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**Promoting Responsibility, Shaping  
Behaviour: Housing Management,  
Mixed Communities and the  
Construction of Citizenship**

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## **Promoting Responsibility, Shaping Behaviour: Housing Management, Mixed Communities and the Construction of Citizenship**

### **Abstract**

This article examines housing policies aimed at establishing mixed income communities. Based on stakeholder interviews and case study analysis in England and Scotland, the article pays particular attention to the impact of interventions in housing management. The first part of the article considers the policy context for mixed communities and considers the conceptual basis underlying contemporary housing management through discourses of *culture* and *social control*. The second part considers how this agenda has resulted in the adoption of intensive management strategies within mixed communities; illustrated in the development of allocation policies, initiatives designed to tackle anti-social behaviour and proposals to develop sustainable communities. The main argument is given that the concept of mixed communities is based on the premise of social housing failure, citizenship has been defined largely in response to private sector interests. This approach to management has been a contributory factor in the construction of social housing as a form of second-class citizenship.

The ability to manage negative social behaviours appears to have far more to do with the practices of the management than the income mix of the tenants (Smith, 2002, p.22).

## **INTRODUCTION: MIXED-INCOME COMMUNITIES: POLICY AND PRACTICE**

Whilst the intention to ensure neighbourhood diversity is not a new departure in UK housing policy - it can be dated back to Housing Minister Nye Bevan's post war vision of creating 'the living tapestry of a mixed community' (Foot, 1973, p.78) – the objective was given fresh impetus in the late 1990s with the development of policies based on the notion that 'communities function best when they contain a broad social mix' (Social Exclusion Unit, 2000, p.53).

Contemporary interest in creating mixed communities has been generated through the reports of the Urban Task Force (DETR, 1999a; Urban Task Force, 2005) the Urban White Paper (DETR, 2000) the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (SEU, 2001), the Sustainable Communities Strategy (ODPM, 2003) and the Local Government White Paper (CLG, 2006). The latter recommended that local authorities act as strategic enablers and 'place-shapers'; applying land-use planning mechanisms to achieve 'sustainable' outcomes, understood as achieving socially, economically and culturally mixed communities.

Described as the 'holy grail of urban policy in recent times' (Power and Houghton, 2007, p.194), the Government has promoted housing and planning policies supporting: 'A well-integrated mix of decent homes of different types and tenures to support a range of household sizes, ages, and incomes' (ODPM, 2003). The mixed communities' agenda is primarily aimed at avoidance of mono-tenure estates, which had become associated with concentrations of deprivation, segregation and polarisation. Characterised by high levels of worklessness and vulnerability, the social rented sector had exhibited a strong correlation with high levels of social exclusion (Hills, 2007) and new policies were therefore designed to ensure a range of tenure types and income groups to ensure a deconcentration of poverty.

Mixed community policies are premised on the 'neighbourhood effects' argument that there are specific and cumulative locational disadvantages associated with communities where concentrations of deprivation are found (Atkinson and Kintrea, 2002).

Contemporary policy has drawn on lessons learned from other countries, notably the Hope VI initiative adopted in the US in the early 1990s (Berube, 2005) as well as in Europe (Van Beckhoven & Van Kempen, 2003) and Australia (Rosenblatt et. al., 2009).

The government's agenda has included a varied set of objectives. For example, the mixed communities initiative, launched in 2005, aimed to provide a 'new and more comprehensive approach to tackling area disadvantage bringing together housing and neighbourhood renewal strategies to reduce concentrations of deprivation, stimulate economic development and improve public services' (CLG, 2009. p.9). The Housing Corporation (now Homes and Communities Agency) has also commented:

Mixed communities contribute to the promotion of choice and equality, avoiding concentrations of deprivation and help address social exclusion and community cohesion (Housing Corporation, 2006, p.9).

