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# The Theoretical Basis for Addressing Poverty Through Mixed-Income Development

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This article examines the theoretical foundations upon which the rationale for mixed-income development as a strategy to confront urban poverty is built. The authors focus on four propositions that draw from theories on social networks, social control, culture and behavior, and the political economy of place. They assess available evidence about the relative importance of the four theoretical propositions. They conclude that the most compelling propositions are those that suggest that some low-income residents may benefit from a higher quality of life through greater informal social control and access to higher quality services. They find less evidence that socioeconomic outcomes for low-income residents may be improved through social interaction, network building, and role modeling.

**Keywords:** *urban poverty; urban development; mixed-income development; public housing*

Mixed-income development is taking hold across the United States as an urban redevelopment strategy. Since the mid-1990s, mixed-income development has gained increased attention from policy makers and local developers, particularly as a tool for transforming failed public housing developments (Bohl 2000; Boston 2005; Briggs 1997; Brophy and Smith 1997; Epp 1996; Goetz 2003; Khadduri 2001; Popkin, Buron, et al. 2000b;

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Popkin et al. 2004; Rosenbaum, Stroh, and Flynn 1998; Schwartz and Tajbakhsh 1997; Smith 2002; Turbov and Piper 2005; von Hoffman 1996). It has also played an increasingly prevalent role in broader urban development efforts, in response to the inherent challenges of balancing planned development and the dynamics of migration, gentrification, and displacement. A variety of objectives have been attributed to mixed-income development including providing better-quality housing for low-income families, increasing the tax base and stability of the inner city by attracting more affluent families, creating an environment to spur greater upward mobility among low-income families, and catalyzing broader physical and economic revitalization (Smith 2002). Although the term is becoming widely used, there remain many open questions about how best to define mixed-income development, how best to implement it, and what are its expected effects.

There are two major rationales for a focus on mixed-income development by urban policy makers. One posits mixed-income development as a strategy for addressing urban poverty. The deleterious impact of decades of racial and socioeconomic segregation in urban America is now well documented (e.g., Jargowsky 1997; Massey and Denton 1993; Wilson 1987, 1996). Proponents of mixed-income development argue that such a strategy will help counteract the negative effects associated with highly concentrated inner-city poverty and promote upward mobility among low-income families.

The second rationale sees mixed-income development as a general strategy for urban redevelopment. The renewed public tastes for urban living combined with available tracts of vacant or underused, centrally located land in cities has created great opportunities for urban revitalization, and mixed-income development has emerged as a strategy that can unite otherwise divided political constituencies and generate the financing necessary to secure and redevelop prime inner-city land. In this line of thinking, mixed-income development is less about poverty alleviation and much more about an approach to inner-city redevelopment that is economically lucrative and politically viable.

This article focuses on the first rationale. Its goal is to examine the theoretical foundations upon which the rationale for mixed-income development as a strategy to confront urban poverty is built. Why should mixed-income development improve the quality of life and prospects for low-income families? To what extent are assumptions regarding its benefits supported in the existing empirical literature? It should be noted that mixed-income development is a fundamentally market-based strategy for addressing urban poverty. It uses public-sector investment and incentives to promote free market enterprise on the part of individuals and private developers as a way

to catalyze neighborhood revitalization (Smith 2002). By relinquishing site control to developers driven by the profit motive and by attempting to build demand among homebuyers seeking investments likely to appreciate in value, the extent to which the mixed-income strategy is likely to address the needs of low-income families is certainly called into question. Our purpose here is to rigorously examine this approach within that context, accepting for the moment the assumption that the interests of free market enterprise can be leveraged to promote some meaningful gains for the urban poor. A fuller examination of the ideological basis of this approach and the relative value of possible alternative orientations and approaches to the problem of urban poverty is a critical task and needs to be engaged but is beyond the scope of this article. Our point of departure is that mixed-income development is a strategy very much in motion; in light of this fact, we seek to clarify its potential and limitations through a careful review of the possible theories that inform it and the empirical record currently available to us.

“Mixed-income” is a term that covers a broad spectrum of levels of economic integration.<sup>1</sup> At one end of the spectrum are private-sector, market-rate developments that include a small percentage of affordable housing, often to qualify for municipal subsidies. At the other end of the spectrum are developments built exclusively for moderate- and low-income families. The public housing “transformation” currently under way in Chicago, the largest mixed-income development effort in the country, defines mixed income generally as including one-third public housing units, one-third affordable housing units (below 120 percent of area median income), and one-third market-rate units.<sup>2</sup> Like Brophy and Smith (1997, 5), our interest in this article is any development or community initiative where the mixing of income groups is a “fundamental part of (the) financial and operating plans.” Thus, our focus in this paper is on planned mixed-income development.

Mixed-income development represents one of two primary approaches currently being used across the country to deconcentrate poverty and reform public housing. While mixed-income development focuses on the revitalization of the original development site and the return of residents to that site, dispersal programs, such as the national Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration Program and the Gautreaux Assisted Housing program in Chicago, focus on facilitating the relocation of residents to lower-poverty communities in the metropolitan area (for a review of dispersal programs, see Varady and Walker 2003). Key differences that distinguish the mixed-income approach include the greater critical mass of lower-income families in proximity to one another, the presence of a single development entity with responsibility for the overall housing area, the physical

design and social engineering possibilities represented by building a new development, and the opportunity for low-income families to remain in familiar areas of the inner city rather than relocate to the suburbs or unfamiliar areas of the city. However, given that both approaches seek to move low-income families into proximity with more affluent families, we will draw on evidence from the study of dispersal programs where relevant.

Although there have been important early efforts to better articulate and assess the rationales behind mixed-income development (e.g., Briggs 1997; Brophy and Smith 1997; Epp 1996; Khadduri 2001, Khadduri and Martin 1997; Kleit 2005; Mason 1997; Popkin, Buron, et al. 2000b; Rosenbaum, Stroh, and Flynn 1998; Schwartz and Tajbakhsh 1997; Smith 2002), the theoretical assumptions behind this redevelopment strategy remain under-examined. Policy makers and researchers alike would probably agree with Schwartz and Tajbakhsh's (1997, 81) assessment that until we can develop a better understanding of why mixed-income housing should work and how well it actually works, "advocacy of mixed-income housing will be based largely on faith and on dissatisfaction with the previous thrust of low-income housing policy." Thus, while major mixed-income developments have been built and occupied in cities such as Atlanta, Boston, Kansas City, Louisville, Seattle, and St. Louis and even bigger developments are under way in Chicago, policy implementation has gotten well ahead of conceptual clarity and empirical justification. Furthermore, the challenges emerging in the federal HOPE VI (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere) program (to be discussed below) where mixed-income has been implemented as a strategy for public housing transformation—concerning, for example, the disparities between the number of units demolished and those replaced for public housing residents; the currently low numbers of returning residents (and changes in eligibility requirements constraining such return); the length of time between relocation and possible return, and the limitations of service provision to support relocation, return, and integration—complicate the task of understanding the likely real-world benefits of mixed-income development as a poverty alleviation strategy.

Despite the lack of clarity about the expected and actual benefits of mixed-income development, we are witnessing increasing local investment in this strategy at a time of shrinking public sector budgets and increased demand for affordable urban housing. The past decade and a half have seen sweeping changes in federal low-income housing policy in the United States, including the repeal of the one-to-one replacement rule and the emergence of the Housing Choice Voucher program as the largest housing assistance program in the country (Popkin et al. 2004). The change of

administration in 2000 brought intense scrutiny of current federal housing policy, including reductions in funding and the very real prospect of the eventual elimination of programs such as HOPE VI. It is within this context that we suggest that a much more detailed exploration and assessment of the expected benefits of mixed-income development is needed.

