



Markus Kip: [00:00:00] Hello and welcome to this episode of the Urban Political on racism and social mix. We're pleased to have four guests with us today. Introducing them briefly in the alphabetical order of their first names: Javier Ruiz-Tagle is an assistant prof at the Catholic University of Chile at the Institute of Urban and Territorial Studies. Julie Chamberlain is an assistant professor in urban and inner city studies at the University of Winnipeg in Canada. Martine August is an assistant prof at the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo. And Moritz Rinn is an urban researcher at the Institute of Social Work and Social Policy at the University of Duisburg.

A very warm welcome to all of you. Thank you for being here. And I'm particularly [00:01:00] grateful to Julie Chamberlain who set this episode and this discussion panel together and who has thought about this episode conceptually. And I'd like to hand over to Julie, if you could set the stage for this discussion today.

Julie Chamberlain: Sure. Thank you so much. And I'm so pleased to be here all together today. So, in critical urban literature, social mix has been described as an ideology, as a myth, as a form of faith based planning, sometimes and as a planning practice that doesn't particularly do what it's purported to, and yet is repeated over and over again as a guiding principle and common sense in planning in many parts of the world. Social mix is advocated as a value at the level of neighbourhoods, blocks and buildings. [00:02:00] Even though scholarship has demonstrated that there's often a lack of clarity around what problems social mixing is meant to solve or avoid and what kind of mixed and is desired and why.

Okay. It is imagined and implemented in terms of income, types of housing tenure, and at times race or ethnicity, whether implicitly or explicitly. And sometimes racialization is a factor in mixing but it is taboo to talk about it directly. So that's the sort of implicit side of things. Whereas in other contexts, it's very much explicit that social mixing is taking place on the basis of imagined inherent categorizations of people.

„And in Germany, where I've done some of my research, there is legal support for discrimination against certain kinds of people in the name of creating and maintaining mix in housing [00:03:00] and in neighbourhoods and in particular areas. So there's a structure or a legal framework, an allowance for this kind of practice.

There have been flags raised by a range of different critical urban scholars in terms of how social mix serves as a state strategy of control in favour of people who have economic means and privilege and access to whiteness in particular, but there hasn't been any significant move away from social mix planning in response to those concerns. Social mix has yet to receive a sort of substantial attention as a practice that urgently needs to be rethought and urgently needs to be transformed.

And the moment that we're living in right now is one where I would sort of cautiously refer to as there's some expanded public attention to the realities of structural racism. There are some very strong invisible movements, particularly led by Black indigenous and people of [00:04:00] colour in many parts of the world to address and transform relations of dominance particularly in societal structures and practices like planning. Alongside, however, a



retrenchment of racism and of racial thinking and structural resistance to transformation of structures that we live with.

And so it's in this context that we're coming together today around the question of whether there is such a thing as socially just, social mixing, and to think and talk about together the intersections of racism and social mix. We've brought these folks together in particular; I have drawn on all of your work. I found all of your work really very generative and helpful in thinking about how social mix works and why it might persist despite the longstanding critiques of it. And so, I've brought these folks together in particular as scholars who have [00:05:00] written explicitly about the power dynamics of social mix and what the implications of those power dynamics can be, especially including the disadvantage and attempted control that social mixing can represent for stigmatized, low income, and racialized people.

This is a group of people who do work in and about a range of different geographies in Europe, in Germany, in particular, in Canada, in the United States, in Chile, possibly in other geographies that I'm not aware of yet, and that we'll hear about in the, in the discussion. And so that is some of the logic in bringing together this group at this moment to talk about this topic. And I'm so grateful to be together today and for the opportunity to talk to each other about it. So maybe I'll start by asking the first question there. I wonder if you could introduce yourself, share how you came to study social mix and why you think it's important, particularly this connection [00:06:00] between racism and social mix.

Javier Ruiz-Tagle: First of all, thank you very much, Julie and Markus for setting this all up, for taking this discussion up to a debate. Of course, this is a hot topic for urban studies, for policy prescriptions, for policy debates all around the world. My name is Javier Ruiz-Tagle. I'm Chilean. I'm assistant professor at the Catholic University of Chile. I did my dissertation research at the University of Illinois at Chicago with a comparative study comparing Chicago, the city where I was living, with my city, Santiago, in Chile studying socially diverse neighbourhoods or socially mixed neighbourhoods.

After that I published some of that work of that dissertation work. And then I started a new line on urban marginality. So everything that I'm going to say about social mix is [00:07:00] going to be based on my empirical experience, on my dissertation. And also from those publications that came after that.

So why is it an important topic today? Because it has become one of the most popular policy prescriptions around the world. This is happening in the United States, in Canada, in several parts of Latin America, like Brazil, Argentina, Chile, in Europe, of course, France, Germany, Spain England, in South Africa, in Australia, New Zealand, some parts of, some parts of Asia, I'm not sure, but of course it's going to be popular even more in the next decade. And it's very popular for a lot of public officials because this is going to be proposed as the end of segregation or a possible way of ending with residential segregation which is one of the most important urban problems of the 20th century. So it has a great promise and a great symbolism. So [00:08:00] basically, why it is important to talk about this?