This agenda has been highly ambitious and additional justifications for mixed communities have included: promoting social interaction; encouraging the spread of mainstream norms and values; creating social capital; opening up job opportunities through wider social contacts; overcoming place-based stigma; attracting additional services to the neighbourhood; and producing sustainable regeneration (Camina and Wood, 2009, p.460).

However, an important feature in the development of policy has been the premise of the 'failure' of social housing (Dwelly and Cowans, 2006) and as a consequence, the main policy instrument has been private sector driven: rather than developing schemes through social landlords the policy makes use of the planning system to compel private developers to include a proportion of affordable housing on new schemes (under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

This article considers the implications of these policies from the perspective of contemporary housing management; it pays particular attention to changes in allocation policies and initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour. Whilst the literature on mixed

communities has been well-rehearsed (see for example, Cole and Goodchild, 2001), with considerable discussion of both benefits (Jupp, 1999; Tunstall and Fenton, 2006; Power, 2007) and costs (for example Cheshire, 2007). However, there has been little detailed, qualitative analysis of the wider impact of mixed income policies upon contemporary management practice. Before considering the empirical material, the next section considers how these practices can be conceptualised within contemporary management discourse.

### **Conceptualising Housing Management Practice: Changing Culture and Maintaining Social Control**

In conceptual terms contemporary approaches to housing management in mixed communities rest on two specific, but linked discourses. The first is a *cultural* discourse, based on the notion housing management can promote behavioural change and increased self-worth. The second discourse relates to *social control*, contending that peer-group pressure will lead to conformity to social norms (Joseph *et. al.*, 2007), but also manifested in more authoritarian, disciplinary approaches to address social problems (Garland, 2002).

The two discourses are based on the assumption that the state alone cannot reduce offending behaviour; responsibility for tackling issues which had previously been dealt with statutory agencies has therefore shifted towards institutions and individuals within civil society (Cowan *et. al.*, 2001). An acknowledgement of the limits of state activity (and a need to save public resources) alongside government's desire to encourage a more individual or 'personalised' solution to public policy issues (Halpern and Bates, 2004) has prioritised local, neighbourhood level responses to urban problems. Issues such as anti-social behaviour are therefore seen as more effectively addressed through role model influence and community pressure rather than by means of paternalistic landlord activities.

This recognition of the limits of state intervention emphasises the importance of interdependent relationships and collective supervision to prevent and address local problems within neighbourhoods (Joseph *et. al.*, 2007, p.18). The density of local acquaintance networks influences the extent to which community members recognise

and hold each other accountable for their behaviour (ibid.). This use of neighbourhood members as 'eyes on the street' echoes Jane Jacobs' (1994) earlier analysis of neighbourhood relationships, but these ideas have been influenced by a more recent philosophy of 'communitarianism' (Etzioni, 2004): an ideology with strong moral overtones, emphasising the collective responsibilities of citizens, as opposed to their rights (or the obligations of statutory agencies). Hence, rather than imposing fines for social problems such as litter, it is more effective to rely on peer pressure and social disapproval as a discouragement; aiming to reach a point where behaviour becomes a 'self-sustaining personal norm' (Halpern and Bates, 2004, p.5). The aim has been to develop a 'responsibility thesis' (Cowan, 1999) whereby residents exercise (self) control to achieve appropriate standards of behaviour.

Cultural discourses in housing management are evident in resident involvement strategies, aimed at the empowerment of communities. Such strategies are based on ideas of increasing self-worth and developing trust and informal networks within communities; relating to what has been termed the development of 'social capital' (Putnam, 2000). On this basis, communities are most effective where they rely on the skills and expertise of those closest to the ground, leading to what writers such as Cochrane (2007) term the development of an 'active social policy', where citizens have greater involvement in day-to-day decisions.

