

## THE EFFECTS OF TENURE MIX IN TORONTO'S REGENT PARK COMMUNITY

INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTS OF TENURE MIX IN TORONTO'S REGENT PARK  
COMMUNITY

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## **Abstract**

Policies of tenure mix have been widely adopted in many industrialized nations and are often justified as a means of attenuating the detrimental effects of concentrated urban poverty. In this thesis, the case of Toronto's Regent Park community is examined. It is the first large-scale mixed tenure redevelopment of a publicly subsidized housing community in Canada. Using a series of 24 semi-structured qualitative interviews with residents from both tenures, I examine their experience of living in a mixed tenure community and gauge their support for policies of tenure mix more generally. Broader determinants of residential satisfaction in the neighbourhood are also examined. The redeveloped Regent Park is considered to be a relatively safe, convivial, well-serviced, well-situated, and aesthetically pleasing neighbourhood by individuals from both tenures. Further, participants from both tenures expressed support for the ostensible goals of the redevelopment. Resident experiences diverge significantly by tenure with regard to their satisfaction with the management and maintenance of their buildings. Particularly, individuals in the public buildings expressed considerable displeasure with how their buildings were managed and experienced serious physical difficulties that, in some cases, had adverse effects on their health and wellbeing. I find that tenure mix enjoys considerable support from residents of both tenures, with especially strong support evinced by a subset of condominium residents. To assess the efficacy of tenure mix, I employ a conceptual framework provided by Joseph (2006) and find some evidence that the redevelopment has strengthened the social capital of publicly-subsidized tenants. For most residents, more proximal concerns take precedence over the mixed nature of the community.

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## **Introduction**

Toronto's Regent Park housing community is Canada's oldest and largest public housing project. Originally constructed in the late 1940s as a slum clearance initiative, Regent Park became infamous as a site of concentrated urban poverty, one plagued by a variety of social ills. Since 2005, the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), in partnership with a private developer, has been redeveloping the community, demolishing the existing housing stock and replacing it with modern apartment towers and townhouses. Currently, in the second of six phases of construction, Regent Park is being rebuilt as a mixed tenure community, with subsidized public housing units and those housing private condominium units placed along side one another. Though mixed tenure redevelopments have been a fixture of urban policy in other Western industrialized nations for many decades, this is the first time that the redevelopment of a public housing project as a mixed tenure community has been attempted on such a large scale in Canada.

The expectations of tenure mix are lofty. Echoing justifications for projects of tenure mix in other countries, TCHC touts its ability to create "higher employment rates, higher incomes, better health outcomes, better educational results, and lower crime rates" TCHC (2007d:1). In light of the existing literature on the ability of tenure mix to achieve the goals ascribed to it, such pronouncements are optimistic, to say the least. Although mixed tenure redevelopment, like so-called area-based initiatives (ABIs) more generally, have been shown to improve many aspects of targeted neighbourhoods, there is, as yet, no definitive evidence that such measures serve to improve the health or wellbeing of those who reside in these neighbourhoods. Indeed, evidence from the United Kingdom suggests that the most marginalized individuals benefit the least from such initiatives (Stafford et al. 2008). As Neil Bradford (2007:2) has observed, it is "not readily

apparent whether such localized responses can address the wider structural forces that are understood to create the new forms of urban poverty and social exclusion”. This lack of firm empirical grounding for the efficacy of tenure mix has led some commentators to dismiss policies of mixed tenure development as “politically and economically expedient forms of contemporary slum clearance” (Gwyther 2009:154) and part of a “neoliberal framework of devolution, austerity, and marketization under which public housing will suffer a slow death” (Kipfer & Petrunia 2009:132).

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the empirical evidence base on tenure mix, so that the effects of its implementation may be better understood. With similar public-private development partnerships in the works for many other public housing sites, such as the planned redevelopment of the Lawrence Heights community, also in Toronto, this research will help to inform public debate over the respective strengths and weaknesses of planned mixed-tenure communities. It will also provide valuable insights for policy makers charged with the stewardship of Canada’s aging public housing stock, for whom such partnerships appear increasingly attractive. I investigate what impact the redevelopment of Regent Park as a mixed tenure community has had on the lives of residents using data collected from a series of 24 qualitative interviews with residents of both tenure groups. To conceptualize and comment on how the redevelopment of Regent Park may benefit the existing population of publicly subsidized tenants, I employ a theoretical framework developed by Joseph (2006).

In order that the effects of tenure mix are understood, however, it is also necessary to provide a general description of conditions in the neighbourhood so that the specific outcomes of mix may be disentangled from the effects of other aspects of the redevelopment. As such, I devote much attention to the general determinants of residential satisfaction with the neighbourhood and

provide a detailed descriptive account of resident's experience in Regent Park.

Through a balance of descriptive and analytical content, I intend this study to be of interest both to readers concerned specifically with the case of Regent Park, in addition to those with a more general interest in urban policy for whom the case of Regent Park may provide valuable insight and grist for further analytic work.

There are three principal objectives of this study:

- 1) To provide a descriptive account of life in the redeveloped Regent Park and to ascertain what specific aspects of the redevelopment contribute most significantly to residential satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood, in addition to examining how the experiences and perceptions of residents differ by tenure type.
- 2) To describe resident attitudes towards the policy of tenure mix, their experience of tenure mix, and to determine the extent to which the redevelopment of Regent Park as a mixed tenure community contributes to resident satisfaction with the community.
- 3) To identify any evidence that may support or contradict the hypothesis that policies of tenure mix can mitigate the harmful effects of concentrated urban poverty using the conceptual framework supplied by Joseph (2006).

The first chapter of this thesis is devoted to an extensive review of relevant academic literature, in addition to providing a brief history of Regent Park and the redevelopment process. Much attention is paid to the political history of tenure mix as well as the context of Canadian housing

and urban policy in which the redevelopment of Regent Park operates. A detailed discussion of the evidence for the efficacy of tenure mix is provided as is an exploration of the methodological issues that are inherent in studying the relationship of neighbourhood characteristics to individual outcomes. The second chapter concerns the methods used in the analysis of the qualitative data collected during the course of this study. Recruitment protocols, interview procedures, steps taken in the analysis of data, and limitations are all discussed, while a detailed demographic portrait of the study population is also supplied. The third chapter of this thesis provides an atheoretical portrait of life in the redeveloped Regent Park. Notable sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood are identified and differences in resident experiences between tenures are discussed. The fourth chapter is focused on the ways in which Regent Park has changed since the beginning of the redevelopment, with a primary focus on the experience of individuals who resided in the neighbourhood immediately prior to the beginning of the project. Indirect reports of changes are also provided. In the fifth chapter, resident attitudes towards the policy of tenure mix are discussed and their conceptions of how this policy may benefit residents are reported. Further, I introduce two ideal types of Regent Park residents, which I employ to organize and examine resident attitudes towards the redevelopment. The sixth chapter is devoted to resident experiences of tenure mix. In this chapter, I discuss particular instances of inter-tenure antagonism and provide evidence for the respective categories of the beneficial effects of tenure mix as supplied by Joseph (2006). The seventh and final chapter is a discussion of the results as they relate to the academic literature and the future prospects for the redevelopment and the specific benefits of mix as they have emerged in this data.

## **Chapter 1: Review of Literature**

### **History of Regent Park**

Built in the context of postwar Canadian housing policy that concentrated on slum clearance and the provision of basic necessities (Falvo 2007), Regent Park was constructed using “Garden City” design principles which sought to separate the community from the surrounding neighbourhoods by restricting automobile access and employing an inwardly oriented structural form, complemented by large tracts of green space. Although Regent Park’s designers hoped its physical attributes would create a bastion of pastoral rectitude within the downtown core, Regent Park subsequently became notorious for its concentration of social ills including violence, drug dealing, poverty, and poor educational outcomes. Sean Purdy (2003:47) has detailed this decline and, to demonstrate the unenviable reputation that the neighbourhood earned over its first half-century of existence, cites a 2002 article in a Toronto periodical which observed that Regent Park had “accumulated a sense of almost mythical ruin”. This view of Regent Park as a socially and economically marginalized community is given empirical backing by census data. According to data from the 2001 federal census, the last conducted before the beginning of the redevelopment, the two census enumeration districts which comprise the Regent Park community were the poorest in Toronto. In one, almost 73% of households were below the Low-Income Cut Off (LICO) while in the other, nearly 60% of households were below this threshold (Statistics Canada 2001). Although resident activism aimed at counteracting the serious material and social disadvantages encountered by Regent Park inhabitants has been a constant feature of the community, Purdy (2003b: 107) comments that “territorial stigmatization has been one of the most protrusive elements of the lived experience of Regent Park residents”. While Regent Park

may have been the poorest neighbourhood in Toronto, it is also a well-serviced community and a wide-range of social programs are offered by a variety of public, charitable, and religious organizations. Despite being the poorest neighbourhood in Toronto, Regent Park was not named as one of 13 “Priority Neighbourhoods” in the city by a 2004 United Way report, owing to the wide-availability of social services in the community (United Way 2004; TCHC 2007a).

### **The Redevelopment**

Since 2005, TCHC, an organization wholly-owned by the city of Toronto and responsible for the provision of public housing in the Greater Toronto Area, in partnership with the Daniels Corporation, a private developer, has been involved in the redevelopment of Regent Park. Over the course of redevelopment, currently in the second of six total stages, all existing housing stock, which is comprised primarily of low-rise apartment blocks, will be replaced by modern condominiums and town homes, while through-streets will reintegrate the neighbourhood into Toronto’s downtown core. Formally, the first stage of redevelopment was carried out under the auspices of the Dundas & Parliament Development Corporation, an enterprise held equally by the Daniels Corporation and the Regent Park Development Corporation (RPDC), a wholly-owned subsidiary of TCHC. Construction of stage 2 is similarly organized, though with another jointly-owned enterprise, the Parliament & Gerrard Development Corporation, being established for this purpose.

While formerly the neighbourhood was home to approximately 7,600 individuals living in 2,086 publicly subsidized units, the redevelopment will see the community’s population rise to 12,500, with market condominium units making up roughly 60 per cent of the units, the remainder being

public and affordable-rent units. In addition, community amenities such as a park, aquatic centre, and cultural centre are being constructed, while commercial retail space is being provided on the ground level of some condominiums. Current commercial tenants include a coffee shop, grocery store and a bank - a welcome addition for residents, as commercial amenities were conspicuously absent in Regent Park prior to the redevelopment. Physically, the Regent Park redevelopment is comparable to HOPE VI mixed tenure housing developments in the United States, being heavily informed by new urbanist precepts. Regent Park differs importantly from HOPE VI, however, in that displaced residents were guaranteed the right to return to a unit in Regent Park or in the immediate vicinity, while only a minority of displaced HOPE VI residents were permitted to return (Goetz 2000).

### **Tenure Mix: A History**

In recent decades, policies of deliberate tenure mix have become commonplace in the UK, Australia, Scandinavia, the United States and the Netherlands, their intention being to break segregation along the economic and ethnic lines that often feature in urban areas (Lees 2008). Despite this policy's recent vogue, it is not without historical precedent. In her seminal paper on the history of tenure mix in Anglo-American societies, Sarkissian (1976) traces social mix as an explicit goal of urban policy to the plan for the English town of Ilford in 1846. The doctrine of social mix was developed by English social activists, intellectuals, and civic-minded industrialists in the face of a rapidly expanding population of industrial workers concentrated in urban areas whose economic marginalization and lack of access to sanitary facilities produced attendant health and social problems and led to the migration of middle and upper income inhabitants away from cities and towns (Arthurson 2008). From its beginning, the doctrine of tenure mix was

inherently paternalistic, with its view that the working class population would benefit from exposure to role models from more affluent sections of society in order to become better citizens and its presumption that the resulting mixed social environment would lead ineluctably to a reduction in class antagonism (Sarkissian 1976; Cole & Goodchild 2001). A famous example from this era is the town of Bourneville, founded by industrialist and chocolate-baron George Cadbury in 1895. Built around one of Cadbury's factories and designed with the assumption that propinquity between classes would benefit workers as norms and modes of behaviour were transferred from the middle classes, Bourneville featured a high degree of physical integration between the classes, a foreshadow of the spatial determinism that pervades much of the current advocacy of social mix (Arthurson 2008).<sup>1</sup>

Tenure mix, a key component of the 'garden city' movement, remained a prominent feature of British town planning until the First World War and reappeared briefly in the years of Labour government following World War Two. In the immediate postwar period, the policy of tenure mix was advocated most stridently by the Minister of Health and Local Government, Aneurin Bevan, whose intention was for local authority housing to be the predominant tenure type for all social classes, although this initial support for the state provision of the majority of housing waned relatively quickly, and housing did not achieve the same level of integration into the welfare state as enjoyed by other sectors (Cole & Goodchild 2001). The incomplete incorporation of housing into the public sector is not unique to the United Kingdom, however. Tracing the history of housing policy in Western industrialized countries in the postwar era, Torgersen (1987

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<sup>1</sup> A study of Bourneville conducted by Groves et al. (2003) found that the community remains a well-functioning town and a relatively desirable place to live. Its desirability may relate to the fact that the factory is still in operation providing employment to many of the town's residents. Authors such as Wilson (1987; 1996) and Jargowsky (1997) have demonstrated that economic considerations, in particular the presence or absence of employment opportunities, are central to the emergence of areas of concentrated poverty - precisely what policies of social mix are intended to address.



cited in Stamsø 2010:64) describes housing, when compared to healthcare, education, and pensions, as “the wobbly pillar of the welfare state”, with neither public nor private sectors ever fully responsible for its provision.

In the British context, the doctrine of social mix did not reappear in a substantial way until after the election of the New Labour government in 1997, with the publication of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions’ (DETR) 1998 policy paper *Planning and Affordable Housing*, which asserted that planners should “encourage the development of mixed and balanced communities in order to avoid areas of social exclusion” (Cited in Goodchild & Cole 2001:110). This renewed emphasis on social mix took place in the aftermath of the Conservative government’s drastic cuts to the welfare state during the 1980’s, which reduced the size of the public housing sector through the “Right to Buy” (RTB) scheme from over a third of all housing stock, to 23% at the time of New Labour’s election in 1997 (Cole & Goodchild 2001). RTB allowed for tenants to purchase their homes from the local housing authority, but served to ‘residualise’ the public housing sector as the most affluent social renters left local authority housing (Rowlands et al. 2006; Jupp 1999). They left behind those without the means to purchase the properties they rented, making the public sector synonymous with the economically marginalized and leading to increasingly segmented neighbourhoods (Wood 2003). Studying the policy discourse of these two eras in British housing policy, Goodchild and Cole (2001:108) remark that while in its first iteration social mix had been conceived of as a tool in a grand project of social engineering, the project of tenure mix is now presented more cautiously as a vehicle to promote “neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion”.

### **The Canadian Context**

The redevelopment of Regent Park differs significantly from similar initiatives undertaken in other countries due to the comparatively decentralized locus of Canadian social policy formation, as the “processes of housing policy development closely mirrored the changes in intergovernmental relations and the evolution of Canadian federalism” (Carroll & Jones 2000:281). From the pinnacle of Federal involvement in the late 1960s and 1970s during the brief existence of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs, Canadian housing policy has been marked by continued devolution, with the federal government restraining funding in 1978, and beginning outright downloading of responsibility to the provinces in 1986 (Carroll & Jones 2000). Federal involvement in housing came to an end as a result of Liberal finance minister Paul Martin’s 1994 budget, while in Ontario, responsibility for housing was further devolved to municipalities by the Progressive Conservative government of Mike Harris in 2000 (Hackworth & Moriah 2006). These policies, in addition to the relaxation of rent controls by the Harris government, made the lack of affordable housing particularly acute in Toronto, which is home to a large number of immigrants dependant on social housing. As Bryant (2004) reports, despite the relaxation of rent controls, private investment in new rental housing plummeted as average rents in Ontario more than doubled the rate of inflation in 2000 and 2001 - in the latter year, over 61, 000 Ontario tenant households were faced with eviction. TCHC and other municipal non-profit (MNP) organizations that administer public housing units built originally by either federal or provincial governments are the direct result of this process of devolution. Taking into account all types of public housing, including private non-profit housing (usually provided by religious organizations) and co-operative housing, public units account for a paltry 6% of the national housing stock (Hackworth & Moriah 2006).

Toronto has, in the past, embraced mixed-tenure housing on a limited scale. Both August (2007) and Falvo (2007) recount how social mix was promoted during the reformist mayoralties of Crombie and Sewell. Perhaps the most famous example of social mix from this era was the redevelopment of the St. Lawrence neighbourhood<sup>2</sup>, although this case is quite dissimilar to TCHC's current project in Regent Park as the redevelopment of the St. Lawrence neighbourhood was notable for its construction of co-operative housing, with a high-level of physical integration between the tenure types. This contrasts with Regent Park where market-rate owners and social renters inhabit different buildings and no form of co-operative housing is present.

### **Policy and Place**

While the Canadian experience with housing policy devolution was particularly severe, the trend towards locally focused initiatives, of which the redevelopment of Regent Park is an example, has occurred in countries where higher levels of government still remain active in urban policy and the social housing sector. This tendency has been termed by Brenner (2004:447) as a “rescaling of state space”. Examining the shifting governance structures in Western European countries, Brenner (2004:463) remarks that the post-war period, or “high-fordist” era, was characterized by “centralized control over local social and economic policies, technocratic frameworks of metropolitan governance, extensive interregional resource transfers and redistributive forms of national spatial planning”. Following the recession of the 1970s and the decline of state Keynesianism, national urban policies were employed “in order to address the specific socioeconomic problems of large cities, such as mass unemployment, the deskilling of labor, capital flight and infrastructural decay”(Brenner 2004:465).

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<sup>2</sup> A large photograph of the St. Lawrence Market adorns the Daniels Corporation condominium sales centre located on the site of Regent Park.

While this movement towards so-called “place-based” policy (alternatively known as Area-Based Initiatives [ABIs]) has been vigorously pursued as a goal of urban governance in many Western European countries and the United States, explicitly defined place-based policy in Canada has only been adopted very tentatively and only on a limited scale (Bradford 2007). Considering the history of housing policy in Canada, it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the move towards place-based policy in Canada has been less a direct goal of policy and more the inevitable result of the retreat of higher-levels of government from engagement in urban spaces. This is certainly the case in Toronto where responsibility for some 58,126 units of public housing, nearly 45% of the total public housing units in Ontario, was transferred from the federal government, to the provincial government, to the municipality, in less than a decade (Hackworth & Moriah 2006).

Andersson and Musterd (2005), studying ABIs in the European context, have suggested a number of factors that contribute to their popularity among policy makers. Among these is the fact that social problems tend to be manifested in a spatially unequal way, so that ABIs allow for more efficient allocation of state resources. This approach may be problematic, however, as it disregards deprived individuals who do not reside within the areas designated for intervention. This critique is particularly relevant in the Canadian context as research suggests that poverty in Canada is generally not spatially concentrated (at least when compared to the United States), and that areas of relative deprivation are characterized by a high-degree of residential mobility, particularly among immigrant communities (Kazemipur 2000; Ley & Smith 2000). Andersson and Musterd (2005) also contend that, in the European context, the objective of breaking the segregation of immigrant communities in urban areas is viewed as a primary goal. To this end, they assert, policies of social mix, which often feature in these ABIs, are designed to integrate

immigrant residents into ‘mainstream’ society. The aim of immigrant integration in European countries is perhaps less pertinent in the Canadian context owing to differing attitudes towards immigration as compared with those of European countries, and the aforementioned mobility of immigrant populations.

A common feature of these ABIs and neighbourhood redevelopment schemes is a significant degree of co-operation with the private sector. This is certainly the case in Regent Park where funding for the redevelopment has been made possible by co-operation with the Daniels Corporation, with the proceeds from the sales of market-rate units used to fund the construction of the social housing units. Employing the general typology of public housing redevelopments supplied by Weber and Smith (2003), the Regent Park project may be characterized as an example of a collaborative Community Development Corporation (CDC). Elwood (2004) points out that this variety of collaboration has been termed ‘third-way’, ‘joined up, or ‘participatory’ governance, and is often defended with the rhetoric of citizen engagement, although the extent to which this rhetoric is operationalized remains unclear. Indeed, the necessity of involving capital interests in such schemes has provoked skepticism towards such projects from some commentators. Discussing the English Government’s 2005 *Sustainable Communities Plan*, which further entrenched tenure mix as a key tenet in planning doctrine through the Mixed Communities Initiative, Lupton and Fuller (2009:1014) assert that “extensive community consultation efforts run parallel with emergent governance structures, in which local state and capital interests combine and communities may effectively be disempowered”, while it remains unclear how these tensions may be resolved “...especially in the light of a collapsing housing market, increased poverty and demand for affordable housing, and a shortage of private investment”. With regard to the increasing role of capital interests in governance arrangements, they quote Harvey’s

(2000:181) description of this ‘third-way’ approach as featuring a “deep substratum of coerced co-operations and collaborations, in which certain agents are favoured, while others are disempowered”. Authors such as Kipfer & Petrunia (2009) and August (2007) have critiqued the Regent Park redevelopment along similar lines.

Swyngedouw et al. (2002), in their study of thirteen large-scale urban development initiatives across Europe found that local democratic mechanisms are rarely respected, that such programs are poorly integrated into broader planning processes, that they often serve to heighten socioeconomic polarization as public funds are diverted away from social objectives to investments in the built environment, and that they generally represent an “upper-class democracy” that is driven by “elite-driven priorities” – although they do concede that “...grassroots movements occasionally manage to turn the course of events in favor of local participation and of modest social returns for deprived social groups” (Swyngedouw et al. 2002:547-48). Further, they make the important macroeconomic observation that the nature of global capital flows leaves municipalities few opportunities to increase tax revenues, boosting the importance of revaluing urban land. This consideration is acknowledged openly in TCHC’s official publications, as they emphasize, with regards to Regent Park’s nascent socially-mixed neighbourhood, that “preventing disruption and retaining positive perceptions of the community [is] critical to supporting higher market values for private units” (TCHC 2007d:12).

