



SOCIAL INTERACTION IN MIXED-INCOME DEVELOPMENTS: RELATIONAL EXPECTATIONS AND EMERGING REALITY

ROBERT J. CHASKIN
The University of Chicago

MARK L. JOSEPH
Case Western Reserve University

ABSTRACT: *In many cities, public housing has come to exemplify concentrated urban poverty and the social problems associated with it. One major policy response to addressing these problems is the demolition and redevelopment of public housing complexes as mixed-income communities. Several theoretical propositions that lie behind this policy are based on assumptions about the ways in which living among higher-income residents can lead to relationships and interactions that may benefit poor people. Based on in-depth qualitative research in two mixed-income developments in Chicago, this paper explores the dynamics of social interaction in an effort to better understand the processes and factors that influence such interaction on the ground, the differential experience of residents from different backgrounds, and the factors that contribute to their decision-making about and interpretation of social relations with their neighbors. This analysis helps to better interpret the findings of earlier studies and craft more informed expectations about such interactions and their likely effects.*

Over the past two decades, catalyzed most notably by the publication of William Julius Wilson's seminal 1987 book *The Truly Disadvantaged*, there has been renewed scholarly interest in urban poverty and, particularly, the problems associated with concentrated urban poverty—how living in high-poverty areas multiplies the deleterious effects of being poor—as well as appropriate policy responses to address these problems. The case of public housing is emblematic. Although initially established to provide reasonable, transitional housing to poor individuals and families (Bowly, 1978), by the 1980s public housing in many cities came to exemplify concentrated urban poverty and the social problems associated with it—high levels of crime and violence, deteriorating housing and physical infrastructure, weak institutions, poor services, social isolation, racial segregation, joblessness, and welfare “dependency” among them.

The recognition of these problems led, among other responses, to two major policy directions in the United States. The first is dispersal policies, which range from the development of scattered-site public housing buildings to the provision of housing vouchers to targeted efforts to relocate

*Direct correspondence to: Robert Chaskin, University of Chicago, 969 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637, USA.
E-mail: rjc3@uchicago.edu*

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residents from “traditional” public housing into communities with lower concentrations of poverty and racial segregation. These include, for example, court-ordered dispersal policies such as those that followed the Gautreaux ruling in Chicago, or through the federal demonstration program Moving to Opportunity (Goetz, 2003; Polikoff, 2006; Varady & Walker, 2003). The second major policy direction focuses on the renovation or, more often, demolition and reconstruction of public housing complexes as mixed-income developments. These include those being developed under the \$4.5 billion federal HOPE VI program (for reviews of the HOPE VI program, see, for example, Cisneros & Engdahl, 2009; Popkin, 2007; Popkin et. al., 2004; Sard & Staub, 2008). Mixed-income (or mixed-tenure) housing has also become a major policy initiative in Europe as well as Canada and Australia (see, for example, Arthurson, 2002; Atkinson & Kintrea, 2000; August, 2008; Bailey et al., 2006; Berube, 2005; Musterd & Andersson, 2005; Ruming, Mee, & McGuirk, 2004). Most recently in the United States, the primary strategic emphasis of the Obama Administration’s major urban policy initiative, Choice Neighborhoods, is mixed-income redevelopment.

THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND THE RELEVANCE OF SOCIAL INTERACTION

Four theoretical propositions provide arguments for the potential value of deconcentrating poverty, in particular regarding the ways that living among working- and middle-class residents can benefit poor people (Joseph, Chaskin, & Webber, 2007). One focuses on the nature of social capital and the potential of relational networks between poor and non-poor residents to promote it. Another focuses on the ways in which higher-income people will provide “role models” that will have a positive influence on the behavior and aspirations of their poor neighbors. A third focuses on the ways in which these same higher-income residents will help maintain order and social control in the neighborhood. A fourth focuses on the ways in which higher-income people will command investment, provision, and responsiveness on the part of both market and political actors that will lead to improvements in neighborhood environment (including, crucially, greater safety and security), services, and amenities.

This paper focuses on the extent and relevance of social interaction within mixed-income developments. Although not necessary to support all of these theoretical propositions regarding mixed-income development, an underlying (and in most cases central) assumption behind the first three concerns the nature of relationships and interactions among residents in mixed-income neighborhoods, whether fostered by mobility or development.

Two of these arguments, in particular, rely centrally on assumptions about social interaction. One draws on ideas of social capital and (particularly in Europe) social exclusion,¹ and focuses on the ways in which residence in these communities might promote integration, interaction, and enhanced access to networks. The argument goes something like this: Residents in concentrated public housing are isolated from information, opportunity, and support. They may have effective social support networks (“bonding” social capital) that help them survive (Briggs, 1998; Gittel & Vidal, 1998; Patillo, 2008; Putnam, 2000; Stack, 1974), but their relationships are largely limited to people with similarly limited contacts, so they lack access to the kinds of “weak ties” (Granovetter, 1973) that provide relational bridges to the networks of others that can provide access to new, instrumental information and opportunity, particularly employment (Briggs, 1998; Elliott, 1999; Lin, Vaughn, & Ensel, 1981; Lin & Dumin, 1986; Rankin & Quane, 2002; Stoloff, Glanville, & Bienenstock, 1999). Integrating poor people into neighborhoods with higher-income people may thus provide them with access to the information and connections that higher-income people have—for example, about jobs, childcare, financial management, working with schools, negotiating bureaucratic hurdles, getting a response from city agencies, and so forth. The assumption here is that integration will lead to interaction, and interaction to concrete social and economic benefits.

The second is the argument that deconcentrating poverty and fostering income diversity will help reduce social isolation of the poor (particularly youth) by providing role models and access to ways of life that can shift their expectations, modify their behavior, and reshape their aspirations and future orientation (Wilson, 1987; Anderson, 1990). Strong ties or intimate relations are not assumed to be necessary, but there needs to be enough interaction—through repeated observation or regular association—as well as receptiveness and perceptiveness of the observer to be influential (Bandura, 1977). The foundational assumptions that lie behind this orientation, which draw on notions of an urban “underclass” defined in part by the development of a “culture of poverty”—an internalized set of values and behaviors that are different and opposed to those held by the “mainstream” culture (e.g., Kasarda, 1990; Lewis, 1968; Murray, 1984)—have been strongly criticized as confusing cultural patterns with the external conditions of poverty itself (Valentine, 1968; Katz, 1993) and as empirically unfounded (Small & Newman, 2001; Newman, 1999; Duneier, 1992). Nevertheless (as we will explore further below), these notions have continued resonance and shape in some important ways residents’ engagement and interpretation of social interactions in mixed-income settings (Chaskin & Joseph, 2010a, 2010b).

Finally, although the third proposition—regarding social control—does not rely entirely on social relations and interaction among residents, relational networks are clearly important. Crime is highly correlated with socioeconomic status, residential stability, and homeownership (Sampson & Groves, 1989), and higher-income people may be more likely to exert pressure to maintain order and enforce rules (Rosenbaum, Stroh, & Flynn, 1998). People may rely on normative expectations to maintain order in cohesive communities, or on formal means of maintaining social control, like calling the police, when such norms are violated. However, the relational dimension remains significant, particularly for the maintenance and use of informal social control. Residential stability promotes acquaintanceship networks over time (Freudenberg, 1986; Sampson & Groves, 1989), and closed networks—the extent to which neighborhood residents share common relationships—play an important role in providing a foundation for the informal social control of youth (Coleman, 1988; Sampson, 1999). Again, the importance of social interaction does not suggest the need for strong ties. Collective efficacy, “the activation of social ties to achieve shared expectations for action” (Sampson, Morenoff, & Gannon-Rowley, 2002), is defined by shared norms, trust, and the expectation that neighbors will intervene, and is associated with lower levels of violence, personal victimization, and homicide (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Although some level of relational interaction is assumed, the degree and nature of that interaction are not specified.

These three orientations—regarding social capital, social behavior, and social control—are also connected in part, at least within the context of public housing transformation, to the design principles and theoretical orientations of New Urbanism. Here, it is assumed that particular aspects of the built environment can shape the social environment in particular ways, for example, by maximizing use and informal surveillance of public spaces, fostering informal interaction, and promoting care and defense of private space (Talen, 2002).