In this article, we undertake a comprehensive review of the theoretical and empirical evidence on the rationales for mixed-income development. We focus on four theoretical propositions regarding how mixed-income development may benefit low-income families. These propositions are drawn primarily from our review of the literature on the causes of urban poverty, emerging research on mixed-income development, and our synthesis of the stated goals of mixed-income development as articulated by policy makers. The first is a *social networks* argument, which assumes that, through social interaction among neighbors of different incomes and backgrounds, mixed-income development can connect low-income people to networks that provide access to resources, information, and employment. The second is a *social control* argument, which posits that the presence of higher-income residents will lead to higher levels of accountability to norms and rules through increased informal social control and thus increased order and safety for all residents. The third is a *behavioral* argument, which assumes that the presence of higher-income residents will lead to the influence of role modeling and the observation of alternate lifestyles and norms, which will in turn promote individual behavioral change and an increased sense of self-efficacy among lower-income residents. The fourth is a *political economy of place* argument, which suggests that the influence of higher-income residents will generate new market demand and political pressure to which external political and economic actors are more likely to respond, leading to higher quality goods and services available to all residents.

In the following section, we briefly review the literature on the determinants of persistent urban poverty and the mechanisms through which it is reproduced. We then describe the four theoretical propositions in more detail, assess available evidence about their relative importance, and examine the extent of their application in mixed-income developments. Finally, we consider the implications for future urban development planning, implementation, and research.

## **The Determinants of Persistent Urban Poverty**

Mixed-income development is, in large part, a policy response to the scholarly analysis of the determinants of the persistent poverty that has

gripped much of inner-city America since the mid-1970s. As a foundation for our discussion of the theoretical propositions that undergird mixed-income development, we briefly review some of the key strands of this scholarship.

In *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987), William Julius Wilson presented his highly influential description and analysis of a new urban poverty, which was characterized by the geographic concentration in certain neighborhoods of high rates of joblessness and welfare dependency; high proportions of female-headed households, out-of-wedlock birth, and teen pregnancy; and high levels of social disorganization, violence, and crime. Wilson's analysis, along with complementary work by other scholars, formed the basis for a new view of urban poverty that helped explain the growth in high poverty neighborhoods between 1970 and 1990.

A leading explanation for the new urban poverty was the restructuring of the U.S. economy from one based largely on manufacturing to an information- and service-based economy. This led to a dramatic loss of stable living-wage jobs for low-skilled workers in many inner-city neighborhoods in the northeast and midwest (Kasarda 1983, 1990; Wilson 1987, 1996). Instead, the urban labor market became largely bifurcated into high-wage (e.g., technology) and low-wage (e.g., retail ) service sectors (Jargowsky 1997). This "skills mismatch" was coupled with the exodus of businesses to the suburbs, in search of cheaper and more abundant land and higher-skilled workers, which created a "spatial mismatch" (Holzer 1991; Jencks and Mayer 1990a; Kain 1968, 1992).

The impact of this economic restructuring has had especially harsh effects on people of color, particularly for African Americans who, due to high levels of racial segregation in urban areas, are disproportionately concentrated in poor, inner-city neighborhoods. Other factors that have contributed to the growth of urban poverty among minorities include employment discrimination; differential treatment by law enforcement and the justice system, resulting in vastly disproportionate numbers of African Americans and Latinos in prison; underinvestment in infrastructure, goods, and services in predominantly minority communities; and underinvestment in urban public schools that serve a predominantly minority student population (Bell 1992; Darity and Mason 1998; Hacker 1992; Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991; Massey and Denton 1993; Pager 2003).

The social isolation of low-income African Americans was exacerbated by the loosening of racial discrimination in housing markets in the suburbs and other parts of cities. While positive in many ways, the exodus of black middle-class and working-class residents from urban neighborhoods, it is argued, had very negative effects on the inner city (Jargowsky 1997;



Jargowsky and Bane 1990; Ricketts and Sawhill 1986; Wilson 1987, 1996). First, it meant a loss of resources from the income of those families, which had helped to support a local economy and sustain well-functioning institutions. Second, it meant a decrease in the presence of families with “mainstream” patterns of norms and behavior (Wilson 1987). Third, it meant a loss of families who were more likely to exert pressure within the community for community order and safety and to place demands on external actors to provide high quality goods and services.

According to this analysis, a critical factor contributing to the effects of these changes was the level of concentration of low-income families left within inner-city neighborhoods. Not only did families have to contend with their own challenges, but they were in an environment where a vast proportion of families were similarly challenged. This led to a level of social isolation that further disconnected families in these neighborhoods from opportunities for and examples of upward mobility. Several studies have documented that there are important neighborhood effects on outcomes such as school achievement and teenage pregnancy, although direct effects are relatively small compared with the influence of family-level characteristics (e.g., Briggs 1997; Brooks-Gunn et al. 1997; Crane 1991; Datcher 1982; Ellen and Turner 1997; Galster and Killen 1995; Jencks and Mayer 1990b). This demonstrates the additional burden of not only being poor but living in a high-poverty community.

The most extreme manifestation of concentration effects and social isolation in urban America is in public housing. Originally intended as temporary housing for families facing difficult times, public housing has become a permanent home to generations of families with severe economic and social challenges. Several studies document the political and social processes, including federal policy decisions, local politics, racial discrimination, and mismanagement that led to the warehousing of very low-income families in public-housing developments (Bowly 1978; Hirsch 1998; Popkin, Gwiasda, et al. 2000a; Vale 2002; Venkatesh 2000).

The destructive and intractable impact of the hyperconcentration of poverty in public housing developments has compelled the federal government to embrace mixed-income housing as an alternative approach. Much of the current national attention on mixed-income development is a result of the high-profile redevelopment of public housing. In 1992, the federal government launched HOPE VI, a \$5 billion effort to rehabilitate the most severely distressed public housing around the country (Naparstek et al. 2000; Popkin et al. 2004; Turbov and Piper 2005). While some of the funds are used simply to revitalize existing developments, many of the HOPE VI

projects are demolishing existing developments and replacing them with new, mixed-income housing. To establish the redevelopment and design principles that would guide the HOPE VI program, the Department of Housing and Urban Development drew heavily on the ideas and experience of New Urbanism, a growing national movement that advocates for the planning and design of more diverse and livable communities (Barnett 2003; Bohl 2000; Bressi 1994; Day 2003; P. Katz 1994; Talen 1999, 2002). Chief among the primary principles adopted by the Congress for New Urbanism is that communities should contain a range of housing types to accommodate residents with a range of income levels (Leccese and McCormick 1999).

### **Theoretical Propositions Regarding Mixed-Income Development**

The four theoretical propositions for mixed-income development that we will discuss here build on different explanations of the causes of urban poverty. Mixed-income development responds explicitly to the social organizational and cultural explanations of poverty but does not address macrostructural factors such as changes in the U.S. economy and structural discrimination. This is clearly an important limitation of the mixed-income development strategy to which we will return in our discussion of implications. At best, mixed-income development can be seen as only one component of a strategy for lifting families out of poverty.

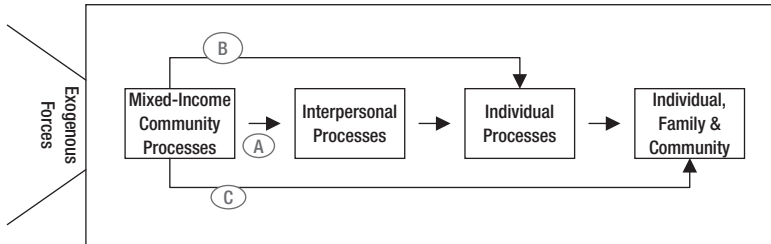
### **Toward a Consolidated Conceptual Framework**

To frame their collaborative research on neighborhood effects on child development, Aber et al. (1997, 45) developed a conceptual framework, which we have modified to help consolidate the theoretical strands presented here (see Figure 1).

In their framework, Aber et al. (1997) integrated two major areas of theory, social disorganization theory (Shaw and McKay 1942) and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) structural-ecological approach to human development. Aber et al. delineated four levels of context that influence developmental outcomes: neighborhood and community processes, social and interpersonal processes, and individual processes, all of which are influenced by exogenous forces and processes beyond the community setting.