Despite the popularity of ABIs, there is little evidence to suggest that such strategies are able to stimulate improvements in the lives of individuals, the most notable example being the ambitious series of place-based interventions known as the New Deal for Communities (NDC) program undertaken over the period of a decade in England. Thirty-nine of the most deprived areas in the country were identified and allotted approximately £50 million each to address specific areas of

need, on the condition that community partnerships would be created to initiate and oversee the various interventions. Despite NDC's scope, both Parry et al. (2004) and Stafford et al. (2008) found little evidence that these programs had positive outcomes on the well-being of residents relative to others outside the intervention areas, while Lawless (2010:25) concludes that area-based initiatives "tend to improve places, rather than the fortunes of individuals within them".

### **Tenure Mix In The Redeveloped Regent Park**

Three decades of devolution have left place-based initiatives in Canada, such as Regent Park's, without the corresponding "macro-level" anti-poverty programs which complement the urban policies of other countries, such as the *Big Cities Policy* of the Netherlands or France's *Contrats de Ville* (Carroll & Jones 2000; Bradford 2007:21). The nature of Canada's engagement with communities, which the OECD has described as "disjointed" (Bradford 2009:4), grants municipalities a great deal of autonomy in articulating the objectives and principles which motivate local housing redevelopments. Despite the local provenance of its policy discourse, TCHC has presented a series of expectations regarding its strategy of mixing tenures in the redeveloped Regent Park which mirror those of nationally derived schemes (Cole & Goodchild 2001; Arthurson 2008; Kleinhans 2004; Lees 2008). It assumes that the geographic propinquity resulting from the influx of relatively-affluent condominium owners into Regent Park will have a beneficial impact on the existing population of social-renters, among the most economically impoverished in the country. TCHC's expectations and objectives find their most detailed elaboration in the *Regent Park Social Development Plan* (RPSDP), a sprawling document outlining goals of the redevelopment and the numerous strategies that TCHC hopes will create a vibrant and socially inclusive community. Particularly, the RPSDP places a great deal of faith in

the ability of tenure mix to create “socially cohesive, socially inclusive mixed-income communities...” that in turn can create “higher employment rates, higher incomes, better health outcomes, better educational results, and lower crime rates” (TCHC 2007d:). This optimistic presentation of the existing evidence on the effects of mixed tenure housing initiatives misrepresents the data presently available. After a careful review of the literature, it is clear that TCHC’s claim that “the results are conclusive”, with regard to the efficacy of mixed tenure developments, is difficult to substantiate (TCHC 2007c:2).

### **Tenure Mix: The Evidence**

In his review of studies on the effectiveness of social mix in accomplishing their stated aims, Kleinhans (2004:384) describes the empirical evidence base as “ambivalent”. Research conducted subsequently provides scant evidence to refute Kleinhans’ assessment. (Musterd & Andersson 2005; Arthurson 2007; Camina & Wood 2009; Graham et al. 2009; Baum, Arthurson, & Rickson 2010; Lawless 2010; Andersson 2006; Kearns & Mason 2007). Bond, Sautkina, and Kearns (2011) have recently conducted a systematic review of publications that have reviewed primary data on the impact of social mix policies. Drawing on both academic and policy literature and restricting their assessments to works focusing on data from Britain, they find in this “review of reviews” that these studies are unanimous in reporting no evidence that policies of tenure mix promote integration between tenure types. Indeed, the two academic reviews included in their analysis, Kleinhans (2004) and Wood (2003) drawing on primary data from Beekman et al. (2001), Cole et al. (1997), and Wood & Vamplew (1999), find that social mix may even lead to increased tensions between tenures. Also lacking is any definitive evidence that social mix creates ‘social capital’, job opportunities, or increases in employment rates. Further, they report



only mixed evidence that such initiatives overcome place-based stigma and diminish perceptions of crime or other anti-social behaviour. Indeed, the only positive outcomes of social mix that the evidence supports with near-unanimity is on improvements to the physical environment, community amenities and to an improvement in the desirability of the local housing stock. In addition, Bond, Sautkina, and Kearns (2011) find that the academic reviews were generally more pessimistic about the prospects for social mix than was the grey literature. Indeed, the non-academic reviews were found to have introductions and conclusions more positive than what was merited by the contents of those reviews.

Although no similar systematic review has been conducted for data outside Britain, a cursory reading of the available literature reveals the same patterns as described by Bond, Sautkina, and Kearns. In the Dutch context, for instance, Uitermark et al. (2007) found that the migration of middle-income residents into redeveloped mixed tenure neighbourhoods often resulted in considerable enmity between owners and social renters, while the social bonds that did develop between members of the two groups have been described as “superficial” (Lees 2008:2456). This hostility may have been due to the antagonistic manner in which these development schemes were carried out, as Uitermark et al. (2007:119) observed that the objectives of these policies were the “...civilizing and controlling [of] these neighbourhoods”.

Perhaps more comparable to Regent Park is the experience of social mix as reported by Joseph and Chaskin (2010) in their study of mixed income communities in the Chicago area. Like TCHC, the Chicago Housing Authority has embraced the CDC model, using funds generated from this public-private partnership to refurbish 17, 000 public housing units and construct 7,700 new public housing units in mixed tenure neighbourhoods. Conducting 65 semi-structured interviews in two newly-built socially mixed neighbourhoods, and following up with 53

respondents a year later, Joseph & Chaskin investigated the attitudes of residents, both social housing tenants and market-rate owners, towards the redeveloped neighbourhoods and towards social mix. They found that the social tenants were overwhelmingly satisfied with the physical features of their new units while the market rate owners expressed satisfaction with the location of the neighbourhoods, with both sites adjacent to the downtown CBD. Tenure mix enjoyed more support among the social tenants than among owners, although this support seemed *premised upon the principle of social mix rather than any tangible product of it*. Many of the subsidized tenants expressed the belief that they would benefit from the diverse environment while some went so far as to say exposure to individuals from a different social class might modify the behaviour of low-income residents. There was, however, precious little evidence of any benefits to the social renters. In all the interviews conducted, respondents could name only one case of a tenant gaining from interaction with higher-income residents – a market-rate owner reporting she had found work for a tenant as a janitor. In sum, whatever benefits did accrue to the tenants seemed “...more symbolic than instrumental” (Joseph & Chaskin 2010:2359). At follow-up, attitudes towards social mix seemed cooler, with many residents of both tenures reporting tensions. About half of residents in private units complained about the behaviour of social tenants, with common grievances including excessive noise, loitering, littering and a general inattention to the physical upkeep of the neighbourhood, and most frequently, complaints about poorly supervised children. From this account, it is hard to discern any positive effect of social mix considered in isolation from the broader context of housing redevelopment.

Studies with higher spatial levels of analysis have also produced ambivalent results. Using longitudinal census data, Musterd and Andersson (2005) studied concentrations of poverty in Sweden and found little association between housing mix and social mix (as measured by

ethnicity and tenure type), despite social mix being an explicit goal of Swedish policy since the late 1970s. Further, they concluded that the areas characterized by a high degree of housing tenure homogeneity, either public or private, were far from the most problematic areas. Following up, Andersson (2006) found that Swedish social mix policy has failed to break the ethnic segregation that pervades urban areas in that country.

In their study of tenure mix and neighbourhood satisfaction in England, Kearns and Mason (2007), come to similarly negative conclusions. Using the Survey of English Housing (SEH), they investigated the influence of tenure mix on a variety of neighbourhood problems. Tenure mix was not associated with a decrease in any of the neighbourhood problems. Indeed, the issue that was most strongly related to tenure mix was the incidence of problems with neighbours, with which it was positively correlated. Caution should be taken when interpreting these findings and relating them to the experience of Regent Park, however. Research of this scope, by necessity, disguises much local variation and these studies include all neighbourhoods, not just those targeted by urban renewal projects in which social mix is a programmatic objective. Further, spatial divisions used in these analyses may not be coterminous with particular social features as they exist on the ground.

### **Contextual Effects**

Much of the RDSDP's conviction in the beneficial outcomes of the redevelopment is implicitly premised upon the existence of so-called "neighbourhood effects" or "contextual effects" hypothesis, which holds that the social characteristics of impoverished areas serve to intensify the prevalence of injurious behaviours, attitudes, and, by consequence, health outcomes at the

individual level. That is, it supposes that a proportion of the deprivation experienced in poor neighbourhoods is an emergent property of prevailing social norms and conditions, and that such deprivation is not simply reducible to the aggregation of impoverished individuals. While the assertion that neighbourhood conditions impact individual fortunes, above and beyond measurable characteristics unique to the individual, seems almost self-evident, providing sound empirical evidence to confirm this aphorism is extraordinarily difficult.

The modern sociological interest in the area-effects debate can be traced to the work of Wirth (1938) and Shaw and McKay (1942). Wirth argued that the urban environment served to destroy the traditional social ties of kinship and community and portrayed a bleak image of urban life, which envisaged the lives of urban dwellers as fragmented and separate from the rest of society (Campbell & Lee 1992). Shaw and McKay were interested particularly in how the urban environment influenced delinquent behaviour and, in their study of Chicago neighbourhoods, found that poor neighbourhoods were disproportionately affected by a series of social ills including high rates of infant mortality, tuberculosis, physical abuse, and crime. Further, they noted that the presence of these harmful phenomena did not abate as the demographic composition of these neighbourhoods changed and from this, concluded, in sociologist Robert Sampson's (2003:133) words, that "...neighbourhoods possess relatively enduring features that transcend the idiosyncratic characteristics of particular ethnic groups that inhabit them". Another notable proponent of the area-effects hypothesis, the eminent American sociologist James Julius Wilson, in his studies of inner-city neighbourhoods in Chicago (1987), asserts that residents of deprived neighbourhoods are not only disadvantaged through exogenous economic forces, but, have their disadvantage compounded by the out-movement of relatively more affluent community members, producing social norms that differ from those of society at large.

Oreopoulos (2005) has critiqued cross-sectional multi-level regression studies, which constitute the bulk of research produced on this topic to date, as insufficient to eliminate the possibility of endogeneity. He maintains that “the underlying characteristics that determine how and why families move to particular areas may themselves determine the outcomes that interest us” and that “without plausible explanations [of] how similar households sort into neighbourhoods for reasons unrelated to the outcomes that interest us, regression analysis acts on faith (assumption) that omitted variables bias and measurement error bias are negligible (Oreopoulos 2005:12). Blasius, Friedrichs, and Galster (2007:627) echo these concerns, commenting that while the problem of contextual effects has been taken up by a diverse range of disciplines including criminology, economics, sociology, and health science, “much of the literature quantifying neighbourhood effects can be challenged on methodological grounds”.

### **Regent Park as a Public Health Intervention**

These same methodological concerns bedevil efforts to demonstrate that socio-economic aspects of neighbourhoods determine individual health concerns. The literature linking such neighbourhood characteristics to a variety of individual metrics of health and well-being is extensive (Hertzman et al. 1999, Dunn & Hayes 2000, WHO 2007, MacIntyre, Ellaway, & Cummins 2002, Guite, Clark, & Ackrill 2006). However, the observed correlations between neighbourhood characteristics and health do not firmly establish that these neighbourhood characteristics are the *cause* of health outcomes, as the possibility that unhealthier individuals filter to ‘unhealthier’ neighbourhoods through processes of self-selection cannot be discounted.

To address these implicit problems a number of innovative methods have been employed,

although no uniform pattern of findings has been produced (Galster et al. 2007). For instance, endogeneity can be avoided in quasi-natural experiments in which individuals are randomly assigned to a treatment condition, thus avoiding unobserved processes of neighbourhood selection. Other methods used to quantify contextual effects include the use of instrumental variables, proxy variables uncorrelated with the dependent variable but highly correlated with the independent variable, and hierarchical linear modeling, which allows for the partition of observed variance between discrete levels. Galster et al. (2007) have compiled a more extensive list including difference and fixed effect models based on longitudinal studies and sibling studies.

Excluding research that does not conform to these more rigorous methodological standards, there is relatively little Canadian evidence published on this topic. Georgiades, Boyle, and Duku (2007) have demonstrated that child educational performance is impacted by contextual factors, but the only Canadian evidence on the effect of neighbourhoods on ‘life-chances’ consists of a study conducted by Oreopoulos (2003) on residents of public housing in Toronto. The waiting list and allocation of publicly-subsidized housing created a natural experiment that essentially randomized assignment to neighbourhoods of different economic standing. Oreopoulos found no evidence that the neighbourhood an individual grew up in had an independent effect upon that individual’s future earnings or labour market participation. Although the evidence is by no means definitive, there exists a growing body of international data that suggests the reality of neighbourhood effects in at least some of the contexts in which they have been surmised to operate (Buck 2001; Friedrichs & Blasius 2003; Musterd & Andersson 2005; Galster et al 2008; Murie & Musterd 2004, Das-Munshi et al 2010; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls 1997).

Perhaps the strongest evidence for neighbourhood-effects comes from the work of Galster,

Andersson, and Musterd (2010), who examined the impact of neighbourhood income mix on individual earnings employing a difference model that controlled for unobserved time-invariant properties. Using longitudinal data from Swedish population registers for three large metropolitan areas that included 1.67 million adults between 1991 and 1999, contextual effects on changes in income were observed, although “...a combination of personal attributes typically governs the vulnerability of the individual to the effect of neighbourhood income mix” (Galster, Andersson & Musterd 2010:22). For instance, they found that regardless of gender, individuals with children but without fulltime employment were more sensitive to the neighbourhood composition, while males appear more affected by contextual features of the neighbourhood than females. Lower-income males appeared to benefit from the presence of middle-income neighbours, rather than from either high or low-income neighbours, suggesting that if ‘social distance’ is too great, little benefit will accrue to low-income individuals. Further, both low-income males and females over 30 years of age experience increases in personal income when low and high-income neighbours are replaced by middle-income neighbours, while a similar effect is observed only for males aged 24-30. While these results provide some support for the basic tenets of social mix, the complexity of the effects observed lead the authors to warn that “...our findings also raise the uncomfortable political prospect that the consequences from the often standardised, ‘one size fits all’ programmes for neighbourhood mixing underway today will vary significantly among target groups, with some perhaps being unforeseen and unwanted” (Galster, Andersson, & Musterd 2010:22).

The difficulty in affecting change in individuals through a change in their social environment is demonstrated by the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) program. Implemented in five major

American cities, the MTO program allowed public housing residents in depressed inner-city areas to be relocated to more affluent neighbourhoods, and was presented as a way to increase the ‘social capital’ of inner-city populations (Popkin et al. 2002). It was hoped that MTO would provide these inner-city residents with greater exposure to ‘weak’ social-tie building opportunities, thus improving their rate of workforce participation along with a host of other positive outcomes. Sampson (2008) summarizes the results and finds that while there were positive impacts on the mental health of adult movers and behavioural deficits among adolescent girls, certain other metrics, particularly the economic self-sufficiency of adults, were unaffected.

The inability of the MTO program to improve the employment outcomes of individuals has been examined by Kleit (2001), who found that although dispersed residents had more extensive networks of social relations, they were less likely to use their broader social networks to seek out employment opportunities. These findings have significant implications regarding the efficacy of using policies of social mix to foster social mobility among the disadvantaged. Whereas MTO was a program that sought to create social mix through dispersal, the majority of other initiatives examined in the literature aim to create social mix through the *in situ* dilution of social renters. This is accomplished either through the gradual replacement of tenants by owners, as in the case of the UK’s Right to Buy (RTB) scheme, or by the construction or redevelopment of purpose-built mixed tenure neighbourhoods. Regent Park may be considered an example of this latter category.

The evidence linking the physical dimensions of housing improvement and health outcomes is much stronger (Shaw 2004, Thomson et al. 2003, Thomson et al. 2009, Somerville et al. 2002). In their 2009 paper, Thomson et al. conducted a systematic review of studies concerning the health impacts of housing improvement interventions, with 45 studies published between 1887 and 2007



included in their analysis. Their findings suggest that basic improvements in the physical condition of housing, particularly ventilation and heating, provide the clearest improvements to health and wellbeing. The impact of area-based housing improvements on health, by contrast, is “unclear” (Thomson et al. 2009: 691). However, they find no indication that such initiatives are harmful to health and wellbeing.

As such, the redevelopment of Regent Park may be considered a health intervention insofar as residents were materially distressed by the physical problems that plagued their former units - units which had gone over half a century without substantial capital upgrades and were in disrepair. The promulgation of the broader development of the Regent Park community, particularly the introduction of tenure mix, as a health intervention is empirically less sound. However, if the emerging evidence derived from methodologically appropriate techniques is a sign that the erstwhile lack of evidence of neighbourhood effects is a result of the difficulty in detecting such effects, rather than an indication for their absence, then the redevelopment of Regent Park as a mixed tenure neighbourhood may be regarded as a public health intervention. Noting that it *may* have an impact on health, however, is not to suggest that it has, in fact, *had* a beneficial impact upon health.

### **Theoretical Models for the Benefits Of Mix**

The literature on tenure mix offers two different conceptual frameworks by which mixed-tenured development may serve to mitigate the effects of concentrated urban poverty, provided by Joseph (2006) and Galster (2007). Although Galster’s model is more exact, consisting of ten possible mechanisms divided into two categories, those which operate internally to a community and those

which arise from interactions external to the community, in this paper, I have elected to use Joseph's model to evaluate the evidence on the potential benefits of tenure mix. The majority of mechanisms suggested by Galster can be subsumed by Joseph's four broader categories, simplifying its use as an analytical tool for qualitative data. Galster's model, by contrast, is composed of more discrete mechanisms that would be more amenable to the analysis of quantitative data. Further credence is given to Joseph's framework by the finding that respondents described, in essence, all four categories when asked about the potential benefits of mixed tenure development.

Joseph's first category involves social networks and social capital, which are increased, perhaps, through the influx of owners. This mechanism is premised on Granovetter's (1973) distinction between 'strong' and 'weak' ties, with the assumption that impoverished individuals lack the latter 'weak' or 'bridging' ties that are instrumental in obtaining information about employment, or other opportunities. As Wood (2003) points out, social mix is often justified by the assumption that residents of deprived areas lack the useful "weak" links, and that their exposure to more affluent neighbours will increase their social capital. Stemming from Durkheim's view that social circumstances have a direct effect upon health and well-being (Berkman et al. 2000), social capital may be defined crudely as the quality and extent of gainful social relations between individuals, in the most narrow sense, and whole communities, in a much broader understanding. While empirical evidence has demonstrated that the number and quality of social ties have a direct impact on health at the individual level (Berkman & Breslow 1983), defining social capital in a broader context remains difficult. Szreter and Woolcock (2004:654) have suggested that the term has become, like 'race' or 'gender', an "essentially contested concept". In the English language tradition, the concept known expressly as 'social capital' emerged from the work of

American sociologist James Coleman, and was distinguished from Granovetter's 'links' by its broader formulation as described above (Szreter & Woolcock 2004).

Contemporary debate around the concept is dominated by the work of Robert Putnam, who first dealt with the subject in his 1993 book *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, in which he compared Italy's various administrative regions and concluded that high levels of social capital, or presence of social networks and norms that enable individuals to network 'horizontally' and labour collectively towards common ends, was the most significant determinant of institutional performance. Putnam distinguishes between bonding and bridging capital, which corresponds roughly with Granovetter's categories, but unlike Coleman, who asserted that social capital could have only positive outcomes, he argues that social capital may produce either beneficial or harmful results. To illustrate, Putnam has pointed out that while high levels of social capital characterize criminal organizations such as the Mafia, the product of this variety of social capital is far from constructive (Szreter & Woolcock 2004). Forrest & Kearns (2001:2135) come to similar conclusions, commenting that "social cohesion at the neighbourhood level is ... by no means unambiguously a good thing". Despite (or perhaps because of) its rather amorphous formulation, the concept of social capital has become thoroughly ensconced within modern social policy discourse (Putnam 2004). Dekker & Bolt (2009), quoting Robinson (2005:1415), explain that the concept is essentially "an empty vessel into which the preoccupations of contemporary public policy were poured". Szreter and Woolcock (2004:661) have speculated that the popularity of the social capital argument in policy circles stems from the

fact that it absolves the state from much of its responsibility over the plight of deprived individuals, and warn that social capital is not a “magic wand for improving society”.<sup>3</sup>

Joseph’s second category is termed ‘social-control’, the ability of more affluent in-movers to enforce more orthodox attitudes and modes of social comportment among the subsidized tenants. Evidence for this mechanism is provided by Sampson & Groves (1989) who demonstrated that a higher proportion of upper-income individuals, particularly homeowners, increased levels of social organization, resulting in reduced criminal and anti-social behaviour. Other evidence to support this mechanism has been supplied by the work of Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls (1997). Using a hierarchical random effects model, they compared levels of self-reported violence to ‘collective efficacy’, a latent construct comprised of scales measuring levels of social cohesion and common values in 343 distinct “internally homogeneous” and “ecologically meaningful” neighbourhoods, in which the 8,782 individual level respondents were nested (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls 1997:920). After controlling for a number of covariates derived from census data, including differential neighbourhood poverty rates, proportion of immigrants, age composition, homeownership, age structure, and residential stability, an independent effect of ‘collective efficacy’ on levels of violence was observed. Where collective efficacy was higher, levels of self-reported violence were lower.

