

Toward a Nuanced, Circumspect Policy of Social Mix in Denmark

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Scholarly & Policy Historical Context

The Concentration of Disadvantage Thesis

[spatial concentration of disadvantage magnifies problems for adults and children associated with individual disadvantage]

The Policy Response in US, W. Europe & Australia:

“neighborhood social mixing”

Purposes of Presentation

Clarify what questions we need to ask about social mix regarding concepts, causal mechanisms, policy rationales and means of implementation

Synthesize evidence from many social science disciplines (emphasizing Scandinavia) to answer these questions

Draw pragmatic implications for policymakers & planners

Calm unrealistic expectations re: mix

Questions Addressed in Presentation

Can social mix policy be justified on grounds of social equity and / or efficiency?

How does social mixing work?

For what social mix should we strive?

How should we achieve social mix?

Will social mix policy be sufficient to end social disadvantage & deprivation?

Answers to Questions

Can social mix policy be justified on grounds of social equity and / or efficiency?

YES, BOTH; concentration of economically disadvantaged past a threshold %:

Harms disadvantaged individuals

Harms advantaged individuals

BUT, Deconcentration / social mix is superior ONLY IF we mix economically disadvantaged at low % (i.e., below threshold)

Answers to Questions

How does social mixing work?

Removes 4 strong sources of negative neighborhood impacts (social interactions, inferior role modeling, no collective efficacy, place stigmatization)

Replaces them with 1 neutral (social interactions) & 2 modestly positive neighborhood impacts (superior role modeling, more collective efficacy)

Answers to Questions

For what social mix should we strive?

**Composition: economically disadvantaged is key;
ethnic composition is secondary**

**Concentration: smallest feasible % econ.
disadvantaged every neighborhood**

**Geographic Scale: neighborhoods mixed at level of
several hundreds of population**

Answers to Questions

How should we achieve social mix?

Voluntary, gradual, option-enhancing strategies that:

Deter processes intensifying current concentrations of disadvantage

Expand options for disadvantaged where they are now underrepresented

Maintain options for disadvantaged where now overrepresented but being displaced by market

Answers to Questions

Will social mix policy be sufficient to end social disadvantage & deprivation?

NO

Social mix is vital ingredient for equal opportunity & encourages socioeconomic success, but is neither necessary nor sufficient

Can Social Mix Policy be Justified on Grounds of Social Equity and / or Efficiency?

Definitions:

Social Equity: net benefits for those who are economically disadvantaged

Social Efficiency: net benefits overall when all in society are aggregated

Implies :

Pareto Improvements sufficient;

Hicks-Kaldor compensation principle necessary
(benefits to “winners” > costs to “losers”)

Can Social Mix Policy be Justified on Grounds of Social Equity and / or Efficiency?

YES...BOTH!

concentration of economically disadvantaged past threshold :