To analyze the proposed benefits of a mixed-income context, the four theoretical propositions outlined earlier can be incorporated into this

**Figure 1**  
**Effects of a Mixed-Income Context**



Note: Adapted from Aber et al. (1997, 45).

multilevel framework. At the *community level* there are several key processes at play: increased social control that promotes greater accountability to social norms, individual and collective leveraging of external resources, and the generation of a culture of work and social responsibility. At the *interpersonal level*, the key process is interaction across income levels that could include information sharing, building social networks, and role modeling. At the *individual level*, the key processes include behavior modification (i.e., self-regulation, use of time, job search methods), change in aspirations, and sense of efficacy.

In addition to the levels, three pathways of influence can be delineated (see Figure 1): (A) from community processes to interpersonal processes to individual processes to individual and family outcomes, (B) from community processes to individual processes to outcomes, and (C) from community processes directly to individual outcomes. Given that our primary interest is the effects of a mixed-income environment on individual outcomes, we discuss the flow of influence in that direction. However, the direction of influence can be hypothesized to also flow in the opposite direction.

Next, we briefly demonstrate how this conceptual framework can help explicate the causal assumptions hypothesized within the four theoretical propositions. In the subsequent section, we turn to a detailed review of the literature that provides the theoretical and empirical foundation for these ideas.

1. The *social networks* proposition operates along pathway (A): Proximity and interpersonal contact at the community level provide opportunities

for social interaction between residents of different income levels and backgrounds. Social interaction leads to the building of familiarity and trust and eventually to the exchange of information and resources that support individual processes such as employment search. Enhanced individual processes lead to improved individual, family, and community outcomes such as higher employment and greater self-sufficiency.

2. The *social control* proposition operates along all three pathways (A), (B), and (C). Along pathway (A), new and strengthened interpersonal relationships among particular individuals lead to greater accountability to each other, and others whom they both know, such as their children. Those in these new networks who commit a delinquent act are more likely to be recognized and held accountable by others. Less delinquent behavior leads to improved outcomes for individuals in those networks such as fewer arrests and lower rates of incarceration. Along pathway (B), increased social control at the community level as a whole and an increased collective sense of vigilance on behalf of the community promote individual behavior modification among those previously inclined to delinquency and crime. As above, abstention from these activities reduces contact with the criminal justice system. Along pathway (C), greater social control at the community level promotes greater neighborhood safety and reduced crime, which directly improves the quality of life for individuals and families.
3. The *behavioral* proposition operates along pathways (A) and (B). Along pathway (A), proximity and interpersonal contact at the community level provide opportunities for social interaction. Individuals modify their behaviors based on the direct influence and mentoring of others and these modified behaviors leads to improved outcomes such as school achievement and better employment. Along pathway (B), the socioeconomic diversity in the community creates a dominant culture of work and social responsibility. The actions and routines of more affluent families are observed at a distance and emulated by others. As in other pathways, the individual behavior modification in turn leads to improved individual outcomes as well as greater self-sufficiency among families and reduced illicit activity at the community level.
4. The *political economy of place* proposition operates along pathway (C). Individual and collective leveraging of external resources leads to higher-quality local services and infrastructure, thus directly promoting an improved quality of life for local residents.

Discussions of the benefits of mixed-income development often reference the value of relationships among residents of different income levels, and as would be expected, social interaction appears as a factor in three of the four propositions. However, an important point to note is that only one

of the three pathways *requires* direct interpersonal interaction across income levels. Thus, even *without* social interaction, a theoretical case can be made for the benefit of mixed-income housing to low-income residents. This is significant since, as we shall see, the assumption that such interaction can be easily facilitated through mixed-income housing is open to serious question.

A basic theory of mixed-income development, then, would hold that first, context matters for individual and family well-being, and second, that a mixed-income context is a more beneficial environment, on balance, for low-income individuals and their families than a context of concentrated poverty (though these benefits may be qualified by the potential costs of such a move, including loss of existing support networks and an increased sense of stigma and isolation).

We will now examine each of the four theoretical propositions in turn. To elucidate the propositions, we identify how each is derived from a proposed cause of urban poverty and define more fully the core concepts and empirical evidence supporting them. Next, we discuss how the concepts are expected to be manifested in a mixed-income development, describe any empirical evidence for whether they have been observed in these developments, and review any evidence for their association with resident and community outcomes. Finally, we draw conclusions about the relative value of each proposition in light of existing empirical evidence.

## **Social Networks as “Social Capital”**

One of the more compelling explanations for persistent urban poverty is that with the exodus of higher-income families to other parts of the metropolitan area, inner-city residents have lost regular contact with individuals who can provide access to information about jobs, other resources, and other forms of social support. Thus, one argument for mixed-income development is that by attracting higher-income residents back to the inner city, mixed-income development can facilitate the establishment of effective social networks that produce social capital.

The concept of social capital is extremely relevant to our discussion here but has been critiqued for having lost its meaning and utility due to its multiple and evolving uses (see Portes 1998; Sampson, Morenoff, and Earls 1999; Sandefur and Laumann 1998). Used as early as 1920 by Hanifan, in midcentury by Jane Jacobs (1961) and Ulf Hannerz (1969), and later by Pierre Bourdieu (1986), in the United States social capital was given its most influential contemporary explication by James Coleman (1988) and later became popularized in the work of Robert Putnam (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti

1993; Putnam 1995, 2000) (Chupp 1999). Although there are important differences in the way Coleman, Putnam, and others have defined the term, there is consensus that social capital is a productive asset that resides in the networks of relationships among actors and takes meaning through its purposive use.

Granovetter (1973, 1983, 1995) has argued that networks among individuals that provide access to information and opportunities are an important source of upward mobility, particularly for employment. Most important are those relationships—"weak ties"—that provide individuals with access to resources beyond their networks of close association (see also Elliott 1999; Lin and Dumin 1986; Lin, Vaughn, and Ensel 1981; Stoloff, Glanville, and Bienenstock 1999). Likewise, Gittel and Vidal (1998) and Briggs (1997) differentiated between bonding social capital, which provides individuals with social support from family and friends in their attempts to "get by," and bridging social capital, which is more useful in individuals' attempts to "get ahead" (Briggs 1997, 178). Individuals with fewer weak ties will be less able to strategically span the "structural holes" (Burt 1992) that exist in local labor markets to take advantage of resources that exist in more distal networks. Corcoran, Datcher, and Duncan (1980) presented a supply- and demand-side economic analysis of why individuals with strong networks should be able to find more highly paid jobs and why firms that offer such jobs prefer informal search strategies (for a more formal analysis, see also Montgomery 1991, 1992).

In his study of professional, technical, and managerial White male workers in Newton, Massachusetts, Granovetter (1995) found that 56 percent used personal contacts to find out about jobs, and respondents believed that information secured through personal contacts was of higher quality. Based on a study of men in upstate New York, Lin, Vaughn, and Ensel (1981) found that 57 to 59 percent used personal contacts to attain a job and that resources available through one's social network were significant in explaining occupational status. They found that friends, rather than relatives, provided better access to a greater range and prestige of occupational options (Lin and Dumin 1986). Furthermore, they found that the use of weak ties seemed most advantageous for those with lower socioeconomic status, since those ties allowed them to reach higher-status contacts and achieve access to higher-status occupations. In their study of women in the Los Angeles labor market, Stoloff, Glanville, and Bienenstock (1999) found evidence that "network bridges"—relationships with individuals of another gender, race, or from another neighborhood—improved employment status.

What do we know about how social networks are actually formed among individuals? Due to personal preference and structural constraints, people's

social circles are generally restricted to people similar to themselves (Fischer 1982; Lee, Campbell, and Miller 1991; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook 2001; Michelson 1976). Due to changes in technology and mobility, residents of modern urban neighborhoods generally rely less on neighbors for intimate support than in previous eras (Fischer 1982; Fischer et al. 1997; Wellman 1979; Wellman and Leighton 1979). Despite these developments, proximity still influences network formation (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook 2001; Wellman 1979; Wellman and Wortley 1990) and instrumental support (Chaskin 1997). Community of residence provides important structural opportunities for and constraints on the formation and sustaining of relationships (Fischer 1982). Studies on the impact of the physical environment on communal relations suggest that opportunity for contact, proximity to others, and appropriate space in which to interact are key factors that can promote and shape social interaction (Fleming, Baum, and Singer 1985; Keane 1991; Wilner, Walkley, and Cook 1952, 1955; Yancey 1972). Thus, it is theorized that mixed-income developments, if appropriately designed in ways that promote the spatial integration of residents at different income levels and provide appropriate common space that allow for informal interaction, may shape relationships among individual residents.