In contrast, the discourse of social control involves a more intensive approach to the management of neighbourhoods; described as a tradition of 'punitive urbanism' (Cochrane, 2007) embedded in public organisations and practiced through demotic political leadership (Cowan et. al., 2001, p.441). Although attempts to influence culture and behaviour have a long history in housing practice (Damer, 1989; Ravetz, 2001), the traditional function of housing management was generally administrative in nature and limited to: managing empty properties, allocating housing, collecting rents and ensuring efficient maintenance programmes (Franklin and Clapham, 1997, p.15). Within this context, issues of public disorder were seen as largely peripheral to housing management, with agencies such as the police seen as primarily responsible for their control (Cowan et. al., 2001, p.441).

However, it is in the context of a changing resident profile, described as a process of 'residualisation' (Malpass, 2003), whereby social housing became increasingly responsible for a higher proportion of economically inactive and vulnerable tenants, that the focus of housing agencies on shaping behaviour and controlling residents has become much more prominent. This focus has been strongly influenced by wider notions of a decline in behaviour, particularly amongst social housing tenants (see for example Field, 2003) linked to an 'increasingly hysterical appeal about an undefined notion of anti-social behaviour' and a 'recognition that many social housing estates were so unpopular that nobody wanted to live there' (Cowan *et. al.*, 2001, p.442).

As a consequence social housing has acquired the perception that it is increasingly problematic to manage. At the same time registered social landlords (RSLs) in particular have attempted to present themselves as highly professional agencies, emphasising a corporate ethos, based on private sector styles of management. RSLs have therefore given an increasing priority to the demands of private funders, alongside a determination to promote their independence from the local authority sector (McDermont, 2004; 2007). Practitioners have therefore attempted to find ways of improving management performance, for example by offering incentives for positive behaviour (including rent reductions, improved repair services, vouchers, priority transfers and 'goodbye payments') as well as sanctions (such as introductory, demoted tenancies and other reductions in tenancy rights) for negative conduct (see Lupton *et. al.*, 2003; Foster, 2007). The introduction of legislation to tackle anti-social behaviour (for example through the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998 and Anti-Social Behaviour Act, 2003) has reinforced the role of housing management in a 'changing constellation of care and control professions' (Brown, 2004, p.203).

The conjunction of these issues has meant that the practice of housing management has been placed at centre of new approaches to 'contractual governance' (Crawford, 2003) or regulation used to foster conformity and social order, in the social rented sector; initially applied to address problems within the most deprived estates (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001b) these processes have subsequently been extended to the social rented sector in general. The use of 'neighbourhood management' strategies has seen local housing managers assuming responsibility for the coordination of 'joined-up' strategies to tackle urban problems (Taylor, 2000). These neighbourhood management tasks



involve dealing with immediate estate level problems as well as identifying wider long-term anti-poverty strategies, including opportunities to access training and employment opportunities (Duncan and Thomas, 2001).

The success of the mixed communities' initiative is in large part dependent on intensive management strategies.. Thus, mixed communities require 'careful, thorough and preventative management' (Tunstall and Fenton, 2006, p.40) and 'the key point is that neighbourhoods need on-going social maintenance as well as physical maintenance' (Camina and Wood, 2009, p.478). The consequence for housing practice has been a policy approach that emphasised individual responsibility, largely avoided state-based solutions, whilst promoting sustainability through social balance and tenure diversification (CLG, 2007). These approaches have supported the notion of a 'society of responsibility' wherein 'the decent law-abiding majority are in charge; where those that play by the rules do well; and those that don't, get punished' (Blair, 2004). Principles of conditionality, mutuality and reciprocity have become important guiding principles; in the words of a former Minister for Housing: 'Social housing should be based around the principle of something for something' (Flint, C., 2008). However, this process of 'responsibilisation' (Flint, J., 2006) in housing practice has a wider significance. It can be argued to construct new forms of citizenship that may on the one hand empower some, yet on the other can subject other transgressive groups to greater sanctions and disciplinary mechanisms.