Joseph’s third category, “culture and behaviour”, more commonly known as the ‘role-model effect’ follows from the second and expects that lower status individuals will seek to emulate the behaviours of the more affluent in-movers. There is relatively little evidence that supports the existence of role-modelling effects. Studies that have examined mixed tenure communities have

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<sup>3</sup> Putnam has responded to these criticisms by pointing out that since his first publication on the topic, he has argued that “Social capital is not a substitute for effective public policy, but rather a prerequisite for it and, in part, a consequence of it” (Putnam 2004: 670).

found little evidence of any interaction between owners and tenants, never mind evidence for role-modelling (Atkinson & Kintrea 2000; Van Beckhoven & Van Kempen 2003; Allen et al. 2005; Kleinhans 2004; Arthurson 2008; Camina & Woods 2009). The only evidence to support this potential mechanism, however, is provided by Crane (1991), who found that the risk of teenage pregnancy increased significantly in neighbourhoods where less than five percent of workers held professional or managerial jobs<sup>4</sup>. While any mention of role-modeling is absent from the RPSDP, perhaps due to the political unpalatability of its implicit paternalism, there is nonetheless evidence that TCHC officials subscribe to its merits. One TCHC planner has, for instance, stated, “behavioural patterns of lower-income tenants will be altered by interaction with higher-income neighbours. For example, social norms about workforce participation will be passed on [to] the low-income residents. The crime rate will fall as high-income residents enforce stricter ground rules for the community” (As quoted in Kipfer & Petrunia 2009:128).

Finally, and roughly coterminous with Galster’s external set of factors, is what Joseph (2006) terms the “political economy of place”. This mechanism, though difficult to test empirically, suggests that residents of more substantial means may be better able to solicit external investment in the neighbourhood and reduce the stigma associated with areas of concentrated poverty while “generating new market demand and political pressure to which external political and economic actors are more likely to respond, thereby leading to higher-quality goods and services available to a cross-section of residents in the community” (Joseph 2006:215) Though difficult to test empirically, this model differs from the three others in that it does not principally rely upon any interaction between established residents and in-movers to benefit the former group. While it is conceivable that the social control and role-modeling categories of effects may occur without direct interaction between tenures types, such interaction would more easily facilitate these

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<sup>4</sup> This paper, however, also suffers from the methodological shortcomings outlined by Oreopoulos above.

mechanisms, while the social networks/social capital category of effect is premised on the necessity of inter-tenure interaction. This is significant as the majority of research on mixed tenure housing developments reports little evidence of such interaction. The only research showing an appreciable level of interaction between residents of different tenures comes from Rosenbaum et al.'s (1998) study of the Lac Parc Place housing development in Chicago. The context of this study was rather unusual, however, as the Lac Parc Place development employed a 'pepper-potting' arrangement whereby no physical distinction was made between the units of the social renters and those of the owners, and residents were 'mixed' at the floor level. In addition, the resident owners were predominately individuals who had once resided in the public housing complex and, as such, it is assumed that they had already formed social ties with a good number of the social tenants. Regent Park, on the other hand, is characterized by a high degree of spatial segregation between the tenure types, while the number of owners who at one time resided as social tenants in the Regent Park neighbourhood is unknown.

### **Neighbourhood Satisfaction**

Another literature with import to the redevelopment of Regent Park is that which concerns the determinants of neighbourhood satisfaction. Using data from the 1997 Survey of English Housing (SEH), Parkes et al. (2002) found that, by a wide margin, the physical appearance of the neighbourhood and general housing satisfaction were the most important determinants of neighbourhood satisfaction. They demonstrated that respondents who reported that the general appearance of their neighbourhood was 'less than very good' were more than four times more likely to be 'less than very satisfied' with their neighbourhood than those who thought general appearance was 'very good'. Similarly, individuals who were 'less than very satisfied' with their

homes were more than three times more likely to be ‘less than very satisfied’ with their neighbour than those who were “very satisfied” with their home. These relationships were found to be robust after adjustment for the demographic composition of the neighbourhood. Crime was also found to be a significant factor in neighbourhood satisfaction, with those who reported that crime was a problem in their neighbourhood being 1.5 times more likely to report being dissatisfied with their neighbourhood than individuals who reported that crime was not a problem in their neighbourhood. The effect of crime on neighbourhood satisfaction, however, was disproportionately strong in the most socially and economically deprived neighbourhoods. More generally, non-whites, males, the unemployed, and those with lower-income were more likely to be unsatisfied with their neighbourhood. Interestingly, after controlling for neighbourhood type (ranked categories of relative deprivation), individual level predictors of satisfaction were attenuated or became insignificant, while neighbourhood characteristics were found to be better predictors of satisfaction than individual characteristics. That is, individuals with the characteristics outlined above were more likely to locate to lower-quality neighbourhoods - individual characteristics themselves appeared to be relatively unimportant in determining neighbourhood satisfaction.

On the question of what effect tenure mix has upon neighbourhood satisfaction, the results were less clear. After controlling for neighbourhood and individual characteristics, social tenants were more likely to be satisfied in areas where they were the majority, while they were less likely to be satisfied in areas where they were in the minority. The converse was true for owner-occupiers.

Mohan and Twigg (2007) investigated income mix and neighbourhood satisfaction using data from the 2002/2003 SEH, arriving at similar conclusions as Parkes et al. (2002). In distinction from Parkes et al. (2002), however, Mohan and Twigg employed hierarchical linear modeling with a

dataset that comprised over 13, 000 individuals nested in 1283 primary sampling units (neighbourhoods), nested within 335 local authorities. This allowed them to determine at which level the majority of variance in satisfaction occurred. Consistent with previous findings, they found that individual level characteristics accounted for only 3% percent of total variance. In their full model, which included individual characteristics, property characteristics and ecological factors, some 27% of total variance in satisfaction was accounted for. Surprisingly, access to commercial amenities was not found to be a significant predictor of satisfaction. More heartening for Regent Park is their finding that “social renting *per se* is not necessarily associated with greater dissatisfaction” as they observed that the fact private renters were more likely to report satisfaction can be explained by the age and social characteristics of the private renters (Mohan & Twigg 2007:2029).

Using data from an Australian housing survey, Baum, Arthurson, and Rickson (2010) report similar findings in their study of social mix and neighbourhood satisfaction. They demonstrate that the likelihood of satisfaction with the neighbourhood decreases as the proportion of residents from non-English speaking countries increases, while being younger, in public housing, and having poorer social contacts also negatively impacted satisfaction. In contrast to Parkes et al (2002) and more encouraging for the case of Regent Park, they found that lower-income residents were not more likely to be dissatisfied in areas where they were the minority. Indeed, they found that as the proportion of high-income individuals in a neighbourhood increased, the likelihood of satisfaction for all residents was elevated. As income mix at the neighbourhood level increased, low-income residents were found to be significantly more likely to report satisfaction while high-income individuals were found to be slightly less likely to report satisfaction with the neighbourhood. They warn, however, that these findings are too “crude” to be useful for planning



mixed-tenure neighbourhoods, and that whatever benefits result from tenure mix may be overshadowed by inter-tenure enmity (Baum, Arthurson, & Rickson 2010:484).

Using data from the American Housing Survey from 1985, 1989, and 1993, Hipp (2010) has conducted similar analysis, with a focus on the differences in measures of neighbourhood satisfaction between different spatial levels, particularly between the census tract and the ‘micro-neighbourhood’ level, the core-sampling unit of the survey comprised of a cluster of 11 housing units. To test this, Hipp used a sample of households nested in both micro-neighbourhoods and census tracts and found that micro-neighbourhood level measures were much better predictors of satisfaction than were census-level measures, identifying residential stability at the micro-neighbourhood as a strongly significant predictor of satisfaction. Accordingly, income levels at the micro-neighbourhood level were found to predict satisfaction more strongly than income levels at the census tract level while the impact of low-income on satisfaction at the micro-neighbourhood level was attenuated if the micro-neighbourhood was located in a more affluent census tract. Conversely, the presence of high-income individuals exhibited a stronger positive effect on satisfaction at the micro-neighbourhood level than did the presence of high-income individuals at the census tract level, an observation that Hipp speculates may be in part due to the more active participation of high-income individuals in community affairs. These findings constitute perhaps the strongest support for the Regent Park project and the strategy of social mix more generally, as satisfaction in low-income blocks was benefited by high-income surroundings, while satisfaction in high-income blocks was affected only slightly by low-income surroundings. They may also lend support to some of the categories proposed by Joseph (2006), particularly the social control and political economy of place mechanisms.

The patterns that emerge from the survey data are supported by the qualitative work of

Livingstone, Bailey, and Kearns (2010), who examined place attachment in four neighbourhoods in Northern England. They found no evidence that social mix reduced neighbourhood attachment significantly, while the high residential turnover common in deprived areas emerged as the most serious inhibitor of neighbourhood attachment. The mechanism through which neighbourhood satisfaction, broadly conceptualized, may impact individuals has been described by Sirgy and Cornwell (2002). They find that satisfaction with the physical environment affects both neighbourhood and housing satisfaction, while housing satisfaction and community satisfaction, in turn, influence life satisfaction. However, the data from which these findings were derived was based on a mail survey in Virginia with a response rate of only 13%. Further research is required to confirm or disconfirm this association.

Finally, a factor commonly described as important in determining neighbourhood satisfaction is the perception of crime (Sampson 1999; Parkes et al. 2007). Significant for Regent Park, Lawless (2007), in his discussion of the NDC program finds that, although individual measures of health were unaffected, fear of crime was appreciably reduced, indicating that such ABIs may be effective in combating delinquent behaviour and, as a result, improving overall neighbourhood satisfaction.

## **Conclusions**

While drawing definite conclusions from data that covers such a diverse range of contexts is problematic, some general patterns do emerge from a careful reading of literature on the policy of tenure mix and attendant subjects. Perhaps most important is the insight that tenure mix does not, in general, live up to the expectations given it by policy makers. There is not definitive evidence

that tenure mix *does not* work, but the view of tenure mix as a panacea for concentrated urban poverty is clearly not tenable. Indeed, given the shifting focus of state welfare policies and the increased reliance on private capital in urban initiatives, it seems reasonable to conclude that much of the popularity of tenure mix may be attributed to economic exigencies facing planners. As Joseph et al. (2007:370) phrase it, “mixed-income development has emerged as a strategy that can unite otherwise divided political constituencies and generate the financing necessary to secure and redevelop prime inner-city land”. This does not, however, discount the possibility that very concrete benefits can accrue to extant populations of subsidized tenants. The literature on neighbourhood satisfaction, particularly, lends support to policies of tenure mix in that the physical facets of the neighbourhood, those most obviously improved by such redevelopments, are the most important determinants of residential satisfaction.

## **Chapter 2: Data and Methods**

### **Qualitative Research**

Owing to the complexity of the study questions, the complexity of the social context that is the focus of study, and the lack of an established canon of variables or factors universally considered to be significant to the topic, qualitative methods were deemed to be most appropriate and were employed in this study. Qualitative research methods are usually defined in contradistinction to quantitative methods. Strauss and Corbin (1998), for instance, define qualitative methods as any type of research that does not involve any sort of quantification or enumeration. In this case, semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary qualitative means of data collection. These methods are most suitable in this instance because, as King, Keohane, and Verba (1994) point out, crucial elements of human behaviour are not amenable to statistical measurement. To understand the motivations and attitudes of residents, and their primary sources of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the redevelopment, a highly-subjective endeavour, the ability of qualitative methods to cast an individual as an “interpretable whole”, as Ragin (2000) phrases it, and its focus on intensive description is beneficial. Put another way, the ‘agency’ of individuals is of central interest to qualitative researchers, whereas with quantitative methods, which focus on a limited set of discrete variables across a broader study population, individuals become invisible. The object of quantitative research is to create general empirical laws that will apply to all cases in question and seek explanations that are universal, causal, and predictive. While qualitative research methods cannot provide generalization beyond observed cases, it can provide useful contextual data to more fully elucidate the results of quantitative research. Indeed, as Ragin (2000) points out, qualitative research can often be the starting point in the search to discover causality because

it “maximizes validity” in determining a causal sequence of events. This is certainly true for this research, as the results of this thesis may be usefully employed to illuminate certain findings of concurrent quantitative research presently being conducted in Regent Park.

## **Recruitment**

A relatively unrestrictive set of inclusion criteria were employed in order to record a broad cross-section of resident experience in Regent Park. To be included in this study, residents had only to be 1) current residents of the redeveloped section of Regent Park, 2) aged 18 or over, and 3) conversant in English. This wide purview was necessary given that the focus of this study is upon both new-comers to the neighbourhood in addition to those that resided in Regent Park before redevelopment. Because this study is concerned with the experience of individuals in the redeveloped areas of Regent Park, individuals who reside in those sections not yet redeveloped were not included. The objective was to generate a “maximum variation sample”, described by Marshall (1996:122), as this mode of selection corresponds with Marshall’s “judgment” category of sampling in which “the researcher actively selects the most productive sample to answer the research question”. Theoretical sampling was not used, however, as more selective targeting of certain groups was made impossible by a very restrictive set of recruitment protocols imposed by TCHC and the Daniels corporation. Directly contacting residents as well as delivering recruitment flyers directly to mailboxes was not permitted. Further, I could not ask study participants to recruit others to take part in the study, although some did of their own volition. The only method of recruitment available to me was the posting of flyers (see appendix 2) in the lobbies of three TCHC buildings and 1 condominium building. Though the recruitment process employed was a passive one, it did generate responses from a wide variety of individuals from both of the main

tenure groups in the community. However, as I was able only to place flyers in the lobbies of high-rise buildings, and was not able to canvas the town homes on site, no residents of the town homes were included in this study.

## **Interviews**

A total of 24 interviews were conducted between November 2011 and March 2012. Respondents chose the time and location of interviews, with most electing to invite me into their homes to conduct the interviews. A limited number suggested that we conduct the interviews in public spaces such as the residents' lounges in the condominium building and the seniors' building. These spaces were used on occasion but only if no other individuals were present. Participants signed a letter of consent in order to formalize their consent after being given a copy of the letter of information (appendix 3) and having it explained to them. All participants consented to have their interviews tape-recorded. The interviews followed a semi-structured format and were guided by a survey instrument that consisted primarily of open-ended questions, with a smaller number of closed-ended questions included. (appendix 4). This survey instrument began with basic demographic questions as well as questions about length of tenancy in Regent Park, before moving on to more substantive questions about the central issues examined in this study. Questions specific to certain tenure groups were omitted if not applicable. By the end of the study period, as I became a more adept interviewer and the interviews conducted became more fluid and conversational, this guide was used mainly as a checklist to ensure that all relevant issues had been discussed. As mentioned above, all interviews were conducted in English, many with individuals for whom English was not their native language. These interviews progressed more slowly, but all participants were able to make their comments intelligible to me and at no time did

linguistic difficulties obscure the message being conveyed. All respondents received a \$25 honorarium for their participation.

## **Analysis**

Analysis of the collected data was informed by Strauss's *Qualitative Analysis For Social Scientists* (1987) with inductively derived categories generated during open coding used in addition to those that were derived deductively through the process of axial coding. Further, categories derived from a literature review completed prior to the start of research were also employed in the analysis of data (Strauss terms these sociologically constructed codes). Because these sociologically constructed codes were used, my method of analysis cannot be considered Grounded Theory. Strauss's (1987) guidebook to qualitative analysis proved helpful as it lays out discrete steps that may be used in the analysis of interview data, from the collection of data through to writing up the final product.

The first step in analysis was the intensive study of field notes written during interviews from which broad and provisional categories were derived and used to inform subsequent interviews. In-depth analysis of the transcribed interviews was not begun until near the end of the study period. An independent contractor conducted the majority of transcription, although I also transcribed a limited number of interviews myself.

The first step in the detailed analysis of the data was the 'open coding' stage, which entailed the creation of a provisional category for all data that seemed relevant to the topic of study. Codes were given in-vivo names if possible, though most initial codes were constructed. In keeping with the recommendation of Strauss (1987), data was scrutinized minutely during this phase of analysis

in order to avoid missing important categories and nearly one hundred unique codes were identified. In the next phase, overlapping codes were consolidated and ‘axial coding’ was employed, whereby new, more generic, categories were constructed by examining the interrelation of early provisional codes to one another. Finally, several core categories were developed and the data was organized accordingly. All organization of the data was done using a word processor with the codes arranged in a series of folders and subfolders. Memos were also used extensively during this period.

### **The Study Population**

The study population was comprised of two groups: condominium owner-occupiers and renters; and, residents of social housing that include subsidized tenants (paying 30% of their gross income for rent) and affordable unit tenants (paying slightly below market rate rent). In Regent Park, condominium and social housing residents do not occupy the same building. However, as affordable units in the public buildings are available to any individual that applies for them, a modest level of tenure mix does exist within these buildings. Thirteen participants were residents of the same social housing building, 2 of them were affordable-rent tenants and 11 were subsidized tenants. Of the 11 condominium occupants interviewed, 9 were owners and 2 were renting. Of the subsidized social housing tenants interviewed, 10 were residents of a building reserved for seniors, though eligibility for residency in this building requires only one member of the household to be 58 years of age or older, so one interview in this building was conducted with a resident of a unit in which a family lived (defined in this paper as a household in which children live). In total, 5 of the interviews were conducted with residents who lived in a unit in which a family lived. Two of these were condominium residents and 3 were social housing tenants.



Demographic differences between the populations are stark. The median age for condominium residents was 33, while the median age for subsidized housing and affordable rent tenants was 64. Market rate tenants tended to be much better educated, with all but two individuals holding university degrees, while only 4 of the social housing tenants had university degrees. Due to the much older population residing in the public and affordable rent units, most of these individuals reported that their main source of income was either public pension plans or disability payments. The minority that were employed had relatively low-skilled jobs in the restaurant and childcare sectors. This contrasts sharply with the condominium residents, all of whom reported being currently employed, with a range of professions represented, including lawyers, engineers, financial services workers, teachers and government workers. Unsurprisingly, the condominium owners were in much better health, with none reporting suffering from a serious chronic condition. Six of the public and affordable rent tenants, nearly half, reported suffering from a serious chronic condition. Diabetes was by far the most common condition, afflicting five of the six individuals. Ethnic differences were also pronounced. Five of the 13 public and affordable rent residents were white, while 7 of the 11 market rate residents were white. The remaining 4 were of East Asian origin. Although a sizeable population of East Asian individuals resides in the building reserved for seniors, only one was included in this study. This results from the fact that most of these individuals are not conversant in English, the only language in which these interviews were conducted. Of the remaining public tenants, four were Caribbean or Afro-Canadian, while four were South Asian. All respondents have been given pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Tenure</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Ethno-racial Identity</b>
Aaron	Subsidized Tenant	60-69	White
Ahmed	Subsidized Tenant	60-69	Bengali
Alain	Condominium Renter	20-29	White
Alice	Subsidized Tenant	70+	West Indian
Aruna	Subsidized Tenant	50-59	Bengali
Chun	Subsidized Tenant	60-69	Chinese
Evelyn	Affordable Renter	70+	White
Gavin	Subsidized Tenant	60-69	White
Gina	Condominium Owner	20-29	Chinese
Gwen	Condominium Owner	50-59	White
Hannah	Condominium Owner	20-29	White
James	Condominium Owner	30-39	Chinese
Jennifer	Condominium Renter	40-49	White
Jiao	Condominium Owner	50-59	Chinese
Julian	Condominium Owner	30-39	White
Kyle	Condominium Owner	30-39	White
Liam	Affordable Renter	20-29	White
Megan	Condominium Owner	30-39	White
Olivia	Subsidized Tenant	60-60	West Indian
Patricia	Subsidized Tenant	50-59	West Indian
Phillip	Condominium Owner	20-29	Chinese
Robert	Subsidized Tenant	60-69	White
Salma	Subsidized Tenant	50-59	Indonesian
Thomas	Subsidized Tenant	60-69	West Indian

**Table 1:** Social and Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

<b>Social Housing Tenants</b>	<b>Condominium Residents</b>
Subsidized tenant (30% rent-geared-to-income)	Condominium owner-occupier
Affordable housing tenant (Slightly below market rent)	Condominium renter

**Table 2:** Tenure Types In Regent Park

## **Chapter 3: Resident Perceptions and General Conditions in the Redeveloped Regent Park**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed descriptive account of the present conditions in the neighbourhood, as reported by the study subjects. It also has the aim of determining what facets of the redevelopment most impact resident satisfaction with the community, identifying factors that drew subjects to locate to Regent Park, as well as outlining other general patterns of experience. Particular attention is paid to areas where the experience of residents appears to bifurcate along tenure lines.

### **Physical Exterior**

Interviewees from both tenures expressed a great deal of satisfaction with the physical appearance of the redeveloped Regent Park. Subjects who had been familiar with the neighbourhood before redevelopment were unanimous in their view that the project had greatly improved the appearance of the community and had made it physically indistinguishable from other, purely commercial, planned communities in the city. Kyle, a condominium owner remarked that Regent Park “...just seems like a pretty middle class neighbourhood to me now, frankly, on the whole”. The attitude of Alain, a condominium renter, is representative of condominium resident opinion regarding the physical attributes of the redeveloped community: “It’s like really nice and everything is like cookie-cutter perfect”. James, an educator in the community and condominium owner, was more

specific in his praise of the physical design of the community crediting the developer for incorporating brick into the buildings as it “kind of goes with like Cabbagetown [an adjacent neighbourhood] and whatever else around”, distinctive as most other condominiums in Toronto are primarily glass. Speaking more generally of the physical redevelopment of the neighbourhood, he maintained that ... “It’s a good thing. I like the aesthetics. It brightens up the streets.” Jennifer, a condominium renter in her-mid 40s was so ebullient about living in the neighbourhood she repeated the marketing slogan of the developer during the interview: “I’m so enthusiastic about it... Like [the way] the whole Daniels... Daniels Corporation has developed this... You know ‘love where you live’. I’m like: Oh my god, I love where I live!” The majority of public housing residents interviewed expressed similar opinions regarding the physical appearance of the neighbourhood. Ahmed, a subsidized tenant, put it succinctly: “It is beautiful living here”.