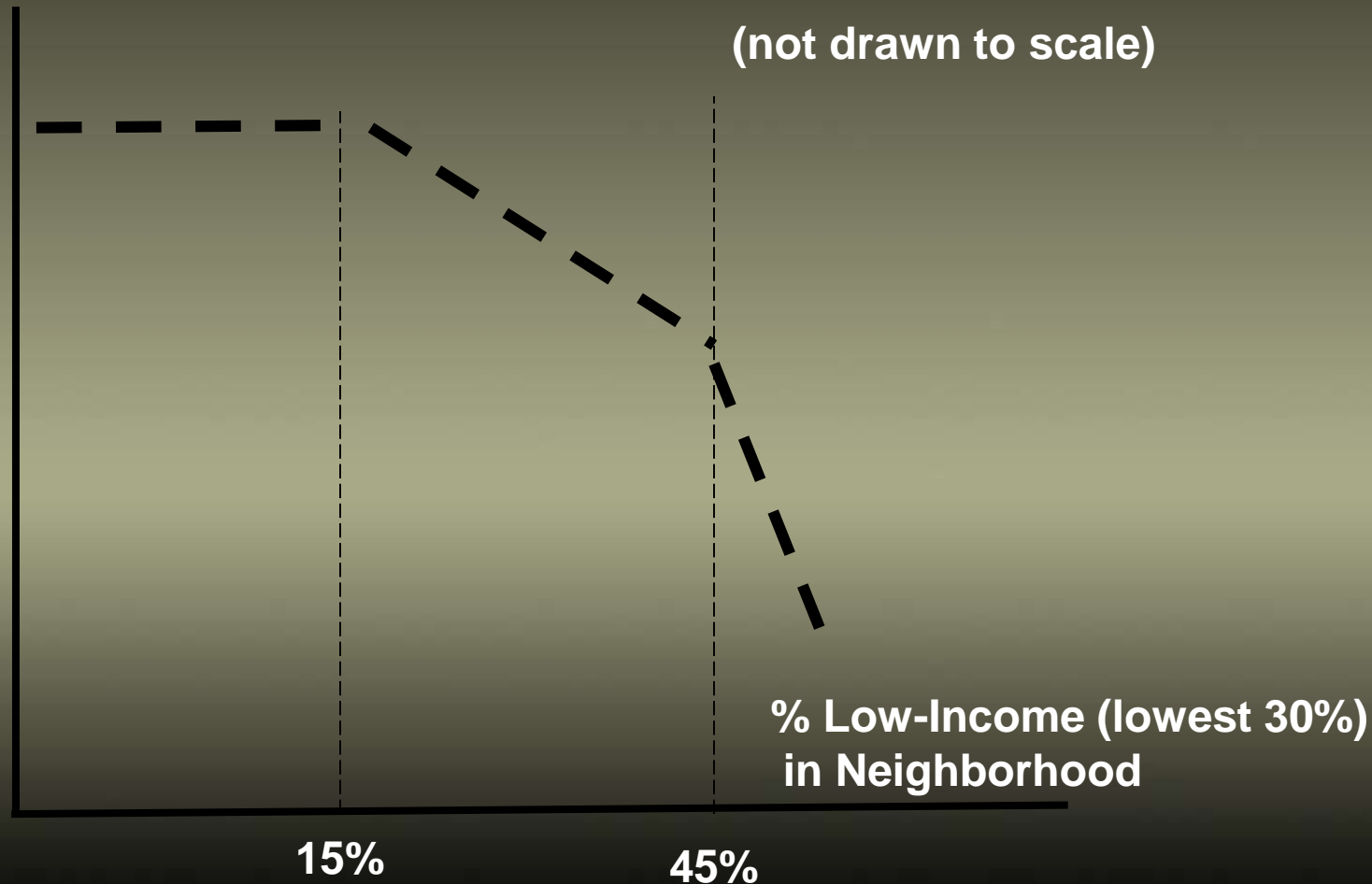
Harms disadvantaged neighbors

Harms more advantaged neighbors

**→ Harms society as a whole
(using variety of measures)**

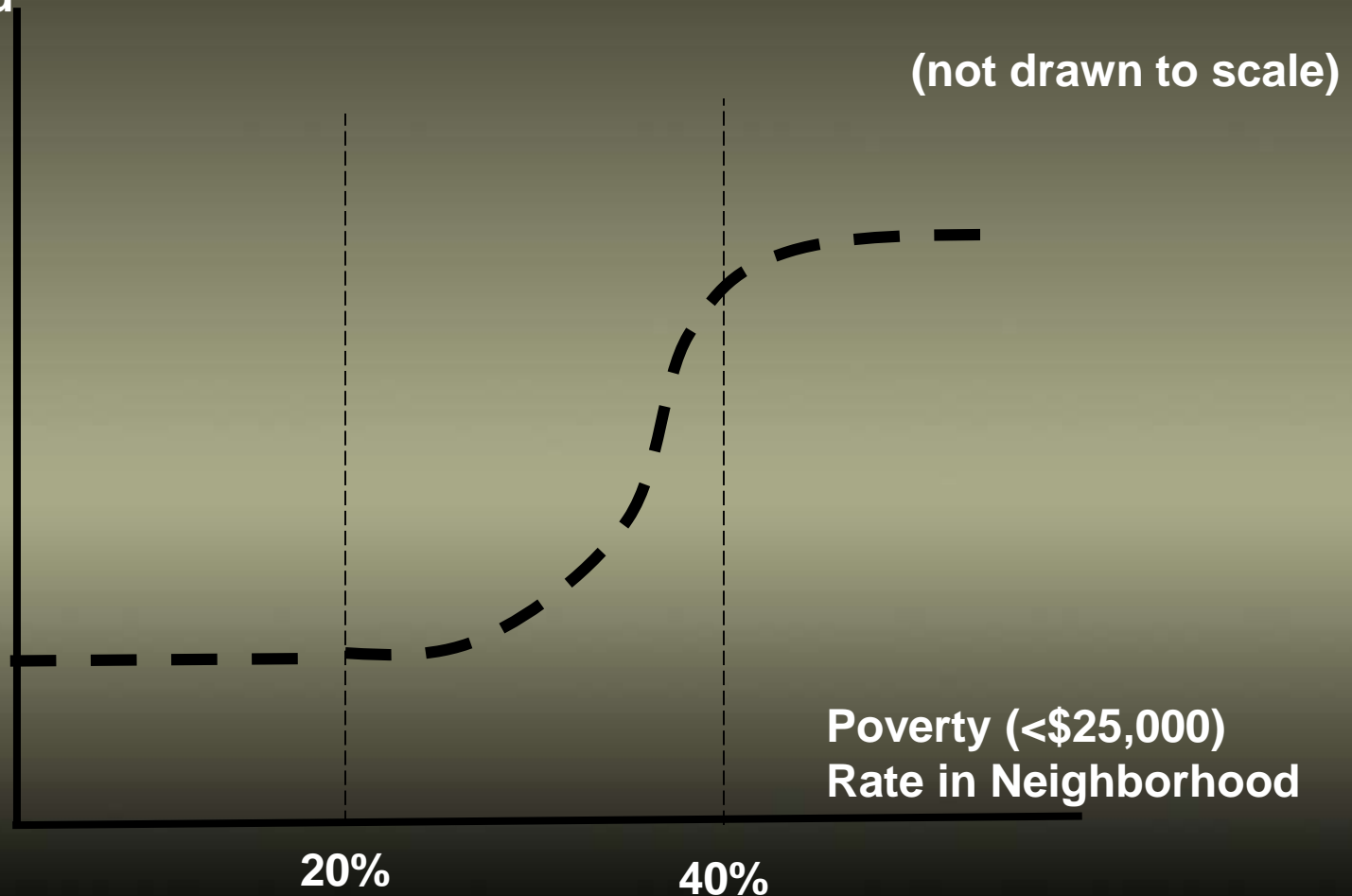
What Do Swedish Studies of Neighborhood Effects of Concentrated Poverty Tell Us?