## **Methodology**

This article is based on research initially undertaken for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and published as good practice guides (Bailey et. al., 2006, 2009). These studies were followed by subsequent research aimed at examining the wider management implications of the mixed community agenda and considering the costs and benefits of development processes adopted in different geographical, social and economic contexts. The research for this article involved four main case studies located in London, South-East England and Scotland:

The first case study (in inner London) involved a formerly local authority estate, previously notorious for a multiplicity of social problems; it has undergone extensive

regeneration and now incorporates a housing association consortium arrangement, with around 30% owner occupation. The scheme has around 800 units and is widely regarded as having been successful in countering the negative reputation of the area.

The second case study (in Outer London) involved another highly unpopular, isolated local authority estate, again characterised by extensive social problems, containing substantial disadvantage. The regeneration process was at a very early stage: a successful ballot had been held to form a new stock transfer organisation and work had been completed in adjoining (private and RSL sector) properties, although not on the local authority estate itself. The proposals envisage the creation of around 5,000 homes, with approximately 33% social housing.

The third case study (in the South East of England) involved a new-build programme wherein a formerly Ministry of Defence site has been transformed into an 'urban village', with high quality landscaping. The scheme has around 360 units and was undertaken by a private developer with a 27.5% affordable housing component.

The final case study involved a large regeneration programme on the outskirts of Edinburgh. This neighbourhood is primarily local authority-owned (with 25% owner occupation) and is about to undergo an extensive regeneration programme through a private development company. The scheme has outline planning permission; the intention is to produce around 3,000 homes and to reverse the tenure profile to provide around 25% affordable housing and 75% owner occupation.

Using mainly qualitative data, the research incorporated twenty semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. Respondents included local authority officers, RSL managers, architects, private developers, residents and local politicians. Additional stakeholder interviews were held with representatives from the Housing Corporation and the National Housing Federation to provide an overview of policy relating to mixed community developments. Interviews were designed to explore in detail the main principles behind developing mixed income communities and to gain an awareness of the key constraints and specific management issues relating to their development. The research interviews and case study analysis were carried out between 2005 and 2007. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interview data was analysed by

coding responses according to mention of key words such as 'allocations', 'lettings' 'anti-social behaviour', 'control' , 'responsibility', 'sustainability' and 'neighbourhoods'.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

Contemporary housing strategies can be understood by reference to three main objectives. Firstly, there is a continuing obligation to provide accommodation for those in the greatest need. Second, a requirement to provide an effective and professional level of management services. The third aim is to create sustainable, mixed communities. However, these objectives present considerable dilemmas for landlords and the following sections illustrate how these conflicts influenced housing management within the case study neighbourhoods. These issues are illustrated through: the housing allocation process; the implementation of strategies to tackle anti-social behaviour and the application of 'active' social policies to promote sustainable neighbourhoods.

### **Changing the Culture of Social Housing: Implementing Allocation Policies**

As noted above, social housing in mixed communities has been driven by strategies aimed at changing culture and behaviour and promoting social responsibility.. For RSLs in particular, these cultural changes were integrally linked to effective housing management, as illustrated in the following comment:

If you set out to design or socially engineer a development, you have to continue to work at it. So management is key to any sustainable community and it has to be proactive (Interview, 13/7/05).

Crucially, these proactive strategies emanated with allocation processes as one RSL manager commented: 'Our view is that you get better management if you actually plan who you house' (Interview, 3/2/05). An acknowledgement that allocation policies were 'sometimes an engine of polarisation' (Hills, 2007, p.180) meant that RSLs were highly critical of traditional methods (based solely on housing need) and advocated a need to change systems. Local authorities were heavily criticised for their approach, as one manager commented:

We don't want to fill the rented housing with people suffering social exclusion. The view of a lot of the local authorities is that simply by virtue of it being mixed tenure, you will have people who are working. I can see the argument but it means that the people we are housing potentially have huge management problems. That is an issue that is yet to be resolved (Interview, RSL, 3/2/05)

The implication of this comment was that social housing residents were inherently a source of management problems, simply by virtue of the process by which applicants were 'nominated' to RSLs by local authorities and highlighted a key tension between RSLs and local authorities. The latter seen as 'narrowly' concerned with meeting statutory duties of reducing homelessness whilst RSL managers saw themselves as fulfilling a wider set of neighbourhood responsibilities. Thus:

we have taken a long-term approach; these people have got to live on our estates for the next ten or twenty years. So we will fight our corner and ultimately the decision is with us. We are an independent organisation (independent of the council) and we will make that decision for the best of the community' (Interview, RSL manager, 13/7/05).