EXISTING EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE ON SOCIAL INTERACTION IN MIXED-INCOME CONTEXTS

Although the role of social relationships and social interaction is an important component of these theoretical orientations, there has until recently been relatively little research on these dynamics, and there is limited empirical evidence that relationships are being built across income groups in mixed-income settings. In some housing mobility studies, although there is some evidence regarding changes in key outcomes like employment, wages, and education (Goering & Feins, 2003; Rubinowitz & Rosenbaum, 2000) and, in other studies, effects on health and mental

health (Kling, Liebman, Katz, & Sonbonmatsu, 2004), most studies do not provide evidence of impact on social networks. DeLuca (2005), in a study of Gautreaux families 15 years after relocation, suggests that although adjustment to the new neighborhood environments and the social norms and expectations they presented was difficult for some, women reported improved social networks that included instrumental exchanges with their neighbors, including child care help and transportation assistance. Other studies are less positive. Mendenhall (2004), in her qualitative research with Gautreaux movers, found limited relationship-forming with higher-income neighbors and limited use of these relationships to find jobs. Although Kleit (2001, 2002) finds that residents in scattered-site public housing are as well embedded in their neighborhoods as public housing residents living clustered together, and they are as likely to know their more diverse neighbors, they are less emotionally connected to them and are less likely to use them for assistance in finding a job. Briggs (1998), investigating the impacts of relocation to scattered-site housing in Yonkers, New York, found little interaction between newcomers and their neighbors (cf. Hogan, 1996), and recent findings on social interaction between participants in the Moving to Opportunity program similarly suggest little evidence that movers develop anything more than limited relations with their new neighbors and little evidence that such relationships are leveraged for the social capital they may provide (Cove, Turner, Briggs, & Duarte, 2008).

Similar findings are the norm with regard to social interactions across income groups in mixed-income developments, such as those supported by HOPE VI (Buron et al., 2002; Brophy & Smith, 1997; Graves, 2010; Joseph, 2008; Kleit, 2005; Tach, 2009). Where social interaction occurs, it is more likely between residents of similar social backgrounds. In a study of a small, early mixed-income site in Chicago, Rosenbaum and his colleagues (1998) found some evidence of social interaction among residents of different income levels, but the range of income levels in this development is much more constrained (between 50% and 80% of area median income, with no market-rate units) than in a number of other sites. In Kleit's (2005) study of the HOPE VI site New Holly in Seattle, although she found higher levels of social interaction and neighboring than in many other mixed-income sites, neighboring relations were much more likely to occur within the more homogenous networks held by different groups (public housing residents, homeowners, ethnic and linguistic groups) than across them. In addition to the apparent importance of minimizing "social" distance, physical space—neighbors' proximity to one another within the development—was associated with higher levels of interaction.

Limited social interaction among neighbors is obviously not unique to mixed-income settings; the ideal-typical construct of the neighborhood as a kind of urban village characterized by solitary communal ties, intimate relations, and high levels of affective belonging, although still sometimes invoked rhetorically, is generally recognized as more myth than norm (e.g., Suttles, 1972; Wellman, 1979), although casual relationships among neighbors do often exist and can be instrumental. And, as suggested above, the theoretical assumptions that lie behind mixed-income development schemes regarding social interaction do not necessarily imply the need to forge intimate relations, nor do those behind the development of these communities—or those moving into them—generally expect such (Chaskin & Joseph, 2010a, 2010b). Some level of social interaction is presumed however—enough to provide certain kinds of access as described above. Understanding the nature of this interaction and the processes and factors that influence it in these contexts is important in light of these basic presumptions and their relationship to the stated policy goals that lie behind such development efforts.² This is all the more true given some key differences between these new communities and most other residential settings.³

PURPOSE, METHODS, AND DATA

This paper seeks to shed further light on the extent, intent, and nature of social relations as they are developing in mixed-income communities. Most studies to date that explore these questions,

particularly those focused on new mixed-income developments being built in the context of public housing transformations, have relied largely on survey data in an effort to describe and measure the extent of neighboring relations among residents, patterns of engagement by income and housing tenure,⁴ and—in some cases—the relationship between such relations and particular desired outcomes. Some recent work in the context of Moving to Opportunity (Popkin, Harris, & Cunningham, 2002), HOPE VI (Tach, 2009; Graves, 2010), and more general development activity and gentrification (Pattillo, 2008, 2009; Freeman, 2006; Hyra, 2008) has explored these dynamics qualitatively in an effort to better understand the processes of interaction and the factors that influence such interaction on the ground. This paper approaches the issue in the same spirit, seeking to provide a nuanced, in-depth exploration of the social dynamics emerging in these contexts, the differential experience of residents from different backgrounds, and the factors that contribute to their decision-making about and interpretation of social relations with their neighbors. Such an analysis helps to better interpret the findings of earlier studies and craft more informed expectations about such interactions and their likely effects, as well as how to think about ways in which policy or intervention practice on the ground might better address the barriers to promoting positive social interaction.

The analysis presented is based primarily on in-depth resident interviews and field observations, as well as a review of documentary data, in two mixed-income developments (Oakwood Shores on the south side of the city and Westhaven Park on the near west side) that are being built in place of public housing complexes that have been demolished as part of the Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation. Interviews were conducted with 65 residents at the two sites, including 23 relocated public housing residents,⁵ 21 residents of "affordable" units (about half of which are rented and the other half owned),⁶ and 21 residents of "market-rate" units (again about half rented and half owned).

Resident interviewees were randomly selected from developer occupancy lists at each site. Response rates varied somewhat across sites and by housing tenure of respondents, from a high of 73% (among relocated public housing residents in Oakwood Shores) to a low of 33% (among "affordable" renters at the same site). Response rates at both sites were highest for relocated public housing residents (71% and 73%), with an overall response rate of 59% at Oakwood Shores and 56% at Westhaven Park.⁷

Interviews were guided by a semi-structured instrument comprised primarily of open-ended questions covering a broad range of topics and some closed-response questions on, for example, social interaction and demographics. Interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed in their entirety, then coded for analysis based on a set of deductively derived thematic codes and refined based on inductive interim analysis. Summary matrices of responses were created to allow for systematic comparison of perspectives across interviewee "type" as defined by site and housing tenure. Documentary data, and especially data from approximately 70 structured observations of community meetings, programs, events, and interactions, allow us to contextualize interview data within the specific dynamics of each site and provide both a check on and new insight into the dynamics described by interviewees. These included meetings of residents organized by property management to discuss issues of safety, rules, and services, and to provide a forum for resident voicing of their concerns. Such resident meetings were largely organized for renters in general, or public housing residents in particular, but in any case were almost exclusively attended by public housing residents and facilitated by property management, development team, or housing authority staff. We also observed the operations of governance bodies responsible for aspects of development oversight, including working group meetings (which are the bodies responsible for general oversight and monitoring of development plans and implementation, and comprised of representatives from the housing authority, the developers, property management, service providers, city council, public housing advocates, and the public housing residents) and management team meetings (which are meetings of development, property management and

service providers to review issues confronted by relocated public housing residents—including lease compliance, working-to-meet eligibility criteria, and social service needs—in the developments). Finally, we observed a number of public meetings and events, including Community Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) meetings (organized by the police in each beat to provide information on crime trends and respond to resident concerns about crime, noise, loitering, and other quality-of-life issues, and attended by residents across housing tenure categories in each mixed-income development and the surrounding neighborhood), as well as events organized by development teams and their partners, or by city agencies, such as community clean-ups, banquets, and social events. Although open to all residents, these were almost exclusively attended by relocated public housing residents. All observations yielded field notes that documented the nature of the event, its content, the number and types of participants, and participant dynamics during the course of the event. For periodic meetings (working group, management team, resident meetings, CAPS), field notes were also synthesized into narrative memos that described the content, participation, and changing dynamics at these meetings over time.

THE CONTEXTS

A significant part of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) Plan for Transformation entails the demolition and reconstruction of 10 public housing complexes as new, mixed-income developments with a total of about 17,000 units, of which about 7,700 are set aside for public housing residents (Chicago Housing Authority, 2008).⁸ The developments are being built and managed through public/private partnerships with eight different private developers. The developers have lead responsibility for securing financing, overseeing design and construction, marketing to subsidized and unsubsidized residents, and contracting for property management and social service provision (for more information on the Plan for Transformation and development teams see Joseph, 2010).

The two developments we focus on in this paper—Oakwood Shores and Westhaven Park—offer a useful illustration of mixed-income development in the context of Chicago’s Plan for Transformation, providing insight into how these efforts are playing out within different types of developments and neighborhoods and managed by different developers through a variety of organizational arrangements.

Oakwood Shores is the development taking the place of Ida B. Wells/Madden Park, one of the oldest public housing developments in Chicago which, unlike many of the public housing complexes being replaced by mixed-income developments, was a low- and mid-rise development. Oakwood Shores will be the second largest of the 10 new developments in the city and is being developed through a partnership between a for-profit developer responsible primarily for the for-sale component and a nonprofit developer which has responsibility for the rental components, as well as for spearheading much of the resident engagement and “community building” inputs.