Future Income of Individuals
in Neighborhood



What Do U.S. Studies of Neighborhood Effects of Concentrated Poverty Tell Us?

Rate of Individuals Engaging in Socially Problematic Behaviors in Neighborhood

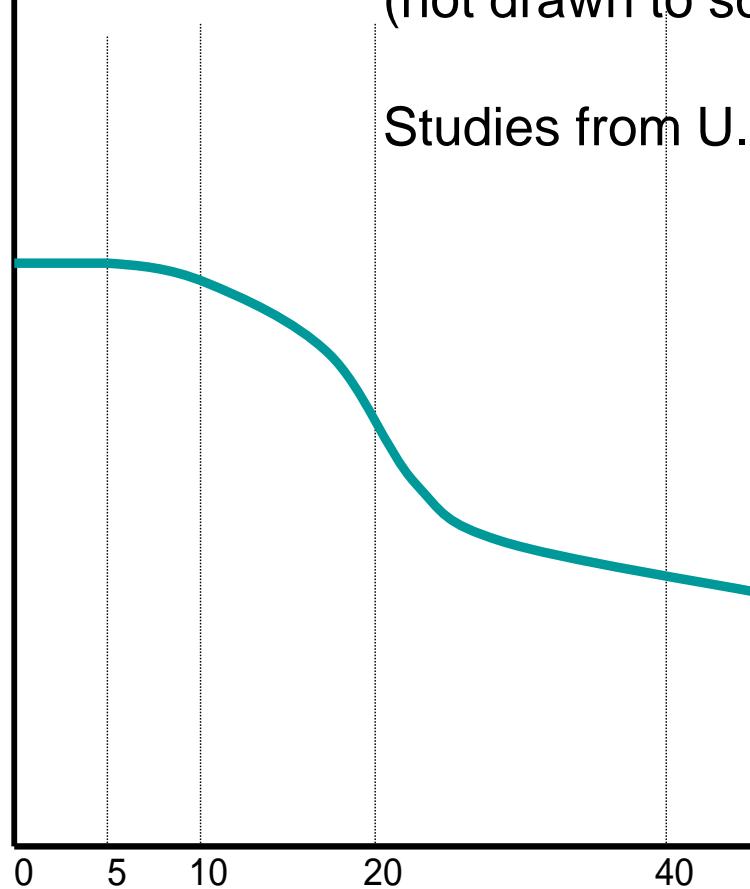


Evidence from Econometric Studies of Residential Property Values and % Poor in Neighborhood