Such comments reflected a strong desire for autonomy, a view of independence central to the corporate image of the sector. RSL interviewees therefore complained of being 'forced' to accept local authority nominations which had a detrimental impact on their management performance: 'when two years later there are problems on the estate the response is "well you are not managing it properly"' (Interview, 3/2/05). RSL managers also expressed considerable frustration at the attitude of local authorities: 'we are finding difficult to get through to them mainly because the people we are negotiating with are not housing managers. Their role is to get people housed' (Interview, 3/2/05). The implication here was that there was an inevitable conflict between the duty to provide accommodation for homeless households and an effective management process.

In response to these problems, RSLs were keen to implement changes to allocation systems and to adopt 'local lettings' policies which enabled greater discretion to be exercised over the social composition of neighbourhoods. However, there was a perception that government approved 'choice-based' letting schemes (Brown and Yates, 2005) (introduced in all the case study neighbourhoods) had not resulted in significant improvements. As one local politician explained:

The reality now is that social housing goes to people in the greatest need. You don't get the choice to have it. Choice-based letting makes a slight difference, but actually people getting choice-based lettings [in the borough] are those in the severest need. There's not that much choice actually (Interview, 1/3/07).

In contrast RSLs expressed greater enthusiasm for local lettings policies which limited the proportion of deprived households and included targets to specify proportions of employed households. For example one respondent claimed, 'our aim will be to have 50% of people who are working' (Interview, RSL manager). Moreover, RSLs were also anxious to include other criteria in making allocation decisions and behaviour was seen as crucial to effective management. Thus: 'housing need is our main criteria, but we do ask for background and we will take that into account' (Interview, RSL manager, 13/7/05). In some cases landlords sought to exclude those with an unsuitable background. For example:

if someone has got a conviction for shoplifting or speeding that is not relevant, but if they have been done for arson or burglary then we might consider that. We will consider each case on its merits. We have got guidance that staff can follow and we don't consider spent convictions (Interview, 13/7/05)

RSLs advocated changes to allocation systems that would enable them to exercise greater control over management processes. Thus managers spoke of 'canny decisions' about who might live in new developments and 'quite a bit of exporting people who might be problematic' (Interview, RSL manager, 9/2/07) in regeneration schemes.. Significantly, such policies were mainly adopted in 'flagship' housing developments, which RSLs chose to present to visitors as examples of successful management. Managers therefore referred to nomination agreements setting out grounds for refusal of applicants which applied 'particularly to our high-profile schemes' (Interview, RSL manager, 13/7/05) and to 'new developments particularly' (Interview, 3/2/05).

It was evident that traditional assumptions that RSLs would inevitably house those in the greatest housing need were being challenged in certain areas and within particular schemes. RSLs (particularly in high profile, new mixed communities) were keen to demonstrate that as landlords they were able to exercise a degree of autonomy about who to accept and (just as importantly) reject to demonstrate that they were more effective custodians of the public good than local authority landlords.

## **Maintaining Social Control: The Prevention of Anti-Social Behaviour**

The emphasis on the social control of residents has been most clearly evident through strategies designed to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB). As problems of social housing have assumed increased significance in policy debates, more intensive management strategies have been introduced, in conjunction with increased sense of conditionality attached to tenancy agreements (including 'introductory' or probationary' tenancies, contingent on acceptable behaviour). Social landlords felt that such tools were effective in fostering a stronger sense of social responsibility, for example by requiring residents to take greater efforts in both reporting and addressing (low-level) anti-social behaviour.