The social networks of lower-income individuals tend to be more localized than those with higher incomes (Campbell and Lee 1992; Fischer 1982). This is also true of African Americans (Lee, Campbell, and Miller 1991; Oliver 1988). Elliott (1999) provided evidence that less educated workers in high-poverty neighborhoods are twice as likely to report finding employment through neighbors as less educated workers in low-poverty neighborhoods. However, this reliance on strong ties has a downside: "the heavy concentration of social energy in strong ties has the impact of fragmenting communities of the poor into encapsulated networks with poor connections between these units; individuals so encapsulated may then lose some of the advantages associated with the outreach of weak ties. This may be one more reason why poverty is self-perpetuating" (Granovetter 1983, 213). By mixing incomes in a community, lower-income residents may be able to build weak ties with more affluent neighbors and thereby improve access to employment networks and other resources.

A key assumption about mixed-income development is that proximity will lead to relationship building. Yet as Briggs (1997, 197) has pointed out, "geographic proximity does not a neighbor make—at least not in the social sense." It is assumed by policy makers and others that residents of different income levels will interact with each other at a level of engagement that will

enable the transfer of information. Briggs (1997, 202) critiqued this assumption: "In the context of housing mobility—and particularly where physical design or extreme differences in race, class, or culture act as barriers—this assumption of social contact is quite heroic and unfounded, at least according to the empirical evidence on neighboring and community participation." From his review of studies of spatial determinism, Michelson (1976) concluded that spatial proximity determines interaction patterns only under conditions of real or perceived homogeneity among neighbors. Based on a study of residents in two public housing developments in large Canadian cities, Keane (1991) reported that heterogeneity among neighbors can act as a barrier to social interaction. The conclusion Keane drew based on his research, and that of others, is not very promising: "a heterogenous apartment building, if large enough, and diverse enough, may be ideal if it allows people of similar or complementary lifestyles and interests to interact, while avoiding interaction with others with different, opposing or conflicting lifestyles" (pp. 41-42) (see also Gillis 1983).

Kleit (2001, 2002) closely examined the impact of living in a more economically integrated context on networks. She compared the job networks of women living in dispersed and clustered scattered-site housing. She found while the dispersed residents did indeed belong to significantly more economically diverse networks, they felt less close to their neighbors than residents in clustered housing. Residents of clustered scattered-site housing, who were living with neighbors more like themselves, were more likely to talk to neighbors about jobs.

Krohn (1986, S88) suggested that "in areas where there is a relatively small proportion of lower-status residents and a larger proportion of middle-status residents, the lower-status residents have a higher probability of associating with middle-status residents than in areas where the proportions are reversed." The literature is not very helpful in specifying the nature of the interaction necessary to facilitate the exchange of information and job leads in a mixed-income environment. Presumably the individuals must have had enough repeated contact and familiarity to have a substantive enough conversation for information about employment needs and resources to be exchanged.

Allport (1954) was particularly interested in factors that can promote positive relationships between individuals with different backgrounds. He suggested that factors that promote these relationships include equal group status, common goals, common interests, and the support of authorities. In preparation for her study of social interaction at the New Holly HOPE VI development in Seattle, Washington, Kleit (2005) built on Allport's work to



develop a heuristic model of factors that might facilitate social interaction in a mixed-income development. She hypothesized that key factors include shared characteristics (such as race or ethnicity, language, gender, and housing tenure), equal status contacts that provide opportunities to interact in positions of relative equality (such as community activities and community facilities such as day care centers and community centers), shared common space (such as a hallway or walkway), and length of residence.

To what extent are social networks being formed across income levels at existing mixed-income communities? Current evidence is limited and mixed. Most studies have found little interaction across income levels at mixed-income developments. Based on interviews with developers, property managers, and other local stakeholders at seven mixed-income developments, Brophy and Smith (1997) reported that there was little evidence of neighboring relationships across income levels. Although neighbors reportedly lived together comfortably, the interaction level was deemed insignificant. Ryan et al. (1974) found that tenants in mixed-income developments in Boston report a median of only two visiting relationships with development neighbors. It should be noted that the same median was found for a comparison group in developments without an income mix; thus, in both cases, social interaction was low. In their scan of early experience across eight HOPE VI sites, Buron et al. (2002) report that residents of differing income levels were friendly in exchanging greetings, but that relatively few report regular interaction beyond that. They also found that HOPE VI movers who returned to redeveloped sites—and therefore were reunited with others with whom they had formerly lived—reported higher rates of neighboring than those who used a housing voucher to move to low-poverty neighborhoods. Based on his review of eight studies of scattered-site public housing around the country, Hogan (1996) reported minimal social mixing between public housing residents and their new neighbors. Although public housing residents reported feeling welcome in their new neighborhoods and not socially isolated, they reported few instances of socializing or visiting with other residents. In her study of Lake Parc Place in Chicago, Mason (1997) found that many residents place a high value on their privacy and purposely place boundaries on their interactions and spend time away from the development in order to avoid intrusion into their lives by fellow residents.

Two studies have found direct evidence of social interaction in mixed-income developments. In their study of Lake Parc Place in Chicago, Rosenbaum, Stroh, and Flynn (1998) found some evidence of neighboring relationships across income levels. However, the range of incomes at that

development was quite narrow: it included low-income (below 50 percent of area median income) and moderate-income residents (50 to 80 percent of area median income), and there were no market-rate units. Importantly, 60 percent of the moderate-income residents had lived in public housing before and therefore had a shared life experience with those in the public housing units. There was a high level of physical integration at Lake Parc Place, where income groups were mixed in every building and on every floor. In contrast, at Harbor Point in Boston, for example, subsidized families live in separate buildings from those in market-rate units and minimal interaction has been observed (Brophy and Smith 1997). This raises important issues of physical design to which we shall return. Rosenbaum, Stroh, and Flynn initially included survey questions intended to determine specifically whether residents were interacting with residents from *other* income levels but eventually removed those questions due to the discomfort that they caused respondents. This challenge they encountered raises implications for other research efforts on this topic.

In her study of the New Holly HOPE VI redevelopment in Seattle, Kleit (2005) found some evidence of social interaction within a development that has a much broader range of income levels than at Lake Parc Place. Although she found “higher levels of neighboring” than in other studies, she also found that public housing residents had fewer ties with homeowners than did the tax-credit renters and other homeowners. Proximity within the development and shared attributes (ethnicity, language, education, marital status, owner/renter) were associated with higher levels of social ties. She also found that when there are children in the household, they can act as bridges to other families with children, but because fewer homeowners tended to have children in the household, this did not result in greater social ties across housing tenure. Community facilities and activities were relatively well attended by the full range of residents of the mixed-income development and appeared to increase renters’ reported connections with homeowners, but not vice versa. It is difficult to generalize from Kleit’s study given the unique level of diversity at New Holly. The development is home to Whites, African Americans, and new immigrants from Southeast Asia and East Africa, with twelve languages being spoken by families in the development. Much of the social interaction there was shaped and constrained by language and cultural barriers.

Where networks have been established between residents of varying income levels, do they have a positive impact? There currently exists little evidence to answer this question. Brophy and Smith (1997) reported finding no evidence of upward mobility for low-income residents in their scan

of seven developments. The developers and property managers with whom Smith (2002) spoke reported that residents indicated that members of the social service staff were more instrumental in helping to get jobs than were other residents. This has implications for the kinds of supports that are likely to be needed in mixed-income developments for low-income residents if they are to benefit from living there.

