. From 1979 to 1994, almost one in three public houses was sold, especially the ones located in areas of better popularity and access (Murie 1998). Because many higher income households decided to buy a dwelling, the social composition of people living in

public dwellings was drastically narrowed, keeping mainly lower income households. Since the desirable public housing estates were transferred to private owners, British public housing was increasingly associated with poor families, often concentrated in deprived estates. For this reason, the 'Right to Buy' has been recognized as responsible for a social residualisation in British public housing and an increase of poverty concentration in some residential areas (Wood 2002).

Nevertheless, some trends of using tenure diversification as a means to promoting social mix already existed during the 1980s (Allen et al. 2005), also in association with the operation 'Right to Buy'. But these policies focused mainly on enlarging the provision of affordable housing through the regulation of new housing developments, and the 'social mix' was achieved by introducing social housing units into private projects intended mainly for home ownership. Section 106 of the UK's Town and Country Planning Act 1990 exemplify this intent. Under Section 106, local authorities were able to negotiate with developers for a certain amount of affordable housing units to be included in their new projects (Claydon and Smith 1997).

An evaluation of the benefits of social mix in projects developed during this period is provided by Allen et al. (2005), who examined three 'mature' mixed communities that had existed for at least 20 years in order to assess the inter-household relations and children's experiences in these areas. The study found that these areas continued to enjoy good reputations, with low turnover rates, and no severe disadvantage associated to the places. Nevertheless, the authors observed that owners and renters occupied different social worlds, and that therefore no personal interaction among them had emerged. However, special note was made about children's mix, since they interacted and established strong friendships regardless of their parents' tenure status. Another positive aspect of mixed tenure was the promotion of kinship networks, for instance, supporting grown-up children who wanted to live close to their parents.

Despite having achieved some social benefits, these socially mixed new developments were not able to address the increasing social residualisation in British social housing resulting from the "Right to Buy". Neighbourhoods with high levels of deprivation caused increasing concern for the negative impacts of poverty concentration.

With the election of the new British labour government in 1997 (Cole and Goodchild 2001), residualisation and its impact on the life chance of the poor moved to the centre of attention. Social mix was then explicitly advocated by the Urban Task Force,

the Social Exclusion Unit, and the Housing Green Paper. The Social Exclusion Unit Report asserts that “the Government’s long-term vision is that in 10 to 20 years no-one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live” (SEU 2001:44). Complementing this intention, the Housing Green Paper proposed planning for mixing housing in existing and new developments in order to create “stable, mixed-income communities rather than ghettos of poor and vulnerable people” (DETR 2000: 37). While tenure diversification had previously been seen as a tool for reducing the shortage of affordable housing units, it has since 1997 become a strategy against social exclusion and segregation.

The new labour government set out to minimise social residualisation by promoting the movement of higher-income families to areas of concentrated poverty, usually characterized by mono-tenure social renting. To achieve this social goal, the main strategy adopted by the government was the regeneration of problematic council estates, mainly through partnerships with the private sector, and promotion of home-ownership in these areas. Methods used for the regeneration of such areas included demolitions, housing and environmental improvements, economic development, training and health programmes, and changes in housing management (Pawson et al. 2000). Legal instruments for inserting social units into new developments also continued to be adopted to achieve tenure diversification and prevent the establishment of exclusively high-income neighbourhoods.

Pawson et al. (2000) studied the impact of tenure diversification in Niddrie, an estate in the Craigmillar district on the periphery of Edinburgh. During the 1990s, Niddrie received about £ 25 millions in investments for replacing and upgrading its housing stock in order to promote owner-occupation and overcome the high concentration of rent-tenure social housing. The initiative was the result of increasing concerns about the stigmatization of the area, high crime rates and residents’ dissatisfaction. Pawson et al. also analysed survey data for Craigmillar district as a whole, in order to compare areas that received different amounts of investment.

They found some positive aspects of tenure diversification; like the improvement of physical conditions, a decrease in stigmatization, and the introduction of households with a variety of social profiles into the area. The incidence of certain crimes – like burglary and car theft – had declined faster than in Edinburgh as a whole, but still remained higher than the average for the city. It is uncertain, however, if these improvements were the result of housing change or simply due to changes in local

policies. Other types of anti-social behaviour, like vandalism, did not show any improvement. The satisfaction of Niddrie residents was not higher than the found in the wider Craigmillar district. The researchers observed, however, that Niddrie residents' opinion about the direction of change in the neighbourhood was much more positive than in other parts of the district. Following the same trend, turnover rates had fallen but remained high.