### **Physical Interior**

There was a significant divergence between the tenure groups with regard to their respective levels of satisfaction in the physical quality of their residences. While condominium residents expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their building, all but one of the residents in the public subsidized buildings who participated in this study encountered serious physical defects with their buildings, which most attributed to the use of cheap construction materials and shoddy workmanship. For the affected individuals, these problems eclipsed in importance the improvement of the external physical appearance of Regent Park and seriously impinged upon their residential satisfaction, more generally. The lone exception was an individual who resided in the Oak Street building. However, as they were was the only resident of that building who participated in this study, the focus of the foregoing discussion is on the buildings where the bulk

of the interviewees lived, the Cole Street buildings and the Sackville Street buildings.

Among the few physical problems that afflicted both the Cole and Sackville buildings, the most notable were problems with glass balcony paneling. Subjects from both buildings reported that these glass panels had cracked and, in some cases, shattered completely, falling to the ground below. These problems were not limited to Regent Park, however. According to the testimony of some subjects, which is corroborated by news reports (Talaga & Winsa 2012), balcony glass failures occurred across the city in 2011, in many different condominium developments. As a result, residents of both buildings lost access to their balconies and, beginning in the late summer of 2011, scaffolding was erected around both buildings while repairs were undertaken. Residents of the Cole Street condominium building regained access to their balconies around the beginning of the New Year, while the scaffolding on the Sackville buildings remained in place until the end of the study period in March 2012. Some public housing tenants, such as Robert, attributed this lag to preferential treatment given to condominium, while others pointed out that since the public buildings were administered by TCHC, extra bureaucratic hurdles had to be surmounted. It is also conceivable that the process took longer in the case of the Sackville building owing to the larger number of stories that needed to be inspected, although an authoritative discussion on the causes and precise technical nature of the physical problems are beyond my expertise and the scope of this thesis. Despite the similar physical predicament of both buildings, resident reactions differed sharply by tenure status. Condominium residents appeared largely unfazed by the situation. Kyle, a condominium owner, went so far as to describe these problems as “really funny”. Residents of the Sackville street seniors’ building, however, reported serious distress resulting from the situation. The most serious effects experienced as a result of these balcony problems were aggravated by difficulties that residents of that building reported with the ventilation system,

which was regarded as inadequate. Robert reported that, since residents could no longer open their balcony doors to let the air circulate, temperatures in many of these units exceeded 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Gavin, another resident of the building, described how actions by the building caretakers compounded the situation:

We had no access to our balconies for going back three months ago, and when you live on this side, when you get the sun all day long... like, if this was a sunny day... I mean this is why I bought these... I had to install these drapes myself because it's just like standing under a lamp... a heat lamp and it's just so bright. And then consequently the heat comes through the window. And with no air conditioning... they shut off the air conditioning much too early this year. And for three weeks all of us seniors... it affected the seniors mostly. We were subjected to temperatures, seventy-nine, eighty degrees 24/7 because you couldn't open the balcony door to get any kind of breeze going.

Another difficulty faced by residents of the subsidized buildings was the frequent mechanical issues afflicting the buildings' elevators, this problem being particularly acute in the seniors' building. Although these problems began to subside by the very end of the study period, residents noted that such troubles had been ongoing from when they had moved into the building. Similar problems were reported in the Sackville family building, though these disruptions did not appear to be as serious or as frequent. Some residents of the seniors' building estimated that at least one elevator was not functioning around one-third of the time. This estimate does seem plausible as I witnessed that one or another of these elevators was often not operational during my numerous visits inside the building. The residents noted that, occasionally, both elevators would not be working. They reported being seriously inconvenienced by these breakdowns, and pointed out that some residents of the building, who had serious mobility issues and were confined to motorized scooters, would have been trapped on their floors. In a building with 22 floors and inhabited by elderly people, many with chronic health problems, the loss of elevator service forced many residents to use the stairs, a formidable task for some. Gavin described how he was

forced to ascend over a dozen flights of stairs: “That doesn’t seem like a lot but for a guy my age with [a chronic respiratory disease], let me tell you it was tough. You know? So, that really pissed a lot of people off, to put it mildly”. Patricia, another resident of the building, reported that she had once been stuck in the elevator for a period of forty-five minutes, while Salma stated that the situation caused her mental anguish: “Sometimes the elevator problem comes. So, we are sick people, right? Suddenly when we want to go to emergency, is hard for us...I’m scared. I’m worried about... when I get into the stairs I get like breathing problem. For me I couldn’t breathe. So, I’m scared to go like that”. Evelyn reported that building management at first blamed the residents of the building for the frequent breakdown:

“There [was] lot of blame on the actual inhabitants. You know, your elevator broke down because somebody rolled his... his walker in there and banged into the door. Okay, well... At one point they conceded that the elevator broke down because the... the mechanism that kept it going – the engine I guess or whatever you want to call it – was... was totally malfunctioning. They had to replace it. That took... I think we were down for about six weeks on that one because they had to get a new engine.

Among the other problems commonly experienced by residents of the senior’s issues were problems with the plumbing system, which often backed up, and general build quality issues that residents attributed to the thrift of the developer. Olivia provided a summary of the situation faced by the residents:

There is no ventilation. The apartments on this side are cold and on that side are hot. And so the ventilation system is false. The closets are falling down. The vent... You’re getting smoking and cooking in your apartment. What else? The pipes are breaking down. The fridges can’t close because they’re cheap fridges, right. They break down fast. [Another resident]...they’ve had to replace his tiles about three times ‘cause water is leaking somewhere and raising up the tiles.

Aaron concurred, remarking, “you can’t believe the poor quality of workmanship that went into this place here”, an attitude that was shared by many other tenants. Further, he reported that

cracks had begun to appear in many of the units in the building. I did observe some cracks within the units of some tenants, one that spanned vertically almost an entire wall, but I cannot state accurately how prevalent such cracks were. I observed no such cracks in condominium units and only one resident of the condominium building reported having had them (they were subsequently repaired).

Some credence was given to the belief that much cheaper materials were used in the public building by Patricia, who related an exchange she had with a contractor who had come to make repairs in her unit:

One of the contractors, when he did come in, he told me... he said uh how [TCHC] put certain ... They put the cheapest things in here but over ... This one and these other ones [indicates condominium building] they put better stuff in. That was the contractor. [Interviewer: A contractor said that?] The contractor told me that...And I believe him.

Additionally, for a period of several weeks during the study period, the lock on the front door of the seniors' building was not working. In response, TCHC posted a private security guard to the front entrance of the building but residents still expressed a concern that unscrupulous individuals would gain access to their building.

While there was a relative consensus that the building was, in Evelyn's words, "beautifully designed", the abundance and severity of the physical issues with the building more than outweighed its aesthetic appeal, for residents. Patricia, speaking specifically about air circulation issues she experienced in her unit, summed up the broader situation, saying,

"So, it doesn't matter how beautiful something is, if you don't feel good inside... Like, if I can't breathe properly, it doesn't matter how beautiful. Who cares? I'd rather live in a little hut where you can breathe fresh air than live in somewhere beautiful and nice for you to look out. Yeah, but ... you know? *Your health deteriorates*, right?"



By comparison, the physical issues encountered by condominium residents were more benign. The most serious issue reported was fetid odours emanating from grocery store refuse. According to interview subjects, this resulted from the building's 'green' design. To conserve energy, the air pressure inside the building is maintained at a lower level than in other buildings, allowing these unpleasant odours to waft upwards from the grocery store into the condominium units. Residents reported that the problem was alleviated after the developer installed a large air filter.

### **Management and Maintenance**

Another point of great divergence between the two tenure groups was their degree of satisfaction with how their respective buildings were managed and maintained. While all condominium residents interviewed expressed satisfaction with how their building was managed, some quite vehemently so, almost all residents of the public buildings expressed a great deal of displeasure with TCHC and its employees, whom they largely considered to be unhelpful, aloof, and unconcerned with the upkeep of the building and the problems faced by its residents. These sentiments were particularly widespread in the seniors' building where the actions of staff (or lack of them) served to aggravate the physical issues in the building to the degree that many study subjects seemed to conflate the material deficiencies of the building with the staff's perceived indolence, each serving to reinforce the other. It would be hard to overstate the displeasure of the residents, and it would be impossible within these pages to give a full accounting of their grievances. I will, however, relate some of the most remarkable instances here in addition to some that are more representative of the body of complaints reported.

Salma reported a case of caretaker inaction that caused perhaps the most serious impact on the

wellbeing of a resident of all those recounted by survey participants. She described how the blinds in the bedroom she shared with her husband and those in her son's bedroom were defective. As these rooms were in view from a high-rise building directly facing her unit, this lack of privacy caused her considerable distress. Salma and her family, observant Muslims, had adapted to this situation by changing in their bathroom but were forced to sleep in these blind-less rooms. She reported often finding people from the adjacent building peering into her bedroom. Though she stated that this problem had been going on for nearly *six months* at the time the interview was conducted, TCHC staff had yet to address the issue adequately. Describing the attitude of staff, she commented, "Whenever I go there they don't care. I think they don't care maybe. Then they... Whenever they see us only they remember about our windows. And then they forget. How many time I'm going to and talking to them?" Indeed, she recounted how on one occasion TCHC staff had accused her family of breaking the blinds, an allegation she took umbrage at: "[They said] 'Maybe you broke'. I said do we like to break everything and stay in a [broken] place]? Why you are saying like this?!" One can imagine the distress that this situation caused Salma, who also reported suffering from panic attacks, though not specifically as a result of this issue. Olivia described another incident, made worse by the lackadaisical response of TCHC staff, and noted the toll this took on her mental health:

And uh my pipes broke down the first few months in there. So, I phoned them and I said my pipe is leaking. What should I do? She says: Oh we'll send you a plumber. So, I kept waiting and waiting until two o'clock the next morning. And I phoned her and I said well aren't you sending the plumber? She says we determined that yours is not an emergency. I said: Oh no? I said I've been emptying buckets of water. I said I'm just going to let it flow. Let the water keep flowing from [my floor] down. Right away in five minutes a plumber phones me. He said did you turn off the taps? So, I said what taps? He says look under the sink. You'll find taps. So, I didn't find any. Then he told me well look on the next side. He says turn those off. I turned it off, the water stopped. I said well why didn't you tell me that this morning when I... I had meetings that I cancelled. So, that's the kind of situation we find ourselves in.

*It's very stressful actually.*

The process by which tenants are to report physical problems with their units, described in part above by Olivia, whereby residents are forced to call off-site phone operators who then pass on details of the problems to building superintendents, was the cause of much consternation for tenants. Aaron put it this way: “If you have a problem...you got to go through Tom, Dick, Harry, Mary, Jane, Joe... By the time you get finished talking, you’ve talked about the same problem to twenty-five different people. Now, it’s two weeks later and they’ll say ‘We don’t have materials for it right now’”.

According to most tenants interviewed, the interminable wait for even minor repairs was a major source of displeasure. Gavin recounted the travails of another resident:

She’s been asking them for three weeks or something like that to get a light bulb replaced and her sink repaired. And I could see that, you know, because you phone their office and you can wait on the phone lines ten minutes, and they could take a message and then you don’t hear anything back. You know? Like, she was telling me: ‘I keep phoning and phoning. And I tell them and I tell them and nothing gets done’... I don’t know. It’s a really crazy-ass system they have.

In one instance, reported by Aaron, the economizing of TCHC staff and their failure to respond adequately to a relatively minor inconvenience involving broken washing machines resulted in a much more disruptive and, one would assume, expensive, outcome:

Of course we cannot have laundry machines in this place. Dryers or even small ones [washing machines]...The machines were breaking down all the time in our laundry downstairs...Now, the guy that runs it [a TCHC employee] wasn’t giving them [tenants] a refund. So, they went and bought their own little machines. So, what happens? The plumbing cannot handle it ... the person above me had a dryer and washer. The sinks would flood up. The sinks would flood... the toilets would flood up, ‘cause it wouldn’t be able to take even a small dryer and washer... After a few months of this and of course the floors would be soaked with water, blah, blah, blah. You’d have major problems, right? All because one guy didn’t want to give a refund of a couple of bucks to people... That’s how sloppy and lacklustre these people

[TCHC staff] are.

Aaron evinced a contempt for TCHC staff that was shared by many other buildings residents, though he expressed it most vociferously. He described TCHC staff as “physically overgrown kids” who demonstrated “no care whatsoever [for what] goes on in the community in actual fact - unless it can make them look good somehow or other”. He went on to say that “I just don’t like the whole atmosphere that the management has created. They’re still the same slum landlords that never took care of those buildings [motions to the un-redeveloped areas of Regent Park]. Okay? They’re the same people”. Evelyn, describing the premature deactivation of the cooling system in the seniors’ building in September 2011 alluded to in the previous section, explained how this avoidable problem was the result of incompetence on the part of TCHC staff:

The man in charge of the seniors’ buildings for Toronto Housing...there’s a rule in Toronto where ...it basically says that every landlord in the city, not just Toronto Housing, is responsible for supplying heat as of September 15<sup>th</sup>. So, on September 15<sup>th</sup> this goof ball turned off the coolant system. And our temperatures were going as high as eighty-five to ninety degrees in this apartment”.

Though most residents of this building ascribed such troubles to ineptitude and a disregard for tenants on behalf of TCHC staff, a small contingent held that TCHC was simply under-resourced. Gavin, who had been in property management during his working life, stated, “In my opinion there’s not enough staff in Regent Park”.

Also frustrating for tenants in the building was the apparent disregard with which more senior TCHC officials greeted their concerns. Participants described in detail their attempts to contact executives with the housing agency, and provided me with copies of letters they had sent. Their motives for these actions were to seek answers and redress for the elevator problems and for being locked out of their balconies. Robert, after hand-delivering letters regarding the situation faced by tenants to the CEO of TCHC, as well as other high-ranking individuals in the organization, and

failing to receive a response, remarked simply that he had “given up” on TCHC and was now appealing to other individuals in various levels of government and the media. There is some indication that petitioning officials outside of TCHC may be a more effective method of soliciting a response to problems. Patricia, for instance, related how she had consistent problems with TCHC staff enforcing a ban on smoking in common areas of the building. After weeks of pleading with them to address the problem she contacted officials with the City of Toronto, who, according to Patricia’s testimony, then obliged TCHC to take action.

Subjects often expressed exasperation at being kept unaware of developments regarding the elevator and balcony situations. Gavin described how he and other tenants had been attempting to make TCHC accountable:

You got to bite and scratch for everything and anything you can get from TCHC... You got to try and light a fire under them because if you don’t they just seem to take their sweet time or they’re not rushed to go after the contractors, which is what we want. Go after the contractors, ask them what the hell’s going on and then let us know. But they don’t. You have to ... It’s like you have to force them into a corner to say... to give us an answer... an honest answer, not some ... some fluff off answer.

Acceding to pressure from tenants, TCHC officials organized a meeting about the balcony and elevator situations for residents that was attended by senior executives at TCHC, Housing Services Incorporated (a subsidiary of TCHC responsible for construction), in addition to representatives from the various private sector parties involved. Many interview subjects reported going to this meeting, which was attended, according to their estimates, by between 50 and 80 tenants. Curiously, this meeting was also attended by nearly half a dozen policemen, whose presence was a mystery to most interview subjects, with some commenting that they felt the police presence to be intimidating and unnecessary, considering the elderly age profile of the building’s population. Olivia observed wryly, “I don’t know if they were expecting us to riot”.

Apparently, little was accomplished during the meeting and the attending officials displayed a callous attitude towards the tenants. Patricia provided this account: “It was like a bunch of them come in one day... There was a contractor for the balconies. The one for the elevator. Yeah, and they all came with their nice suits and briefcases ...and they said they were going to fix everything”. She recounts that during the meeting the representative of the elevator company “...got a phone call and just left, and he didn’t... I didn’t... Right in the middle of the meeting he says ‘I’m sorry, I have an emergency; I got to go. And I don’t know. He didn’t have no card. He didn’t have nothing”.

Those interviewees who resided in the family building, however, expressed relative contentment with TCHC service, although due to the small sample size it is hard to determine exactly how widespread these sentiments are within that building. Aruna reported that repairs took only one to two days to be completed and stated that she had “no problems” with TCHC more generally. Ahmed was likewise pleased with TCHC. He had recently fallen into arrears on his rent after becoming unemployed but was grateful to TCHC for showing him leniency and allowing him to make arrangements to pay when he regained fulltime employment. Further, having been a resident of Regent Park prior to the redevelopment, he expressed gratitude to TCHC for the assistance they had given him during the relocation process:

They did a wonderful job. I can’t believe it. You know,... They gave us packaging. They gave us money. I mean they gave us a hand to move out. They gave us like, you know, tape and everything, you know. Boxes. Like, is tremendous service, you know, and they gave us like a mover...it was really, really well done.

Although he acknowledged the troubles with the elevator in his building, he commented that, in general, he is “...really happy [with TCHC’s] service”.

The experiences of condominium residents regarding the maintenance of their building and the

responsiveness of those responsible for its upkeep are a stark contrast to those reported by residents of the seniors' building. According to study subjects from this building, the condominium staff, employed by the Daniels Corporation, responded with alacrity to the various needs of residents. For instance, Jennifer commented "I always get a sense here that as a resident, I'll be listened to, regardless of whether I'm a tenant or an owner. They respond to things really quickly here...and by and large really [are] friendly". Further, she conveyed a general sense that the building management actively sought to create an amicable environment saying, "I get the sense here that the problems that arise are dealt with reasonably in terms of how people personally respond to them as well as how they're dealt with by management". Jiao, the single condominium resident who reported having structural problems with her unit, which included a crack in the floor, misaligned glass paneling, and paint marks, recounted how contractors employed by Daniels fixed these problems almost immediately after she reported them. When condominium residents found themselves afflicted by the foul smell emanating from the grocery store refuse, they reported that Daniels' staff was proactive in informing them about the status of the situation and the plans underway to remedy it. Hannah, for instance, commented that management had been "constantly working like with us" and that they had been "really good about it". The lengths to which Daniels' employees went to satisfy the requests of residents in the building were remarkable. Kyle reported how he had the building's concierge intercede on his behalf: "We live right here on the ground floor essentially, and very rarely have we ever called the concierge at three in the morning to say: There's a big group of guys right outside our windows. Could you have them disperse 'cause it's noisy. I think that's happened twice..." There was even an indication that condominium residents were able to effect the removal of a staff member whom they considered to be insufficiently obliging to their needs. According to Megan, another resident of the building reported having a hostile encounter with a group of young individuals outside the

entrance of her building, after which “...she went and told the concierge in our building. The concierge, I don’t think, took immediate action, and my understanding was that as a result of that, that concierge was moved. Like, that concierge was gone the next week”. Megan noted that she was “uncomfortable” with the concierge’s exit, adding, “I don’t know how much the concierge can really be responsible for what happens on our sidewalk”. There was one condominium resident who did express some displeasure with building management, however. Julian reported that he was reprimanded by staff for drinking a beer on the skypark, as this was against condominium regulations, an injunction that he expressed considerable displeasure at.

### **People and ‘Friendliness’**

Study subjects from both tenure groups were largely positive about the other inhabitants of Regent Park. While some respondents reported having difficulties with certain individuals - more often than not members of their own tenure group - very few interviewees espoused negative opinions towards other groups of residents as a whole. While many of the social housing tenants commented that a limited amount of criminal activity and anti-social behaviour still existed in the peripheries of the neighbourhood and the yet-to-be redeveloped sections of Regent Park, there was a general sense that social interactions in the community, were of a reasonably amiable nature. Hannah, a condominium owner, commenting on whether she found people in Regent Park to be friendly, stated, “it’s pretty much the same as anywhere”. She remarked, “I’ve been to like upper class parts of the city where people seem maybe a bit more snobby actually. Here to me they seem a bit more... like they actually pay attention to people. So, yeah they don’t have that kind of snobby feeling when you come here”. Indeed, she evinced the hope that “it doesn’t get too upper class around here, which I don’t think it will... And I think [Regent Park] attracts those kind



of people who are not like looking for somewhere that's necessarily like really high end". Another condominium owner, Jennifer, was more effusive in her description of Regent Park inhabitants remarking that "people are really friendly and nice", while Gwen, another condominium owner, concurred, saying "everybody is friendly here". During our interview, conducted in the dead of winter, she spoke fondly of the community during the summertime, commenting that it is:

“...a good time to meet people. Where the Tim Horton's is down at the corner of Parliament, you'll often see families congregate. It's really nice actually on a hot summer night. That tends to be the hub of activity. We'll see children with their grandparents sitting on the stone benches outside and meeting... meeting each other. And they're very friendly. I walk my dog at nights, I might sit there and the kids will come over and pet the dog.”

Liam, an affordable renter in his late 20s, found Regent Park to be a considerably more congenial environment than other neighbourhoods he had lived in, commenting that in these other neighbourhoods “...you don't really know who lives next door. You don't talk to people in the halls”. In Regent Park, by contrast, he states, “I've met probably half the residents in this building already”. He attributes this difference to a convivial atmosphere that pervades the community:

I know the neighbourhood now instead of just living in it. And you walk down the street and it seems like it's more of a small town as it is a city. And it has that feel... not entirely, but it has the feel of friendliness and interactivity and people are more involved in the neighbourhood. Like, they're not afraid to stop or meet each other. Or they see people talking and they come over and say “Hi” as opposed to just running through the motions of living in the same vicinity. You're actually living together in this vicinity.