Martine August: So my name is Martine August and I got interested in social mix initially when I was an undergraduate student. We would just be taught in school that social mix was a good thing. I was doing urban studies and would hear 'healthy neighbourhoods are socially mixed'. This was just one of these truisms that was taught to planning students. And when I was in grad school, we were told that you should focus on a topic that bugs you because something about it hasn't been proven. And this is one of these things that I could never quite understand, what these mechanisms were that made social mix create healthy neighbourhoods. That wasn't clear to me.

And so when I was doing my doctoral research, social mix was at the forefront. So I studied the mixed income redevelopment of public housing and focused that research on two communities in Toronto that were being redeveloped called Regent Park and Don Mount Court. These are places [00:09:00] where social mix was being imposed or forced upon these communities as part of the revitalization strategy. Social mix was an important concept to understand. It was super important in justifying that redevelopment in the public imagination and arguing that this was necessary and that it was going to be benevolent and was going to lead to benefits for people once we created a socially mixed community out of a formerly low income public housing community.

We'll talk more about some of the critiques of this, but I want to discuss why I think it's important. The concept is politically very powerful. It's quite difficult to come up against social mix. You seem to be in favour, perhaps, of the opposite, segregation or social exclusion. So it's a very powerful topic. It is inherently seems to be benevolent and altruistic, and it is capable as a result [00:10:00] of doing very dangerous work and that it can be used to justify initiatives and policies that actually are promoting things like displacement and gentrification and targeting racialized groups as well. And so I think it's also important because it does have potential to be a progressive idea. And that's something I think we'll also talk about today.

Moritz Rinn: Yeah, thank you, Markus and Julie for bringing us all together. I really appreciate this because I'm the inhabitancy of the quarter in Hamburg that Julie did her research on in Wilhelmsburg. I'm living here. I'm like an object of study of Julie. And this is very nice. And I read papers of Javier and of Martine, and I was very impressed of their work too. So I'm really happy to be here with you all.

The focuses of my work are urban relations and conflicts in Germany. And I want to emphasize that this is the [00:11:00] standpoint and viewpoint from which I talk today. And as a researcher, garnered experience in German cities and being not directly affected by racism myself. This is important, I think, to know for people who don't see me maybe at the moment. I started to be interested in, in social mixing policies because these were highly at the forefront in Hamburg when a new social policy was started in the 2010s after a period of harsh neoliberal politics. And the new social democratic government promoted the social mix as a means to produce a city for all. And I was investigating the conflicts around this city for all in which urban social movements on the one side and political administrative actors on the other side were involved and engaged. Social mix in [00:12:00] Germany, as Julie talked about it in her introduction, is a, I would say, dominant biopolitical power tool to speak in these terms of Michel Foucault maybe.



Because I would always address social mix not as a myth, not as an ideology, not as something like a social reality but it's a part of a dispositive of the cohesive city. It's a government tool. It's a government thing. It's not about a urban reality but it's part of a regime that affects the everyday life of problematized people in problematized areas. It's organized around this urban problem thing of segregation and urban inequality and hierarchized differences in the city. And social mix affects the everyday life of people dwelling in those areas which are designated as special development areas and all this stuff. And I think [00:13:00] it is very important to not only say 'Okay, social mixing does not go to the core of the roots of social inequality and the city', but it is itself producing social inequality and fostering the exclusion. I think this is very important from my viewpoint, and I want to talk about this today.

And racism is, as it is, a constitutive part of urban life and social relations in the city, always a part of this construction of urban problems on which social mixing policies are addressed to.

Julie Chamberlain: Thank you so much. So, my name is Julie Chamberlain. I am assistant professor in urban and inner city studies at the University of Winnipeg in Manitoba in Canada, just since last year. I'm from Toronto. And I have done my PhD research in, in Hamburg and Wilhelmsburg, as Moritz was mentioning. [00:14:00] And it's through my engagement in Hamburg Wilhelmsburg that I came to study and analyse social mix.

For me, the critical interest and mix traces back to an encounter that I had as a master's student. So that was in 2011. I was with a group of Canadian students who had an opportunity to travel to Hamburg for a few weeks. It was at a time when planners and politicians, in particular, were talking about Wilhelmsburg a lot, about the stigmatized neighbourhood. And the massive transformational redevelopment projects that were underway. There was a very intense public marketing and education campaign that was happening when we were there, and we had an opportunity as a group of group of students to meet the head of urban planning in Hamburg at the time.

And he spoke to us about this historically immigrant and working class [00:15:00] neighbourhood, a neighbourhood that had been stigmatized for a long time. And he suggested in the talk that he gave that the area's problems would be solved when the population of the area was transformed.

