



# **Social Mix and the City: Challenging the Mixed Communities Consensus in Housing and Urban Planning Policies**

*Kathy Arthurson*

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Concern about rising crime rates, high levels of unemployment and anti-social behavior of youth gangs within particular urban neighborhoods has reinvigorated public and community debate into just what makes a functional neighborhood.

The nub of the debate is whether concentrating disadvantaged people together doubly compounds their disadvantage and leads to "problem neighborhoods". This debate has prompted interest by governments in Australia and internationally in "social mix policies", to disperse the most disadvantaged members of neighborhoods and create new communities with a blend of residents with a variety of income levels across different housing tenures (public and private rental, home ownership). What is less well acknowledged is that interest in social mix is by no means new.

*Social Mix and the City* offers a critical appraisal of different ways that the concept of social mix has been constructed historically in urban planning and housing policy, including linking to social inclusion. It investigates why social mix policies re-emerge as a popular policy tool at certain times and also challenges the contemporary consensus in housing and urban planning policies that social mix is an optimum planning tool.

### KEY FEATURES

- \* Provides some alternative insights into social mix
- \* Examines the historical use and substance of social mix
- \* Explores questions about the scale of implementation of social mix
- \* Comprehensively analyses the evidence-base for social mix within the framework of the unique Australian experience

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