Jennifer, a condominium resident, noted an ethic of collective concern that pervaded the community, stating, “I think...get the sense that we care about each other. You know, when conflicts arise and problems arise. People really care here. And that's rare for downtown living. Rare. Really rare”. Liam and Jennifer's comments constitute an outermost point on the spectrum of opinion regarding the affability of resident interaction and stand in contrast to Gina, a condominium owner, who commented that people “mostly keep to themselves”. However, even

of subjects who reported not knowing many people in their building or in the neighbourhood, none described Regent Park as an unfriendly or uncongenial place. Social housing tenants also shared this perception of Regent Park as a friendly community. Aruna, a mother of two in her late 40s, when asked how she felt about people in the neighbourhood, stated simply “they’re friendly”. Ahmed was similarly positive, though more loquacious: “I don’t see any problem, you know. They’re very friendly. They’re very... Nobody is aggressive... Everybody is polite for each other. Everybody is nice to each other”. Aaron, a 60 year old on long-term disability and resident of the seniors’ building that was plagued by physical problems, perceived this sociability in more utilitarian terms. In his view, this friendliness, in part, resulted from the instrumental co-operation between residents that arose as a response to the myriad problems. He attached less importance to the more ambiguous notion of ‘community’. He remarked, “It’s a friendly atmosphere. That’s all we’re creating here. I’m not trying to uh ... uh create any kind of a community but we want a community that recognizes each other. You belong here. You have a problem? Well... any kind of a problem. Well, we are bound to help you if you aren’t creating this situation”. Evelyn, another resident of the seniors’ building, provided a touching example of this obliging atmosphere, describing how another resident of her building came to her aid after parties unknown made a habit of absconding with her morning newspaper:

In the year that I’ve lived here, he has personally delivered my Globe and Mail every morning, which is a very sweet thing for him to do. And, you know, he doesn’t ever say anything very much about it. I thank him and buy him coffee when I can. But you know, he just did that, which I thought was very, very nice. And there’s like several other people down there who are... who are quite nice that, you know, you can ask to keep an eye on things or to do such and such or whatever. *People are friendly*”.

### **Attraction to Regent Park**

Subjects most commonly cited Regent Park's close proximity to the downtown as the neighbourhood's single most attractive feature. Indeed, the community's central location was raised by nearly every study participant, with no difference in the degree of enthusiasm for this quality apparent between members of the two tenures types. Gavin, a pensioner in his late 60s, gave an extensive description of Regent Park's advantageous location:

And that's the one great thing about here too, is that the convenience of everything. You got the...the location for transportation you got the bus, you got the street... you got two streetcars, two buses that go north or south, two streetcars that go east or west, a subway ten minutes away if you catch the bus at the right time, a big shopping plaza right here, No Frills [a grocery store] up there within... within three blocks. So, for a senior person like me... and two banks. You got a bank here and a bank at Carleton. We especially, and I'm sure I'm speaking for a lot of seniors, we especially enjoy that because you don't have to go far to do something major like shopping. You know, and these stores are always battling each other with sales, so I mean that's great for the... for the people that live here.

Patricia, another public housing tenant, pronounced the location "perfect", adding "It's convenient. It's very convenient. And they just put a grocery store, the bank's there. So, it's good for... If you don't have a car and I don't have a vehicle". Aruna, a working mother of two and social housing tenant, explained her preference for downtown living, stating "I like downtown more... because there are nearby everything, you know? My daughter's school, hospital, and my job. And any kind of problem we are going for TTC... we don't have no car". Salma, a stay-at-home mother in her late 50s who suffers from chronic health problems, stressed the accessibility of a nearby hospital: "I'm living here mostly because everything is convenient for me. We don't have a car. So, for streetcar, bus, everything is close by, right? In emergency when you go on to go St. Michael Hospital, everything close by for me that's why I'm living

here”<sup>5</sup>. Jiao, a condominium owner, cited Regent Park’s location as her primary reason to locate there, saying “I don’t feel regret. I think this is a good choice to buy. It’s very convenient. For me I really like here”. Gwen, also a condominium owner, reported that these views were shared by most other residents in the condominium building that she had become acquainted with, saying that they had “... a lot of the same reasons I moved here. You can walk ... Like the walk to downtown, Eaton Centre, financial district, one of them works down there. Probably a few people here work in the financial district. It’s so walkable”.

Also significant for many individuals was the abundance of social services available in Regent Park and the immediate vicinity. Many social housing tenants reported making use of a broad range of these services, To provide just two examples of many: Aruna, described how she had made use of an on-site facility that helped her craft a resume and apply to jobs, while Salma reported making use of a support group targeted at women of her ethnicity suffering from diabetes. A number of public housing tenants also reported volunteering their time with many of these local service groups. Condominium residents did not report using these services and none had yet volunteered their time, although many expressed a desire to in the future. This difference may be largely due to the significant difference in age and employment status between the two tenure groups. All condominium owners were employed full-time at the time they were interviewed, while only one public housing tenant reported being employed full-time. This left public housing tenants with significantly more time to devote to voluntary activities.

Individuals with children also cited the availability of amenities and services specifically for children as important components of the neighbourhood. Megan, a condominium owner stated

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<sup>5</sup> An assiduous reader may note the preponderance of the words ‘convenient’ and ‘convenience’ in the foregoing passages. These terms were something of a mantra for respondents, and were used by many more subjects than would be feasible to quote here.

“we definitely use a lot of the stuff around Regent Park. It’s a great, great place to have a baby because everything is like... you can walk in two seconds to it, right? And lots of free things to do with a baby too”. Having considered moving into a single detached house, she now expressed relief that she and her husband located to Regent Park saying that she felt Regent Park has “way more community” than other parts of the city and that “You’re way less isolated living here”. She noted that her experience of maternity leave was “...different from my friends who live in houses, you know, at three times the price. Right? If [my infant] gets fussy we go out here and come look at the plants and we turn the fire on<sup>6</sup> and we walk around and we see who’s downstairs getting their mail”. Indeed, she considered the stimulation provided by an urban environment as ideal for herself and for her infant:

If you’re in a house on a street and you’re with a baby all day, right, you look at the front window and see the house across the street and sometimes a car will go by or sometimes. Sometimes I just sit in a chair looking out from our balcony with the baby, and I’m like: ‘That’s a cement truck. That’s a streetcar. That’s a bus. That’s a school bus... There’s stuff going on constantly. There’s always something to see, something to do. Right? Like,... So, it’s way less isolating. Way less. I don’t have to bundle the kid up... If I just need to get out for five minutes, I don’t even have to bundle him up. I can just take him downstairs and grab a coffee, right? And there’s fifty people downstairs having a coffee at any time of day in that Tim Horton’s. That Tim Horton’s is busy all day, every day.

Kyle, a condominium owner, also indicated that the presence of childcare facilities was an important attraction to the community:

For sure one thing that drew us to this place though is that literally if you look out my window right here is the daycare, right? So, we’ve got daycare right across the street that’s brand new... in the TCHC building. There’s another daycare on Regent Street, I think, that’s brand new and just went in. So, we’re on the wait list for both of those. Yeah, great services around here, for sure.

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<sup>6</sup> The condominium common room is equipped with a gas fireplace.

For Kyle, this attraction was not limited to daycare services but extended to primary and secondary education. He explained: “I’ve got friends that work for the Toronto District School Board, and they tell me that some of the schools around here are the best ones in the city because they just got so many resources, right? Irony”.

Even residents without children noted the availability of such amenities. Hannah, an unattached condominium owner, remarked that the community is very “family-friendly” adding, “I get that sense; there’s so many schools and lots of things geared towards I think... like families. It attracts like I think more families than just single people. And I think that’s a good thing. Like, especially in a downtown neighbourhood because there’s almost nothing like that in the downtown”. Despite the presence of such amenities, the number of residents with children in the condominium building was apparently quite small. Gina, a condominium owner, provided a humorous indicator of her building’s demographic profile. When asked whether there were many families in the building, she responded: “I think there are a number of people with kids but I don’t know what the number is... the ratio of kids to dogs is {laughs} ...I’m thinking that dogs might be higher”. Megan, a young mother, estimated there to be only three or four other couples with children in the building. Many condominium residents attributed this dearth of families to the type of units available in the condominium, mostly bachelors and one bedrooms, with the development being marketed to a demographic that Jennifer termed the “aspiring urban professional” – young, upwardly mobile, and childless individuals. Kyle, a condominium owner and father of a small infant, bemoaned the lack of suitable condominium stock available for families, stating “there doesn’t seem to be a lot of family-friendly condos around” though this complaint was aimed at the Toronto condominium market more generally and was not a specific indictment of Regent Park or the Daniels Corporation.

For the small subset of the study population who had lived in Regent Park prior to the redevelopment, another significant attraction to Regent Park was the presence of close friends and extended family members both within Regent Park itself and in the surrounding neighbourhood. Most of these individuals were immigrants from South Asia, so the presence of specific ethnic grocery stores and networks of co-ethnic peers was also an important draw. Ahmed, who emigrated from Bangladesh to Toronto in the 1990s, reported having a close network of Bengali friends within Regent Park, all of whom frequent a local shop that purveys Bengali food. When asked what he enjoyed most about living in Regent Park, he responded: “Because of the community basis, you know, when they work together after work, when they go to park, you know, they see each other. You know? If we even all husbands like us if we go to work, our wives can go outside to meet other ladies from Bangladesh”. Further, Ahmed detailed how TCHC took great care to re-house many of those individuals from his network who had resided in the old Regent Park and had been displaced by the redevelopment in close proximity in the new buildings. As such, the social dislocation experienced by these individuals as a result of the redevelopment was minimized. A close proximity to ethnically-specific resources was also a benefit for the sizable Chinese population of the seniors’ building. Chun, the key informant for this population, explained that the Chinese seniors made regular use of the Toronto East China Town, located just a few block to the east of Regent Park and of the many social programs and amenities that were available in the community, including a social worker operating in the Regent Park community who was fluent in Chinese and made available for their needs. Predictably, no condominium residents reported having similar ties in the community. Gwen, a condominium owner, captured the mood of the condominium residents, saying “It feels like nobody’s been here too long”. She contrasts this impression with her perception of the experience of individuals who live in the non-redeveloped areas of Regent Park, remarking, “I think on the other side it was, you

just feel some people... There were some people who were... had very deep roots in that community. Here we have... you know, we're all pretty new".

Beyond Regent Park's opportune location and the presence of various amenities, many respondents also reported being attracted by the general allures of the urban lifestyle. Residents of the condominium buildings were more likely to invoke this nebulous appeal than were public housing tenants. In general, the latter group's appreciation of the community appeared to be grounded in more functional considerations. Many of the condominium residents grew up in the outlying suburban communities of Toronto and reported being enticed by the density and bustle of urban living. Originally from Scarborough, a satellite community within the municipality of Toronto but located to the north of the Downtown core, Julian described his attraction to the downtown this way: "I've lived in the suburbs my whole life and I have a lot of friends who are like: 'No, you know, I'm so used to the suburbs. I don't want to live downtown.' I've been like... I went to university downtown. I love just being downtown. I love walking and getting my groceries. I love walking to wherever". Jennifer, originally from Etobicoke, another satellite community within the municipality of Toronto, described her attraction to Regent Park and urban life more generally:

I used to live in Manhattan, and one thing I love is the density...the density and the variety of people. And this is one of the few places besides Kensington Market... or the only other place besides Kensington Market where I feel that feeling in New York, which I really loved. I am a freak for a dense cultural mix... And I love it. I love the fact that there is a lot of kids in the neighbourhood. And you know, the crossing guard here is really friendly, knows everybody...but the sound of these children and their families. Like, parents taking their kids to school and all the... the age of the kids and the cultural religious mix. I just... it totally enlivens me. I love it. Love it, love it.

Gwen, a condominium owner, who immigrated to Canada from Ireland in the 1980s and has since lived only in Toronto, expressed similar sentiments, placing an emphasis on her impression of



Toronto as a close-knit and intimate community, qualities she has found to be particularly conspicuous in Regent Park. While describing Toronto as a “metropolis” she added, “at the same time I felt it wasn’t chaotic. I still felt like it was a neighbourhood or some sort of a community. I... I like living here”. Ahmed, a social housing tenant, also expressed his appreciation for the neighbourhood’s intimate feel: “Regent Park [is] in the heart of downtown but it is the smell of village... like everything village area or... or like outside of the Toronto. Like, you know, where is the like natural things. Whatever you’re looking for, everything we have in Regent Park”.

### **Perceptions of Crime and Safety**

Curtailing criminal activity, or at least the perception of it, has been instrumental in fostering higher property values in the redeveloped Regent Park, and has contributed significantly to resident satisfaction with the neighbourhood. None of the residents interviewed reported ever directly witnessing a serious criminal act. However, some residents did have indirect experience of criminal activity, or activities that they assumed to be illegal. Residents of social housing were much more likely to report these indirect or assumed experiences. Chun, a subsidized tenant, heard what he assumed to be gunshots in the vicinity of Regent Park and through subsequent media reportage did confirm his assumptions. Public tenants in the seniors’ building reported encountering individuals in their building that they assumed to be prostitutes. Patricia, a childcare worker in her late 40s, described this encounter: “One day there was just I think two prostitutes here. And they were on crack, I’m telling you.... Whoever she was looking for on the intercom, she says... they told her my number. So, she’s getting off the elevator and she’s really... You could see she’s on drugs”. In her estimation, the solicitation of prostitutes by residents of her building is a fairly regular occurrence, adding, “you see the men, some of the men, you do. And

I've seen it with my own eyes. They... You know, they get the women, they come in...and they bring them in here". Patricia also related an exchange she had with her daughter who claimed that a certain amount of drug activity still occurred, though Patricia herself was oblivious to it: "[My Daughter] says 'I see people here, they're...it looks like it's good but they're still doing their stuff. Cause' remember they still got the... certain people around that still do those things' But I... I'm not aware 'cause, you know, I'm not looking for it". Another resident of the building, Robert, reported that it was "well-known" that an individual in the building was selling illicit drugs, something he expressed considerable dismay at, while also stating emphatically that the drug trade was still very active in Regent Park, although he admitted to not actually witnessing such activity. Residents of the condominium buildings did not report having similar indirect or conjectural knowledge of criminal activity. However, the only direct observation of a police intervention in the neighbourhood reported by a study participant took place within the condominium building itself and was reported by Jennifer, a condominium renter, who assumed the police officers were responding to a domestic dispute. She recalls seeing "...a woman who was being escorted by one of the officers, clearly had tears in her eyes and a man who was being escorted by the other officer... So, that looked like a domestic and that's going to happen, right". Alain, a student in his early 20s and market renter, reported the most serious crime directly observed by a respondent: "I saw someone who was stealing a bike and I called the police. {laughs} That's it. But like that could happen anywhere, right? So, that's it. I have not experienced anything else. It's actually a really quiet area at night".

Speaking more broadly on her perception of the safety and security of the neighbourhood, Megan, a young mother in a market rate condominium stated that she has had "...like no security issues in Regent Park. I walk [my infant] all over the place here... And I'm not ever worried about that in

this neighbourhood. Like, I haven't heard of anyone being mugged since we got here. Never... I haven't had any like negative experiences like out on a street or anything". She related her ironic response to a question posed to her by acquaintances about how she deals with the risks from criminal activity in Regent Park, a response that further elucidates her perception of the magnitude of these risks:

"Yes, [my husband] and I sat down; we had a very serious conversation about it one night, and we decided that to cut our risk we are not going to sell drugs in the lobby of any of the old buildings at three A.M., because that's where and when the shootings are occurring. So, we're just not going to do it."

James, another condominium owner, also stressed that the violence that did occur was drug-related and was only a danger to those engaging in such criminal activities saying, "you see shootings here [but] it doesn't make it a dangerous place. I walk around at two, three o'clock in the morning by myself and I don't ever feel in danger". Julian, a condominium owner and a professional in the music industry in his early 30s, conveyed a similar impression saying "I've never witnessed any problems...Nothing's ever happened to me or to anyone I know". He did, however, explain his reticence to walk at night through an area two blocks to the West of Regent Park, located around the intersection of Sherbourne and Dundas streets. Indeed, a common opinion expressed by interviewees was that this area was significantly more dangerous and disorderly than Regent Park and that the external reputation of Regent Park as a haven for criminal activities was currently undeserved. Alain described his initial trepidation about the risks involved with walking at night in Regent Park: "Like, can I do that or is that like legit dangerous? So, you try it out and you find out. And I totally do that all the time now. It's like not a big deal. And people are like: Really? Like, you walk in Regent Park at like one a.m.? I'm like: Yeah, I do. Like, it's not a big deal". Public housing tenants reported being similarly at ease in the neighbourhood. Olivia, a pensioner in her late 60s responded this way when asked whether she

was apprehensive about walking in Regent Park late at night: “No. No, no. No, not at all. I walk here in the night. Like, I’m a walker. I go late in the night for walks. I never see anything. Yeah, some people are scared but I’m not”. Alice, a retiree in her early 80s was likewise unconcerned about crime: “I’m not afraid, I feel very comfortable here”. More worrisome for her were the manifold physical problems she experienced in her building, commenting “I do not feel completely safe sometimes... because of mechanical reasons”.

Many residents also noted that the population of homeless and mentally-ill people extant in the downtown East Side sometimes caused disruption in Regent Park. Aruna, who had resided in Regent Park prior to its redevelopment, reported that the redevelopment had improved the situation, although she stated that “sometimes homeless people is bothering”. In one notorious incident reported by some residents of the condominium building, a homeless or otherwise indigent individual urinated on the side of their building, an act which elicited much opprobrium among a number of condominium residents, though none of these individuals took part in this survey and their responses to this act of public micturition are only known indirectly through the testimony of study subjects, who unanimously considered their reaction overwrought. Indeed, there was relative consensus, among all survey participants who discussed the issue, that frequent interactions with homeless and mentally-ill individuals were an unavoidable facet of living in downtown Toronto, that these individuals did not pose a material risk to the health and safety of Regent Park residents, and that the impact on satisfaction with the neighbourhood was negligible.

### **Indicators of Success**

The inequalities apparent in the previous section, though woeful, are understandable in light of the

economic exigencies that undergird the redevelopment. Vigorously catering to the needs of condominium owners can be understood, in the broader context of the project, as an effort to ensure robust demand for condominium units, a demand that is a desideratum for the continuation of the redevelopment. There is no doubt that the project has succeeded in TCHC's stated goal of "preventing disruption and retaining positive perceptions of the community [which are] critical to supporting higher market values for private units" (TCHC 2007d:12) This is evidenced by the fact that condominium residents report regularly receiving flyers from realtors informing them of recent condo sales in the community. All condominium owners who have studied these flyers state that units comparable to their own are now selling considerably above their purchase price, in some cases by over 20 per cent. Although this appreciation is proof of the increasing desirability of the Regent Park community, it has also likely been fuelled by a strong condominium market across Toronto, and by the fact that condominiums built in the first phase of construction were sold for slightly below the prevailing market price and featured attractive financing for first-time buyers. In addition to this quantifiable indicator of success, at least when success is construed narrowly as rising market value of condominium units, are the actions of condominium residents who manifest their satisfaction in the community and their dwellings by encouraging friends and family to purchase new units in Regent Park. Megan reported: "I'm trying to get [my husband's] mum to move here too. Yeah, 'cause she's relocating to Toronto. So, I'm hoping that... Like, I want her to come to Regent Park. I've just sent them all the stuff for the new building yesterday". Jiao, another condominium owner, reported "last week I went to the presentation centre because my co-worker, she's going to buy downtown condo. I commented to her that this area is good right now. And then soon they're start sell this phase three". Liam, an affordable renter, described his intention to purchase property in Regent Park when his financial situation allows him: "I've already started talking to a few friends about buying one of the

townhouses. So, I essentially want to stay in this unit until I buy something, and it will most likely be in this area”. Indeed, when asked the broader question - whether he thought the redevelopment itself has been a success - he responded, “I think that the... the idea of the redevelopment in general has worked since it started... Like, I said I’m planning... my plan is to buy property in this neighbourhood. So, that kind of indicates my answer right there”. Kyle, a condominium owner who lives in a two-bedroom unit with his wife and infant, reflecting on the prospect of further additions to the family, remarked “in retrospect I think what we were really in the market for was a three bedroom”. He was clear in his intention to purchase a unit in the neighbourhood saying, “I would say without a doubt that we would definitely like to stay in the Cabbage Town/ Regent Park area”. The lone respondent in a position to purchase property in Regent Park who demonstrated a definitive resolve not to was Evelyn, an affordable renter in the building dedicated for seniors, whose experience of living in Regent Park was coloured by the considerable physical problems encountered by residents of that building. She explained how she became aware of the affordable rental program through a family member: “I thought: Well, that’s a good thing to do if I’m going to buy here, I might as well see what it’s like. So, I took this apartment on that basis. Um, I’ve since made up my mind. And I’m not investing in it”. Other interview subjects who resided in that building reported that, also owing to the physical issues in the building, many subsidized tenants had put themselves on a waiting list to move out.

### **Experience of Stigma**

Though there was a broad consensus among study subjects that the external reputation of Regent Park as a dangerous place was not merited, many respondents reported experiencing stigma from

family, friends and colleagues. Salma, a social housing tenant, put it this way:

Everybody say Regent Park is bad but is not so bad... From long time I'm staying here, right? I live here... Sometimes outsiders when we come by taxi they say they are scared to come here. Sometimes Scarborough people friends say to us... "Oh, why you stay here? Why don't you move to Scarborough? Why don't you move there?" And I say no, for us it's okay here. But the... the real people are not so bad here.