I really appreciate what you said, Martine, about being sort of counselled to pick up to focus on a topic that there's something that makes you uncomfortable or something that something that worries you or troubles you that hasn't been properly proven. I was very struck by this formation of a neighbourhood's problems being solved by transforming its population. And in practice, or in principle, I have then spent the last 10 or 11 years trying to understand, explore critique on the one hand, how the quote unquote population was understood what the population was imagined to be and then to explore what was posed as transformation, what transformation looked like. And I did my doctoral research in [00:16:00] 2017, 2018, 2016, it spreads over time, with racialized residents of Hamburg Wilhelmsburg. Talking to people about their experiences of development and planning.



It was through that, that I really slowly over time came to understand just how crucial this notion of social mix was to not only what was happening in Wilhelmsburg, but how the residents that I spoke to were making sense of what was happening. Critiquing it in some ways, but also kind of imagining it or hoping for it as something that would in fact bring a positive transformation to the neighbourhood.

And so that's really my entry point into the topic is starts from a discomfort and then a deeper understanding of the centrality of this common sense in German urban planning. My concern with it has been fuelled through my PhD research where I then absolutely did hear planners and politicians say things like [00:17:00] 'well, we know that there's some evidence that this might not actually do what we think it's going to do, but we're going to do it anyways.' I was really struck by that. I appreciated the honesty and also was deeply sort of disturbed because I have come to similar concerns and conclusions that Moritz set up, where I think that it is itself a tool of inequality that reproduces inequality. And so that problematisation, I think, is really important.

Markus Kip: Great. Thank you everyone for listening and for your intriguing insights on the relevance of the topic. As a ground from which to continue this conversation, could we maybe see if we can develop a working definition for social mix? Would anyone be willing to come forward and explain to me and the listeners what social mix is and how to define it?

Julie Chamberlain: Okay, I was going to [00:18:00] start us off and then get everybody to ask everybody to refine it. So I was also going to say the word ideology more as you said, it's not an ideology. So now I'm rethinking my words. I say social mix is a concept or policy or ideology. It's very powerful and planning theory. It is based on promoting this idea that healthy neighbourhoods or communities within cities are going to be socially mixed. Now, it's not always clear what kind of social mix is being discussed. I think that's part of the power of this concept, is it's a bit vague. But it's implied that this is some sort of racial ethnic class economic mix that will lead to healthy social functioning in communities.

And there's a couple ways that it can be deployed, or I guess in practice, that social mix can be created. So it's either by bringing in the type of people [00:19:00] that are presumed to be superior and so I think this is also, you know, one of the very important things to discuss with this concept of social mix, is that it allows you to politely discuss What is really about, you know, class and racial transformation of urban communities because there's this presumed superiority about the people that are bringing the positive mix that they're morally superior, benevolent, inherently going to be altruistic and have some sort of positive impact on allegedly pathological spaces, right? And so the people that are bringing the mixed are presumed to be white, employed wealthy people living in the city.

And then, you can also execute a social mix strategy by removing those people who are presumed to be in need of social mix. So the degraded category of the population that you can also politely [00:20:00] not mention with social mix policy, but it's presumed to be there. And so this is typically coded as racialized populations, lower income populations. And they can be taken out of a, of a neighbourhood dispersed. And so in American discourses, you hear with this concept of deconcentration brought up quite a bit, which is politely, I think, not



mentioned as much when social mix is the key word in American deconcentration of poverty discourse.

It's a bit more explicit who's at this lower end of the social mix hierarchy, the people that need to be mixed, and they're kind of categorized as an underclass typically presumed to be racially marginalized residents of the American inner city. And so I think that some of these ideas about deconcentration are not spoken about when we talk about social mix, but are often a little bit more explicitly mentioned in American policies of deconcentration. So those are some maybe starting points to kick us off on a [00:21:00] definition of social mix.

Javier Ruiz-Tagle: Well, I think I can continue. I wrote this definition several times since one of my publications actually was for an encyclopaedia in urban studies, so I had to work a lot of, in a few words defining this. So there are broad definitions and more specific definitions. In the broad sense, social mix just means diversity. Social diversity in a given geographic area and this diversity can be economical, racial, ethnical, cultural, whatever. The question is, how do we get there? How is social mix achieved and how is it experienced by poor residents?

So, historically, social mix has been a longstanding planning idea of 200 years ago. People have been pushing for some type of social mix. This is included in the discourses from Howard to Jen Jacobs on other type of [00:22:00] guys. It has been proposed for a wide variety of goals. Some of those are moral goals while other have been like healthy neighbourhood goals and other stuff and it has been used interchangeably to refer to other concepts like integration, mixed income communities, poverty deconcentration, balanced communities, and so on. So, one of the things that I identified conceptually is that there has been at least Seven means for achieving social mix in the international literature, including public policies.

One of them, the most polemic of all, is the demolition of public housing to other processes that have been just emergent urban processes. It's like if you think about the process of gentrification and you take just the five years in which you have the first newcomers, the first pioneers and then the other poor people living there. If you check that picture, [00:23:00] that is social mix. And that is a sort of emergent social process on some other social process from poor to wealthy or from wealthy to poor, whatever. If you take that moment, that is a moment of social mix that is sort of emergent. Different from a public policy in which you push and in which you create a social mix.