\$ Values
or Rents

(not drawn to scale)

Studies from U.S., UK



% Poor in
Neighborhood

Estimating the Aggregate Social Costs of Concentrated Poverty: A Thought Experiment

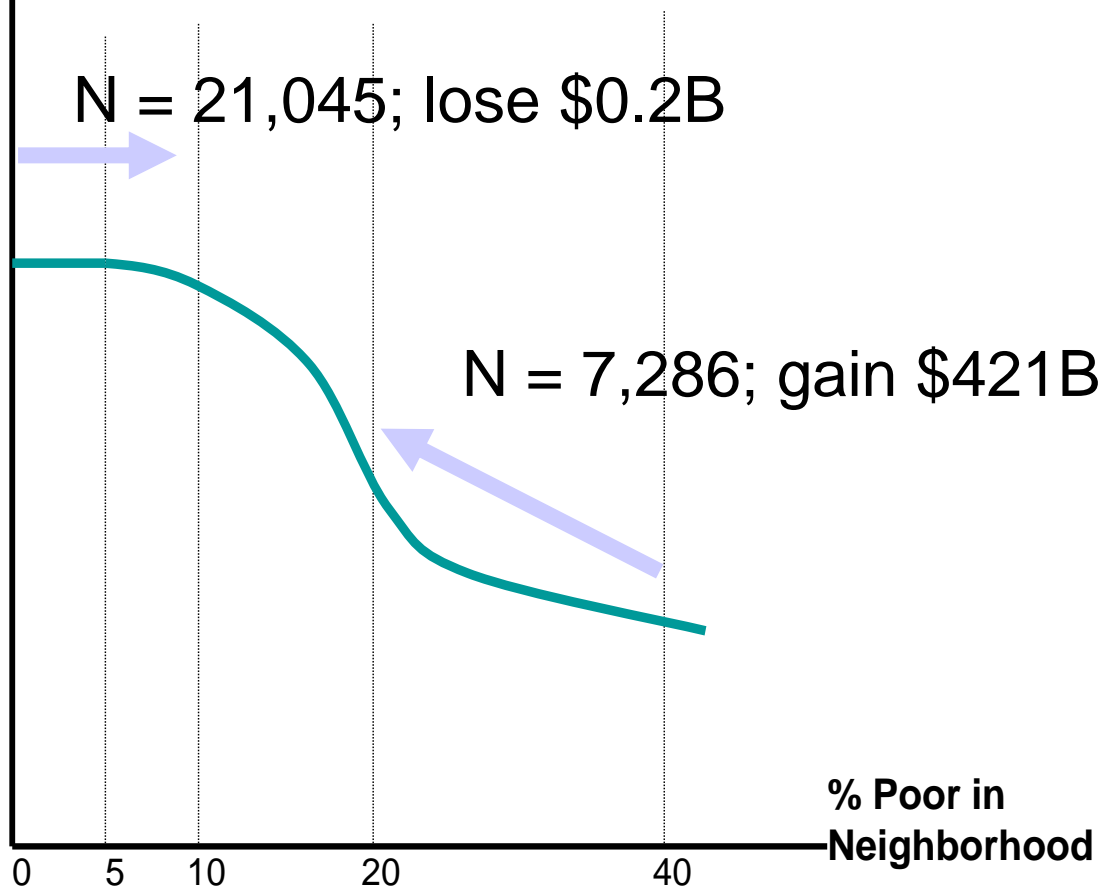
IF US poverty were redistributed such that:
(1) all census tracts in 1990 exceeding 20% poverty had their rate reduced to 20% by 2000;
(2) only lowest-poverty tracts allocated additional poor, with each increasing its poverty rate by maximum 5 percentage points...then over the 1990s:

Aggregate value of owner-occ. stock rises ***\$421 billion (13%)***

- Aggregate annual rents rise ***\$400 million (4%)***...
aggregate value of rental stock rises ***\$20 billion***

Interpreting the Results

\$ Values
or Rents



Interim Conclusions re: Social Mix Justification

There is a sufficient evidentiary base to justify:

- (1) on *equity* grounds a social mix policy that works toward avoiding high concentrations of economically disadvantaged individuals; and
- (2) on *efficiency* grounds a policy that works toward neighborhood social mix, but only if the concentration of economic disadvantage stays relatively low

How Does Social Mixing Work?

**Concentrated economic disadvantage →
Strong negative context effects through:**

negative social interactions

negative role modeling

little collective efficacy

place stigmatization

How Does Social Mixing Work?