Oakwood Shores is located south of the city’s central business district (the Loop) in an area often referred to as Bronzeville which, like New York’s Harlem, has an important historical legacy as being the economic, political, and cultural center of African American life in Chicago—the “Black Metropolis” of Drake and Cayton’s famous study (Drake & Cayton, 1945; Hyra, 2008). The larger neighborhood of which Oakwood Shores is a part (or portions of it) has been the focus of substantial development interest from private, public, and philanthropic actors and has several gentrifying areas.

The development itself is one of three mixed-income developments in the immediate area (the others are significantly smaller) that are part of the Plan for Transformation. It is located just blocks from Lake Michigan and the network of public parks that runs along the lakefront for most of the north-south length of the city. It also sits between Hyde Park, a relatively affluent community

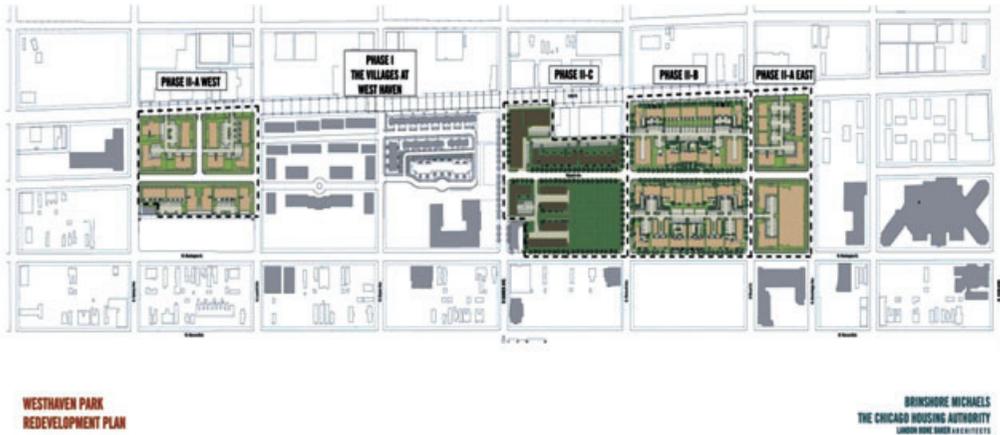


FIGURE 2

Westhaven Park Site Plan

housing residents, so ultimately the new development will have a larger proportion of relocated public housing residents (63%) than any other site. It will also have the lowest proportion of for-sale units (27%). Initial plans for this first-phase development (known as “the Superblock”) anticipated a 50% split of higher- and lower-income, public-housing eligible residents in these units (between 50% and 80% of area median income, and below 50% of area median income, respectively), but a significant majority of current residents (about 70% at the time of initial fieldwork) now have incomes in the lower part of that spectrum. These units sit in the middle of the development site between areas to the east and west being developed as mixed-income, and this concentration of “pure” public-housing within the development has been a source of significant tension among residents in the mixed-income development portion of the site (see Figure 2; Joseph & Chaskin, 2010).

The site itself is located on Chicago’s Near West Side, about 3 miles west of the Loop. The broader neighborhood in which the development sits has also been the target of significant development interests over the past two decades (the West Loop was among the most robust real estate markets in the city prior to the 2008 downturn, a site of significant investment, high-end restaurants, and loft conversions), but development efforts immediately surrounding the site have been contentious. Westhaven Park is within blocks of the United Center, a major sports arena that is now home to the Chicago’s professional basketball and hockey teams. Initial efforts to build the arena were met with community mobilization in an attempt to minimize the effects of displacement and ensure set-asides for affordable housing as part of the development plan. Ultimately, the campaign led to a community development plan and a negotiated agreement that included construction of replacement housing for homeowners that would be displaced by the stadium as a first order of business. All redevelopment at Horner Homes is governed by a consent decree that is the result of a successful class-action lawsuit brought against the Chicago Housing Authority to redress the housing discrimination that created the racial segregation at the site (see Wilen [2006] for a history of this lawsuit and the subsequent redevelopment at Horner Homes). The consent decree has significant implications for the development, which set it apart from most other new mixed-income developments in Chicago. All residents that are part of the “class” have the right to move into the public-housing set-aside units in the new mixed-income development.

In addition, relocated public housing residents are not subject to the same kinds of site-specific eligibility requirements that residents of other mixed-income sites need to meet, for example, with regard to employment or drug testing. Given the importance at other sites of these stringent criteria in determining residents' eligibility to return and influencing their post-occupancy actions to retain their eligibility, this is an important differentiating factor at Westhaven Park.

Westhaven Park is being developed by a development team that includes two private, for-profit developers, and management of the rental properties is handled by a subsidiary of one of these firms. Resident supports and services are contracted out to local non-profit service providers.

The physical design and distribution of units by income and tenure in the phase of development that provides the context for this paper differ from the first phase of Oakwood Shores in a few important ways. First, the small, multi-unit buildings on the site (comprising 6 to 10 units per building) alternate, side by side, as rental and ownership buildings, so although renters and owners do not live together in the same building, there is somewhat more integration of residents by tenure at the block level. Within rental buildings, 50% of units are set aside for relocated public housing residents, with the balance split between "affordable" and market-rate units. Within for-sale, multi-unit buildings, 80% of units are set aside as market rate units. In addition, the site includes a larger (113-unit), nine-story mid-rise building that includes both for-sale and rental units (the latter exclusively for relocated public housing residents), which provides significantly more proximity and opportunity for daily interaction between residents of different incomes and tenures than is the case elsewhere. The higher level of unit integration at Westhaven Park also provides, as we will explore further below, greater opportunity for friction among residents.

In addition to these factors, there are a few other key differences between the two sites that are worth highlighting as a context for our discussion of social interaction. First, racial and ethnic diversity is more notable in Westhaven Park, where owners are more likely to be non-black—mostly Caucasian and Asian; in Oakwood Shores, a higher proportion of the population—including owners—are African American. In addition, mixed-income residency was initiated about two years earlier at Westhaven Park, leading to relatively more residents having lived there longer, including a larger number of homeowners at Westhaven Park than at Oakwood Shores (see Figure 3 for a summary timeline of each development).

EXTENT AND NATURE OF INTERACTION

Although there are some fundamental commonalities, the overall extent and nature of interaction among residents differ qualitatively in the two developments. In general, residents report low to modest levels of social interaction at both sites. The interaction they describe, where it happens, is overwhelmingly casual, although some residents talk about various kinds of small-scale instrumental exchanges. Most interactions appear to be among residents in relatively close geographic and social proximity, though there is some evidence of casual interaction across income and tenure groups as well. For the most part, although negative interactions are sometimes noted, the climate of social interaction in Oakwood Shores is largely characterized as relatively pleasant, casual, and respectful, if notably distant. In Westhaven Park, although specific social interactions are often described as cordial, residents more frequently describe contentious exchanges, and the climate of social interaction has been more problematic overall.

Casual Relations among Neighbors

Most residents in each site have casual interactions with some subset of their neighbors as a matter of course. When asked to estimate the number of people with whom they had some casual

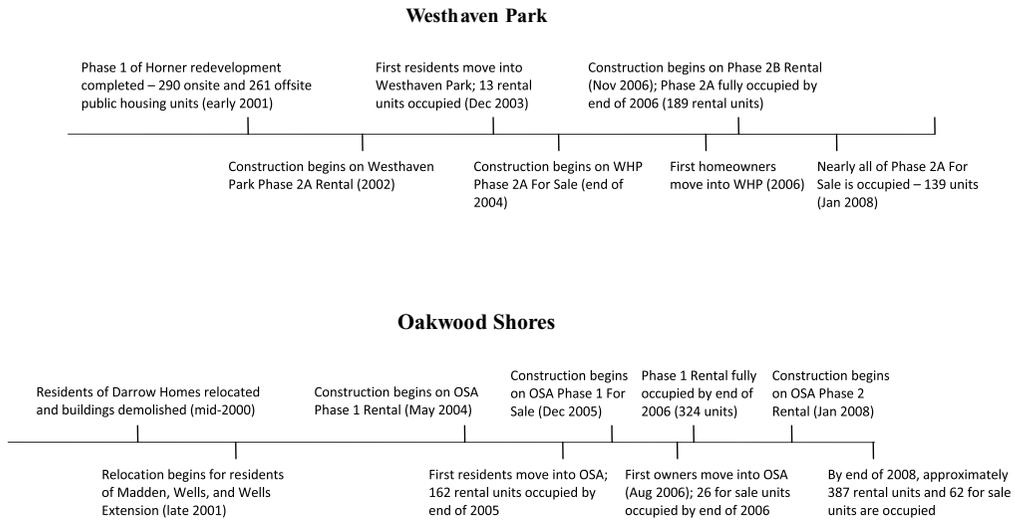


FIGURE 3

Summary Timeline of Developments

interaction (those they “know well enough to have a conversation with”), 80% of residents with whom we spoke across the two sites say they know at least three people in this way, and about 40% of our small sample (N = 65) claimed to know more than 10 neighbors well enough to converse with (see Table 1). This was particularly true among relocated public housing residents and owners of market-rate units. Renters of market-rate units reported the fewest such relationships, both on average and in each site. This may be a function of a relative lack of opportunity for integration among such renters, who are neither members of condominium association boards nor represented by tenant groups, and are less likely to participate in services, activities, and events that serve primarily lower-income renters. It may also reflect a “renter’s mentality” and the anticipation among these residents of a shorter time horizon of residency at the development and thus less reason for making connections with their neighbors.