The type of policy we have in Chile is for new social housing built in vacant land. So in vacant land you have nothing. And then you have a new development which is a mixture of social housing and a mixture of middle income housing. So there are different means of achieving it.

Some of them are more polemic. Some other are not that polemic. But the big question in terms of race is 'how is this experienced by poor or excluded neighbours or residents living there?'

Moritz Rinn: Yeah, I [00:24:00] can just add maybe. A recent strategy of social mixing, or social mixed politics, that have been or can be observed in Germany is... because Martin, you mentioned positive politics, attracting wanted people or negative politics, like demolishing social housing like driving displacement processes. And in Germany, I would say there is social mixing politics too. You can observe some kind of preservation politics against the displacement and hyper gentrification in specific former problematized quarters who now seem to have the right social mix that is integrating all the poorer people, the migrant people and give them the 'big opportunity' to live in a middle class dominated area.

So this is something that I think, at least in Hamburg, you can observe, this kind of [00:25:00] preservative social mixing politics. So, and I think this is important from a German perspective, because I would always say this is like a social democratic politics, to bring in an historical perspective, that emerged at the end of the Fordist promise of an equal city or of equality for everyone. Therefore, social mix is not about equality. It is about managing and arranging inequality that has to do with the crisis of the Fordist city and what happened then.

And in Germany, the urban political actors had to acknowledge that there is a migrant labour force living in the cities and appropriating urban spaces and they cannot longer be pushed out. And they have to be addressed as part of the urban population.

And so I think social mixing politics, have a history. And they're changing with [00:26:00] transformations of the society in its urban form. So what we can observe now has to do with the Post for this neoliberal transformation of a welfare state, of public housing and all this stuff. And now there are these politics of social mixing coming in to solve these problems as an answer to problems that come up because of this kind of inequality, new kinds of inequalities. To make it short, I think it's good to have an historical perspective on social mixing politics.

Julie Chamberlain: I think I'll just add to that. I appreciate that emphasis also on the historical context, and also to an extent to continuity, because Javier was saying that there are these various different strategies. And when I think about social mix as a policy and planning [00:27:00] strategy today, as well as Being a discourse and sometimes a goal, it's framed in all these different ways, it can play all these different roles, that in the German context, anyways, it's, it does need to be understood as related to earlier practices and often being seen as an improvement on earlier practices of things like quotas and bans on migrants moving to certain neighbourhoods.

And so I would sort of add to the definition the sense that that it's often framed as a policy innovation. As a sort of positive policy innovation that corrects the mistakes of the past, corrects the past processes that have created segregation and that now need to be undone. I also think that kind of bridges into thinking about what the problems are. We can't define social mix without beginning to talk about what's wrong with [00:28:00] it.

Markus Kip: Maybe you could elaborate a bit on your research? With residents in those areas that have been subjected to social mix, how have they experienced the social mix in the context of a stigmatized neighbourhood?

Julie Chamberlain: Sure. Maybe I can start off on this one. And the very sort of short answer to that question is that it is complicated. I found in the context of my research in Hamburg Wilhelmsburg and specifically talking to racialized long-time residents of the neighbourhood. Actually, it's not even really properly described as a neighbourhood. It's a large island. There's a lot of different land uses on the island, but it is a neighbourhood that has historically systemically devalued over many decades. And then [00:29:00] it has experienced since the early 2000s Targeted redevelopment along the lines of social mix that included policies like attracting students to the island and thus trying to transform the use of apartments and houses that had sort of more than two bedrooms. It involved a large several large apartments. Projects /events, the International Building Exhibition and the International Garden Show, which transformed space on quite a massive scale along that mega event framing. And then, there's sort of a suite of different policies and projects happening at the same time, and the third one was a social mixing directive in public housing.

As far as I could tell, and Moritz might be able to correct me on this, that social mixing directive was not widely advertised necessarily. But the people that I spoke to absolutely saw the effects of it. [00:30:00] And so I found that the projects and policies that were implemented in order to drive towards a mix that was perceived from the outside as not being there because it has been a stigmatized and racialized space for quite some time were impacts of the policies that people were experiencing in terms of lack of access to apartments rising rents, lack of access to apartments that had been perceived as previously available to Immigrants to low income people to Turkish speaking people just to sort of mention some of the people who participate in my research.

I heard repeated many times 'we used to be able to get an apartment in this or that building or area. And now nobody's nobody in my community is getting an apartment there. Something is happening.' And there were those sorts of experiences and also experiences of immobilization and inability to move [00:31:00] within the neighbourhood. Because with an influx of a white German middle class, there was more pressure put on an already tight housing market, but a housing market that had historically been delinked from the rest of the city of Hamburg. And so I heard from people 'Now I need a slightly larger apartment and there's no hope of doing that. If I want to stay in this neighbourhood, I have to stay in this apartment. Or I renovation in my apartment and there's not really hope of that happening. I'm kind of stuck where I am.' So there was this side of things.