Despite such measures, managers expressed considerable exasperation that residents felt unable to take greater responsibility in their own neighbourhoods: 'My frustration is in ASB actually encouraging some people within the community to come and speak to us' (Interview, 16/1/07). Such frustrations were particularly evident in communities where there was what was described as a 'no-grass' policy (Interview, 16/1/07), meaning that residents were highly reluctant to contact official crime prevention agencies. Similarly, there was a sense in some communities that problems did not exist unless they directly affected residents: 'If people are not kicking their door, assaulting them or harassing them, then as far as they are concerned it is not happening' (Interview, 16/1/07) Therefore, despite attempts at introducing cultural and behavioural changes, many managers felt that attempts to create mixed communities had to date had little impact in the way that residents related both to each other and to landlords and local authority representatives. Frustrations with the behaviour of residents tended to be expressed by social landlords about their own tenants.

In attempting to maintain social control both local authorities and RSLs were keen to make use of a range of tools that were available to them, which included instruments of both civil and criminal law. These methods of social control included approaches adopted, purely for symbolic reasons, as expressed by one local authority officer:

The advantage with a criminal conviction is that we don't need to bring in any neighbours as witnesses. It's part of a community confidence building exercise that we carry through eviction, even if they are in jail anyway (Interview, 16/1/07)

This description of such measures as 'confidence building' was revealing as it indicated considerable pressure from residents themselves to take effective action against groups who were creating problems in the local area. Importantly, many of the measures available were targeted at social housing residents as they were often perceived to be the main focus of management strategies, on the basis that they were responsible for the majority of anti-social behaviour in the local neighbourhoods.

As measures mainly directed against social housing residents, these approaches had the consequence of reinforcing tenure prejudice, in spite of 'tenure-blind' design measures adopted in mixed income schemes. This did not help to challenge negative stereotypes. As one developer noted of social housing residents:

they've all got kids, you can have 15 kids out on the street all of them come out of the small set of houses, well their reputation stinks even if the kids aren't bad (Interview, 2/6/05).

Private developers in particular held assumptions about the resident composition of social housing tenants that were very difficult to change. For example repair problems were generally attributed to tenant behaviour rather than any inherent design flaws or maintenance issues: 'Developers will always take the view that [building defects] are down to tenant abuse' (Interview, RSL manager, 3/2/05).

The main objective of implementing intensive management systems designed to promote responsibility and exercise social control was to ensure that the attempts to ensure a wider socio-economic profile were not undermined by resident behaviour. As such, strategies adopted were often aimed at reassuring private developers and the maintenance of property values. As a manager of a large developing RSL commented, in referring to private developers:

Their big concern [is] that basically all housing associations are housing troublemakers. They want to know how quickly we are going to evict people. I say that we have got a policy to work within the law but we don't vet people, regardless of their history and we have to go through the allocation process. But it's quite clear what they want to talk about. They want to be assured that our residents will not run riot (Interview, 3/2/05).

This concern with reassuring private sector interests reflected an acceptance that social housing represented a stigmatised sector and encouraged stereotypical views about the behaviour of social housing residents; perceptions that at times appeared to be accepted rather than challenged by RSL managers. These concerns were reflected in the responses from private developers:

The last thing I can afford is potential purchasers coming up when I have 200 homes for sale, and first thing they see is a lot of kids getting up to no good, cars on bricks and all the rest of it really. They are just going to turn around and go away (Interview, private developer, 13/6/05).

The implication was that properties would not be attractive to the private sector unless the neighbourhoods were effectively managed (with the implication being that management was largely directed *by* social landlords *towards* their tenants). However, as Rowlands *et. al.* (2006) have demonstrated, developer attitudes can be surprisingly positive towards mixed income schemes; the need for social landlords to offer reassurance about the behaviour of their residents is therefore often overstated.