Regarding social interactions, there was no evidence for increased contact, or of improved employment chances facilitated by such 'informal networks'. Nevertheless, homeowners were not avoiding sending their children to local schools, a fact that might represent a potential for future integration. Finally, the study criticises the excessive attention to housing improvements and the lack of attention to improvement in local facilities and local economic factors, since these could also have served to improve interaction. Pawson et al. observed that owner-occupiers were as likely to use services like community centres, library and child care as renters.

Research carried out by Atkinson and Kintrea (2000) in three Scottish housing estates investigates if the introduction of owner-tenure housing in areas of social housing concentration is able to improve social networks of existing residents. The study observed that owners and renters present different patterns of daily movement and there is almost no interaction between both groups. However, as in the Niddrie study, many residents mentioned positive impacts concerning the stigmatization and reputation of the areas. Jupp (1999), in a study conducted for ten British mixed estates, noticed physical improvements to these places, although no indication of positive outcomes for social interaction between renters and owners was observed.

In general, the studies about social mix in the UK have demonstrated that such initiatives are able to reduce or eliminate the stigmatization of deprived areas, promote higher satisfaction of residents and improve housing conditions, amenities and commerce. On the other hand, no evidence could be found for increased social interaction and the benefits that such interactions was expected to bring, like enhanced job opportunities.

5.3 The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, levels of urban segregation are low in comparison to the USA and the UK (van Kempen et al. 1992), mainly due to the very different composition of the housing market: more than half of all housing is still owned and rented out by public, not-for-profit

housing corporations. Traditionally, all sections of society had access to, and made use of public housing provision regardless of income (Murie and Musterd 1996; Sleutjes 2006). Recently, this has begun to change with a trend towards more owner-occupied housing for the better-off, and the highest-income households are by now almost completely absent from public rented housing (Sleutjes 2006). However, the situation can by no means be described as one of residualisation, since public rented tenancy is not synonymous with welfare dependency as in the UK, nor is there complete spatial separation as in the US American “projects” (Murie and Musterd 1996).

However, social segregation and mixed neighbourhoods are just as much on the Dutch political agenda; indeed, from reading urban policy statements alone one would not get the impression of a difference in scale or quality of the problem (Vrooman et al. 2005; MinBZK 2002). The discourse used and policies prescribed are also very much reminiscent of those seen in the USA and UK, as the following account of the two main types of policy pursued in the Netherlands of social-mix policy in the Netherlands, the restructuring (*herstructureren*) and the spreading (*spreiding*) approach will show.

5.3.1 Regeneration: “Het Grotestedenbeleid”

Restructuring has been an explicit policy goal since 1990, and has been pursued with growing determination and rising investments since then, its most important instruments being regulations for all new developments to contain a mix of higher and lower-cost housing, and targets for existing neighbourhoods to reduce poverty concentration. This latter element is a central part of the Large City Governance (Grotestedenbeleid or GSB).

This package of policies was launched in the shape of a pilot project for the four largest cities (the “G4”: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Haag and Utrecht) in 1994, and has since grown into an urban development strategy for the entire country. Explicitly designed as an integrated approach, the GSB proposed to address the following set of problems specific to the large cities:

- “unemployment rates of twice the national average
- urban residents’ income significantly lower than the national average
- a significantly lower level of education than the national average
- outflow of companies and jobs

- a skewed housing market dominated by cheap, relatively unattractive rental units
- large vulnerable groups such as drug-addicts and homeless people.”

The situation in the G4 was analysed in terms of „problem accumulation“, whereby the abovementioned factors influence and reinforce each other, concentrating in certain areas, the „problem“- or „vulnerable“ neighbourhoods, and within these areas, specifically among residents with a migration background (MinBZK 2002:5).