And there was also, among the people that I talked to, a real buy into the narrative of social mix, the promise of it as potentially creating all of these sorts of goals that we've talked about: a healthier neighbourhood, a sense of balance and stabilization. Those are terms that are very prominent in the German planning framing and also in the legal framing of why [00:32:00] discrimination is allowed in housing for the purpose of social mix. There was a sense among the people that I talked to that it could potentially correct the planning mistakes of the past, that the city had intentionally kind of ghettoized the island, is what folks said to me. And now they were trying to intentionally undo the problems that they had created or the concentration that they had created. So it was, it was a very complex picture of, on the one hand negative experiences which I read as the effects of the knock on effects of social mix and also some real interest and investment in the notion of social mix.

Not least, it was a real hope that social mixing could push white, middle class Germans to live among people that they have not historically wanted to live among. And [00:33:00] I often heard people who were, for example, immigrants from Turkey, they had migrated 20, 30, 40 years before some of them, and had lived in the neighbourhood for a long time. They had really experienced that Germans don't like to be around them. So, just to quote one of the participants, one of them said: 'I'm Turkish. I live in Germany, but I can't be among Germans. I can, but Germans don't like to be among us. And at least that's not that's not what I have seen.'

And so this is why these projects are happening. They saw that the structure has to change, that Germans need to be brought in. This was a sense that social mix was a way of forcing mix on the dominant population that otherwise had fled the island.

And so that's what has been my experience or what I've heard about people's experiences with social mix in a really stigmatized neighbourhood. It is this complex: [00:34:00] on one hand, a critique of some of the effects of it, and on the other hand a hope that it would actually create some of the neighbourhood benefits that people have really wanted for a long time.

Javier Ruiz-Tagle: I think one way of seeing the problem, one way of approaching this could be by saying the micro experience and the macro experience. So, do poor or secluded or lower status people want to live mixed? Why do they have to do it? That's like a sort of first question. And then from the stratosphere and from the macro processes, do we want the city to stay segregated? How are we going to do it? How are we going to stop it? What can we do for it? And are we going to privilege real estate development or a socially just city?

So those two questions are very, very difficult to work with [00:35:00] when you're a public official. I'm not in the in the pants or in the shoes of those guys. But of course, it's difficult because generally, my study was a comparative study. I was studying poor blacks living with wealthy whites in the U. S. and poor people living with wealthier middle class people living in Santiago, for occurring through different processes of social mix but, but in both cases, Poor people didn't care about living close to wealthier people or to upper status people. They don't think they need it. And it was imposed to them, or that process was something that was out of their expectations.

But from the upper side, from the city level, country level, or whatever kind of level of analysis, you will say, okay, you need some type of a less segregated city. How can we do this? Do we let the city [00:36:00] be more mixed, more gentrified, more segregated or something? And then there are ways of imposing it. And as I was mentioning before, when you have these seven type of means of achieving social mix, you have the quotas. In France, for example, We are having at least 20 percent of social housing units in each municipality. And people are achieving those municipalities, just for a few exceptions, but it's kind of working. If you conceive that as a social mix, that's not something that you that you feel is against poor people. It's rather the contrary; it is for including people is some richer municipalities, but if you think of social mix in. Cabrini Green, Chicago: demolition, exclusion of people, discrimination, all types of problem for poor blacks is a totally different situation. And they have to share the same building, share the same administration, share



[00:37:00] the rules imposed by a group of white people who want to have their moral standards on top of the others.

So there is a kind of variety of experiences, but in general I could say that poor people don't want it. It's not their expectations. It's kind of imposed in most of the cases. But we need to think of some way of doing this, not social mix in the same building, but some type of desegregation of cities. And that's a more complex question. And maybe we're not able of answering that because we're not planners working in a public position right now. But we need to think about that.

Martine August: So in terms of the experiences of social mix and stigmatized neighbourhoods. The community I looked at, I really saw playing out what I found in the literature. So you have these expectations, I guess, or promises that are made [00:38:00] by policymakers for social mix. And here I'm talking about the approach to social mix, like Javier just mentioned, that it was taken up in Cabrini Green, right? This forced imposition of social mix. I mean, essentially state driven gentrification of low income communities, right? And the promises are that there will be all sorts of benefits for the people living in those communities. So they'll benefit in terms of social uplift. They'll benefit from role modelling which is, I think, a deeply offensive concept, but this idea that seeing higher income, higher status people will somehow rub off on the behaviours of people living in these communities, and they will miraculously no longer be affected by structural racism and poverty and these things. There's all these expectations that you'll see people's incomes improve, better employment outcomes, better educational [00:39:00] outcomes for children. All these types of things are supposed to somehow happen through these interactions that are going to take place in mixed income neighbourhoods.

In my research, what I found, which echoed what most research shows, is that that interaction doesn't exactly occur. And when it does, the expectations aren't necessarily borne out in terms of the benevolent behaviours of the people who are bringing mix to these communities.

So what I found in the in Regent Park public housing community that was, quote unquote, revitalized and became a mixed income neighbourhood through the demolition of public housing and the redevelopment of the community with a combination of new public housing and a lot of condos like 75 percent of the community is condos.