Although our focus here is mixed-income development, it is worth reviewing the literature on dispersal strategies, which also aim to move low-income families to low-poverty settings. Research on the Gautreaux Assisted Housing Program in Chicago and the national Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration Program (MTO) provides some evidence about outcomes experienced by residents who move to low-poverty areas, but most studies are unable to explore the role that social networks played in those outcomes. Residents relocated to lower-poverty areas through the Gautreaux program were more likely to be employed; and their children were more likely to graduate from high school, attend college, and, if they did not attend college, to be employed and have jobs with better pay (Rosenbaum and Popkin 1991; Rosenbaum 1995). However there were no differences in earnings or hours worked for residents who relocated. Research from MTO reports no significant early or interim impacts on individual employment rates (Orr et al. 2003; Hanratty, McLanahan, and Pettit 2003; Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2003).

As far as relationships with neighbors in dispersal programs, Rosenbaum et al. (1991) found no differences in number of friends and interactions with neighbors between Gautreaux participants who moved to the more affluent suburbs and those who moved within the city. They offer this as evidence that low-income families can indeed establish supportive relationships with middle-income neighbors. Mendenhall's (2004) qualitative research with Gautreaux participants is one of the only studies to specifically examine the role of social networks in employment outcomes. Speaking with program participants an average of fifteen years after their original move to low-poverty areas, Mendenhall reported that demographic differences between the women and their neighbors hindered the formation of relationships, that when job information was shared it was often for entry-level positions, and that the best sources of information about employment came more often from coworkers and through other institutional relationships.

In summary, there is limited empirical evidence so far to support the proposition that mixed-income development will lead to changes in residents' social networks. As Bennett (1998, 114) argued in his review of planned mixed-income development in Chicago's Cabrini Green neighborhood,

planners “seem to presume that communal social relations will spring, more or less spontaneously, from appropriately balanced design features. This is not likely.” Most studies have found little interaction across income levels, and those that have found evidence of interaction have not been able to demonstrate that the interaction has led to information about jobs or other resources. There have been no studies documenting the link between interaction and job attainment in mixed-income developments.

There is evidence that interaction is more likely among residents with shared characteristics such as housing history and common life experience, ethnicity, and marital status. It may be possible to promote interaction through such mechanisms as managing proximity in the development, planned community events, and common facilities that provide civic space and the opportunity for informal interaction. Much more research is needed, however, on the types of interaction required for the exchange of useful information on employment and other issues, whether interaction of that type is occurring in mixed-income communities, and what mechanisms may be most effective in promoting it.

## **Social Control**

Another important explanation for persistent urban poverty is that the loss of working families has meant the loss of individuals who were more likely to exert pressure within the community for order and safety. This second theoretical proposition posits that the higher-income residents in mixed-income developments will raise the levels of social organization in the development and surrounding community. Sampson and Groves (1989, 777) defined social organization as “the ability of a community structure to realize the common values of its residents and maintain effective social controls” (see also Shaw and McKay 1942; Kornhauser 1978; Kasarda and Janowitz 1974). Effective social control requires interdependent relationships in a community and collective supervision to prevent and address local problems.

A key element of social organization is the density of local acquaintance networks, which influences the extent to which community members recognize each other and can hold each other accountable (Freudenberg 1986; Sampson and Groves 1989). In this sense, social organization incorporates ideas others have discussed under the framework of social capital. For example, Coleman (1988) described the key concept of network closure: The greater the extent to which the individuals who know you know each other, the more that network can facilitate informal social control. The

social ties that are necessary to establish network closure need not be intimate or affective ties; casual or instrumental relationships between community members or even attentive, regular observers—"eyes on the street" in Jane Jacob's (1961) terms—can provide accountability (Chaskin 2001). Another important element of social organization is local participation in formal and voluntary organizations, which builds the community's capacity to defend its interests. Social organization is theorized to be the key mediating mechanism between attributes of a community, such as socioeconomic status and homeownership, and levels of crime and delinquency (Sampson and Groves 1989).

There is strong evidence for the relationship between levels of socioeconomic status, homeownership, and residential stability and the level of social organization in a community, which in turn has been shown to be associated with levels of delinquency and violence. In their analysis of the British Crime Survey, which includes almost eleven thousand respondents across 238 localities, Sampson and Groves (1989) found that lower levels of community socioeconomic status had the largest effect among other variables on the extent of unsupervised peer groups. In turn, the rates of unsupervised youth had a large and significant effect on self-reported personal and property victimization and rates of offending.

Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) have developed a related concept—collective efficacy—to measure residents' perceptions of social cohesion and trust among neighbors and the extent to which their neighbors are willing to take action on behalf of the community. Using data from the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, which includes interviews with almost eighty-eight hundred residents in 343 neighborhood clusters, Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls analyzed the relationship between socioeconomic status, homeownership, concentrated disadvantage, and collective efficacy. They found that high socioeconomic status and homeownership was associated with elevated levels of collective efficacy. In contrast, concentrated disadvantage was negatively associated with collective efficacy. Collective efficacy was found to be strongly negatively associated with self-reported violence and the explanatory power of social composition was reduced by the inclusion of the collective efficacy variable. Thus, collective efficacy was demonstrated to partially mediate between compositional aspects of community and violence.

In a mixed-income environment, higher-income residents will raise the socioeconomic status and homeownership rates of the community. Increased socioeconomic status and homeownership rates should be associated with increased informal social control by residents, stronger accountability to

norms and rules, and lower levels of deviant and antisocial behavior. An additional mechanism derived from social organization theory is that rates of participation in voluntary and formal community organizations should increase, also contributing to more effective collective control of community life. Relatively higher-income residents in low-income communities are more likely to participate in community organizations (Crenson 1983; Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995).

The available evidence is mixed about whether increased levels of social control have been observed in existing mixed-income developments and, if so, the source of that increased control. Based on their surveys of residents, Rosenbaum, Stroh, and Flynn (1998) found that the higher-income residents at Lake Parc Place provided strong support for rules and enforcement. Only 5.4 percent of the moderate-income residents felt that there were too many rules; 26.8 percent of the low-income residents felt that way. And while only 3.6 percent of the moderate-income residents felt that management was too strict, 12.5 percent of the low-income residents felt that way. However, in their study of eight HOPE VI sites, Buron et al. (2002) found no difference in the levels of social control reported by public housing residents of HOPE VI sites, housing choice voucher apartments, unsubsidized apartments, and public housing developments. The one exception was that control of graffiti was perceived to be significantly lower in public housing sites. Based on his conversations with developers and property managers, Smith (2002, 22) reported that strong property management seemed relatively more important for social control than actions by residents: "The ability to manage negative social behaviors appears to have far more to do with the practices of the management than the income mix of the tenants."

In summary, although there is very limited empirical evidence for increased social organization in mixed-income communities, the strong empirical evidence for the impact of socioeconomic status, homeownership, and residential stability on informal social control makes this proposition compelling. More research is needed to assess levels of social organization in mixed-income developments and determine to what extent the presence of higher-income residents is an important factor.

## **Culture, Behavior, and Role Modeling**

A central concept in the urban poverty literature to which mixed-income development is a policy response is the notion of a "culture of poverty." Some scholars have argued that a key factor in the persistence of poverty is that many families living in the inner city have adopted destructive and antisocial

habits that are counterproductive to their well-being and upward mobility (Auletta 1982; Lemann 1986a, 1986b; Lewis 1969; Mead 1992; Murray 1984; Wilson 1987). As Kasarda (1990, 314) described it, "The spatial concentration of poverty, joblessness, and social dysfunctions . . . contributed to the formation of a segregated, culturally isolated, immobilized subgroup that has come to be labeled the *urban underclass*." Due to the concentration of poverty, he adds, "ghetto problems became magnified, and socialization of the young residents to mainstream values and positive work ethics atrophied."

Anderson (1990) provided a vivid documentation of the loss of role models in his ethnographic description of the role of "old heads" in the inner city:

Traditionally, the "old head" was a man of stable means who believed in hard work, family life, and the church. He was an aggressive agent of the wider society whose acknowledged role was to teach, support, encourage, and in effect socialize young men to meet their responsibilities regarding work, family, the law, and common decency. . . . But today, as meaningful employment has become increasingly scarce for young blacks and as crime and drugs have become a way of life for many, the old head is losing his prestige and authority. . . . Today, too, many of those who in earlier times might have become old heads have left the ghetto with the middle class exodus or have simply disengaged. (p. 3)

The third theoretical proposition for mixed-income development follows from this orientation, arguing that by being exposed to families from more stable socioeconomic backgrounds, other families may over time adapt more socially acceptable and constructive behavior, including seeking regular work, showing respect for property, and abiding by other social norms (Michelson 1976).