Alain, a condominium resident, conveyed a similar sentiment when describing his long search for a rental unit in the city, one that led to him to balance the appeals of the neighbourhood against its less-than-beguiling reputation. He described his rationale this way: "I understand this is Regent Park but all the pros outweigh the one con that is the location. You know? And at the end of the day it's really not that bad. Like, the location is not that bad". Not growing up in or around Toronto, Alain was at first unaware of its reputation, but quickly became cognizant of it as peers expressed surprise at his decision to locate to the neighbourhood. He reports that he often has trouble hailing a cab in Regent Park and must resort to calling the dispatch line, although on arrival their prior notions are quickly disabused; "They're like: Oh, like this is a nice area here. Like, how much did you pay for your condo?" Indeed, Alain reported being something of a zealot when combating negative outside preconceptions of the community, stating that he was "actively interested" in changing these perceptions "because I don't want people to think that I live in a shit hole... Like, that's not what I pay for" and that "I'm quick to correct people 'cause it bugs me". He described the stigma he experienced as "a hidden thing that you sign up for when you live here. You know, you're going to have to explain to people what that is. So... it's a fine line because when I explain to people where I live, it's like I don't want to sound cocky but it's like it's not a bad place. Like, *it's actually a really, really nice place*". Kyle, a condominium owner, reported the astonishment of his peers upon their learning of his decision to purchase a unit in Regent Park, saying "our friends especially the professional friends or the people that have lived

in Toronto a long time all thought we were completely nuts. They're like: What are you doing buying in Regent Park?!" He reveals, however, that in light of his manifestly positive experience in Regent Park, with its central location, amenities, and rising property values, his colleagues are beginning to "...look at it with a little bit more interest, I think. And they're like: Oh... It's got all the hallmarks of like what they expect a neighbourhood to be". James, an educator in Regent Park, had a similar experience with his peers: "They thought I was crazy. They're like are you nuts? I'm like why? 'Cause if I talk to a lot of like especially middle class to upper class, to upper class Torontonians, yeah there's definitely a lot of stigma and misunderstanding, I'd say". Evelyn, a former high-ranking public servant and affordable renter in the seniors' building, reported that many of her friends were "bothered" by her decision to locate to Regent Park. Indeed, many of her peers made a point of calling her whenever a violent act committed in Regent Park was reported on the news: "The year that I've been here I think there were three or four murders in this area. Every time another one was reported I got a phone call from somebody... saying 'What are you doing living out there?'" She brushed off these concerns though, saying, "it seems to be young people and drugs but that's not an issue native to this area. It's got nothing to do with this area". In their discussion of stigma and outside perceptions of the community, subjects often made a clear distinction between the old and new sections of Regent Park. Megan, a condominium owner, described her reaction to being asked by friends about incidents of violence in the neighbourhoods: "They're like: 'There was a shooting. Did you hear?' And we're like: 'Yeah'. And it'll be like on a street in the part that hasn't been redeveloped yet...in a weird way *I barely know where they're talking about*". Most study participants reported having difficulty reconciling the external perceptions of Regent Park with their own experiences, although this may in part be due to the fact that no interviewees reported spending time in or having extensive social contacts in the yet-to-be-redeveloped areas of the community. That is,



their experience of the park is largely limited to redeveloped areas.

### **Differentiation**

Residents from both tenures expressed support for the explicit architectural strategy of making market rate and public buildings indistinguishable from one another, although condominium residents appeared more enthusiastic about this strategy and were much more likely to cite it in interviews as a benefit of the redevelopment. However, differences do become readily apparent by entering the buildings with the public buildings lacking the same quality of amenities present in the market rate buildings and, in general, being more spartanly decorated. Most condominium residents interviewed were keenly aware that their building contains a greater number of amenities and that these amenities are of a higher quality. These amenities include a spacious park located on a green roof separating the two towers of the condominium building, a gym replete with modern exercise machinery, and a luxuriously adorned two-storey common area equipped with a bar and game tables. These amenities are accessible only to condominium residents. Although he had never been in the public buildings, the stark contrast between buildings became evident to Alain after a cursory internet search: “I’ve seen pictures of inside those buildings. It’s not ... It’s like a cheap version of what we have here. Yeah. And they have no amenities. They have nothing”. Strictly speaking, his statement that the public housing tenants have “nothing” is exaggerated. The public buildings do have dedicated common rooms, though according to study participants they are used rarely, and compared with their private counterpart, have a grim and distinctly institutional ambiance. In the building dedicated to seniors, a small number of exercise machines were provided in a section of the common room, though it was widely regarded by residents as inappropriate for the elderly population of the building and has fallen into disuse.

Conversely, public housing tenants had a much hazier grasp of precisely what amenities were available to condominium residents, though there was a general perception that both the amenities and building quality enjoyed by condominium residents was far superior to their own.

The difficulty in distinguishing public from private buildings was used explicitly as a defense of the project and as a response to external stigma. Megan related this experience:

There were a couple of people who said to me that they were surprised that I would have a baby in this neighbourhood. I did have somebody say that. And I challenged that person to tell me which of these was the Toronto Community Housing building... because I didn't think the person could identify which one it was. I don't think they realized that it's that one, right? Like, that out my... out my window was the TCHC building.

Alain commented, "They [outsiders] don't know that it's Toronto Community Housing. So, it's kind of like a little secret almost... Those buildings from the outside really do look like ours". Commenting on the exceptionality of the Regent Park neighbourhood, he remarks that it is "...pretty amazing that you can have a building... like the building across from here, that is a TCHC building. Literally steps away from that building is a condo building. Like, that's crazy". Although without direct experience of negative attitudes towards this strategy, he conjectured that some condo residents might be unsettled by paying substantially more than subsidized tenants to live in buildings that appear comparable, stating that "it's horrible to say that you would want to have a separation but at the same time that you're paying that price [market rate]". He concludes this line of questioning, however, by recognizing that an improvement in housing conditions for social housing tenants is a core objective of the redevelopment and explained "It's definitely an upgrade for that. So, that's good. I mean I feel good about it." Ahmed, a resident of public housing, conceived this lack of differentiation as beneficial to the self-image of social housing tenants by compressing the social distance, manifested by observable disparities in housing quality, between individuals and attenuating the invidious effects that the psychological

internalization of these disparities in lower-income individuals incurs: “Whoever living Toronto Community Housing they have a like, you know, hiding impression too, you know? ‘I’m not like him. I’m in an old house.’ You know what I mean? So, if they live together like, you know, there is a multimillion[aire] and me living same building, it makes me like easy going with the community and neighbourhood... this is the like a psychological improvement step”. A similar argument was advanced by James, a condominium owner, who argued that the physical design of the community would reduce place-based stigma: “I think it does help to alleviate a lot of the stigma for people who... especially if they’re lower income ‘cause you don’t know. And unless people actually disclose that they’re renting or they’re being subsidized like you’re not going to know”.

There was, however, a considerable divergence of opinion on whether or not the physical indistinguishability of the buildings in Regent Park resulted, as James asserted, in an indistinguishability of its populace. For many condominium residents, ethnicity was a strong indicator of tenure status, with visible minorities being much more likely to be public housing tenants. This perception largely did not arise from the *a priori* assumption that visible minorities would necessarily be subsidized tenants, but rather, from the *a posteriori* disjuncture between the ethnic makeup of the condominium and the community at large. Julian, a condominium owner, described how the community was “more ethnic” than other neighbourhoods in Toronto and was “mostly Muslim” in character, contrasting with the condominium building, whose population was “more white”, with the only significant non-white population being of East-Asian descent. Alain, a condominium renter, had a similar perception, saying

“Race definitely I feel is an indicator for that [tenure status]. I don’t know if that’s just me like judging like... or like noticing that but I see people that are inside here living... like in the elevator or just walking around, and I see people that are living in the neighbourhood. There’s a... definitely an ethnic

difference for sure.

This observation is given credence by the demographic profile of the condominium residents in the study population, made up only of Caucasian and East-Asian individuals. Gina, a condominium owner, commented on the ease of distinguishing the tenure groups, saying, “it’s the condo owners versus... versus people who live... like the immigrant population who are living in the Toronto Community Housing buildings, right? So, it’s ... it’s very distinctive about who... who lives where almost”. Another indirect indication of tenure status for condominium residents was age. Condominium residents were mindful of the lack of families in the building, and thus, concluded that most school-age children in the neighbourhood must be public housing tenants. Commenting on the lack of units available in the building that would be suitable for a family, Alain noted, “...these buildings aren’t really designed for families. It’s a lot more like single people, like young people, young professionals kind of thing... So, big families you’ll see them in FreshCo, you’ll be like there’s no way they live here”. Beyond ethnicity, Alain cited an individual’s general appearance as indicative of differences between the two populations, saying “You know, just the way people are dressed or like... You can tell how much a coat is worth or whatever, right? Like, those kind of things [are indicative]”. When asked whether she could discern between individuals of different tenures, Jiao, a condominium owner, also named appearance as mark of tenure status. However, she added that one’s behaviour may also betoken one’s place of residence. She stated “you can tell from appearance there’s a different. Then when you talk, then you... you will feel the different. If they’re educated or not educated. What they think about. Then you can tell the different”. She added that “it’s different because um their attitude is different...And you can tell the people [who are] like low level. Attitude, behaviour”. As examples of this “low level” behaviour, she named individuals who “go and spit... like that. And say the coarse language some. I can hear this across ...on the street”. However, she remarked

that she thinks the situation is “...getting better. Because they all... there lots of people...I can see in this building lots of young. Young; they’re from university. U of T - a lot of student live here”. Though Jiao, a recent immigrant from China, was the only condominium resident to cite behaviour as a mark of differentiation, her attitude was shared by Gavin, a public housing tenant. He claimed the influx of condominium owners was quite apparent because “[when] you’re out and about, walking around meeting... you can see nicer people. Nicer looking people. And recognize them as more normal than the people who aren’t working or are in decline, or whatnot, eh”. The views of these subjects contrasted sharply with those of other interview participants, however. Gwen, for instance, speaking about residents of the newly-constructed townhouses on the site, stated that “I don’t know exactly how they [other condominium residents] feel, but to me the townhouses that the people bought and the townhouses that are TCHC don’t look any different”. Sean, an affordable renter, acknowledging that the redevelopment was a “social project” with the intention of creating “classless living, where everybody is unidentifiable” expressed a similar opinion. He stated:

“I have no problem going through the neighbourhood and talking to anybody. I don’t know who’s who. I don’t know if somebody that lives ... owns a condo is worth twenty million dollars or is somebody given a subsidy is only worth five... like fifty thousand a year. And it shouldn’t matter. And that’s what this whole project is about, is bringing people together.

## **Conclusion**

In sum, the picture of residents’ general perception of and satisfaction with the neighbourhood that emerges from the data presented above is one in which the redeveloped areas of Regent Park are seen as relatively safe, convivial, well-serviced, well-situated, and aesthetically pleasing. Most residents interviewed seem to view the neighbourhood as a ‘normal’ one, its key

distinguishing feature, perhaps, its high-degree of ethnic heterogeneity when compared to other neighbourhoods. It is peopled by individuals with a taste for the many attractions of urban life, although subsidized tenants were more likely to place a sole focus on the material utility of the neighbourhood, its location and proximity to a range of resources, while condominium residents often cited more ephemeral attributes of urbanity. However, the experience of residents diverged markedly where perceived build quality and managerial attentiveness and competence were concerned. Serious mechanical issues, long delays for repairs, and a fraught relationship with TCHC staff afflicted subsidized tenants and, in some cases, had a detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of residents. Condominium owners enjoyed much more attentive building management and evinced a much higher degree of satisfaction with their residential situation. Further, though the buildings were regarded as indistinguishable with respect to which ones housed subsidized tenants, many respondents reported that the demographic and class-based cleavages in the neighbourhood were quite apparent. Though the buildings look alike, the experiences of those who inhabit them was quite dissimilar. Megan captured the mood of the neighbourhood's affluent: "It doesn't even feel that experimental anymore. Maybe 'cause I'm just in it, but it's good. I like it. It's been fun". Aaron, a subsidized tenant in the seniors' building, was less enthusiastic: "They're talking about, revitalization of Regent Park. It's not working... Not in any way shape or form. People movin' out of here. People have got their names on lists to move out of this place. That's how bad it is". He added, "It was just a scam".

## **Chapter 4: Changes**

### **Introduction**

Although only four of the study participants had resided in Regent Park before the redevelopment, their testimony offers a useful perspective on how the redevelopment has changed the community and what aspects of the redevelopment affect them most. These individuals were unanimous in their view that the major reduction in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour that has resulted from the redevelopment has been the most significant aspect of the project. These respondents reported that the prevailing conditions prior to the redevelopment in which criminal activity was rampant in the neighbourhood had a very serious effect on their health and wellbeing. Indeed, many considered this change to be a necessary pre-requisite for many of the other positive changes in the community such as the location of new commercial amenities to the neighbourhood.

### **Personal Accounts of Change**

Gavin, who has lived in Regent Park for nearly a decade, spoke about the reputation that the community had as being violent, commenting that “ I think the stories are pretty accurate” and that “It was obviously one of the most uh crime ridden areas, you know, going back ten years ago....It was... It was pretty... much, much tougher then than it is now”. He recounted how “...almost every day of the week there’d be young black guys down in the lobby smoking grass and saying ‘How you doin?’ ‘You want to buy some?’ referring to crack... I mean every day. And there was never any security there at the time”. During this time he considered himself to be

constantly in danger, saying “...walking down the street being [I was] afraid of these three young guys that are going to roll you or something like that. Three years ago I used to worry about that, coming back from a bar if I was out playing pool or drinking”. Further, he recalled that this menacing environment had a serious impact on sociality in the building: “I didn’t have any friends at the other building. Everybody stayed in their own place in the other building for fear of stepping out into the corridor and seeing a drug deal going down” This contrasts sharply with his new building where he reported making new friends. Further, the new orderliness in the community had improved his wellbeing and was a “big-relief”, since, as he put it, “you can imagine living in a building where almost daily... it wouldn’t matter what time of time. It could be eight o’clock in the morning, eight o’clock at night, and there’d be all these young guys hanging around the front door and the back doors to do business with people coming from other areas or other buildings to get their drugs”. He contended that a limited amount of drug-dealing still occurred in the peripheries of the neighbourhood, but that it had “lightened up considerably”.

Salma, another resident of the seniors’ building who has resided in Regent Park for approximately ten years, also reported that the criminal activity in the neighbourhood had affected her daily routine, with the members of her household limiting the amount of time they spent in the community. She recalled “so many problems [were] here happening...so, just we [were] not going out a lot. Just shopping and coming home, doctor... because everything is closed at that time living here”. Before the redevelopment, she explained that violence had been commonplace, saying, “shooting and killing and bothering, so many things was [happening] here”. For her, the redevelopment has eliminated these problems and she declared that “now, hundred percent good, I think so”.

Aruna, a resident of the family building who has lived in Regent Park for nearly fifteen years,



unlike Salma, reported that some of the criminal activity and antisocial behaviour still existed, but that it was “not too much now”. For her, the previous atmosphere in Regent Park had been an intimidating one and the improvement has been drastic. She recalled, “Before is too much scary people. Now, there is gone. You know all that time homeless people or drug people living in there. There is fighting, there is killing, there is scream. Now, is okay. Now is more better”. She added that “Everything look like clean” and that “Now everyone is satisfied for new development”.

Ahmed, another longtime resident of Regent Park who now lives in the family building, noted that, in addition to the criminal activity, the behaviour of other social housing tenants very negatively affected his satisfaction with his residence. He described some of his neighbours in his previous building like this:

Their house was like terrible like hell. Dirty, smell, and all the time like... like uh, you know, you cannot say bad people but, you know, the... bad habit people used to go there all the time. And sometime they pee on... on the... on the stairs and especially on elevator. You know? When they pee on elevator it's really disgusting, you know. And right now I cannot see it...I living here this new building I live here like almost two years. I didn't see any pee or anything on elevator.

Additionally, he reported being mystified as to why more was not done to stem or counteract the criminality as the participants and the locations where such activities went on in the neighbourhood were well known, while also recalling that the atmosphere which pervaded the neighbourhood had a serious impact on his wellbeing:

It was terrible... And I don't understand, you know, why they like law and order people cannot take care of them because you ... you can see them; they're selling, they're using. It was really, really... if you open your eyes you can see, you know, where is... where is selling, where is hiding. *So, this is bother me. Like, really, really bad. Like, really, really bad...* Yes, it was, you know, like hooker... you know, street prostitution. And then drugs. It was bother me a lot. Now, it's beautiful. It's not any more.

### **Indirect Accounts**

Other study participants, although they did not reside in Regent Park immediately prior to the redevelopment, also provided useful insights on how the community has changed as a result of the redevelopment. Phillip, a condominium owner who had grown up in the Regent Park neighbourhood, though he had not lived directly in Regent Park, also remarked that the level of criminality in the neighbourhood had declined tremendously. He recollected that crimes such as robbery of cars, private residences, and businesses were a commonplace occurrence and that “the kind of crimes that took place in this area were more brazen back then”. James, another condominium owner and educator in the community, drawing on conversations with his students (most of whom live in Regent Park) and other members of the community, stated, “They like it. They like the new development ‘cause a lot of them said that, you know, that they’re glad they’re getting new things like a new building. They’re glad that the community in some ways is changing. *The perception is that it is safer*”.

Although all study participants who had resided in Regent Park reported being negatively affected by the prevailing atmosphere of criminality, only one, Aruna, reported being a victim of crime. She recounted how one evening she had been shopping for groceries with a friend, when “...just coming in my building... and one guy maybe eighteen or twenty years [years old], he’s running and he took my friend’s purse. And he’s going run”.

### **Demographic Changes**

On the question of precisely what aspect of the redevelopment had caused this decrease in crime, most participants who had lived in Regent Park immediately prior to the beginning of the

initiative remarked that it was through the dispersion of individuals who had been involved in crime or their relative dilution with the influx of new condominium owners. Gavin, for instance, stated plainly that the improved orderliness of the community was “I think because of the influx of new people and the displacement of the people who were sent to other areas” and that “... because of this dispersion of certain elements of them it’s made it more difficult for them to operate as they used to because now there’s new buildings, new people”. For Gavin, this shift in the population of Regent Park was an integral part of the success of the project and the normalization of the neighbourhood. He stated, “I think it’s becoming more of a regular neighbourhood” and that the newcomers were “...definitely friendlier. Politer. Better dressed. You know? ...all in all certainly more a responsible normal type of people that you would like to meet”. Aruna also attributed the decrease in crime to the influx of new condominium owners, an influx she considered quite beneficial. Discussing what the neighbourhood had been like before the redevelopment, she commented “before there are homeless people here or drunk. Now is gone”, a change she said had occurred “...since new people is coming. Before is all from housing people. Now, it’s mixed. [Interviewer: And is that a good thing?] Yeah. Yeah. Of course is good. Now is mixed people, not so much bad people or drunkards”.

As to which groups of individuals had been primarily responsible for criminal behaviour and had been the ones dispersed, both Ahmed and Gavin identified the West Indian community. Gavin commented that those who had been mainly involved in drug and gang activity were “just young black kids selling ... selling drugs because they don’t want to work or something like that ninety percent of the time” and that “the community as a whole was just all young black guys” who were no longer present in the community. James also reported that the notion that the West Indian Community had been dispersed was widespread in the community, although he observed that it

might have been the result of a passive policy on behalf TCHC to disallow households back into the community who had not been current on their rent:

I think there was an assumption made that they're almost kicking out the West Indian community and bringing back only the South Asian community, who have I think maybe historically just been a little bit more savvy with their finances in terms of not having lates in their... or any defaults on their rent. So, maybe they base it on that. Right? And... I don't know. But I do notice that the majority of the people that live in these buildings, there's a huge... a very sizeable South Asian population.

Other researchers in Regent Park have also noted this belief. In her study of social housing tenants in Regent Park, Cahuas (2011) reported that many of her interview subjects held that TCHC staff was employing an active screening policy of tenants that resulted in most West Indian households not being permitted back into the redeveloped community. Likewise, Johnson (2010), in her study of displaced households, found that many residents believed that TCHC was admitting back to Regent Park only those households they considered “desirable” or “acceptable”, although she was careful to note that no such policy of selection has been acknowledged by TCHC and no direct evidence of such a policy exists. It may be possible to quantify the change in the demographic makeup of the neighbourhood when data from the Federal Census of 2011 becomes available (it was not available at the time of writing), which would confirm or refute the anecdotal evidence that West Indian households are now a much smaller percentage of the population than before the redevelopment. However, even if this data were to confirm that this demographic shift has taken place, it would not constitute compelling evidence of an *active* policy of screening out these households by TCHC, as such a shift may feasibly have come about from the *passive* mechanisms outlined by James above.

## **Conclusion**

For those that had been familiar with the conditions in Regent Park before the redevelopment, there was a strong consensus that the neighbourhood was much safer, and now more like other neighbourhoods in the community. Those with the most intimate knowledge of the prior conditions attributed this change principally to the dispersion or relative dilution of those individuals most involved in criminal and antisocial behaviour, and also explained that they thought the presence of new condominium residents was a very positive component of the redevelopment. Ahmed summed up how the changes in the community had positively affected his satisfaction with his residence and his wellbeing, adding that he perceived that attitudes like his were common in the community:

But I think people are thinking positive right now, you know. When they see there is no drug dealer or no drugs addicted people around them, they feel good. When they see there is no pee on the stairs or elevator they feel good. You know? When they see there is nice facilities around them, they feel good. When they see there is good security around them and Toronto Community Housing focusing like how much facility whatever the people want, they're trying their best to do it, people feel good. You know, they make them happy... I talk to people about this area or about the Regent Park facilities... they're happy.