And I studied this early on in the redevelopment. So it was just starting to become mixed. And what I found was the people who are living there said, you know, for the most [00:40:00] part, the condo residents don't really speak to us, or they we see a version to interaction. And so this sort of echoes what you see in the literature. So not only is this concept of role modelling and these rub off benefits of interaction deeply offensive and something that should just be critiqued on its own. Beyond that, it doesn't exactly happen.

And there's also, I think, a critique of the presumed benevolence of the people who were coming in. This idea that by being there, they were going to use all of their social clout, race privilege, political power to improve the neighbourhood they're living in and to benefit the people who were there before them. This just doesn't seem to be the case. I spoke to one person who was advocating for social mix, and she said 'we middle class people have pointy

elbows. We get things done in a city. If the streetlight is burned out we will call our political representatives. And what I saw happening when I did my research is that these pointy [00:41:00] elbows tended to be directed at the incumbent public housing residents who are living in these forcibly mixed neighbourhoods. So yes, they would call the police if they saw black people outside, essentially. Or if they thought their neighbours were behaving in ways they didn't like, they would call the housing authority, call the police. And so the political power and social capital of these newcomers isn't necessarily going to be used in the service of improving the neighbourhood for all are trying to help the people who live there. And as I've mentioned before, I am also deeply critical of those assumptions in the first place.

And then also, I think the other thing I saw really just echoes what Julie was saying: These Redevelopment projects are essentially state driven gentrification processes that are leading to displacement, house price increases, all the negative impacts of gentrification, changing [00:42:00] the cultural makeup of the community, changing the types of stores that are in the community, creating social, cultural, political displacement, right?

And so, I saw people living with the impacts of that higher priced housing in the neighbourhood, maybe less of a feeling of belonging and also lots of people pointed to the idea that this wasn't being done for them. So the neighbourhood was being redeveloped, new facilities and amenities were coming into this community... and I'll also echo Julie, you mentioned so many times that lots of people had hopes for social mix and bought into the narratives of social mix. And I saw that particularly when I spoke to people prior to redevelopment. A lot of the people who are living in public housing bought into these promises and we're excited for this new world that was going to unfold for them. Speaking to people after it had started, they were starting to see something different and realizing that the changes that were being made were to you sell the [00:43:00] community to middle class condo buyers, people who could afford to move in there. And in fact, their presence there was something that was potentially going to dissuade people from buying or something that needed to be reduced proportionally in the community in order to make it a successful real estate development.

This idea that the neighbourhood wasn't being redeveloped for them, was seen in really obvious ways. So there was, say, user fees for some of the new amenities. There was a community centre that was initially going to be named after the community, Regent Park, and at the launch, it was actually they changed the name and named it after the developer, right? So that was, I think, a pretty Good symbolic moment really emphasizing what this was all about.

Moritz Rinn: In our last research project we investigated conflicts people experience around every [00:44:00] day appropriation of housing, using neighbourhood spaces, public spaces and infrastructures in areas Designated as in need of development and should be treated with politics of social mix. So we applied perspective from below and asked people, what is the trouble you experience in this neighbourhood? And one of these neighbourhoods was Essen-Altendorf. It's a highly stigmatized neighbourhood. There's a criminalizing discourse of clans and there's everyday deviance, concentrated poverty, high share of foreignness and so on.

And because Julie and Martine, you talked about the hopes people associate with social mixing politics. Yeah, the white German inhabitants of Altendorf, they had hopes. They had hopes of the reconquering of the neighbourhoods for the white German natives, and they [00:45:00] were disappointed because this did not work. And in our interviews, we had common narratives, mostly among white Germans, that nothing worked. To say a little bit about the strategies applied, it was basically the same you mentioned, like building new housing for richer people, new community centres, programs of social work, like the community work, renovating the, the housing stock, building new public spaces, new parks, artificial lakes, and all this stuff. And working on the neighbourhood image.

Let's say one thing about the development of the of Essen-Altendorf in the last years, it was one of the Arrival neighbourhoods where people from Southeastern Europe arrived in 2013, 2014 and 2015. And also many of the refugees who came to [00:46:00] Germany since 2015, they all came to Essen-Altendorf or many of them. So there was external migrant dynamic that was shaping the experience of people that had nothing to do, or something to do, but not so much to do with what the urban politicians did in upgrading the neighbourhood, but in the feeling of the German natives, this all failed. The promise they gave to us was to reconquer this neighbourhood and they failed.

And on the turnaround, migrant people, people who are made to migrants, who are said to have a migration background, say 'Well, the Germans, they have become more racist, more xenophobic. They treat us badly.' I would say this has to do with the politics of social mixing, too, because there's this promise of 'we reconquer, we normalize these [00:47:00] spaces and the normalization politics in Essen-Altendorf were shaped by law and order politics, too. Like we all know that. There were police controls every day when we were making our research or field research there. Every day we saw police controlling mostly migrant people. And this was closely connected to this neighbourhood change that was intended by the local governance.

So I think it is very important to say that everyday racism in this problematised quarter was fostered by the social mixing politics.