### **Active Social Policies: Creating Sustainable Communities**

The creation of sustainable communities has been a central feature of twenty-first century government housing policies and has been strongly supported by practitioners. However, the concept of sustainability is a malleable one (Kearns and Turok, 2004); in relation to housing it has been linked to 'active' social policies to combat social exclusion and worklessness (Raco, 2007). As noted earlier, such policies have been implemented through a resident participation process offering increased involvement in local decision-making and strategies to encourage resident empowerment. At the same time, housing management strategies have been based on the premise that social housing was inherently problematic. Hence, local authority planning officers spoke of the 'key difference between regeneration now and back in the good old days of the 50s and 60s when it was single tenure redevelopment and it was an experiment that well and truly failed' (Interview, 22/9/05).

One consequence of such views was to reinforce distinctions between social and private sector residents. Not only were social housing tenants seen to possess an inherent potential to behave anti-socially, but were also seen as lacking the wider values shared



by others (such as civic engagement or community spirit). This view was reflected in the following comment from an architect working in an inner-London scheme:

I used to walk around and say to residents 'the trees are doing well' and they would say 'of course they are; they're our trees'...[However] when people were coming in off the homeless list; they didn't have that sense of ownership (Interview, 20/4/07).

Such views were reinforced by the strong perception that the social benefits of mixed communities emanated from the introduction of higher-income (private sector) groups, as explained by one local authority officer:

You are introducing new income to areas which statistically aren't as prosperous and you are potentially lifting the economic base of an area. It is the only way of introducing new development into areas like this without any additional help.... Ultimately the delivery of the private housing was absolutely critical in delivering these projects. Without it we wouldn't even entertain a scheme of this nature.... (Interview, planning officer, 22/9/05).

New schemes were entirely dependent on private sector investment and the social benefits are conferred by middle class groups, indicated by shifts in the social profile of neighbourhoods. For example one area was described as having 'changed quite dramatically by the number of people that have been brought in...you're bringing wealth into an area that didn't have wealth' (Interview, resident, 2/9/05). The solution to the problems of marginalized communities was to attract those groups willing to contribute to the community in financial terms (thus undermining other kinds of contributions). As the leader of one local authority suggested when referring to a 'failed' neighbourhood:

Clearly the old estate has gone downhill over the years. You've got more and more people coming in and no facilities....At the moment there are communities of interest all over the place rather than geographical communities...The key is to introduce economic livelihood (Interview, 26/ 05/05)

Economic livelihood was therefore equated with community cohesion, ignoring evidence demonstrating that higher income households often chose to separate themselves from the wider community (Blandy, 2008). Policies have therefore been driven by attempts to introduce working households rather than supporting interventions targeted at marginalized groups and the main focus in mixed income developments has been directed towards encouraging higher-income groups into neighbourhoods.

It is by no means automatic that a high proportion of economically inactive tenants will result in tension but it is more likely that you will have increased incidents of anti-social behaviour. It becomes in a sense a self-fulfilling prophecy. It doesn't become a destination of choice so you don't get wealth creation and you don't get the same level of social responsibility (Interview, Housing Corporation, 7/3/05)

The explicit linkage between economic activity and social responsibility was compounded by a sense that participation processes were dominated by higher-income, middle class residents; such groups tended to be seen as more articulate and capable of influencing decision-making processes. Constructions of citizenship in social housing were linked to an expectation of resident involvement in decision-making processes (DETR, 1999b) and reflected distinctions between private and social rented sector residents. This 'compounded citizenship' (Atkinson, 2006) reflected both a withdrawal of state agencies and a process where residents of deprived areas needed to work harder than others to reduce social problems (p.110). Housing managers expressed willingness to engage with social rented tenants, but voiced concerns about the effectiveness of participation arrangements. In the words of one respondent:

In a lot of the consultation...the stalwarts really are leaseholders and whilst the people with the best deal are the tenants, it is trying to get those people to sit around the table in sufficient numbers [that is problematic] (Interview, RSL manager, 30/3/07)

Citizenship therefore tended to be associated with those most willing to participate in decision-making processes and the absence of tenant voices meant that the interests of social housing residents were often overlooked in favour of those more able to express their demands. Moreover, in addition to distinctions in participation arrangements, in many cases the visions of mixed tenure schemes tended to be based on an idealised imagination of the kinds of communities that would be developed. For example:

It quite ironic that when you visit [a scheme]. It may be getting dark and you are confronted with these utopian visions; for example a board showing young professionals drinking cups of coffee in cafe bars; it doesn't square with the experience of our tenants (Interview, RSL manager, 3/2/05).