There were also some differences across sites. In Oakwood Shores, residents of “affordable” units with whom we spoke (whether rented or owned) reported fewer casual relationships with neighbors compared with relocated public housing residents or owners of market-rate units. In Westhaven Park, residents of affordable units (again, whether rented or owned) reported *more* such relationships compared with relocated public housing residents, whose experience seemed

TABLE 1

Number of Neighbors Known Well Enough to Converse With

	Relocated Public Housing N = 23	Affordable Rentals N = 10	Affordable For-Sale N = 11	Market-Rate Rental N = 11	Market-Rate For-Sale N = 10
Total					
None	4%	10%	0%	27%	0%
One or Two	17%	0%	0%	18%	20%
Three to Five	17%	20%	45%	18%	0%
Five to Ten	13%	30%	18%	18%	30%
More than 10	48%	40%	36%	18%	50%

TABLE 2

Resident Sample Selected Characteristics

	Overall N = 65	RPH N = 23	AFF N = 21	MKT N = 21	RTF N = 44	FS N = 21
Total						
% Female	77%	96%	81%	52%	88%	52%
Race						
African American	82%	100%	81%	62%	100%	43%
White	9%	0%	10%	19%	0%	29%
Other	9%	0%	5%	19%	0%	29%
Average age	41	41	40	41	43	36
Married	25%	9%	24%	43%	18%	38%
Education level						
High school grad	85%	61%	95%	100%	77%	100%
College grad	38%	0%	52%	67%	18%	81%
Employed	69%	39%	81%	90%	57%	95%
With children in HH	43%	65%	33%	29%	55%	19%
Income						
Under \$20,000	31%	74%	15%	0%	45%	0%
Over \$70,000	14%	0%	10%	33%	7%	29%

RPH: Relocated public housing residents in units with a public housing subsidy.
 AFF: Renters and owners in units priced “affordably” with the use of tax credits.
 MKT: Renters and owners in units priced at market rates.
 RTR: All renters including relocated public housing residents.
 FS: All owners.

split; a third of those with whom we spoke reported fewer than three casual relationships with neighbors, and another third reported more than 10 such relationships.

The character, status, and role of those who occupy the middle tier of “affordable” units are worthy of further scrutiny. Where do these residents “fit” relative to other groups defined by income and tenure, for example, and to what extent might they play a kind of bridging role in facilitating social relations? Although more investigation is needed, a preliminary analysis of our sample (see Table 2) suggests that, on the whole, renters of affordable units are closest in socioeconomic status and life circumstance to relocated public housing residents, though they are somewhat better off. Like relocated public housing residents, renters of affordable units are likely to be African American and low-income, with modestly higher levels of education (few college graduates, but the vast majority having graduated high school) and levels of employment, and are nearly as likely to have children in the household. Owners of affordable units, on the other hand, are most similar in some respects to other owners, and in some respects to renters of market-rate units. Like both these categories, the vast majority of those in our sample are employed and all earn more than \$20,000. They are less likely than either renters of market-rate units or (especially) market-rate owners to earn more than \$70,000, but like those in the latter category are in general highly educated, with about 80% having earned a college degree. Finally, they are more likely than market-rate owners, but less likely than renters of market-rate units, to be African American.

As might be expected given what we know about the relationship between residential stability and density of acquaintanceship networks (Freudenberg, 1986), these dynamics are to some extent a function of time; interviewees who lived in the development for more than 1 year reported more casual relationships than those who lived there for less than one year.

The patterns suggested by answers to these closed-response items are suggestive, but clearly limited given our small sample. Analysis of the qualitative data provides greater insight into

the nature of these casual relationships, the dynamics they represent, and the ways in which residents ascribe meaning to them and to the nature of neighborhood life emerging in these new developments.

One important characteristic the qualitative analysis makes clear is just *how* casual the relationships enumerated above tend to be. For the most part, the interactions described are characterized as conversations in passing—on the way in and out of the house, for example, or while passing on the street. Most are described as exchanges of greetings, or perhaps of information on an issue (such as dealing with parking or safety) directly at hand. Still, these exchanges often take place within a context of more general awareness of one another, even if this awareness does not always translate into more concrete relations. As a renter of an affordable unit in Oakwood Shores puts it:

I don't have any relationships with anybody. We speak and that's it. We don't talk. One time there was an accident in front of the house, a motorcycle hit the lady upstairs, her car. I was parked in front, so he didn't hit me, but it hit her. And so, you know we talked for like, a lot of people from different buildings down, came down. You know you talk a minute right there. And one of the girls was like that's usually where you park your car. Good thing you didn't park it there. And I was like yeah. And I was like, how does she know my car?

Several of the theoretical arguments for the possible benefits of mixed-income development rely on expectations for some level of influential contact (for example, through “modeling” behavior) or instrumental social interaction (for example, through bridging social relations) among neighbors, and particularly between relocated public housing residents and more affluent, working- and middle-class residents. These assumptions do not necessarily include expectations for intimate ties, and it is quite possible that modest levels of interaction and the forging of casual relationships may be perceived as fruitful or of instrumental benefit to one or both parties. Most people living in or working to create these new developments have modest expectations for the level of “community,” in the sense of affective connections and solidarity, likely to be engendered in them. (For an exploration of early efforts at “building community” in mixed-income developments, see Chaskin and Joseph [2010a, 2010b]).

These modest expectations regarding the extent and nature of neighborly relations seem to sit comfortably with most residents. Although some residents had higher expectations for their interactions with neighbors and express disappointment at the level of social distance and (as some express it) isolation within the development (Joseph & Chaskin, 2010), most are quite comfortable with the limited degree of interaction, to the extent that what interaction there is can be described as cordial, or at least unproblematic. Indeed, most interviewees who described casual, positive relations among neighbors saw significant *benefit* to maintaining some distance. For some, this is simply a matter of enjoying their privacy, or of privileging prior relationships beyond the neighborhood (“I have a really big family, and I already got my friends and stuff,” as one resident puts it). For others, their perspective was grounded in caution. Several relocated public housing residents, in particular, talked about the benefits of friendly but distant relations with neighbors, in part to avoid encumbrances. As an Oakwood Shores resident puts it:

When you start talking about at home, you don't want too much of that personal interaction because it's like your home is supposed to be like a private area, so if you really get to know these people and you start receiving things from them in any form . . . if that don't work, you're right here in the same building if it don't go right or if you start to—like the lady wanted me to babysit. I don't want that personal—if something goes wrong, that means we got to feud with each other right here in our own building.

Or, in the words of another:

I came here for a peaceful experience with my children. You see your neighbors, you say Hi. Maybe I may sit on the porch every blue moon, that's okay. But I don't want to find myself out there with you every day. You're in my business, I'm in your business. I don't have time for that.

Or, in the words of a market-rate renter in Westhaven Park:

But as far as neighborly, where you come over and you're in and out of each other's houses all the time, I just don't socialize like that with the people—fraternize with them, I should say. So I would say it's cordial. And it's neighborly. That's good enough for me.

For some relocated public housing residents, maintaining this social distance is described as more specifically self-protective, a strategy of “keep[ing] myself to myself,” particularly in light of their past experience in public housing, or of what some describe as increased scrutiny of their behavior in their new context (Joseph & Chaskin, 2010). To the extent this is true, this heightened degree of formal monitoring and oversight may have an unintended consequence of constraining informal relationship-building in these contexts. Indeed, dynamics around rules to curb particular kinds of behavior and control the use of space within these developments—from prohibitions against barbecuing to those intended to prevent “hanging out,” including sitting on front stoops or gathering in front of residences—have in some cases created a context of friction that has had a negative impact on relational dynamics in general (Chaskin & Joseph, 2010a, 2010b), and property management rules and activities have been shown to have a dampening effect on social interaction in similar contexts elsewhere (Graves, 2010).

For others, though, casual interactions are pleasant by-products of life in the new developments, facilitated by the improved physical environment (including, especially, increased safety) and by daily routines, where residents begin to see and recognize each other over time. In some cases, these interactions take place across income groups, though they do not generally seem to have led to more substantive or instrumental relations. A relocated public housing resident in Westhaven Park provides a typical characterization:

Oh, I see them when they be getting—you know, going to work, coming home from work, go shopping, you know. But I just stay on the balcony and stuff like that, and they are walking—when they be walking their pets and stuff. That's when I mostly see them, and like when I go out to dinner and go to the mailbox, I'll see, you know, some coming in. I'll, you know, comment on their dog. I'll play with their dogs and stuff like that. But they're very polite. We talk about the weather when we're on the elevator, how nice it is, stuff like that.