Markus Kip: Thank you, everyone for these very critical and at the same time, very sobering analysis from your research in different parts of the world. I'd like, as a last round challenge you with that question, is there a socially just social mix [00:48:00] planning in your opinion or in your research? Javier, you mentioned that quota from the French system that requires districts to have the quota of public housing.

Javier Ruiz-Tagle: It all depends on what's the goal of social mix. If the goal is to have more people calling the police, as Martine and Moritz mentioned, I think that's not desirable for poor or excluded minorities. But if you said the goal is to live in a better district in terms of more funding for education, more funding for public space, a better administration of the fire department or healthcare or something like that, if you have a better tax base, maybe social mix could work because you have a mixture of people instead of just having poor people.

It also depends on how do you do distribute resources, [00:49:00] infrastructure opportunities in the city. What is your system of territorial distribution of those things? If your tax base is



based on the people who specifically live in those places and your area is totally poor, you don't have money even for watering the plants of your parks.

And that happens in poor neighbourhoods in Chile. It depends on how your tax system is built in your country. So some administration, some institutional frameworks, could work better if you have a mixture, if your tax base or your institutional framework is connected to the people who live there.

So in that sense, I would say, social mix could be beneficial for an area but not for governing every relationship or micro relationship or for something like calling the police every day or just searching for people or [00:50:00] stopping people on the streets. There are different sorts of questions and different levels, different scales from which you can think of social mix. Maybe at the level of a quarter of a neighbourhood or bigger districts, instead of thinking in a building and rules and police and searches and so on.

So, there are a lot of questions, a lot of problems that you can deal with in a mixed neighbourhood. Some of them are totally wrong or totally unbeneficial for people, and some others could be beneficial if you treat them in a better way.

Martine August: I think that to try to conceive of what a socially just social mix would look like, it's also important to point out a couple more flaws with the social mix model as it's been deployed. And we've all been sort of speaking around this but it really does accept this fundamental social and racial inequality as a starting point, and doesn't try to address any of those root causes, but instead just takes that as a given. So, there's an acceptance that white middle class people in our society have more political power and social clout.

Instead of saying, 'Why is that?' 'How can we undermine that and change things?' The answer is 'Okay, let's move those people to these areas where people can be effectively ignored for proper service and infrastructure investment and security and all of these things.' They've been in the public housing community where I studied. That's exactly what happened. And the idea was that once these people come in who have more power, some of that will be used to improve this neighbourhood rather than questioning that. I think it's really morally bankrupt to promote solutions that are just basically trying to deploy class and white supremacy to try to solve these problems, right? Rather than trying to ask, how do we make it so that people living in public housing aren't poor and aren't forced away from opportunity and so on?

And then the other issue with it too, which is similar is it's basically a spatial problem, right? Where you're trying to move people around in space but not addressing any of the underlying material inequalities that they're facing. And so where I did my research, this was very obvious, a lot of people were moved to other public housing communities. The illegal drug trade was pushed to other low income communities nearby. So while there were some changes on the footprint of the community that was subject to the social mix policy, if you were to just look at a broader scale, social inequality in the city and poverty and disadvantage remained, but were just moved around to different places.

So I think the concept of social mix itself has a lot of power, as I mentioned at the beginning. People believe in it and there is something that we find palatable about the idea that people

shouldn't be segregated. And so in this sense, the idea has some sort of potential value if it can be mobilized in ways that promote increasing access to affordable spaces within the city. There's an example I typically draw on, there's a wealthy neighbourhood in Toronto called Rosedale. And activists here have said: Build social housing in Rosedale if you want to create social mix, rather than taking away affordable housing in a long time low income community. Expand the options and the availability of high quality social housing and communities that are experiencing good investment and places that have good schools and so on for people without need them needing to be subject to state driven gentrification policies.

So if the concept of social mix can be mobilized in favour of improving opportunity and creating more social affordable housing, I think Harvey has pointed to some good problems that could still exist with that in terms of some of the politics of what I've called the presumed benevolence of middle class in these mixed neighbourhoods that can still be an issue, but I think there is some potential there if the concept of social mix is mobilized in that way.

Moritz Rinn: I'm a little bit... I don't know how to say it. I don't think that segregation, from a German context speaking, should be seen as a problem. I think this is one of the big problems of the social mixing debate. It's not about segregation that is a problem if we talk about how we imagine a socially just city. I think it's about redistribution. It's about redistribution of wealth, of resources, of infrastructures, of housing space, of the means of reproduction. I think, it's about talking about division of labour to talk about the structures of the racialized capital society in its urban form.

I think segregation is the wrong problematisation. I really think so. And so this is why I think there cannot be a socially just social mix planning. I would always turn around the question: Social mix is a problem for urban governance, segregation is not always a problem for people. The problem is not segregation, but the problem is the lack of infrastructures, resources, housing, and all this stuff.