The general aims of the GSB can be categorised into the “social, economic, physical and safety pillar” (Sleutjes 2006:1) out of which only one, the “physical pillar” refers explicitly to social mix. However, this one set of measures outweighs all the others in terms of financial investment. Physical improvement is envisaged in the shape of small-scale sprinkles of regeneration which “strengthen the position of urban living settings on the regional housing market” (MinBZK 2002:23) and attract middle- to higher-income residents to majority-poor neighbourhoods. The middle section of Dutch society is underrepresented among the residents of the large cities due to the nature of the housing market there. While cheap rental units of a relatively low standard abound, larger and more sophisticated housing both for rent and sale is scarce and therefore affordable only on the very highest incomes. The overall share of owner-occupied housing is to be increased by demolishing some of the small, cheap public housing units and building larger, high-value units instead, in order to attract buyers from more affluent areas and also retain upwardly mobile residents in the neighbourhood (Nieuwenhuizen 2005, Sleutjes 2006). For the period 2005-2009, the Dutch national government has allocated 1.4 billion Euros to these activities in the Investment Budget for Urban Renewal (Investeringsbudget Stedelijke Vernieuwing), with further investments coming from urban authorities and housing corporations (RMO 2005).

5.3.2. Dispersal: “Rotterdam zet door”

The dispersal of “problematic” residents in order to avoid concentration is much more contested in the Netherlands than for example, in the USA and has therefore mainly been implemented off the record. Certain local authorities and housing corporations are known to have used “rules of thumb” such as not allocating further flats to migrants in areas that had reached a certain threshold of migrant residents (Bolt 2004).

Only the city of Rotterdam has taken the “spreading” approach above ground, starting with several attempts at codifying spreading policies regarding migrants in the 1970s, which were declared illegal by parliament and quickly dismantled. They were followed in 2004 by “Rotterdam zet door”, a pilot project in which prospective residents whose income is less than 20% above the national minimum wage, the so-called “opportunity-poor”, are refused permission to settle in neighbourhoods with a high concentration of poverty (College van B&W Rotterdam 2003). This latest attempt has been much discussed. It has been labelled racist as there is a strong suspicion that the ultimate intention is to filter out newcomers with a migration background, who are disproportionately represented in the lowest income groups (Bolt 2004, Nieuwenhuizen 2005; Uitermark 2006). The Dutch Commission for Equal Treatment advised the housing corporations who would have to implement this policy, not to do so as it was contrary to Dutch anti-discrimination laws (Castermans 2005).

5.3.3 Debates on social mix in the Netherlands

Dutch analyses and debates of social-mix policy and its effects centre to some extent on the same issues as in the other two countries. Various studies have investigated the question of negative “neighbourhood effects”, and have concluded that these are minimal to non-existent (Musterd et al. 2001 & Uunk 2002, cited in Nieuwenhuizen 2005). Others have studied the levels and quality of social interaction in “restructured” neighbourhoods and have found that social networks among neighbours tend to be homogenous (especially in terms of socio-economic status and ethnicity) regardless of the setting (van Beckhoven and van Kempen 2003, cited in Sleutjes 2006; Dekker and Bolt 2004; Karsten and van Kempen 2001; Uitermark and Duyvendak 2005). Outcomes related to improved safety are inconclusive: while crime rates have fallen since the start of GBS initiatives, this improvement in objective safety has not been more marked in the large cities than in the country as a whole, making it difficult to attribute this change to a location-specific policy trend rather than a general trend. In terms of subjective safety, the personal feeling of being safe in general, and especially within one’s own neighbourhood, the G4 cities actually show a deterioration since 1997 while figures for the smaller cities and the national average improved (MinBZK 2002).

The question is then asked why the Dutch government is investing so heavily in social-mix policies in a situation where spatial segregation is comparatively low and few benefits can be expected for the population concerned. In the analysis of Uitermark (2003;

2006) and Uitermark and Duyvendak (2005), the motivation for promoting such policies should not be looked for primarily in a concern for the well-being of disadvantaged individuals, but rather in the need for strengthening the cities' economic position as a whole. On re-reading the problem analysis provided in the GBS, it becomes clear that the large cities of the Netherlands see their prospects for economic development hampered by the characteristics of their own inhabitants. At the same time, they find themselves in competition with the so-called "VINEX"-locations, large-scale new developments outside their territory also wooing the most desirable residents (Camstra et al. 1996 cited in Uitermark 2003). For the city administrator, facilitating social mix is a way of attracting higher-value residents who will strengthen the tax base, support local businesses and also improve the "governability" of the city. Middle-class, well-educated residents of Dutch origin are, for example, much more likely to engage with the city government in participatory initiatives for neighbourhood improvement, and constitute much less of a burden on social services than their more "problematic" counterparts (Uitermark and Duyvendak 2005:87).