## **Chapter 5: Resident Attitudes Towards Mix and the Redevelopment**

### **Introduction**

In chapter 3, a broad outline of residents' experiences and attitudes were provided in order that a general understanding of the prevailing conditions in the community could be related (with all the necessary qualifications and provisos regarding the completeness of such an account given the size and composition of the sample). This chapter will provide a more intensive exploration of resident attitudes towards the redevelopment and tenure mix more generally, and the ways in which they perceive themselves and their roles in the broader redevelopment process. Rather than simply reporting what residents like or dislike about the community, the purpose of this chapter is to explore the meaning inhabitants ascribe to their residency in the community and what role the redevelopment played in their decision to locate to Regent Park. Investigating the motivations of Regent Park's residents and their attitudes towards policies of tenure mix and urban redevelopment is vital to an understanding of the ways in which the mixed-tenure nature of the redevelopment may aid the neighbourhood's impoverished residents. Armed with a sagacious description of the dispositions of Regent Park's inhabitants, one can begin to examine how the categories of effects proposed by Joseph (2006) may be realized. The theoretical model supplied by Joseph (2006) is not a deterministic one, where certain outcomes lead ineluctably from particular combinations of variables. Rather, the theoretical model he has provided is one in which the vicissitudes of human nature and behaviour are of central importance, and one which is concerned with the ways that combinations of social factors may align to make possible certain behaviours and interactions. It is a theoretical model in which human agency is the prime mechanism. As such, the motivations and dispositions of the human actors involved are of central

importance. In this section, however, the responses of condominium residents are much more numerous than responses by social housing tenants. There are several reasons for this. First, condominium residents obviously had a great deal more latitude in their residential selection than did social housing tenants. The decision to locate to a mixed tenure community is one made by very few renters or buyers in the private market and thus was seen as an unorthodox choice worthy of much discussion. Further, condominium owners were not beset by the physical problems experienced by residents of the public buildings, which were the primary topic of discussion with most residents of the latter group. This lack of pressing physical concerns left condominium residents with more interview time to discuss other topics. Finally, most subsidized housing tenants seemed, in general, to be less concerned specifically with the mixed tenure component of the redevelopment. Condominium owners, by contrast, had a great deal more to say about the topic. The lack of subsidized tenant voices in the proceeding pages then, is not the result of an editorial strategy of excision but a reflection of the relative contribution of the different tenures to this particular aspect of the thesis.

The policy of mixed-tenure redevelopment enjoys a remarkable amount of support from both condominium and social housing residents, though this support was more pronounced among the condominium residents than among social housing tenants. All residents of the market rate units expressed at least modest support for mixed tenure development, while most expressed very strong support. Almost all condominium residents expressed what may be termed ‘egalitarian’ attitudes towards the provision of social housing, with some even stating that they considered housing a fundamental “right”. As will be demonstrated in the following pages, the Regent Park neighbourhood attracts not only individuals with a predilection for an urban lifestyle, but also many individuals who are enticed by the ostensible ‘mission’ or ‘narrative’ of the project itself.

## **Resident Ideal Types**

To aid in the presentation and analysis of the data, I have devised two ideal types of condominium residents. One group I term the “Communitarians”. They are those who cite the redevelopment, particularly its social aspects, as a primary attraction to the neighbourhood. They are individuals for whom a decision to locate to Regent Park over other neighbourhoods in the city was an expression of their own ideological convictions and a desire to take part in the ‘revitalization’ of the community. Contrasting with the Communitarians is a group I term the “Utilitarians”. These are individuals who cite material factors such as price, accessibility, and amenity as their primary motivation to locate to Regent Park. Both of these terms were coined to describe specific groups or philosophies but have been adopted into the language with much broader meaning. For instance, the term “communitarianism” was coined by English utopian socialist John Barmby in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to describe the set of ideals which he espoused, but has subsequently come to mean, according the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), “A theory or ideology which rejects as divisive both the market-led theories of political conservatives and the liberal concern for individual rights, advocating instead a recognition of common moral values and collective responsibility”<sup>7</sup>. Likewise, the term utilitarian has a specific meaning, referring to the philosophy of Jeremy Bentham, but I employ the term in a more general sense connoting, according to the OED, “a person devoted to mere utility or material interest”. These types are, of course, only conceptual tools, and are most usefully conceived of as two ideal ends on a spectrum of resident attitudes. Individuals inhabit a place on the spectrum relative to other residents between the ideal types on the basis of their motivation to locate to, or continue to reside in, Regent Park. To be sure, this is an inexact typology as individuals may simultaneously hold communitarian or

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<sup>7</sup> Sociologist Amitai Etzioni has developed his own specific theory that he names communitarianism, but I employ the word in its more general sense as explained above.



utilitarian ideals, or may develop or cast off these opinions during their stay in Regent Park. Further, individuals may hold communitarian ideals but cite reasons for locating to Regent Park that are wholly utilitarian. To give a brief example, Jennifer, a renter, was first attracted to Regent Park by the location and what she considered to be a very reasonable rent, though she was not aware of the redevelopment project. She became aware of the “full social amenity”, as she termed it, only after she moved in but was among the most vehement in her espousal of communitarian ideals of all the residents interviewed. Though purely notional, the communitarian/utilitarian dichotomy that I have proposed is a useful heuristic device that may be employed to delineate and describe the attitudes of residents regarding the objectives of the redevelopment and how residents understand their role in it.

### **The Communitarians**

The most strident communitarians were those individuals who cited the neighbourhood’s redevelopment as a mixed income community as a principal reason for their locating to Regent Park and conceive of the project as primarily intended to improve the situation of impoverished public housing tenants. They are individuals who, for the most part, are keenly aware of urban matters and of issues of poverty more generally, most having direct experience of living with or working with impoverished or otherwise marginalized individuals. Further, most were acutely aware of the social dislocation that the redevelopment may have had on the previous residents of Regent Park and expressed concern for their plight. Though most did not report actively engaging with subsidized tenants or attempting to advocate on their behalf, they did evince what appeared to be a genuine, if passive, altruism.

Gina, a condominium owner in her late 20s, provides a good example of this group. Growing up, she spent most of her life in a downtown eastside neighbourhood not far from Regent Park, with which she was quite familiar. She left the neighbourhood to pursue her university studies, but has returned to the community after finding a job in the public service. She stated that she closely follows the work of Richard Florida, a scholar who has written extensively on urban issues, and mentioned that she was quite interested in “urban revitalization”. She described her decision to locate to Regent Park in this way, emphasizing the redevelopment over financial considerations:

I knew that Regent Park was undergoing redevelopment, and that it was going to be more based on a mixed income community. And I guess what attracted me to the development or the area was the sort of ideals. Sort of like being an experiment in the... in this whole revitalization and um just some of the values...it would sort of embrace what I like about the diversity of Toronto in terms of the community... I was interested to see where the neighbourhood was headed, and I thought there was a lot of growth and relatively speaking it was more affordable than other neighbourhoods.

Kyle, a human rights lawyer in his early 30s and condominium owner describes a similar attraction to the community, stating that: “We liked the narrative behind it. We liked the building. Even just wandering around here, it felt like it had a good community feel to it... And seeing all the social services that are available around here, we kind of like the whole scene. And basically more or less on the spot just decided to buy the condo”. Indeed, he even lists as an attraction to the community the relatively high population of the downtown east area of Toronto (in which Regent Park is located) that is on social assistance, pointing out that it “dovetailed with my own professional work and interest” and that “I think that’s really important to the vibrancy and the life of the city. So, I kind of like to be close to that stuff”. Further, he was quite aware of possible negative consequences of the redevelopment. When asked whether he believed he was contributing to the exclusion of individuals from the neighbourhood, he provided this answer:

Yeah. And I don’t think that the community that Regent Park was will ever be the same again. You know, it doesn’t take long, I don’t think, for those

kinds of patterns and those kinds of networks and that kind of community to break down pretty quickly... especially if people are coming and going, being displaced, coming back, living in different architectures of space. So, no I think that there absolutely has been a massive impact – an irrevocable impact on the area. I definitely think I'm responsible as one of the people that have bought into this, to the extent that anyone's responsible for anything in this capitalist society.

However, despite these qualms, he commented that the project had been done “responsibly” and was a “necessary change”. He reasoned that “...you can't just leave people to languish in the slum, despite all the community and the networks and all that stuff that comes with it”, adding that the project was “morally conscious”. He did acknowledge, however, that there was room for improvement:

Has this redevelopment been as socially conscious as it could be? I would say no, probably not. I mean if they were really primarily concerned as a priority with community and stuff, there's a whole host of other things I think that could have been done to better preserve that community. At the same time, you know, have they done an okay job? I'd say they've done an okay job, as far as I can tell. Now, I haven't had the face-to-face conversation with local residents about ‘Hey, how's gentrification affecting you?’”

He noted that the right-of-return of tenants was an important factor in his decision to purchase property in the neighbourhood, saying, “If we thought as a project that it was just pure gentrification, you know, displacement of social housing and social services in the name of private ownership and exclusion, I don't think we would have bought into this”.

This consideration also weighed heavily on James, an educator in the Regent Park community, who was keenly aware of the class dynamics latent in the neighbourhood.

I'm okay knowing that my students have housing. If I knew that they were actually homeless and they actually couldn't find housing in Toronto... community housing didn't place them somewhere, then I'd feel really bad. But knowing that they're actually guaranteed housing and brand new places. So, I feel a little bit better but still... there's still some qualms about, you know, people moving into the area, making profits off of it. And you know, I'm one of those people. I'm certainly not going to deny the fact that I... you know, it

was a conscious choice buying here, right.

James also reported being enticed by the mixed tenure nature of the community, having previously lived in a mixed neighbourhood while growing up in a major American city, commenting “I’m not a fan of just yuppity, upper class, upper-echelon areas, and I like the fact that it is mixed”. He also expressed dismay that the tenures in Regent Park were not physically integrated within buildings:

It wasn’t exactly mixed how I thought it was going to be because growing... living in the States for a while, mixed housing in [a large American city] for example, like you’re actually mixed in the same building. Here it is segregated so these two buildings are market condos. That one’s TCH and the other ones over there. So, it’s mixed but not mixed in the sense that I thought it was going to be mixed.

When asked whether he wished that tenures were mixed within buildings, he answered in the affirmative, explaining his assumption that having more closely integrated tenures would reduce stigma, saying, “you get a different perspective and I think it does help to alleviate a lot of the stigma for people who... especially if they’re lower income ‘cause you don’t know”. For James, the fact that the buildings housing social housing tenants and those housing condominium residents were not distinguishable had import beyond simply masking an individual’s tenure status, it had powerful symbolic meaning. Discussing the fact that market-rate owners had to pay substantially more for residences that appear the same, he remarked, “You know, I like that idea... that it is mixed like that. So, I think there is a lot of symbolism behind having mix, especially the buildings when it’s like that”. The ultimate purpose of this mix for him, which the physical aspects of the neighbourhood were mere adjuncts to, was to create a harmonious community in which people interacted across barriers of class and ethnicity. When asked what he thought the ultimate objective of the redevelopment was and how one could tell that this objective had been achieved, he remarked:

I'd say where people do get along, and not just get along but getting to know each other – sit down, talk. You see each other at the park, you can see each other at, you know... It's not so segregated. So, you don't see just okay maybe the Somalians over here and the West Indians over here. You see 'em a lot more mixed.

Phillip, another condominium owner, also expressed dismay that the tenures were not mixed more closely, saying:

When I first moved into this area, I thought that we were going to have floors of the condo being mixed and others not that... that wasn't the case, and I'm a little bit disappointed at that because I feel that we could learn a lot as Torontonians, about the plight of those who live in impoverished settings just by ... just by seeing the kind of challenges that they face in their everyday life..."

Throughout his interview Phillip returned to this theme several times, explaining how he thought one of the most important aspects of the redevelopment was its ability to raise the profile of the predicament of impoverished public housing residents, a predicament he had first hand experience with growing up in a public housing project only blocks away from Regent Park. Having earned a university degree and gained employment in a professional field he decided to purchase a condominium unit because he "like[d] the revitalization idea" in that "this project has sort of shifted the focus back to how we can uh develop responsibly, meanwhile still maintaining the um... social fabric... social cohesion". He did, however, express concern about the effect of rising property values on social housing tenant residents, saying:

I'm kind of worried that if... if values or stuff go up... if property value goes up and people will just get pushed out, then you're going to have essentially what happens in New York or what happens in other parts of the city where you're not really solving or addressing the social issues, you're just moving them out and it becomes one of those out of sight out of mind issues again, right.

He continued, stating, "if property value rises in here, that's just another way of ... of pushing people out. And I don't want that to happen. I want... *I want this area to become a model for*

*how you can have a strong social development within the core of the city.*” Despite reservations about the motivations of the developers he held that the redevelopment was a “socially conscious” one and that “...if it’s action towards addressing the problem [poverty], then I’m all for it. At least they’re doing something, not like when I was growing up. It was just sort of an ignored issue.”

Gwen, a customer service representative in her early 50s, was similarly attracted to the ‘mission’ of the redevelopment. Off-handedly describing herself as a “socialist”, she made the decision to purchase her first home in Regent Park after her adult children moved out. She reported being active in advocacy campaigns for social housing in the early 2000s and is an avid supporter of a left-leaning city councillor, in part because of his perceived dedication to the cause of social housing. She remarked that the “type of condo I moved into and the community I live in makes me feel I still am involved. I’m involved in this community and I ... It’s more than just the amount of money I put in; I’ve invested in the community itself”. She attributed her attraction to the neighbourhood to an interest in “...people in the community, how people integrate and get on as opposed to what it physically will look like or what it financially will mean. That’s not important to me. I mean ...it’s not bought for me as an investment, hoping that I can sell it for more money. I... I bought to probably stay and grow old here”. Further, she reported that she believed these sentiments to be common within her building, saying “And I feel like those people there, yeah they’re truly invested. I can see that they have the same ideas around investing in their community”. These statements are, however, slightly at odds with those of James and Phillip, who commented that some individuals in their condominium building seem not to share their communitarian outlook, and, in the words of James, have an “elitist” attitude in that they eschew contact with the social housing tenants and make comments to the effect that these tenants

lack certain “etiquettes”. Phillip was of the opinion that many newcomers to the neighbourhood did not understand the “dynamics” of the community and that they “didn’t make the decision to move into Regent Park because of what it stood for, what the revitalization project stood for, they moved in because it’s a downtown central area.”

This difference in perception may owe to the fact that most condominium owners reported becoming aware of complaints about social housing tenants through the condominium Facebook group - Gwen did not report frequenting this Facebook group, while James and Phillip did. From this data it is impossible to say exactly how widespread negative sentiments about public housing are. The fact that certain individuals broadcast these attitudes via Facebook does not necessarily imply that they are widespread. In Kyle’s estimation, the disaffected individuals in the condominium buildings were a vocal minority.

Renters of condominium units also counted among the ranks of the communitarians. Jennifer, a conflict mediator in her mid-40s, put it this way: “I just love the vision of this whole neighbourhood. Like, I want to be a part of this vision”. She also felt that a sizeable portion of the market rate residents of Regent Park have been attracted to the neighbourhood by the unique circumstances of its redevelopment, with an interest in an “active, health, civic life”. As Jennifer explained, Regent Park “...draws people who, I think, are interested in a real democracy. Empowering people economically. Empowering people socially. Creating a dialogue”. She continued, stating that the inhabitants of her building were “socially progressive” and that “my sense is that we just want a better vision of living. We want a more cohesive vision of living. We want to live in a place where people are getting along and attempting to get along, not in a superficial way; in a very, very real way”.

Some of the subsidized tenants also expressed communitarian views. Olivia, for instance,

explained that through her efforts to organize and advocate on behalf of public tenants in the face of the numerous physical difficulties in her building, she was “helping to create a healthy community where people communicate with each other. And that’s what we’ve... well I’ve been trying to do”. She continued, specifying that she was “informing people [of their rights], not keeping them ignorant and then trying to get rid of the greed and hatred that could happen because of the confounding of the languages and all of that and the strangeness and the people’s cultures and habits and everything”.

### **The Utilitarians**

Contrasting with the communitarians are the utilitarians, those individuals (condominium residents) who admitted that their sole or primary attraction to Regent Park was the discounted price. However, even these individuals expressed a great deal of support for the project. Julian, a professional in the music industry in his early 30s and market rate owner, described his decision to locate to Regent Park in this way: “Yeah, it’s a financial decision basically. As an investor I think the east end as underdeveloped. The west end’s expensive... I was looking for something like the cheapest with the most future benefit, and that brought me to Regent Park”. He commented that if he could have his choice, he would have lived somewhere more “happening” and named a trendy development in an upscale west end neighbourhood of the city as a place he would most likely have selected had it not been for the price. Despite the solely pecuniary logic behind his decision to purchase in Regent Park, he took pains to express his interest in, and support for, the larger redevelopment project stating: “I love it. I’m always Googling like seeing what’s new at Regent Park. Let’s see what’s going on. I’m interested in the neighbourhood. I like change. I like ... following change. Is it working? Is it not working? No, I think it’s really



interesting”. On his opinion of public housing tenants and the policy of tenure mix he explained “I have nothing against them, so... I even feel bad saying “them” like they’re a different species. You know what I mean? Like, I guess I’m just saying this is the best way for society to integrate all people and have a fair, equal society.”

Alain, a renter, described his decision to locate to Regent Park saying, “the main reason was price because you can get a lot more for your money at Regent Park... Like, I live in a bachelor now, and you really can’t find amenities and new construction like that for the price that I’m paying here now anywhere else in the city”. However, he espoused a positive opinion of the policy of tenure mix, saying, “it needs to happen”. Further, he did not express any negative opinions towards social housing tenants and did not begrudge the fact they received a domicile for significantly less than he was paying citing his unfamiliarity with their predicaments: “That’s a good deal for them. But that’s good. Like, as it should be. I don’t know what their whole situation is so I’m in a situation where I can pay a thousand dollars a month, so that’s fine”.

Indeed, all but one of the market rate residents interviewed in this study expressed a great deal of support for the provision of public housing more generally and did not harbour negative views of residents of public housing. The lone exception was Jiao, an owner and recent immigrant from China. She made a distinction between social housing tenants whom she thought were deserving of assistance, individuals with health problems for instance, and those she decried as “lazy”, who she thought were taking advantage of social welfare programs. However, she admitted to not knowing any of the social housing tenants and was still satisfied with her residence, to the extent that, as reported in the previous chapter, she had recommended buying a condominium in Regent Park to a colleague at work.

### **Tenure Differences**

Attempting to discern the attitudes of social housing tenants towards tenure mix by investigating their decision to locate to Regent Park over other neighbourhoods is obviously less fruitful, given that social housing tenants have limited choice regarding where they are able to locate. Patricia's experience of locating to Regent Park is typical: "It's better than living where I was for thirty-six years... I seen on the news where they... like what it's gonna' look like in fifteen years. What it would look like. And I thought: Oh, that's interesting. So, then I thought well let me give it a try. And then they called me". Despite this lack of control over residential options, social housing tenants were generally supportive of the policy of tenure mix. None of those interviewed were critical of tenure mix, while only one individual was ambivalent towards it.

Alice, a retired nurse in her early 80s, responded in this way when asked whether she liked the mix of tenures: "Oh yes! It is the spice of life. You come with your ideas, I come in with mine... I love it!". Patricia, when asked if she supported the policy of tenure mix responded: "Yeah, of course I do. Of course. So, who wants to be off and everybody just all in their own little cloud?...That's not the way it should be". Chun, the key informant for the large Chinese population of the seniors' building, explained that this Chinese population generally supported tenure mix because it was concordant with a traditional Chinese principle, which was accorded its own word. He stated the goal of tenure mix was to engender "more harmony" in the community and that "people living there [in-movers] makes the society structure change. You know? Not only one group same age, same education, same salary. Not good. Right? This area only poor people. A lot of crime. Right? You have some rich people live there, middle class all living there. I think they will [be better]". Gavin, another resident of the seniors' building supported tenure mix, like Chun, on instrumental grounds. He explained that the redevelopment "...I think

that, you know, it enhances the neighbourhood itself because now it's more upscale people shopping, living". The lone resident who espoused total ambivalence about the policy of tenure mix was Robert, another resident of the seniors' building. He stated simply that he had "no opinion" of tenure mix and that it "doesn't affect me".

One interesting divergence between the tenure groups involves their participation in civic affairs, particularly their involvement in local volunteer organizations. While condominium residents, particularly those I've designated as communitarians, were much more verbose when discussing the lofty objectives of the project and their egalitarian ideals than were the social housing residents, none of the condominium residents reported regularly volunteering their time with local organizations, although some, like Megan, stated that they planned to become involved in the future. Social housing tenants, by contrast, were much more involved with local organization and at least five reported regularly volunteering their time with local social service providers including women's shelters and immigrant outreach programs. While this may signal to some that the nature of condominium residents' altruism is a purely passive one, as mentioned in the previous chapter, it is likely that the widely differing employment status of individuals from the respective tenures who participated in this study contributed to this difference. All condominium residents reported having full-time employment save for one who reported being a full-time student in addition to holding a part-time job, while only one social housing tenant reported being employed full-time.