Social learning theory provides a conceptual framework for understanding the potential for individual behavior to be shaped by the observation of behavior modeled by others (Bandura 1977). Indeed, Bandura (1977) posited that most human behavior is learned observationally through a process of perceiving modeled actions and outcomes, coding and retaining information about the actions, reproducing the actions, and receiving external positive reinforcement for the adapted behavior. Bandura suggested that "the types of models that prevail within a given social setting affect which human qualities, from among many alternatives, will be selectively activated" (p. 88; see also Akers 1979). Keys to modeling include regular association that enables repeated observation, perceptiveness of the observer, and characteristics of the model (Bandura 1977). Modeled behavior is

particularly influential when the model is perceived to be successful and well accomplished. As Bandura explained, "The behavior of models who have gained distinction is more likely to be successful, and hence to have greater functional value for observers, than that of models who are relatively low in vocational, intellectual, or social competence" (p. 88; see also Brewer and Wann 1998). Thus, the work of Bandura and others on social learning suggests that, in general, it is possible that individual action can be shaped through observation of the behavior of others, but for insight about the possibility of role modeling among members of a community, we must turn to studies that explicitly examine a neighborhood context.

There is a broad literature that examines neighborhood effects, in particular the impact of living in a neighborhood with a greater proportion of affluent residents (see, for example, Briggs 1997; Ellen and Turner 1997; Galster and Killen 1995; Gephart 1997; Jencks and Mayer 1990b). The studies by Jencks and Mayer (1990b) and Galster and Killen (1995) attempted to develop some insight into the specific processes by which individuals' behavior may be influenced by the social composition of their surroundings. In discussing school and neighborhood effects on adolescents, Jencks and Mayer (1990b) suggested three mechanisms of influence: peer influence, indigenous adult influence, and the influence of outside adults. They also pointed out that the presence of affluent adults can have a negative effect where there is competition for scarce resources or a dominant effect of relative deprivation (see also Gephart 1997). Galster and Killen (1995) have developed a conceptual model of youth decision making that demonstrates the key influences of local social networks and economic conditions on youth perceptions of the opportunity structure within which they must operate.

As we conceive it, in some cases, a change of behavior from the influence of others may happen through what we call distal role modeling, that is, observing the actions of others over time, such as a neighbor going to work every day, or a neighbor's kids attending school on a regular basis. The argument here is that simply being in an environment where others are acting a particular way may provide motivation to adapt one's behavior. For example, Briggs (1997, 206) suggested, "One important effect in some contexts may be that the jobless poor are motivated by their new, more affluent neighbors in ways that they were not by earlier, poorer ones."

In other cases, role modeling may be more proximal, with residents of different income levels interacting directly and role modeling occurring in a much more intimate way, for example, through direct advice, feedback, and accountability. Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti (1993), for example,



posited that a change of behavior, in terms of observing norms of reciprocity and trust, could emerge through modeling and socialization and a process of repeated exchange over time. Likewise, Krohn (1986) asserted that social networks constrain behavior and, for example, juveniles living in areas with lower proportions of poor residents are less likely to commit delinquent behavior.

While many have found Wilson's (1987) analysis of the exodus of mainstream role models from the inner city compelling, there are those who caution that this "received" wisdom about the extent of internal integration in the pre-desegregation inner city could be mistakenly portrayed as "harmonious mentoring" (Bennett 1998). Furthermore, notions of a culture of poverty have met with fierce criticism as offensive and unfair (M. B. Katz 1993; Valentine 1968). For example, Valentine (1968, 11) argued that we "must distinguish carefully between cultural patterns and external conditions—whether environmental or historical. In particular, care must be taken not to hold those who live by a culture responsible or accountable for conditions that are beyond their control." He added,

The other possibility is that lower-class life does not actually constitute a distinct subculture in the sense often used by poverty analysts. . . . Whatever is distinctive about lower-class life may be no more than a situational adaptation to the structural position of the bottom stratum in a highly stratified society. Accordingly, it is possible that the poor may be much more "middle-class" or "working-class" in their values, aspirations, and other cultural orientations than previous research has indicated. (p. 113)

More specifically, the notion of role modeling by one income group for another risks being seen as demeaning and paternalistic (Rosenbaum, Stroh, and Flynn 1998). The strongest research findings have documented the influence from affluent adults to lower-income children and adolescents, rather than adult-to-adult influence (Anderson 1990; Ellen and Turner 1997; Gephart 1997; Jencks and Mayer 1990b; Kasarda 1990). This has led some researchers to focus the hypothesized influence of mixed-income developments on the dynamic between adults and children (Ellen and Turner 1997; Khadduri and Martin 1997). Also problematic is the notion that members of any higher-income group necessarily demonstrate exclusively productive behavior and are well positioned to model appropriate behavior for others. Families from all income levels struggle with alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence, and illegal and illicit behavior. Conversely, there are many individuals living below the poverty line who have "mainstream"

aspirations for themselves and their families and remain in poverty despite abiding by the law and adhering to social norms.

In general, there is increasing evidence for a benefit to low-income children and adolescents from the presence of middle-class, affluent neighbors in such areas as education outcomes, health, and sexual activity (Briggs 1997; Ellen and Turner 1997; Gephart 1997). However, the mechanisms through which this association comes about is unclear, and there is no evidence in the limited research about mixed-income developments as to whether role modeling is taking place and, if so, what effect it has. Residents with whom Mason (1997) spoke, for example, downplayed the importance of modeling (see also Rosenbaum, Stroh, and Flynn 1998). Interestingly, by surveying residents of mixed-income developments about social opinions and lifestyle values, Ryan et al. (1974, 22) found that "contrary to conventional wisdom, people at different income levels display pretty much the same distribution of values, social attitudes, and lifestyles." While there is certainly a difference between holding a value and acting upon it, there may well be less to be gained from income mixing in terms of changing values than is assumed. The one exception on Ryan et al.'s survey where lower-income residents answered a question differently from higher-income residents was when asked whether they agreed that the only significant difference between poor people and the rest of society is that the poor don't have as much money. Ryan et al. reported that while low-income residents tended to agree with this statement, higher-income residents did not. This suggests that low-income residents would not subscribe to the proposition that they are in need of modeling from higher-income residents. This raises the question referenced earlier by Valentine (1968) as to whether inner-city residents are isolated from mainstream values or simply from mainstream opportunities.

In summary, although the presence of middle-class role models has become a fundamental and commonly accepted rationale for mixed-income development, our review raises serious questions about the relative importance of this proposition.

## **The Political Economy of Place**

Another important explanation for the conditions in inner-city neighborhoods is the neglect and marginalization of these areas due to a variety of powerful market and political forces at the city, regional, national, and even global level. In the context of these forces, the absence of residents who can advocate effectively on behalf of the community, demand high-quality goods and services, and influence public policy is a serious detriment. The final

theoretical proposition for mixed-income development suggests that all residents of a mixed-income community will benefit from the presence of higher-income residents, whose greater economic resources, political connections, and civic engagement should attract and compel greater attention from external actors. The political economy proposition is theoretically distinct from the other three propositions in that it concerns the relationship between residents of the community and external actors, rather than interactions among residents.

Logan and Molotch (1987, 141) discussed the important role that affluent residents of a previously marginalized area can play: higher-income residents can “function as a vanguard for change. . . . In defending their own financial and psychological investments, these [residents] strive to make the entire neighborhood more closely resemble their own way of life.” Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997, 918) described “the differential ability of communities to extract resources and respond to cuts in public service” based on social composition. They noted that “financial investment also provides homeowners with a vested interest supporting the commonweal of neighborhood life” (p. 919).