Accepting this interpretation goes some way towards explaining why a policy that ostensibly sets out to improve life in disadvantaged neighbourhoods can end up, at times, producing a negative impact on the life of the disadvantaged. It also explains why cross-subsidisation might be allowed to go the 'wrong' way (in terms of social justice concerns), leading to the perverse effects described by Uitermark (2006:62): „I know few politicians who doubt the usefulness of building flats for sale in backward neighbourhoods. Yet it is remarkable that, while there are more and more cuts in social housing support, buyers get substantial subsidies. Rotterdam city council gives 25,000€ to every buyer. These subsidies for better-off households are rarely challenged any more, while the opposite is true for subsidies that benefit poor households”.

6. Are Social Mix Policies Achieving the Expected Benefits?

Social mix policies rely on a common set of general beliefs in the benefits that these policies might be able to achieve, with little empirical evidence to support them. This Section will bring together the results of evaluations of social mix policies implemented in the UK, the Netherlands and USA. Based on this overview, we present an assessment of which of the benefits expected from these policies (outlined in Section 4.2) have actually been achieved.

6.1 Preventing or reducing violence and anti-social behaviour

Many evaluation studies have reported reductions in violence and anti-social behaviour (Feins and Shroder 2005; Hanratty et al. 1998; Katz et al. 2001; Pawson et al. 2000; Popkin et al. 2004; Rosenbaum and DeLuca 2000; Turbov and Piper 2005). These observations were particularly evident in those renewed developments which were strongly characterized by high crime rates before the process of regeneration. Turbov and Piper (2005) reported 'dramatic' reduction of violent crime rates in HOPE VI sites. The same was observed by Rosenbaum and DeLuca (2000), who added that this new reality brought various benefits for residents who returned to the renewed neighbourhoods, and included the comments of mothers who started to feel less fear to leave their houses and therefore became more motivated to get jobs. Families who participated in dispersal programmes, receiving housing vouchers to move into better neighbourhoods, presented some reduction of anti-social behaviour (Hanratty et al. 1998) and very often reported the feeling of safety (Feins and Shroder 2005; Hanratty et al. 1998; Katz et al. 2001).

However, these social mix policies are relative narrow and attend only a small proportion of poor families who fit highly selective criteria, including no criminal records or debts. Only the families considered as 'desirable' have the opportunity to live in better areas and improve their quality of life. The eligibility criteria for receiving Section 8 vouchers in the Gautreaux Programme, for instance, excluded more than two-thirds of low-income families in Chicago (Rosenbaum and DeLuca 2000). A single criterion, like the lack of criminal records, can exclude one in five American black men from receiving housing vouchers, obtaining affordable housing in new mixed developments, or even returning to their neighbourhoods after renewal projects (Berube 2005; Smith 2002).

The management procedure in new and redeveloped social mix neighbourhoods is also often characterised by authoritarian control. Especially in the UK, neighbourhood managers are not only controlling the population characteristics of their sites, but also keeping a strong surveillance of resident low-income families and expelling the inconvenient ones (Cole and Goodchild 2001; Haworth and Manzi 1999).

Therefore, such exclusion policies keep increasing the social residualisation in those areas where 'good tenants' left and the ineligible families, usually the most problematic, remained concentrated. Clampet-Lundquist (2004) mention the case of 'undesirable' residents who had to move from HOPE VI sites to other public housing developments, probably increasing poverty concentration in non-HOPE VI

neighbourhoods. Smith (2002) complements this idea by citing the comment of a police officer about crime reduction in one of the redeveloped HOPE VI sites, where he observed that “drug dealers had not been converted into good citizens, but had moved onto a different part of the neighbourhood” (Smith 2002: 22).

Despite the common sense that sites which receive investments from social mix initiatives present a reduction in crime rates, the benefit of these policies to the city as a whole is unclear since violence might even increase in other sites with a rising concentration of poverty and ‘problematic’ attributes.

6.2 Encouraging social interaction and mainstreams values

Most evaluations of social mix projects are not optimistic about their ability to promote increased social interaction. Through interviews conducted in ten mixed neighbourhoods in England, Jupp (1999) observed that overall, an average of 94% residents knew the name of one neighbour and 64% knew more than five names, however, only 37% knew the name of one neighbour from another tenure type, and only 17% knew more than five such different neighbours by name. Other negative results in relation to social interaction were observed by Pawson et al. (2000) in their study of renewal in Niddrie (Scotland), by Silverman et al. (2005) in new British mixed income communities, and by van Beckhoven and van Kempen in a case study of “restructured” areas of Amsterdam and Utrecht (2003, cited in Sleutjes 2006). These findings indicate that the reduction in geographical segregation brought about by social mix does not automatically lead to a decrease in sociological segregation.