So yeah, maybe in other countries, geographical contexts, this can be really different, but I think from a German perspective, I would really push this forward and say, anti-segregation policies are a problem because they destroy structures and infrastructure, social networks built from below. I think this is really a problem and they want to impose the norms of middle class lifestyles in every part of the city. They want to discipline people and all this stuff. And I really think we should, from a critical perspective, we should not think about how we could better social mix politics, but what we could do instead.

Julie Chamberlain: Gosh, I appreciate this discussion so much. I have such discomfort with social mix policy because one of my core concerns is that that process really matters. I can sort of envision a goal. I can certainly envision a mixed neighbourhood. I kind of live in one myself right now where I've landed in Winnipeg, where there is a mix of people from different backgrounds and socioeconomic situations, and there's a mix of different urban forms and housing forms and it's a very interesting place to live. I am, of course, also a white professional who has landed in a real position of power and benefiting from what's around me, right?

I think that context in Germany, Moritz, as you said, the sort of the problem with the framing of segregation... and a key thing in Germany is that segregation, we know this from Empirical research, segregation itself is actually extremely limited. It hardly even exists in Germany, but it is problematized on a giant scale or has been anyways. And it kind of goes through waves where it's problematized more or less. So like the problem statement is very large and the situation doesn't actually reflect the problem statement.

So it's starting from a false premise to begin with, I think, is part of what you're identifying and what I relate to. But then, my concern is that social mix policy in particular and the sort of instruments of social mixing create a form of displaceability.

I've been really influenced or sort of inspired by Orin's formulation of the idea of displaceability where it labels certain people as kind of manipulable. It creates a condition where it becomes possible to move certain people around.

I'm not convinced that there's any way that that ends well. Do you know what I mean? We're operationalising these very sort of basic hierarchies, categorizations of people. And I do sometimes see that there can be distinctions between social mixing on the basis of housing tenure or of income, perhaps. I've also encountered in the people that I talked to in Wilhelmsburg, a lot more acceptance and comfort with mixing on the basis of class or income. But when we're talking about judging based on people's last names, which is what is happening in Wilhelmsburg and has been happening in Wilhelmsburg, judging whether they should have access to the neighbourhood or to housing based on last names or the hair colour and skin colour, I feel like the results are going to be fundamentally problematic. Because we are reproducing racism by doing that.

And so, I guess I have a real difficult time envisioning then... I can envision a socially just social mixed city, socially mixed neighbourhood, but the technique or the planning strategy of getting to it, I have trouble envisioning the strategy ever being just. That's kind of where I get stuck.

Javier Ruiz-Tagle: Just to add to the last comments on what Martin was saying... I was showing here in the chat of our zoom meeting a very famous picture of demonstrators in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. The recovery plans there included social mix, or part of the HOPE 6 program and funding especially. And they were demonstrating against why Wealthy neighbourhoods were not touched by that. So that's the point.

If you do social mix, why you just do it in poor neighbourhoods, including demolition? Why don't you include or insert or remove some of the wealthy heights and put some social units in those places? So that's a more fair question and a different way of approaching the problem or more integral, exhaustive maybe, a way of approaching the idea. And not always thinking in displacement, thinking in moving people to the resources.

There is a paper from Iris Marion Young about that, from a philosophical point of view. It's about why are public policies always thinking in terms of moving people to opportunities. Why don't we do the opposite? Moving resources to people, to those poor neighbourhoods



instead of just gentrifying them or letting the market doing it. Introducing more funding, more opportunities, more infrastructure to those neighbourhoods.

So maybe, the mix is going to come after that, because wealthy people are going to feel attracted to those neighbourhoods. So just let the market maybe do that job. But first, start with the opportunities and the social infrastructure that people need in those places, before letting the market solve operations.

Julie Chamberlain: Yeah, I'll make a final comment just to really echo that. I mean, if social mix is really about trying to improve resources and opportunity for people who are living in quote unquote unmixed neighbourhoods, then a social mix policy is a very indirect way to get those outcomes. The idea is: we'll demolish it, or we'll redevelop it, or we'll create all this real estate development. Then we'll sit back and wait and hopefully we'll get some sort of interactions between these groups. And we'll get some sort of mobilization among the middle class who will fight for better infrastructure and make sure that the schools improve and all of these things. And then eventually, maybe if we come back in a few years, we can measure it and this neighbourhood will have improved infrastructure and resources.

There's a better way to do it! A) Because that doesn't happen. And so many studies have been done to show that and B) Because it's just so indirect. And there's an interesting example of a project actually in Winnipeg, written about by Jim Silver, where the community didn't have the quote unquote problem, or I guess the luxury of gentrification pressures. And they thought: Hey, we're going to have to create a socially mixed neighbourhood from scratch from the people who already live in this public housing community by trying to help them get better jobs and by bringing educational resources to this community, so that you would get social mix when the people who are living there had improved their own material circumstances. And in addition to that, why not also invest in the housing so that people aren't living in low quality housing and all of these things.

So it's definitely a less roundabout way to get it. Probably a lot more effective is to actually just invest in communities for the people who live in them for their own sake.

Martine August: I think that's an amazing last word. Thanks very much, everybody. It was such a pleasure to get to talk to each other.