This description is illustrative of the general tenor of casual relations described by residents, and indicative of the role that geographic proximity and routine play in fostering such exchanges, as well as the limitations encountered in bridging social distance beyond the most casual interactions. Even among the most sociable, this seems to be the case. As another relocated public housing resident at Westhaven Park described it (emphasis added):

I pretty much know everybody. . . . I'd say about 90 percent of the people within this small area, *aside from the owners*. I'd say about 90 percent of the people within these two buildings I would know personally and say hi and bye to and have a little conversation with.

This perceived divide, particularly between lower-income renters and owners, was in evidence in both sites. In some cases, this is a source of notable tension (to which we will return); in some,

of mild discomfort, informed by subtle cues and quiet assumptions about race and class when they confront one another. An owner of a market-rate unit in Oakwood Shores noted how this dynamic played out in one such casual interaction:

I was sitting out front with my kids, and some man walked by and said you live in that house? And I said yes, you know. And he said well, wow. We live here too, but our place is nothing like yours. And it was very uncomfortable for me. I was like oh, you know. Yeah, just because I was feeling like I'm this big rich person and I'm not. But I just felt like that. It just felt kind of strange. I didn't really know what to say.

Or, as a relocated public housing resident in Westhaven Park noted:

I haven't actually met anyone of another race. We have a few people who will actually stop and talk—speak and everything—that will come past. It will always be somebody with their dog, and me and my son will jump. And they're like: He's not gonna do anything. And we're like: No, we're still not. We said a few words to them that day they tried to get us to play with their dog, but we were just too scared. And then from that day forward, it's like they'll come—when they walk [their dogs], they'll stop right there and just look up.

In other cases, however, residents are quite sanguine about this social distance. As a relocated public housing resident in Oakwood Shores puts it:

The market-rent paying people or the owners, 'cause we have condos across the street and everything like that, I would say they are the most anti-sociable of the group and I don't mean that in a negative way. You might see somebody just maybe throwing their hand up a Hi! Nobody's communicating. Nobody's like mingling. For me, I love that.

A number of interviewees across tenure and in both sites, however, while comfortable with the current limitations of these casual relations—visual recognition and a cordial wave, a quick chat by the mailbox or in passing on the street—believe that they offer the *potential* for more substantive or instrumental exchanges down the road. They are seen to set the stage for being able, later, to draw on relational resources, at least around relatively quotidian needs. A renter of an affordable unit puts it this way:

You know, like I get to know my neighbors and that's it. You know, just hi, how are you, my name's whatever. We get to talk like that. And it's pretty much that's how it is. And you know because you might need your neighbor and your neighbor might need you. You know what I mean. I think we should be in contact with each other like that, something happens that I can call you or something's going on I can call you. I think you should be able to exchange phone numbers in case of emergency or something like the power, the lady upstairs her car got hit.

Instrumental Exchanges

The vast majority of casual interactions reported by our interviewees reflected this kind of cordial distance, and they were largely not characterized by exchanges of practical information or instrumental favors. However, several interviewees did mention such instrumental interactions. The relative emphasis on these kinds of relations in our interviews was substantially less than on casual interactions through conversation or exchange of greeting. Nearly a quarter of our small sample of residents across the two sites reported not knowing *any* of their neighbors well enough to ask a favor or invite into their home, and another third claimed only one or two such

TABLE 3

Number of Neighbors Known Well Enough to Ask a Favor or Invite into Home

Total	Relocated Public Housing N = 23	Affordable Rentals N = 10	Affordable For-Sale N = 11	Market-Rate Rental N = 11	Market-Rate For-Sale N = 10
None	26%	30%	9%	36%	0%
One or Two	30%	40%	27%	45%	40%
Three to Five	17%	10%	36%	18%	20%
Five to Ten	13%	0%	18%	0%	20%
More than 10	13%	20%	9%	0%	20%

acquaintances in the development. Residents with whom we spoke in Oakwood Shores reported somewhat higher levels of such instrumental relationships, as did owners at both sites, of whom 60% of market-rate and 63% of affordable-unit owners claimed to know more than three neighbors this well (see Table 3). Among relocated public housing residents, 43% of those with whom we spoke made a similar claim, though this was much more likely to be the case in Oakwood Shores than in Westhaven Park (63% to 24%, respectively).

For the most part, such instrumental interactions were described as dyadic exchanges of favors or information between one resident and another. Such exchanges were described with essentially the same frequency by residents across income groups and tenures, but largely reflect exchanges between residents *within* these groups.

Often, the favors exchanged were described as small but important acts of basic good neighboring—“just common courtesy things” as one resident puts it—like placing lost keys on top of a mailbox for their owner to find, jump-starting a car in cold weather, help carrying a heavy package or groceries, slipping misdelivered mail under the intended recipient’s door. In a few cases, interviewees described more fundamental assistance, including the kind of “looking out for” one another that is grounded in a more concrete knowledge of neighbors’ needs and circumstances. One relocated public housing resident, for example, described how her neighbors kept an eye out for her child who has autism and sometimes left the apartment to wander unsupervised in the neighborhood. Another talked about how some neighbors would check in on her, knowing she was sick. These examples were mostly provided by relocated public housing residents in each site and, as near as can be determined, are almost exclusively examples of within-group exchanges. This may in part be a function of physical proximity, among residents who live near each other and begin to look out for one another over time, and in part a function of prior networks. In both sites, the vast majority of public housing residents with whom we spoke moved into the new developments having lived in the former public housing development (Horner Homes and Madden-Park Wells, respectively) that the new, mixed-income development is being built to replace.

However, this tendency of within-group exchange seems to be generally true of the majority of instrumental interactions described by interviewees across tenures. Within-group relations, particularly as defined by housing tenure, are more likely to lead to instrumental exchanges and be reinforced by multiple opportunities for association. As an owner of a market-rate unit in Westhaven Park puts it:

So when we go out to our cars in the morning some of us leave at the same time, or like on a weekend if we’re doing something in our garages, planting some pots or whatever we’ll stop and talk. It helps to go to the association meetings because then you get to meet them and get to know them a little bit better.

In the few cases in which potentially more generative exchanges of favors were reported, they were largely between residents of the same tenure. For example, one resident (a relocated public housing resident) in Oakwood Shores described trying to leverage her influence on a key advisory council to help a neighbor (another relocated public housing resident) try to get a child into the local charter school; another (a market-rate owner in Westhaven Park) sought to draw on a neighborly relation (who also served on the condominium board) to try to get a new job. In the isolated cases where interviewees were explicit about seeking to make connections on behalf of neighbors of a lower socioeconomic status, thus providing “bridging social capital” (Briggs, 1998; Gittell & Vidal, 1998; Putnam, 2000), these efforts were born of prior relationships (for example, a young person who was a participant in a youth program run by the renter of a market-rate unit) or relational connections reinforced elsewhere.

In addition to exchanges of instrumental *favors*, interviewees reported on how casual relations also included, or in some cases led to, the exchange of useful *information*. For example, casual, pick-up conversations of the kind described above (particularly where such interactions occur repeatedly over time) have led to broader exchanges of information. As a renter of a market-rate unit at Oakwood Shores puts it:

I got to know her just because she’s my neighbor and she was nice enough to—we both was out and we introduced ourselves and it was—how we talked and what we didn’t like about the complexes and what we did like and what wasn’t being followed by rules and stuff like that and she’ll let me know what’s going on. I’ll let her know what’s going on.

Again, these accounts were largely described as exchanges between residents of similar economic status or housing tenure. They were not confined to interviewees in any given category (relocated public housing residents were as likely to describe them as owners, for example), although residents with whom we spoke at Westhaven Park were somewhat less likely to report the exchange of instrumental information than were those at Oakwood Shores.

Beyond these dyadic exchanges of favors and information, some interviewees described ways in which their interactions with neighbors’ children reflected the kind of “intergenerational closure” that is such an important component of collective efficacy, particularly with regard to social control and socialization of youth functions (Sampson, Morenoff, & Earls, 1999). As an owner of an affordable unit in Oakwood Shores described it:

But I do make it a point when I see other neighbors, even if they’re kids, to speak and try to make it feel like this is your community. Hey, I’m your neighbor, you know, hi. When you see me please speak, I’ll speak back type thing. And with kids, I always feel like teaching, you know, or because some people may not know like hey, pick up those things on the floor. Pick it up, I don’t care what you used to do, you know, now this is your community. Have an interest in it and so forth. So, like there were kids that came here yesterday and as I was leaving I noticed that they had left. And so, I said to them, oh um, did you guys close the gate? You know, they may not have thought twice about it, but you come in the door, the gate’s closed, you know, close the gate.