By bringing higher-income residents into a community, mixed-income developments are expected to increase the proportion of local residents with the willingness and ability to advocate for high quality goods and services. In addition, the greater spending power of the higher-income residents should make the community more attractive for retail and commercial development and services such as banking. Khadduri (2001) argued that higher-income families will demand better performance from neighborhood schools and that because those families have other housing options, they will not tolerate poor management of the development. Increasing the rates of homeownership is particularly important given the differential willingness of those with a financial stake in the community to work to solicit public and private investment in the community.

Not only will more affluent residents act independently on their own behalf, but it is also expected that their presence and engagement will contribute to more effective collective action on behalf of the community. Chaskin (2001, 295; Chaskin et al. 2001) has defined community capacity as “the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of a given community.” This capacity includes resources, such as the skills of residents, networks of relationships between community members, leadership, and collective action. It might be posited that more affluent residents could

contribute more personal resources, broader networks of influence, and greater discretion over their time to help confront the challenges and opportunities that the community faces. As Logan and Molotch asserted (1987, 141), "Not surprisingly, those who ordinarily join and become leaders in community organizations tend to be the middle-class (or aspiring middle-class) homeowners, even if present only in small numbers in any neighborhood." Crenson (1983) and Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995) found that both affluence and homeownership status affect levels of participation in local neighborhood activities and community organizations. Furthermore, Crenson found that more affluent residents were more likely to participate when they lived in neighborhoods with lower socioeconomic status.

However, there are risks for the lower-income residents due to the higher participation of more affluent residents. Although basic community values and interests (safe streets, good schools, efficient city services) are likely to be shared across income groups, the particular needs and priorities of low- versus higher-income residents may differ substantially, and the unequal distribution of power and resources among residents (and among local organizations acting on their behalf) may exacerbate such differences and lead to differential benefits that favor those with more influence. Thus, the benefits that may accrue to mixed-income communities by virtue of the presence or activism of higher-income residents cannot be presumed to redound equally to the well-being of all.

Based on his review of the literature on urban development, Smith (2002, 26) asserted, "Much research has shown that attracting non-poor households to a community is critically important to creating a market for services . . . and exerting political power to improve municipal services." Several studies have provided evidence of the unequal spatial distribution of municipal services (Benson and Lund 1969; Burnett 1984; Judd and Mushkatel 1982; Pinch 1984), although certain services, particularly "mobile" services such as policing, are relatively equitably distributed (Lineberry 1977; see Rich [1982] for a review). Lineberry (1977) concluded that while the overall "unpatterned inequality" in municipal services that he observed in the city of San Antonio did not reflect bias on the part of the public bureaucracy, residents of lower socioeconomic status were disadvantaged by their inability to effectively exercise exit or voice in response to unacceptable service availability and quality. Increasing the number of higher-income people within a community, therefore, does not ensure that the particular needs of lower-income residents will be met.

There is essentially no research in mixed-income developments on the role of higher-income residents in leveraging external resources or to what

end they are leveraged. From his interviews with developers and property managers, Smith (2002) found some evidence that increased pressure from more affluent residents ensures that the development properties are well maintained (see also Popkin et al. 2004).

In summary, despite a lack of empirical evidence about the extent to which affluent residents of mixed-income developments can more effectively demand and attract external resources, based on expectations that homeowners will have greater residential stability, participation in community organizations, likelihood of voting, and spending power, this proposition remains a compelling argument for mixed-income development, though to whose relative benefit such influence will accrue is in need of examination. More research is needed on changes in the amenities and resources available to mixed-income developments and the neighborhoods that surround them with an examination of the role of higher-income residents in leveraging those improvements.

### **Assessment of Propositions Based on Available Evidence**

At this juncture, the most compelling propositions are those that do not rely on social interaction across income levels to promote a higher quality of life for residents of mixed-income developments. The theoretical pathway we outlined that operates via interpersonal relationships seems unlikely, in the short term at least, to hold much promise as a means to improved individual and family outcomes for low-income residents. While research has demonstrated that informal social networks are an important source of information about jobs, there is little evidence yet that this level of interaction will emerge among residents of mixed-income developments. Certainly, it is clear that the development of instrumental ties among neighbors is a long-term process and that residential stability in the mixed-income developments will be a key to increasing the density of acquaintance among residents and the overall social cohesion (Fischer 1982; Freudenberg 1986; Kasarda and Janowitz 1974; Sampson 1988; Sampson and Groves 1989). While role modeling of a more distal nature—the impact of seeing neighbors engage in a daily routine of work—may take place, the least compelling proposition at this time is that through direct interaction, higher-income residents will promote behavioral change among adult lower-income residents. Relatively more compelling is the possibility that the behavior of children and adolescents may be influenced by residence in an environment that facilitates daily observation of the routines of more affluent adults.

Much more promising are the theoretical pathways that operate through the increased social control and improved community attributes—like safety and services—that may be generated in a socioeconomically diverse context. It appears likely that the greatest contribution of the higher-income residents will be to help maintain order in the development and to attract external resources to the community. There is emerging empirical evidence that higher-income residents of mixed-income developments are more stringent about upholding rules and regulations and promoting informal social control. Thus, the propositions concerning social control and political economy hold more promise at this time based on available empirical evidence, though again, how these dynamics may play out differentially for lower- versus higher-income residents needs to be explored.

As Popkin and her colleagues (2004; see also Bohl 2000) concluded from their review of the literature:

While it is clearly feasible to create a healthy mixed-income development that will attract higher-income tenants and provide a pleasant and safe community for all residents, it remains less clear what conditions are required to ensure that living in these communities will have substantial pay-offs for the social and economic status of low-income families over the long term. (pp. 23-24)

In an earlier work, Popkin, Buron, et al. (2000) also made the critical observation that mixed-income developments, due to their screening criteria and other requirements, will be unavailable to many of the most challenged families among the urban poor. Having established the potential and limitations of mixed-income development, we now turn to implications for future implementation and research.

## **Implications for Expectations, Implementation, and Research**

### **Expectations and Implementation**

Our analysis has identified and assessed four theoretical propositions for mixed-income development as a strategy to address poverty. There are significant implications for the design and implementation of mixed-income developments depending on the relative weight placed by policy makers and implementers on these various propositions. It is likely that different mixed-income efforts place different relative emphasis on differing propositions

and therefore have differing expectations about why mixed-income development should “work” and what can be expected as a result. In some settings, the mixed-income approach may be driven by a strong commitment to moving public housing residents out of poverty through better access to employed individuals who can connect them to the world of work. In other settings, there may be little expectation for social interaction but high expectations for neighborhood-level revitalization driven by demands from higher-income residents for neighborhood improvements, high-quality housing and services, and working community institutions.

Mixed-income efforts with different expectations for individual and community-level outcomes may make different design decisions. For example, developers, drawing on New Urbanism ideas, must decide how much to integrate various unit types and consider the creation of common “civic space” and the incorporation of mixed-use elements (Barnett 2003; P. Katz 1994; Leccese and McCormick 1999). They must also decide how much to invest in ensuring that units are indistinguishable to the outside observer; Brophy and Smith (1997) identified this as one of the key principles of mixed-income development. Different levels of investment will be made in providing supportive services to residents and putting in place activities and infrastructure intentionally geared to promote social interaction. Based on these differential investments, we should expect different outcomes, such as the level of social interaction and its potential benefits.

Our analysis has several implications. Policy makers and developers should be urged to be more clear about their expectations and priorities for the mixed-income development they undertake. As we noted earlier, there is a compelling rationale for mixed-income development that has nothing to do with lifting families out of poverty and is simply based on enabling the private development of valuable inner city real estate. Assuming for the moment that there are a significant number of mixed-income developers for whom poverty alleviation is a goal, more clarity is needed about which pathways of change those developers and their partners intend to promote. Without more clarity, we will have a limited ability to evaluate the “success” of the mixed-income approach, learn about the relative merit of different pathways, compare various design and development strategies, and advise policy makers and implementers on the relative value and most effective means of promoting a mixed-income approach. In addition, given the multiplicity of partners involved in any single, mixed-income development effort—private and nonprofit developers, public agencies, social service providers, community partners, lenders—there are likely to be a multiplicity of expectations, in some cases contradictory. More clarity early in the effort

can prevent later conflict and disappointment when certain expectations are not met. Of course, given the complexities of mixed-income implementation, greater clarity about expectations is only an initial step.