Social mixing → Eliminates 4 strong negative context effects processes:

~~negative social interactions~~

~~negative role modeling~~

~~little collective efficacy~~

~~place stigmatization~~

Replacing them with 2 weaker but positive processes:

positive role modeling

enhanced collective efficacy

For What Social Mix Should We Strive?

- **Composition:** On what basis(es) are we mixing people: ethnicity, race, religion, immigrant status, income, housing tenure...all, or some of the above?
- **Concentration:** What is the amount of mixing in question? Which amounts of which groups comprise the ideal mix, or are minimally required to produce the desired outcomes?
- **Scale:** Over what level(s) of geography should the relevant mix be measured? Does mixing at different spatial scales involve different causal processes and yield different outcomes?

“Recipe” analogy

For What Social Mix Should We Strive?

COMPOSITION

% Low-income (or poor) is key “active ingredient” associated w/ most negative neighborhood effects

Low-income residents do better with higher % middle-income neighbors, compared to higher-income neighbors

For What Social Mix Should We Strive?

COMPOSITION

What about immigrants? Refugees?

Employment rates of neighbors is key

Given employment rate of neighbors, higher % own ethnic group preferable for immigrants' economic prospects

Caveats:

Advantages of enclaves erodes over time

Enclaves disadvantageous for women

For What Social Mix Should We Strive?

CONCENTRATION

smallest feasible % economically disadvantaged in every neighborhood

Or...second-best

NO more than 20% poverty in any neighborhood (US)

For What Social Mix Should We Strive?

GEOGRAPHIC SCALE

Negative impacts of concentration of economically disadvantaged strongest at smaller spatial scales

Thus:

Deconcentration & mixing should occur at scale of several hundreds of households (not necessarily every corridor or floor of large building)

How Should We Achieve Social Mix?

Noble end does not justify all means to end!

Enact voluntary, gradual, option-enhancing strategies that:

Deter market or gov't. processes intensifying current concentrations of disadvantage

Expand housing options for disadvantaged where they are now underrepresented

Maintain options for disadvantaged where they are now overrepresented but being displaced by market or gov't.

How Should We Achieve Social Mix?

CAVEAT #1:

Potential Inequities for disadvantaged who may be involuntarily displaced from current neighborhoods either by market or gov't. policy forces:

-- Loss of “bonding social capital”

-- Loss of valuable social institutions

How Should We Achieve Social Mix?

CAVEAT #2:

Successful mixed-income building / neighborhood developments require:

- good maintenance & infrastructure**
- good design**
- good locations**
- community-building efforts**

Will Social Mix Policy be Sufficient to End Social Disadvantage & Deprivation?

NO, CIRCUMSPECTION REQUIRED

MIX = not necessary, not sufficient condition:

-- Individual agency

-- Asymmetry of negative and positive neighborhood effects...and

-- Potentially indelible negative neighborhood effects

→ legacy of disadvantaged places

Will Social Mix Policy be Sufficient to End Social Disadvantage & Deprivation?

What more is needed:

- ancillary supports for health, skill development, etc. of disadvantaged
- commitment by advantaged population to community building / inclusion
- national social welfare & redistribution policies

Conclusion #1

Can social mix policy be justified on grounds of social equity and / or efficiency?

YES, BOTH; concentration of economically disadvantaged past a threshold %:

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Conclusion #2

How does social mixing work?

Removes 4 strong sources of negative impacts (social interactions, inferior role modeling, no collective efficacy, place stigmatization)

Replaces them with 1 neutral (social interactions) & 2 modestly positive impacts (superior role modeling, more collective efficacy)

Conclusion #3

For what social mix should we strive?

**Composition: economically disadvantaged is key;
ethnic composition is secondary**

**Concentration: smallest feasible % econ.
disadvantaged every neighborhood**

**Geographic Scale: neighborhoods mixed at level of
several hundreds of population**

Conclusion #4

How should we achieve social mix?

Voluntary, gradual, option-enhancing strategies that:

Deter market & gov't. processes intensifying current concentrations of disadvantage

Expand options for disadvantaged where they are now underrepresented

Maintain options for disadvantaged where they are now overrepresented but being displaced

Conclusion #5

Will social mix policy be sufficient to end social disadvantage & deprivation?

NO

Social mix is important ingredient for equal opportunity & encourages socioeconomic success, but is neither necessary nor sufficient

Thank you for your comments and questions!

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