These exchanges, however, were largely reported as occurring between residents and their neighbors’ younger children. Dynamics around older youth tended to be more complicated and often contentious, and some residents, particularly in Westhaven Park (where dynamics around social control and public behavior are more highly pitched), have taken to intervening through more formal mechanisms, by calling police or informing property management of youth transgressions. These actions are further informed by race and class; African Americans and renters, as well

as some owners of affordable units, were less likely to report discomfort with intervening with youth directly.

Finally, in a few instances, instrumental exchanges were described by residents as moving beyond the dyadic to include mobilizing broader networks or relations leading to collective action, particularly among (mostly market-rate) owners. As one such resident in Oakwood Shores puts it:

I think we were talking to a couple of the neighbors, and you know, we had asked them, do you have a problem with this issue? And they said yes. And then somebody else said hey, we do too. And so then we said well, you know, instead of maybe going to the developer individually, maybe we can all get together as a group, and then we can try and schedule something.

This kind of organized collective action is most common around emerging problems and has been particularly prevalent in Westhaven Park among homeowners around issues of particular contention, especially concerning safety, behavior, and the use of public space. There have also been some efforts to intentionally organize residents to work together *across* income and tenure levels, but for the most part they have been short-lived and of limited success.

Negative Interactions

Although the casual relations that characterize social interaction (when it happens) among residents at the two sites are described in most instances as generally positive and largely unfringed with either specific tensions or expectations, residents also talked about instances in which they found interactions with neighbors to be negative experiences. This was more apparent among interviewee comments in Westhaven Park than in Oakwood Shores, and particularly among relocated public housing residents, renters of market-rate units, and owners in this site. In Oakwood Shores, negative interactions were mostly noted by residents of market-rate units (whether owned or rented) and by relocated public housing residents.

Most of residents' reflections on negative interactions were described in fairly general terms; about 20% characterized their casual relations with neighbors as being generally negative, and about a third framed the tenor of relations as interactions taking place within a broader context of mistrust, or avoidance, or differences with regard to expectations for behavior and adherence to norms, for example, of "common courtesy," such as keeping music and late-night noise to a minimum, keeping children under supervision and within bounds, and refraining from public drinking. Some describe the tenor of such interactions in broad, anomic terms: a general lack of friendliness, a degree of caution toward one another, a sense of judgment being rendered. As a relocated public housing resident in Westhaven Park puts it:

But most of the other ones sometime they—people are—sometime people because they have a little bit more than you, and I know it isn't my imagination. Sometime they tend to make you feel like maybe they're a little bit better than you, and some of these people they do kind of act like that like they a little better than the rest of us just because they got a little bit more money or whatever.

Or, in the words of the owner of a market-rate unit in Oakwood Shores:

I'm still trying to figure out who is who and what is your motive. You know? Are you a worker or are you a person that sits back and reaps the benefits of the workers?

Others are more specific about the dynamics that lead to avoidance, or to specific, negative interactions. Children are frequently (though by no means invariably) invoked in describing these dynamics, either as triggers of negative interactions, or as responses to them, through family management strategies to monitor and protect residents' children in their interactions with the neighborhood environment (cf. Furstenberg, 1993). As the renter of a market-rate unit in Westhaven Park puts it:

I don't really let him play with the kids out here because the kids out here, their parents—first of all, they're not attended. Their parents just sort of let them run wild. And they don't really respect, you know—like they'll play ball in front of the car and hit the car. So I don't really let him associate with any of the kids out here. There—he has some friends, but they're in more of the neighborhood that I grew up in. And we have relatives as well.

Or, in the words of one from Oakwood Shores:

So—but I don't let him socialize with them because I mean—and I'm not putting anybody down or anything but because all families are not the same and you don't know what family is what because you in this circle together. You know what I'm saying? And from what I see when I come home or look out my window, it's like they're running wild. They're just—my living room window got busted out. I'm on the first floor. I'm already nervous and scared as it is 'cause I'm right off 39th Street. That's down the street from Ida B. Wells. You know what I'm saying?

As indicated by this last comment (and many others), expectations for social dynamics—as well as how residents choose to interact with their neighbors and how they interpret the interactions they have—are informed in part by the remaining legacy of the public housing developments the new, mixed-income developments are replacing. For some (particularly owners and renters of market-rate units), this “fear factor” (as one market-rate renter in Oakwood Shores puts it) generates particular caution in their interactions with neighbors, and particular concern about the level of social order and control in the immediate neighborhood. This dynamic plays out in both sites, though it is particularly notable in Westhaven Park, where the presence of the public housing “Superblock” in the middle of the development has a major impact. Indeed, the collective action among homeowners at that site has been in large part to express their concerns to the responsible authorities—the Mayor's office, Chicago Housing Authority leadership, the local police commander—about disruptive behavior at the Superblock. Homeowners hope that this pressure will lead to the Superblock being redeveloped as mixed-income housing as well (a proposal that has been taken increasingly seriously by the CHA).

Although much of the tension around children was noted by higher-income residents and unit owners, and invariably directed toward children presumed to be those of relocated public housing residents, this was not always the case, and several relocated public housing residents also described such tension with their neighbors. As one described:

But, see, some people, like the lady upstairs, she don't care what her kids do. They jump all over the bathrooms. They jump and I be sayin' sometimes—I said, don't you think they might fall or something? She say, well, you know, kids are just so active. Certain things you can tell 'em to do, and certain things you can't tell 'em to do. I say, well, yes you can. You make 'em sit down. . . . She nice to talk to, like I say, but when you sit there, sometimes tell people certain thing about their kids, they don't wanna listen.

It should be noted, however, that children—at least younger children—were also often cited as potential facilitators of interaction, or at least as points of positive, casual interaction between

residents of different incomes and tenures (cf. Kleit, 2005). Although some residents did note (with some surprise) uncomfortable interactions with younger children (refusing to move to let a returning homeowner climb the stairs; returning a cautionary look with “this hate stare”; using profane language), far more frequent and problematic were perceptions of and interactions with older youth. As the owner of an affordable unit in Westhaven Park puts it:

It pretty much is like 12 and below, they’re friendly. Like they come up. They’ll pet my dog, say hello. They know my dog’s name and everything like that. It’s cool. And then from like 30 and up, the same way—they’ll say hi. They’ll go, Oh, how you doing? Oh I’m doing fine. You know? Short little conversations. But it’s like that range in between that’s kind of—sometimes you get the funny looks and whatnot. And the funny thing is that like me and her, we’re not trying to take over anything. We’re not trying to control them. But I think they just have that idea that we are. You know?

In some cases, interviewees discussed negative interactions with reference to particular examples of conflict. Indeed, about 25% of those with whom we spoke described specific disputes they had witnessed or been part of. These were more often reported at Westhaven Park (over two thirds of those reported), particularly by owners and market-rate renters in our sample. For the most part, even these stop short of actual altercations (and most around relatively minor issues of noise and child management), but stand out as specific negative interactions that contributed to a tenor of discomfort, mistrust, or fear. The owner of an affordable unit in Westhaven Park described one instance:

I mean we paid for this. We bought it with a balcony. Now we can’t even go there. Because one time we were just smoking there and chilling with our friends. And they were just talking out loud that we were gonna call the police on them. And we’re trying to change the neighborhood. And so now we’re kind of scared.

This dynamic has led to a tendency for some residents to withdraw, and to rely more on formal channels to maintain social control than on informal neighborly interactions and processes. As the owner of a market-rate unit in the same site puts it:

I don’t go outside and say something to them directly. I call the police, but part of that, too, is I’m not sure how they’re going to react and I’m sure that other people feel the same way. Especially when they’ve been drinking and they’re screaming at each other . . . over what seems from our perspective as petty issues, I don’t want to get involved. I don’t want this behavior to continue but I don’t want you to know that it bothers me right now. You know what I mean?

Race sometimes plays an explicit role in particular instances of conflict, adding to this tension, though in complicated ways. Those white residents in our sample who describe themselves as having been at the receiving end of these conflicts describe how they see race and class dynamics, within the context of tension around newcomers “taking over” the neighborhood, as lying behind these incidents. This was particularly apparent in Westhaven Park, where there is greater ethnic diversity among owners and where race seems to be a more salient marker of difference, sometimes serving as a proxy for some residents to make assumptions about owner versus renter status among their neighbors. Homeowners, who were most explicit about this dynamic, also associated it with a response to their incursions as newcomers, and particularly when they first moved in. As an owner of a market-rate unit in Westhaven Park puts it:

When we first moved in, we were the first ones in this building, and there was some animosity. There was some derogatory names called towards us from . . . people in the neighborhood that

were here already, often in terms of race and stuff. They felt we were intruding, that we don't belong here.