Other evaluations concerning dispersal strategies adopted in programmes like Moving to Opportunity and HOPE VI reported that movers experienced loss of neighbourhood friends and local networks (Clampet-Lundquist 2004); disruption of long-standing communities in HOPE VI redeveloped sites (Berube 2005), and sometimes feelings of loneliness (Clampet-Lundquist 2004).

Concerning the promotion of mainstream values, which is a benefit closely related to social interaction, two evaluations of Chicago’s Gautreaux programme indicate some benefits (Rosenbaum 1995; Rosenbaum and DeLuca 2000). Rosenbaum and DeLuca (2000) mention that some Gautreaux participants reported the positive role models motivated them to work and indicated how to dress for a job, time management, and how to deal with child care. These works are, however, remarkable exceptions among many

others that found no evidence of that (Allen et al. 2005; Atkinson and Kintrea 2000; Berube 2005; Clampet-Lundquist 2004; Dekker and Bolt 2004; Jupp 1999; Pawson et al. 2000) or even do not consider the promotion of mainstream values as an expected benefit from social mix (MinBZK 2002).

The lack of positive change in social interaction raises several issues to be discussed. One of these is related to the historical change in patterns of social interaction. Neighbourhood interaction has generally decreased in contemporary societies, regardless of the socio-economic status of individuals (van Beckhoven and van Kempen 2003, cited in Sleutjes 2006; Urry 2000, cited in Forrest 2004). This reality, in addition to the fact that neighbourhood networks take a long time to build, indicate that high levels of social interaction in mixed communities – particularly in the new ones – might represent an unrealistic target.

However, good local services and facilities able to serve different social groups can be a key strategy to promote some interaction. This is particularly true for services that address children's needs, since they tend to interact and establish friendships regardless of their social status (Allen et al. 2005). Pawson et al. (2000) observed that private tenants in Niddrie were near as likely to send their children to the local schools as local renters, a fact that points out the need for providing strong local schools that may found future neighbouring networks. The promotion of stable communities with low turnover rates also helps the establishment of a sense of community. Some initiatives can facilitate this process, like the encouragement of kinship networks, or the provision of different housing types and tenures to keep residents who experience upward social mobility or a change in family size in the same neighbourhood.

Urban and housing design is another relevant issue to be observed. In some of Jupp's case studies (Jupp 1999), for instance, private and social housing were clustered and located on different streets. Berube (2005) also noticed that in many new developments in the UK regulated by Section 6, local authorities allowed differentiation and separation between affordable and market-rate houses. Developments that provide homogeneity at street level and differentiate the quality of dwellings contribute to the distinction of families who are subsidised from the ones who are not. This distinction can increase prejudice and can represent obstacles for social interaction.

Finally, good management of relationships can also assist the establishment of neighbours' interaction. As a means to achieving this, Tunstall (2006) suggests actions like welcome visits, local events, and information about available amenities and services.

6.3 Improving neighbourhood reputation and residents' satisfaction

Many studies have indicated the capacity of social mix strategies for improving the reputation of renewed neighbourhoods (Allen et al. 2005; Atkinson and Kintrea 2000; Pawson et al. 2000; Silverman et al. 2005), although it is difficult to differentiate if this resulted from physical improvements or the social mix itself. Families who participated in dispersal programmes and moved to more affluent neighbourhoods also benefited, avoiding 'postcode prejudice' that could reduce their employment opportunities (Atkinson and Kintrea 2001).

Another reason to consider neighbourhood reputation is the need to gain acceptance in the wider community both for new developments and for the concept of public housing provision generally. Social housing developments often face serious protests from communities fearing that these projects will bring negative impacts to their neighbourhood, and social mix developments seem to be an efficient strategy to overcome these concerns. Smith (2002) interviewed several American developers who confirmed this idea. In one of the interviews, the developer mentioned that to obtain community approval is necessary to guarantee that the project will bring high quality houses and controlled management to keep the quality and avoid anti-social behaviour.