We can venture several implications for the implementation of mixed-income development. Although the importance of social capital and the networks that sustain it is increasingly well accepted, we know far less about how to foster and support their development. One approach is to bring people together for particular purposes in the hope that interaction will promote relationships that can have some staying power and that can be reengaged over time for a range of purposes (Chaskin 2006). Community facilities—such as a community center or resource room—and events—such as cookouts, potlucks, and community meetings and celebrations—may be important venues for bringing residents into the same space and providing an opportunity for repeated interaction and relationship building. However, initial research suggests that simply sharing the same space will not build the level of interaction necessary to promote the meaningful exchange of information and support. More must be done through active facilitation of connections by development and program staff to help residents identify areas of common interest. Community institutions—such as community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and schools—can serve important roles of bringing individuals of diverse backgrounds together regularly, identifying common interests and shared values, and promoting the development of informal social networks.

Another approach is to address the structural and environmental factors that may promote or constrain interaction and relationship building. This may include efforts to increase residential stability (through homeownership and tenant management programs), safety (through community policing and other efforts), physical revitalization (including the creation of safe and accessible “civic space” such as parks, community centers, and libraries), and organizational infrastructure (promoting opportunities for participation in a range of clubs, associations, and community organizations) (Chaskin 2006; Sampson 1999). As the New Urbanist tradition asserts, social interaction is influenced by proximity and the opportunity for engagement around shared interests such as common space (Barnett 2003; Bohl 2000; P. Katz 1994; Leccese and McCormick 1999). Architecture, physical design, and the creation of common space may be an important means of shaping how residents interact with one another (Michelson 1976). Thus, integration of the units for various income groups within the same building and complex may be important for facilitating interaction. There is much yet to learn about the relative effectiveness of these approaches



and about the most promising ways to organize and implement them successfully.

Decisions about income mix are obviously important but very dependent on the goals of the development. There are countervailing purposes at play. The goal of reserving as many units as possible for low-income families must be balanced with the goal of attracting residents willing to pay market rates, especially homeowners who will bring greater stability to the development. What is the critical mass of higher-income residents required to generate the communal benefits in terms of increased social control and stronger demand for goods and services? To the extent that promoting social interaction is an important goal, it appears that interaction is more easily generated among residents of proximal income levels—low-income and moderate-income, for example—perhaps especially if the moderate-income residents have previously lived in public housing. This suggests including a moderate-income tier in any development where public subsidies such as low-income housing tax credits can be made available.

Above all, our analysis here has suggested the need to lower expectations for the impact of mixed-income housing on low-income residents. Short- to medium-term impacts in terms of social order and increased quality of goods and services seem to be reasonable expectations, though the extent to which these benefits will redound equally to lower- and higher-income residents of mixed-income developments is open to question. These developments would improve the environment for low-income families and thus have an indirect effect on their well-being. But in terms of more direct effects such as employment gains, opportunity, and well-being, it is unlikely that mixed-income residence by itself can promote observable change in the short or medium term. In terms of employment, the roles of macrostructural factors—the strength of the economy, the availability of accessible jobs for which residents are qualified and for which they will be fairly considered—cannot be influenced by simply relocating to a mixed-income development. In addition to these structural factors, fully addressing poverty among low-income residents of mixed-income developments will require serious investments in education, job readiness, training, and placement; attention to instrumental barriers such as transportation and substance abuse; and attention to more fundamental structural barriers that shape unequal access to opportunity.

Despite the need to lower short-term expectations for mixed-income development, this strategy appears no less promising than dispersal programs, the complementary approach to deconcentrating public housing described at the outset of the article. Based on available research, the clearest

benefit to low-income families in dispersal programs is increased community safety and order, the same benefit we expect from mixed-income developments (Goering and Feins 2003; Orr et al. 2003; Varady and Walker 2003; also instructive are studies on the outcomes for HOPE VI relocatees—see, for example, Buron 2004; Comey 2004; Cunningham 2004). The increased sense of security appears to lead to mental health benefits (Kling et al. 2004). While we do not expect a significant impact on earnings for residents of mixed-income developments, dispersal strategies have so far failed to demonstrate any impact on earnings either. Both strategies require families to adapt to new environments and establish new social networks, but families in mixed-income developments have the advantage of remaining in the inner city and living in close proximity to other low-income families. While mixed-income development presents significant implementation challenges and costs, dispersal programs face significant administrative and political challenges of their own, including resistance from suburban communities, making it difficult to take that approach to scale. In this light, mixed-income development seems worthy of further exploration.

It is very important to note, however, that given the reduction in units available to public housing residents at redeveloped sites and the stringent screening and lease compliance standards that often accompany mixed-income housing, without changes in current policies, residence in mixed-income developments is an option that will be available to very few low-income families and certainly will exclude the most vulnerable and difficult to house (Popkin, Buron, et al. 2000). To fully meet the needs of an increasingly mobile and isolated urban poor, increased investments will be needed in other low-income housing options such as well-maintained public housing developments with strong supportive services and a housing choice voucher program with greater accountability for landlords and more resources to support families' search for housing and ongoing housing stability. Moreover, even those families who are able to navigate the relocation experience and screening criteria to secure units in mixed-income developments may experience significant personal and familial challenges in the new environment including social isolation, stigma, a sense of relative deprivation, increased scrutiny, and competition with more affluent residents for the allocation of scarce local resources (Briggs 1997; Jencks and Mayer 1990b).

Furthermore, while national experience confirms that it is possible to create and populate mixed-income developments, it is still too early to draw conclusions about the feasibility of sustaining a mix of incomes over the long term. The depth of the market of those willing to pay market-rate prices and rents for housing in mixed-income developments is yet unknown

and may vary substantially across cities. The pace of turnover among residents of mixed-income developments and the implications for the financial viability of the venture and for social stability also remain to be understood.

## **Future Research**

There remains much to be understood about mixed-income development as a strategy for addressing poverty. Important areas for future research include questions about the pathways through which mixed-income environments influence their lower-income residents, questions about the design of mixed-income developments, and questions about the outcomes achieved from mixed-income development.

Regarding the pathways we have theorized here, more research is needed in mixed-income environments to ascertain the extent to which a variety of processes are at play, including social interaction and new relationships across income levels, increased social control, a predominant culture of work and social responsibility, and increasing leveraging of external resources. More information is needed about the source, nature, and extent of these processes. Where those processes are observed, more must be learned about the roles and perspectives of residents of various income levels and any facilitating roles played by other community stakeholders. Given the importance of time for relationships to be built and new forms of social organization and control to emerge, it is critical that research on these developments be of a long-term nature.

Regarding design of mixed-income developments, questions persist as to the optimal mix among income levels and the value of the inclusion of a tier of moderate-income residents, relative to the goals for the development. More evidence is needed about whether particular design principles—such as physical integration, common space, and community facilities—are effective in promoting social interaction across income levels and greater social control. Likewise, more evidence is needed about the value of various community-building strategies as a means of facilitating affective and instrumental relationships among residents. Key questions persist about the reciprocal relationships between the developments and schools and other community-based institutions such as faith institutions, businesses, and the police.

Ultimately, there are important questions to be answered about the specific outcomes experienced by low-income residents of mixed-income developments such as family stability, employment and self-sufficiency, and children's school achievement. Attention must be paid to the potential costs for

individuals and their families, including increased social isolation. It will also be important to assess impacts at the neighborhood level in terms of crime and safety, quality of local services, and market and public sector investments. Armed with more information about the direct and indirect impacts of this strategy on low-income families, policy makers will be in a stronger position to assess the promise of mixed-income development as a component of efforts to provide housing and improve life opportunities for those in poverty.

## Notes

1. Smith (2002) defines five such categories of mixed-income housing: moderate-income inclusion, low-income inclusion, broad range of incomes, market-rate inclusion, and affordable mix.

2. Specific percentages for the 16,654 new units currently planned by the Chicago Housing Authority are 37 percent public housing units, 24 percent affordable units, and 39 percent market rate units (Metropolitan Planning Council 2005).

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