Or, as one in Oakwood Shores recounted:

Well, interestingly enough the first, I think it was the first month we moved in, I was standing right here, and we had the windows up. It was like maybe 8:00 at night. It was dark outside. And somebody threw a rock right through that middle window. I was standing right there. Well I was standing right there. It was interesting the police came over and said you know, it's all because you're white and blah, blah. And she might be right, I don't know.

COMPARING NEIGHBORING EXPERIENCES

One question raised by interviewees' experiences with neighborly relations in their current circumstances as residents of new, intentionally mixed-income developments is how different they might be from what they had experienced in their prior neighborhoods. Nearly everyone—across sites, income levels, and tenures—suggested that they have fewer relationships with neighbors, know fewer people well, and interact more casually (and in some cases less comfortably) in their new neighborhoods than in their old. For owners and higher-income residents in particular, this is clearly in part a function of time; virtually all these residents are new to the area and have been in the neighborhood a relatively short time. But other dynamics are at play as well. For some, it is also a function of a change in status or context—from apartment complexes with greater opportunity for informal encounters with more people to townhomes in which routine paths provide quotidian interaction with fewer people; from condominiums in which they owned their units and interacted with others on boards to residents of market-rate rental units; from smaller towns to a neighborhood in a large city; from houses on family-dominated streets to condominiums largely populated by singles or childless couples. For others, a sense of difference, and a perspective that others note this difference, also plays a role. The owner of an affordable unit in Westhaven Park who talked about having had more extended casual relations in her former neighborhood puts it this way: "It's more that people know that you're new here. Where before I could sort of blend in."

For relocated public housing residents, the change in experience from old to new is more complicated. On the one hand, their local social networks are diminished, both in terms of casual relations and instrumental exchanges. Many relocated public housing residents we interviewed talked about knowing "everyone" in the public housing complexes from which they came and the long-term relationships they had maintained prior to relocation. Interviewees in Oakwood Shores were particularly vocal about the extent and importance of their prior relations at Madden Park/Wells. As one puts it:

You knew the whole—everybody's body, mamas, cousins. Their second generations. Their third generations. Actually, I loved Ida B. Wells. I would not downplay that. I loved Ida B. Wells. It was a family. We stuck together. You knew—you couldn't live there without knowing. The negative came in that you know too many people. You did. You couldn't get away.

Some relationships were maintained during the transition, and these were often seen as important bridges to managing their new circumstances, even in very casual ways. As another Oakwood Shores resident noted:

I lived there almost 40 years. I seen the kids grow up and the mothers and the grandmothers. You know the people. . . . Sometimes [I miss this], like when you're on the street, except Ida B.

it was such a rowdy place. But to me, I just felt comfortable there. And by my knowing some of the people from over there moved over here, when I see them on the street, I feel more relaxed . . . and I just go about my business.

On the other hand, the context in which these relations played out, and the dangers it presented to everyday life, were frequently invoked as a significant difference between old and new circumstances, and, for most, a worthwhile trade-off. Interviewees noted the level of violence, crime, drug trafficking, gang activity, and intrusion into their everyday lives in the former “projects” and the relative absence of such dynamics in the new development. One resident at Westhaven Park outlined this trade-off clearly:

Now it’s like I hardly even see my neighbors and when I see them, it’s always little short, brief, friendly. Hello. Goodbye. How you doing? Everybody going about their business and like if something was to happen, our neighbors aren’t scared to knock on the door and be like, you know, just checking to make sure everything’s okay, so it’s not really different from what we came from but it’s like just—I don’t know. I feel more secure here. . . . Like you come outside and you see your neighbors and you don’t have to worry about them gonna stick you up or, you know, hoping to sell you some drugs or ask you if you selling them or something. It’s real nice. Now people know how to keep to themselves and at the same time respect where we come from.

Although the change in environment is reported to be accompanied by fewer and more distant interpersonal relations for adults, several relocated public housing residents reported quite different experiences for their children. In contrast to the experience of owners and higher-income residents, several of whom (as noted above) talk about how they engage in family-management strategies that restrict their children’s free access to the neighborhood and to relationships with other children active in the public space within it, relocated public housing residents talked about how much *more* freedom their children have in the new environment. Increased freedom of movement for relocated public housing residents’ children was frequently mentioned as a benefit of the move to the new development and the sense of increased safety the environment provides. In some cases, at least, this is seen to lead to new friends and broader networks among their children. A resident at Oakwood Shores who discussed this new freedom noted, for example: “Every time I turn around he’s trying to introduce me to some more kids.” There is little evidence from our data, however, that suggests that these relations, where they are developing, are with children from other income levels.

BARRIERS AND CONTRIBUTING DYNAMICS

In reflecting on their experience in living in these mixed-income developments, interviewees discussed a number of factors and dynamics that help shape their choices regarding interaction with neighbors, their interpretation of the actions of others, and their assessment of the social climate of the neighborhood in general. A number of these—the short timeframe that most residents have lived in these contexts; a level of fear and avoidance that constrains their desire to become involved with their neighbors; a desire for a level of anonymity and freedom from entanglement—emerged in the analysis of the nature and extent of interaction provided above. Other factors were cited as well. One concerns issues of available time and the pressures of other responsibilities, including both work schedules and existing relationships with family, friends, and acquaintances—both locally (largely among relocated public housing residents) and elsewhere. Another concerns issues of the physical infrastructure of the community, to which we will return.

Perhaps most important—both because they were most frequently raised by interviewees across sites, income level, and tenure and because they play into other critical dynamics, like fear of crime and victimization—were issues of perceived “difference” that set residents apart from one another and contribute to the delineation and maintenance of within-group interactions at the expense of between-group relations.

Regarding physical infrastructure, residents focused on the layout of buildings, the extent to which entrances to buildings are private rather than common, and, especially, the relative lack of “shared space” that could serve as a communal meeting place. Some noted this with regard to a lack (at this point in the developments’ growth) of common amenities, like grocery stores and restaurants. The absence of sufficient and attractive park space, in particular, was noted by interviewees at both sites as a potential barrier to interaction. As a relocated public housing resident at Oakwood Shores puts it:

It’s just basically, if they—maybe if they had a park right here where the people that lived in the residence can—you know, you’ve seen this person on a daily basis, or your child has interacted with their kids. You know what I’m saying? That’d probably help more.

Or, as an owner of a market-rate unit at Westhaven Park noted:

We see people on our balcony basically making chitchat with people, but there’s no place to really do things together. There’s not any green space. There’s a park at the end of the street but it’s occupied late at night by people most likely doing illegal activity, and there’s a lot of broken glass and stuff around and it’s not someplace to really want to walk and hang out, per se. And then around the building, there’s nothing.

This description is in contrast to one provided by a relocated public housing resident of the old Horner Homes:

And see, what we used to do down there, when we were staying in Henry Horner Homes, is that we had so much green grass area around the buildings that we could just go outside and, like, set up a table and have your barbecue grill and sit out and barbecue and everything, like, right outside ’cause you have so much grassy area. Now it’s like you can’t do it. I mean, you could still do it, but just space is, like, really limited. You can’t do much. They really say not to do it because they’ll fine you and you’ll get in trouble for it, but people still do it anyway, but it’s still a hassle.

This kind of activity—normative in Horner—has become one source of tension in the new developments. In the absence of dedicated space for such activities, some residents (presumed to be relocated public housing residents) make use of public space that is not dedicated to civic use (the area in front of a building, a parking lot, a street corner) in ways that others (owners and higher-income residents) find objectionable. Further, these and other behaviors become a marker of “difference” that higher-income renters and owners use as cues to determine social boundaries and shape attitudes about neighbors and their approach to interaction with them. Interviewees also noted a number of other indicators by which they determine difference, such as race (in Westhaven Park), routine (particularly as it indicates whether you are working or not), dogs, cars, children (age and number), and the exercise of certain privileges (like barbecuing on balconies, allowed to owners but a lease violation for renters). These cues are not infallible, as one relocated public housing resident in Oakwood Shores noted:

I’ve actually had a market rent person talk to me about a CHA person and didn’t know I was from CHA. . . . She was like: They move—the market rent person—they move these people

in here from CHA and they don't know how to act. Now you talking to a CHA—now she's confiding all this in me and I come from CHA.