Active social policies offered a construction of citizenship largely defined in relationship to the needs of the occupants of privately owned and leased properties. Whilst the aim in theory was to create balanced communities; the construction of these communities

appeared to be directed to appeal to an affluent middle class population whose behaviour, responsibility and attitudes towards citizenship were seen as unproblematic. Described as a process of 'domestication by cappuccino' (Atkinson, 2003) the focus appeared to be to minimise the number of people in priority need who entered new communities and maximizing the number of residents who were in work or in 'stable' households. These processes can be categorised as a process of 'state-sponsored gentrification' involving a combination of middle-class colonization and working-class displacement (Lees, 2003).

## **CONCLUSION**

This article has illustrated some of the main tensions involved in contemporary housing management practice and these have resulted in a number of problems for social landlords. First, social landlords have remained committed to providing accommodation for vulnerable residents, but they have also become increasingly professionalized and committed to improving their management services (often at the behest of their own residents). As they have prioritised the avoidance of management difficulties this has led to a reluctance to accept applicants potentially viewed as 'problem' households (Power and Lupton, 2002, p.132). Local or 'sensitive' lettings policies were therefore frequently aimed at excluding those groups who were most in need to assistance from social landlords.

The second problem is that the disproportionate attention on tackling behaviour exacerbates resident (and developer) concerns about crime and low-level anti-social behaviour amongst a small minority of social housing residents; it has thereby contributed to the marginalisation and demonization of social housing tenants and thus increased, rather than minimised tenure prejudice. These intensive management strategies reinforce the popular stereotype that anti-social behaviour 'only occurs on social housing estates' (Squires and Stephen, 2005, p.523).

The application of active social policies to develop sustainable communities constitutes a third area of difficulty. These policies have been defined largely by reference to the needs to private sector agencies whilst social housing continues to be equated with social problems. The notion of active citizenship is integrally linked to economic activity,

private development activity and property values. An objectification of council housing and differentiated treatment of social rented tenants has been remarked upon elsewhere (Card, 2006, p.37) but these distinctions have further marginalized social housing and reinforced the tenure prejudice in ways that mixed community policies were designed to avoid.

The research findings support evidence in other countries which indicates that mixed income developments are in practice available to very few low income households and almost certainly exclude the most vulnerable and difficult to house (Popkin *et. al*, 2000). It is in such ways that writers have warned of the dangers of creating a 'balance through exclusion' (Cole and Goodchild, 2000, p.357). Whilst it is difficult to provide firm evidence that working-class communities are being deliberately excluded from new mixed-income community developments, there are indications that the focus for policy-makers is to provide opportunities for new middle-class gentrifiers at the expense of existing communities through the allocation process and providing tougher conditions for social housing residence. As Lupton and Tunstall (2008) identify, mixed community policies can carry implications for a social justice agenda, wherein citizenship rights are constructed which reinforce a hierarchy of privilege with owner-occupiers at the top and social rented sector tenants at the bottom.

A key element in the perceived success of the mixed communities agenda has been a focus on effective management strategies by contemporary social landlords, centred around notions of culture, behaviour and social control.. However, this emphasis has been profoundly influenced by the thesis of the residualisation and failure of social housing with the result that those who obtain access through statutory homeless routes are seen as inherently problematic and requiring intensive housing management. In addition, the reliance on private sector individual and institutional interests has exercised a disproportionate influence in defining social responsibility (and hence citizenship) within mixed communities. Policies based upon the social benefits conferred by economically active groups (and in particular leaseholders and owner occupiers) carry the danger that social housing is presented as a tenure that offers second class citizenship.

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