Despite generally positive observations concerning the reduction of stigmatisation, the degree of success in reducing neighbourhood stigma depends on many factors, like the development process, the degree of mixing, and the geographical distribution of different social groups. Public regeneration projects commonly suffer from time pressure to rebuild social housing in the first phases of the development process (Tunstall and Fenton 2006), postponing the construction of market-rate units for later phases. Such a procedure leads to lower public esteem than the reverse approach of starting with the construction of dwellings for higher-income families. This is the case of private new developments, which usually invest in keeping high market values and tend to shape better reputations of the areas.

The degree of mixing also influences the reputation of the area. Hiscock (2001), in a Scottish study about the influence of tenure mix and social capital, observed that

although social mix had improved neighbourhood reputation in general, the residents' perception of this improvement was much higher in areas with 29% social renters than in areas with 62% social renters.

Another important feature is the geographical distribution of lower- and higher-income households: clusters of social housing raise the possibility of prejudice, while areas where these social units are 'pepper potted' usually build better reputations (Berube 2005). Similar comments can be made in relation to dispersal policies. Turner et al. (1999) mention the problem of clustering of families who received Section 8 housing vouchers, and how this increased prejudice and raised reactions from the neighbourhoods these families had moved to.

6.4 Enhancing housing quality, commerce, services and infrastructure

There is consensus about the ability of social-mix projects to improve the quality of social housing and other general physical conditions (Feins and Shroder 2005; Jupp 1999; Pawson et al. 2000; Popkin et al. 2004; Turner et al. 1999). This is an expected result, since it represents a basic starting point in social mix approaches: new projects and renewed developments demand a higher-quality physical environment in order to attract wealthier households, while dispersal initiatives move people to neighbourhoods that already present good conditions.

In many cases, these physical improvements are extended to infrastructure, services and commerce. They can be a consequence of the (re)development intervention or simply due to the presence of higher-income residents that can financially support or have more power to call for improvements and good maintenance. Pawson et al. (2000) advocate that strong local economies, including commerce and services in general, should be prioritised in social-mix developments because they can improve life chances of residents, e.g., providing local jobs and good schools. Other studies have provided observations that reinforce this argument: Turbov and Piper (2005) report school improvements in HOPE VI sites in Atlanta and St Louis and resulting gains for students from low income families, while Rosenbaum and DeLuca (2000) describe how families who received housing vouchers and moved to wealthier suburbs benefited from the availability of local jobs.

Considering social-mix approaches based on the regeneration of distressed areas, the physical improvements and decrease in stigmatization are usually followed by rising

housing prices. Such results signal the success of the initiative, but should be closely monitored since the evolution of mix can lead to excessive levels of gentrification (Tunstall and Fenton 2006). In other words, successful regeneration might attract more higher-income households than planned with the result that lower-income residents who should have been the main beneficiaries are pushed out (Musterd et al. 2000). In cases where this process is controlled by keeping affordable dwellings under public ownership while housing prices are rising, a widening income gap between neighbours can aggravate conflicts in mixed developments, a fact that increases obstacles for interaction between different social groups (Brophy and Smith 1997).

7. Conclusions

Social mix policies are still widely accepted and promoted as an important strategy to overcome problems related to social segregation. This paper set out to assess their ability to achieve the expected benefits by evaluating existing studies conducted in three countries – the USA, the UK and the Netherlands.

The existing studies present several divergences concerning the impact of social mix policies, even when they evaluate outcomes of the same programme. While some studies identify many accomplishments and characterize these policies as successful, others focus on their failures and the need for restructuring them. Such divergence leads us to conclude that there is no single formula for success. Cities differ according to their needs, the structure of their housing markets, levels of deprivation, and many other particularities that will demand specific mix approaches.

However, despite these disparities in the studies, it was possible to observe that some of the expected benefits were easily achieved than others. Since social mix policies directly act by reducing geographical segregation, the benefits related to that, like improvements in the quality of the physical environment, are more easily achieved. Yet a decrease in geographical segregation does not automatically affect sociological segregation. Therefore, benefits expected from the interaction among different groups, such as stronger social networks and the promotion of mainstream values, are more difficult to achieve. For this, additional initiatives that encourage contact among neighbours are needed: community activities, strong local services, the proper scale and design of developments and a smaller income gap among residents can all contribute.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that although social-mix policies might modify the degree of segregation, it cannot eradicate it. As long as social inequality persists, it will continue to produce segregation unless structural socio-economic issues are addressed.

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