Most noted by far, as the comment above suggests, is the issue of behavior and attitude, particularly with regard to residents (presumed to be public housing residents) whose behavior is seen as problematic (mostly, though not exclusively, by higher income residents and owners) or inappropriate. For some, it is a question of commitment and investment. As the owner of an affordable unit in Oakwood Shores puts it:

But when it's not your own you've got this lackadaisical attitude like, whatever. It's like be invested. And so people that are just I don't know riding up and down the street all wild and crazy or throwing you know bottles on the floor as they're walking up and down the street or food or garbage, it's just like if that was your house you would never do it. So, that's how I feel like they're not owners. They don't feel like they have an investment in this area because if they did they would protect it like they do their personal belongings.

For others, it is an issue of values and lifestyle, and is emblematic of the continued resonance, among some, of “culture of poverty” notions characterizing the public housing population. As an owner of an affordable unit in Westhaven Park described it:

You know there's been a couple of moments of tension where people who are used to a certain lifestyle, they come in—and it's not us, per se. But people who share like the same values. You know? Just like the same type of—just like the same mindset, in terms of how to be considerate and things like that. Ours might be a little bit different than theirs. So because of that, we may call the police on them a couple of times. And then all of a sudden, they think, oh, these guys are calling the police, they're trying to alter my lifestyle as they come in. And so it has materialized.

Assumptions about neighbors based on their behavior go the other way, as well, and many relocated public housing residents, in particular, note a kind of standoffishness among presumed owners. As a resident of Oakwood Shores puts it:

Well there's some people, they think if making this amount and they higher than you, they look—you know, you could walk past and speak and you can tell they don't want to speak or something so you know you ain't on their level or something like that.

These perceptions of difference, as they are reinforced over time, concretized in particular interactions, and reified through discourse among neighbors, seem to be establishing themselves in ways that may become difficult, over time, to redress. They are further supported by structural arrangements of the developments themselves, including governance structures that include subsets of residents (e.g., owners on condominium boards) to the exclusion of others, programs and events that cater (intentionally or not) to other portions of the population, and the way in which residents are sorted geographically, within buildings and on blocks, with different levels and kinds of social-spatial mix (Chaskin & Joseph, 2010a, 2010b).

CONCLUSIONS

The nature and dynamics of social interaction that are emerging in these mixed-income developments, and the meanings ascribed to them by residents, raise some important questions about

the posited social control, social capital, and role modeling benefits of mixed-income communities for addressing the problems of concentrated poverty. At least at this early stage, social interaction has been limited, extremely casual, and (particularly with regard to instrumental exchanges) largely contingent on social (class) proximity. Spatial proximity also plays a role, but can work in two directions; in some cases increased opportunity for interaction has led to increased tensions over use of space and behavioral expectations rather than positive exchanges. There is thus little evidence to support expectations that reducing the isolation of public housing residents by integrating them (and other low-income residents) into mixed-income communities will promote access to the networks and resources of their higher-income neighbors—increasing their “bridging social capital”—in ways that might promote particular social goods (such as access to employment or information about schools, services, or other resources). More modest benefits of instrumental exchanges among neighbors—exchanging simple favors, sharing basic information relevant to community life—might be more reasonably expected, but seem largely to occur among residents of similar social background. Similarly, there is no evidence to support expectations that interaction with higher-income “role models” will lead to beneficial changes in aspirations and behaviors of low-income residents. And while low-income residents—and particularly relocated public housing residents—have clearly benefited from living in the significantly safer and more healthy environments that these mixed-income communities represent, the dynamics of social control are sometimes contentious, reflect particular tensions between higher-income residents and their low-income neighbors, and increasingly rely on formal (calling the police, reporting problems to property management) rather than informal (relational) mechanisms of social control. It may be that more, and more fruitful, relationships will develop over time, but early indications suggest that, where tensions have run high, divisions within the population may be ossifying, and that relationship building is likely to continue to be largely developed among people of similar backgrounds. This is not surprising given our knowledge about the relationship between diversity and social cohesion. The intentional diversity of unit type, income, and housing tenure status in these particular contexts has led to a population characterized by (relative to many other planned mixed-income developments) fairly extreme social distances, throwing the challenges of creating social cohesion and interaction among a heterogeneous population into stark relief and leading to some of the same kinds of tensions documented in other gentrifying contexts. This suggests the need to retool our expectations for the nature and likely impact of social interaction within these contexts, but also to increase attention to and investment in the kinds of inputs—education, training, job placement and retention, financial literacy—that might address individual-level poverty among relocated public housing residents directly, and to the systems and structure of opportunity that reproduce it. In the meantime, attention to spaces, mechanisms, and opportunities for participation that promote the possibility for people of different backgrounds, interests, resources, and priorities to live together simply as neighbors—a version of what Iris Marion Young describes as “the being together of strangers” (1990, p. 237)—and for negotiating tensions around expectations and interests, will need to continue to be explored, experimented with, and evolved. Given our findings about increasing tensions and neighbor divisions and isolation in the early phases of these new communities, the longer-term success and sustainability of mixed-income developments may very well depend on better strategies for managing neighbor relations.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 The concepts of social capital and social exclusion address some common concerns and invoke similar commentary in terms of the causes of marginalization and social isolation. However, the ways in which personal agency, state responsibility, and civil society roles are treated in discussions of social inclusion and social capital are sometimes quite distinct, with real implications for how they are differentially applied to the public policy making process in different states (see Daly and Silver, 2008).
- 2 The policy goals of mixed-income development schemes like those supported by HOPE VI funding go well beyond the potential impacts on low-income individuals that living in a mixed-income environment might lead to; they are also about, among other things, the reformation of public housing, neighborhood regeneration, the reclamation of the central city, and urban renewal more broadly (raising important critiques regarding the likely and intended beneficiaries; see, e.g., Fraser and Kick, 2007; Imbroscio, 2008; Smith and Stovall, 2008).
- 3 Unlike most neighborhoods, mixed-income developments are specific, contrived efforts to remake urban space and reintegrate low-income people into them, intentionally seeking to promote diversity that is meant to foster particular kinds of outcomes. In addition, as wholesale redevelopments they put into play dynamics of incursion and defense in unique and complicated ways.
- 4 “Housing tenure” refers here to a resident’s status as an owner or renter of a housing unit, and whether the unit in which s/he resides is subsidized or not. It does not refer to length of time in residence.
- 5 We use the term “relocated public housing residents” to refer specifically to those residents who moved from traditional public housing into mixed-income developments, whether they have returned to the development built on the site of the complex in which they lived prior to demolition or have moved to a mixed-income development from a different complex. They are thus distinct from residents of traditional public housing, in which buildings are owned and operated by the public housing authority, and from those who moved into the subsidized private housing market using Housing Choice Vouchers. There is some debate among stakeholders as to the appropriate language to describe these residents, since they are in some ways in a liminal position between the public and private spheres, living in units subsidized with public housing funds and remaining on the rolls of the public housing authority, but at the same time residents of developments that are privately owned and managed. Some argue that they should be referred to as “former” public housing residents, based on the aspiration that they are moving toward the status of residents in the private market; others argue that they are still public housing residents, for which the public housing authority continues to bear responsibility; others that they should be referred to simply as “residents,” making no distinction between them and other members of these new communities.
- 6 The affordable rental and for-sale units are financed with a combination of federal, state, and city programs, including the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, Affordable Housing Tax Credit, and tax-increment financing programs. The specific financing sources and stipulations vary by mixed-income site, depending on what was allocated to the developer. These programs have requirements that units be rented or sold to households earning a certain percentage of area median income, typically 50–80 percent of AMI for rental units and up to 120 percent for for-sale units. Property managers and others working on the developments refer to the residents of these units as “affordable renters and owners,” so we adopt that term here.
- 7 Summary demographic information for our random resident sample are provided in Table 2. We are unable to compare these statistics against those of the developments’ population as a whole due to a lack of data. Although developers do collect some demographic information on the renter population, little of it is comparable to the variables provided in the table, and for the most part such information is not collected at all for owners or market-rate renters.

- 8 Mixed-income housing is just one component of the Plan for Transformation, which also includes rehabilitation of family, senior, and scattered-site public housing units, the provision of Housing Choice Vouchers to those residents who wish to rent in the private market, and relocation and support services to public housing residents affected by the Transformation. Of the 25,000 units to be delivered for public housing residents under the Plan, about 30 percent are in mixed-income developments; about 38 percent are in senior buildings, and about 20 percent in traditional family public housing, with the remainder in scattered-site developments (CHA 2010). The lion's share of financial investment, however (about two thirds or \$2 billion, including CHA funds and those leveraged through private, public, and philanthropic sources), is targeted to mixed-income developments (CHA, 2009).
- 9 The eligibility criteria for public housing residents to return to mixed-income developments are significantly different than those that had established their eligibility to live in public housing prior to the Transformation. In most cases, they include being lease-compliant at the time of potential move, being employed (or engaged in an education program, employment training program, or community service activity) for at least 30 hours per week, being up to date on payment of rent and utility bills, passing a drug test, and passing a three-year criminal background check.

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