

# Mixed Income Housing Policy and Public Housing Residents' Right to the City

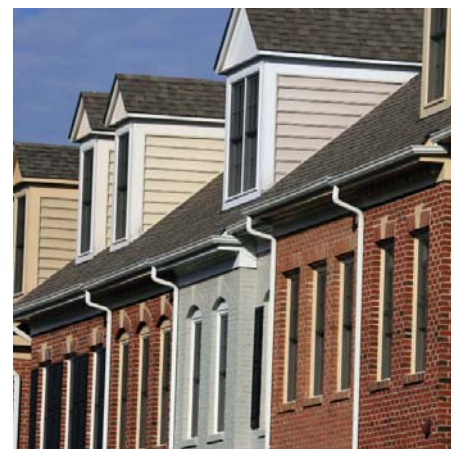
## What is this research about?

This research analyses housing policies aimed at reducing poverty by considering two different types of housing policy: programs that relocate residents to stable, middle-class neighbourhoods, and new developments that contain a mix of market rate housing and subsidized public housing. The research focuses on the second type of mixed income housing implementation.

## What you need to know

Poorly planned public housing developments tend to segregate and isolate poor people from the rest of society. Concentrated poverty is damaging to the health of cities and tends to produce high crime rates, violence and unemployment. Segregation limits the rights people to space, not only physical, but also

political, social and economic space. Additionally and despite widespread housing policy implementation, it is unrealistic to assume that the mere mixing of various income groups will improve the lives of the poor without properly putting into place integration measures that go beyond the physical move.



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**KEYWORDS**  
*economic integration, poverty  
deconcentration*

Summary Date: March 2013

**ARTICLE SOURCE**  
Duke, Joanna (2009). Mixed income housing policy and public housing residents' 'right to the city'. *Critical Social Policy*, 29(1): 100-120.

## What did the researchers do?

The researchers examined research on mixed income housing programs in the United States to see if housing policy can increase public housing residents' rights to the city (i.e. live in low poverty, safe, non-segregated neighbourhoods). They looked at neighbourhood composition to evaluate the number of public housing residents currently living in low poverty neighbourhoods. The researchers also examined the design of mixed income neighbourhoods with the idea that public housing design and market housing design should not look different if diversity is truly a goal of mixed income programs.

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## What did the researchers find?

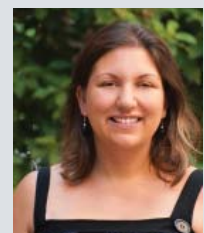
The researchers found that residents and political leaders resist mixed income developments out of fear of the damaging negative effects public housing could have on their neighbourhoods. These fears include decreased property values, increased crime rates and a weakening of the established community. However, it is often the case that these negative effects do not actually occur. The researchers found that negative results only occur when public housing is placed in already vulnerable neighbourhoods, making the more affluent neighbourhoods better candidates for assisted housing. Researchers also found that the relocated public housing tenants faced barriers in forming relationships with other residents and also reported that

the majority of residents being displaced from their communities were relocated into other high poverty neighbourhoods. Regarding design, the researchers found that similar designs between the subsidized units and market units in mixed income neighbourhoods tended to take attention away from the underlying social issues by making inequality less visible but no less real. Finally, the researchers found that mixed income housing has the potential to increase public housing residents' right to the city, but only if policy makers are proactive in the face of barriers such as community opposition, and if public housing residents are encouraged to actively participate in their new communities after relocation.

## HOW CAN YOU USE THIS RESEARCH?

Policy makers can use this research to go beyond the mere physical mixing of people from various income levels and focus more on the opportunities for political, social, and economic integration of the public housing residents. Current attempts at economic integration do not address the underlying class and racial discrimination that maintains neighbourhood segregation. Therefore, housing policy must ensure that public housing residents have equal access to live, create and participate in their new neighbourhoods and communities.

### ABOUT THE RESEARCHER



**Dr. Joanna Duke Lucio** is an Assistant Professor in the School of Public Affairs at Arizona State University. Her research interests include urban governance and policy, mixed income and affordable housing policy, diversity, and citizenship.