### **Attitudes Towards the Benefits of Mix**

While much support for the policy of tenure mix was based upon principle, that people from different ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic positions should live together, most participants

also believed that tenure mix could produce concrete benefits for both types of residents. These beliefs were more prevalent among condominium residents, though most social housing tenants conceived of at least some tangible benefit resulting from the mix of tenures. Lending credence to the theoretical model provided by Joseph, which I have employed in this thesis as the evaluative basis for the benefits of mix, is the fact that most participants, when asked to describe exactly how tenure mix might benefit social housing tenants, provided responses that fit into one of the four categories named in Joseph's model. The only responses that were not accounted for by this model were ones in which market-rate owners were considered to be the beneficiaries of tenure mix; or, responses which envisioned tenure mix as being able to create more harmonious communities but where the specific mechanism that led to this outcome was not explained.

### **Political Economy of Place**

A common belief among participants was that the market rate owners would be better able to attract resources to the community and could more effectively lobby on behalf of its residents, what Joseph (2006) termed the "political economy of place". Phillip, for instance, remarked, "it seems like they [market rate owners] are better able to ... at least have more clout with the local government". In his view, one of the reasons that Regent Park was neglected in the past was a lack of "foresight" and a "lack of will to take care of the issues" on behalf of the government. For Phillip, tenure mix is a remedy for this in that the new residents are better able to "understand the issues" and are "better able to speak up", that is, to petition local authorities on behalf of the community. He added, "The new crowd of people moving in tend to be more understanding of their rights, understanding of what they can do. Understanding of how the system works...or at least are more willing to enact changes. Take initiative to do something. It's harder to do that

when you're living in an impoverished setting". Indeed, a common opinion among many subjects was that the large immigrant population of Regent Park was overly acquiescent and did not seem to understand or act upon the rights they held as tenants. Robert, who had been trying to organize tenant action to address the many problems that afflicted the seniors' building, observed,

“...they have it in their mind they have to be quiet or be kicked out. And we've told them at meetings. Like, you can say what you want. You know? Within reason, you know? You can dislike something of what's going on or... you disagree with something, you can say it if you want. But they're afraid they're going to be evicted... they're terrified”.

This view is given some credibility by the testimony of Phillip, who stated, “they're refugees coming in or immigrants moving in. It's a different culture. And you don't want to put up a fight. With my parents' generation... they didn't put up a fight. They just sort of... went with the flow, roll with the punches type of thing”. He attributed this complacency to his family's tenuous financial situation, saying, “back then we were so concerned about other things that we didn't really have time or the energy or even the willpower to... to speak up for ourselves”. Another advantage enjoyed by condominium renters with respect to their ability to co-operate instrumentally was their fluency in English. Indeed, in all the interviews conducted with residents of the condominium building, only one individual was not completely fluent in English. In interviews with social housing tenants, by contrast, fluency in English was the exception rather than the rule. According to many participants, this lack of a *lingua franca* among residents of the social housing buildings severely impinged upon their ability to organize collective action. Olivia, for instance, who, like Robert, had been trying to organize tenants to address the problems they faced, described her building as a “Tower of Babel”, a phrase repeated verbatim by Gavin in his discussion of the same issue. He continued, saying, “everybody's speaking a different language. You want to organize something? That's a tough road to hoe. Let me tell you, it's a tough road

because you got to get an interpreter for this particular group, an interpreter for that particular group”. Olivia, however, did contend that mix has the potential of “informing people of their rights” and supported the policy of tenure mix heartily. Many residents named the large Chinese population of the seniors’ building, which Verna estimated to represent a plurality of the total population, as particularly reticent to advocate on their own behalf. Chun, the key informant for this population, supported this notion, commenting, “in this building, I think the Canadian people is more active. Much for active than Chinese seniors. They understand everything. They have Canadian culture, right?” The Chinese population, by contrast, he described as “really isolated...so, be quiet, stay at home”.

For their part, the condominium residents also expressed a belief that their presence in the neighbourhood was beneficial for the subsidized tenants. However, most cited the material advantages that resulted from their relative affluence and the impact this had on the local commercial environment as the chief benefit of their presence in the community rather than their political clout or their ability to navigate administrative systems. Aside from Phillip, only Jennifer suggested that the condominium owners might benefit the community in their ability to leverage external resources, saying, “when you get a certain level of income, social services respond, i.e. the police, respond a different way, I think, as well too”. More typical of condominium resident sentiment was the statement of Alain:

We’re bringing new money and new economy in the area here. Those are like... I feel that... Like, that’s what they’ve achieved so far...And that’s a good thing. For sure. Totally, because these people that are living here are now spending money in Regent Park. And there is now a place to spend money in Regent Park. Prior to 1 Cole being here, where did you spend money in Regent Park?

Alain, a utilitarian, was more blunt than most in his assertion that the affluence of condominium renters improved the neighbourhood, but most communitarians evinced similar sentiments. For

instance, Kyle, a communitarian, was positive about the “new businesses” that had opened in the area, although he did not, as Alain did, directly attribute his presence in the neighbourhood to the burgeoning of commercial enterprises in the area. For Kyle, the improvement in the commercial environment was an outcome of the more general process of “revitalization”, though one might reasonably conclude that this is an implicit acknowledgement that the presence of condominium residents was the cause of this improvement.

### **Social Control**

Relative to the political economy of place, participants cited social control, the ability of condominium residents to enforce stricter social norms, much less frequently. Jiao, a condominium owner, conjectured that the presence of condominium residents would make social housing tenants “behave themselves”. Debby, another condominium owner, thought the redevelopment process could instill stricter norms regarding maintenance and upkeep. She stated:

I could be wrong here but I think that if you own or rent a home and people are taking care of their home, everybody feels like taking care of their home. So, the chances that it'll start to look, you know, rough or broken down, dilapidated in some way I think are less because people... You know, they... When people start looking after their homes, it just grows on everyone.

Jennifer, a condominium renter, placed more emphasis on the importance of property ownership, and the ability of condominium residents to enforce not just standards regarding property maintenance, but could also the ability to inculcate stricter norms of social comportment. She observed, “as you get people again who have ownership of their space, have an investment, they're not going to tolerate that behaviour”.

Social housing tenants expressed similar views. Gavin, for instance, noted that he perceived

people in the neighbourhood to be more friendly as a result of the influx of condominium residents, and that these new residents have “...made it more difficult for [criminals] to operate as they used to because now there’s new buildings, new people”. Salma expressed similar sentiments, saying, “because if it’s condo everything will be quieter, I think so, because they are taking care a lot”.

### **Role-Modeling**

Similarly, there was relatively little support among residents for the role-modeling category of effect, although what support there was came largely from social housing tenants. For instance, Alice, a resident of the seniors’ building, suggested that impoverished individuals would “mingle from the rich and learn”. Patricia was more specific about what could be ‘learned’: “

There’s [condominium residents] that have jobs too. You know what I’m saying? So, they [social housing tenants] need to see that. The people that probably don’t have no hope or no, you know, see that there’s other people then maybe that’ll encourage them...You know, maybe that would help them say: well, maybe I should do something with my life...You don’t have to go out to be a doctor or a lawyer but, you know”.

Ahmed, a social housing tenant, thought that the presence of condominium residents would have an aspirational effect upon the existing population of social housing tenants who “...never get pushed [and] they don’t want to do anything. They become lazy”. He continued, saying:

If they have private condo, private people come here who [are] challenging the life, you know, this case going to push the current of Toronto Community Housing whoever living here to see mix things, you know. Oh no life is better than, you know... than we are practicing. Life’s better than we are uh daily basis we are having. Life is better than...So, they can see the challenge and they can see the better life. To see other people. They have nice car, nice ... nice facilities. You know, they’re renting or owning, you know, nice condo. They can see, you know, why not me? At least they can build... So, this way I think it’s to mixing condo, mixing with like private people in Regent Park



area, this is better... good for Regent Park community people for their future.

Phillip, the only condominium resident to evince similar views, also remarked that the presence of condominium owners would have something of an aspirational effect on social housing tenants, or at least would make them aware of other possibilities and serve to make them more likely to importune on their own behalf. Discussing his own upbringing in social housing, he observed, “We never had something to compare it to. And so if... if you’re living in government housing and stuff, you really need to be exposed to all those other things in life before you... before you are willing to speak up”.

### **Social Capital**

Social capital was the category of effect that enjoyed the broadest support among study participants, with both tenures expressing what appeared to be similar levels of support. There was a broad consensus among study participants that the newcomers to Regent Park would very likely be able to provide valuable connections, especially regarding employment, to the extant population of social housing tenants. For instance, Hannah, a condominium owner, stated “when you mix people together like the poor people and the middle income people, it might give the poor people like a better chance at better opportunities because they’re kind of mixing with higher class people”. Julian, another condominium owner, was more specific:

It’s the whole “Who you know is more important than what you know” right? So, I think that also applies to a neighbourhood... If you’re in a neighbourhood with a hundred percent poverty... If you’re all like, you know, low income housing, your neighbour needs help, you can’t help your neighbour, your neighbour can’t help you. You’re all in this situation and you’re segregated into the neighbourhood and no one can help anybody... And I think integrating into a community is the equivalent to sending your kid to private school. You meet the right people. You give the opportunity. And what does that do? It brings everyone up. The less fortunate now can become

fortunate... or at least have a chance.

Phillip agreed with this sentiment. Speculating on how his life may have been different growing up in a mixed tenure housing development:

“I think there’d be more opportunities for me available... I would probably be able to interact a lot more with people within the community and learn a lot more. And through that get a lot more opportunities. You didn’t have anyone in the area that you could meet and talk to and learn more about what was out there. You live[d] in a...in an area where everyone around you [was] in a perpetually impoverished state”.

Megan provided an interesting perspective on the question of social capital in this passage in which she recounts her experience at a community meeting that was attended mainly by social housing tenants:

I sat at a table of all women from ... I believe they were from Somalia, and like every... every question on the thing they were like jobs for our kids, jobs for our kids. And the more I talked to them about it, the more I realized that really what they cared about was like that... The opportunities they have are what they are but they wanted better for their kids. And when you think of what your first job was or what my first job was or my partner’s first job, you always get your job through somebody when you’re a kid, ‘cause you don’t have any experience and nobody... you know, whatever. Well, who do people know in Regent Park to get, you know, your kid a part-time job or a minimum wage job? That’s what... that’s all you have yourself. So, how are you going to access the same things for your fourteen year old, right.

### **Future Prospects of Mix**

The notion that the primary beneficiaries of tenure mix would or should be the children of subsidized households was widespread, though most respondents thought that this process would take a great deal of time to produce constructive results. Evelyn, an affordable renter, when discussing the problems faced by immigrants in the community, noted, “their children will be fine. They’ll be Canadian and it’ll all get sorted out. It just takes time”. Ahmed, a social housing

tenant with two small children of his own, stated that the benefits of tenure mix were “for the kids”, and observed that although little interaction took place between residents of different ethnic background in the community, “...the good thing is our kids getting mix up. They are not hanging out with like only Bengali people...When they go to school they have friends from all over this multicultural country”. Most subjects seemed to agree the schoolyard would be the most important venue for mix in the community, though they could only speculate exactly how this mix would occur or how it would take place. Julian captured the prevailing sentiment: “Again, it’s building relationships between people... Kids going to school with kids. I think the whole mixing thing... yeah, it’s going to take some time. Maybe a decade. I’m just throwing a number around...but yes, I think it would be a good thing, and I don’t know how it’s going to happen”.

## **Conclusions**

This chapter provided a detailed account of the meanings residents ascribe to policies of tenure mix in addition to the ways in which they conceive of tenure mix as beneficial to the extant population of subsidized tenants. Support for all categories of Joseph’s framework were recorded, although support for the more ‘paternalistic’ mechanisms of effect, role-modeling and social control, was more apparent among subsidized tenants. For the condominium residents, the special circumstances of the redevelopment appear to have attracted many individuals who evince what appeared to be genuine altruistic attitudes. Even those not grouped among the communitarians still expressed great support for the project and its ostensible goals. Conversely, rather than attracting individuals with such altruistic attitudes, it is possible that the special circumstances of the redevelopment served to repel individuals with values antithetical to those expressed by study subjects, though it is impossible to shed more light on this questions with the existing data.

## **Chapter 6: Experience of Mix**

### **Inter-tenure Interaction**

There was very little evidence of any interaction between residents of different tenures. Most participants did not report knowing a single individual of another tenure in the community. Gina, a market rate owner, described the situation this way: “We’re a community but I think now we are siloed”, though she held out hope that “maybe with the cultural centre and other initiatives there will be more sort of gathering or intermingling between the two groups”. For many communitarian residents, this lack of integration between tenures was a source of dismay. James commented, “ I would like to see more interaction. I don’t see a lot”, while Phillip remarked “ideally you want to see more interaction between the different groups”, though presently he described the situation as “...just buildings popping up and people moving in and investing in condos or whatnot but not really interacting much with, you know, the folks who live in the grey [TCHC] building down there”. For his part, Kyle reported having encounters with social housing tenants, though they were “...just like conversations on the street...‘How’re you doing?’ kind of thing and ‘What’s going on?’ Or, you know, you see some police takedown on the street and everyone gathers around: ‘Oh, what’s all that about?’ And then, you know, you start making fun of the cops and...that kind of thing”. Megan recounted how she had tried to forge a relationship with social housing tenants, but that this attempt had come to naught:

We exchanged phone numbers and the one woman who spoke the most English, I was like: “I’m inviting you to come. Like, you come and we’ll come to the garden and check it out and whatever, and bring your friends.”...but they didn’t come. They didn’t call me. So, I said “Ok”...I think they feel a little bit like cut off a bit from this building. Like, I don’t think any of them have seen this lounge that we’re sitting in or the park or the garden or whatever, and ... but they... I don’t know; I gave them my phone number. They didn’t call. So, not much I can do, right?

The only participant who did report making the acquaintance of an individual whom they knew to be of a different tenure was Gavin who met and struck up a conversation with a condominium owner while shopping in the onsite grocery store, though he added, “I don’t know him hardly at all actually. I mean I know him to say hi to him”. Generally, the residents of the respective types appeared quite isolated from one another. For instance, none of the condominium residents interviewed was aware of the difficulties faced by residents in the seniors’ building. Jennifer captured the tenor of this circumstance, stating plainly, “I don’t know what it’s like for the other buildings”.

### **Intra-tenure Interaction**

This lack of interaction between tenures is unsurprising given that there appeared to be relatively little social interaction within buildings as well, although participants in the condominium building noted the presence of an active group of residents who organized various social activities and were quite involved in condominium affairs. Julian, a condominium owner, when asked whether he knew many people in his building, remarked “No...I guess I’ve only been here a year; maybe that will change”. Both Gina and Phillip, despite being among the most committed to the ideals of the project, also reported not having close contact with other residents of their building. The situation was similar for Alain, who felt disconnected from other residents of the building because of his relatively young age, saying, “There hasn’t really been a situation where I’ve had a chance to connect with people here ‘cause they have some social events here but I just haven’t been to them. And I feel like they’re organized by older people so I just really wouldn’t be able to relate”. The only individuals who did report forming relationships with other residents of their building were the two dog-owners, Jennifer and Gwen, who described how they had met other

dog-owners while walking their dogs. Both of these individuals expressed an eager anticipation for the completion of the park onsite and foresaw a great increase in the level of sociality among residents resulting from it. In the seniors' building, residents reported there was relatively little interaction between tenants, save for a committed group of approximately a dozen individuals who spent much of the day socializing and watching television in the front lobby of the building. Gavin, for instance, stated that he had made "maybe three friends" in the building since moving in, while Evelyn likewise reported not meeting many individuals though she attributed this to the high population of Chinese residents whom she described as "very nice people" but who don't "...tend to mix with the regular people. They pretty well keep to themselves. Many of them don't speak English". For the participants from the family building, both reported that they only knew other co-ethnic residents of the building that they had known prior to the redevelopment.

Where the tenures differed markedly was in their ability to communicate regarding issues of common concern. This appeared to stem in large part from the relative youth and technological savvy of the condominium residents as all participants from this building noted that the condominium's Facebook group was an active venue for the dissemination of residents' concerns. Though I was unable to use the comments made within this Facebook group in the research for ethical reasons, residents described that most or all they knew about the dissatisfaction of other residents was learned through this Facebook group. Megan provided an insightful account of perhaps the most serious antagonistic interaction between a condominium resident and individuals who were assumed to be social housing tenants, the way in which knowledge of this incident was disseminated through the Facebook group, and the widely varying reactions of condominium residents. According to the account posted on Facebook, a relatively elderly resident of the condominium building had been returning one night after walking her dog when she confronted a

group of youths outside the entrance to her building, apparently told them they “didn’t belong here” and brusquely instructed them to move. The youths responded by threatening to harm her dog (this incident was alluded to in a previous chapter). This resident did not have a Facebook account, but wrote a letter describing her version of the incident and passed it on to other condominium residents. Megan takes up the story from here:

The letter described what happened at the door, and said that it was black men at the door. And then... and told the whole story. So, the letter got posted on the Facebook page and then there must have been forty-six comments after. And it was early in having that page, and the comments were really interesting because... There was a mix of reactions, right? Some people said “I feel scared as well.” “There’s nowhere to walk our dogs right now.” That was a big issue because the big park isn’t built yet, and we can’t walk dogs on this park. So, people felt that there wasn’t a safe place to walk their dog, that the loitering was becoming a problem by that door. And then some people ... There was a person who took issue with the description of the men; that, you know, why... why was their race used. There was someone else who said, you know, something about the experience of poor black men. And then someone else said: “Well, no one said they were poor.” So there was a lot conversation going on. There was someone who said: “You have to remember that we moved to this neighbourhood.” Like, we moved to their neighbourhood. And someone else said: “Well, but that behaviour is not okay from anyone and that lots of people who live in Regent Park and have always lived in Regent Park wouldn’t approve of that behaviour either. So, you don’t get to let them off the hook because ... because they’re poor or because they’re black, right? That’s unacceptable behaviour for all kinds of people that live here. So, it just went on and on and on. A ton of people weighed in. Yeah, so it was very interesting.

### **Inter-tenure Antagonism**

Although there was no evidence that such antagonistic interactions between condominium residents and youth in the neighbourhood were a regular occurrence, there did appear to be some enmity between some members of the respective groups. Particularly, issues arose as a result of individuals socializing outside the entrance to the onsite coffee shop, which is directly adjacent to

an entrance to the condominium building. James, an educator in the community, put it this way:

My students probably were standing in front of the 1 Cole, that building... So, they'd be standing there. I think there was a lot of negativity towards the students, especially from... posted on Facebook on why are they standing there. Just call the police to get them away. But they weren't doing anything; they were just standing there. Like, it is loitering but like I said what else is there to do. They're not causing trouble and they're just standing there talking to their friends. I don't see what the issue is... I think it's a social space. It's a public space.

According to other respondents from this building, these attitudes were directed not only at youths, but at other patrons of the coffee shop who socialized outside their entrance. Gina described how some residents of her building felt that "They [patrons of the coffee shop who were assumed to be public tenants] shouldn't be gathering outside. There's the coffee shop, and that's not a place for them to be, you know, constantly sitting, gathering", though her reaction to these sentiments was similar to James', commenting,

"They chose to buy into the community, and, you know... you can't sort of take your "not in my backyard" nimbyism attitude and say: 'Oh, you know what? I bought into this and I invested so much money into my condo, and there are people gathering outside, and I don't like that'. I mean this is not it's not like your front yard, right? This is public space".

Alain, a renter in the building, reported following the situation closely, but considered the concerns of these residents to be fatuous, and found the whole situation something of an amusement. He observed,

"I know on the Facebook group there was pictures that people took on their cell phone of literally just people like drinking coffee outside... like on the street outside the Tim Horton's. And they're like: Oh, like that's the 1 Cole entrance, like not the Tim Horton's entrance. So, they wanted that blocked.

None of the individuals interviewed considered the issue problematic, while some contended that only a very small and vocal minority of residents had pursued the matter. Those aggrieved individuals, however, did have sufficient clout to force condominium management and the local



city councillor to take action. As a result of a consultation process headed by the councillor, a solution was agreed upon whereby a planter box was placed directly between the entrances, to clearly demarcate the space (See Figure: 4). According to respondents, the installation of the planter box appeared to placate resident concerns, with Kyle calling it an “interesting pragmatic solution”. He commented that such issues were common “to landlord/commercial tenant relationships” and that such “growing pains” were “...kind of trivial stuff. And a lot of it seems to have been satisfied to my satisfaction”. Indeed, attitudes towards the planter box incident among condominium study participants ranged from ambivalence to marked distaste, with Phillip calling it “stupid” and Kyle commenting that it was “... just a classic fight, I think, between like private property and public space”. Indeed, most of the condominium residents who expressed an opinion on the matter pointed out that such perceived inconveniences were just a part of living in a densely populated downtown neighbourhood and that some market rate owners harboured unreasonable expectations of what property ownership in just such a setting entailed. None of the social housing tenants interviewed were familiar with the incident.

### **Evidence for the Benefits of Tenure Mix**

In the previous section, I have described the experience of tenure mix in Regent Park in general terms, employing examples that are representative of the many responses regarding resident experiences of tenure mix provided by participants for which space is too limited to include. In this section, I turn my attention to experiences that may provide evidence to support certain mechanisms of effect as suggested by Joseph’s (2006) theoretical model. As such, many of the experiences I cite in this section are unrepresentative of participant experience as a whole, but may suggest that some of the possible beneficial effects of tenure mix as suggested by Joseph do

exist.

Gwen, a condominium owner, reported the clearest evidence for the benefit of tenure mix that emerged from this data. The circumstance she describes is clearly an example of “social capital” and may, more tangentially, be an instance which lends support to the “political economy of place”: Gwen described how she was able to raise an issue facing public tenants whom she had met on the street while walking her dog with the local city councillor who had purchased a unit in the same condominium:

“There’s a couple of other ladies I met who...when we first moved in, we talked about the poor lighting, because when they knocked down the houses there it was really dark. And I...you know, I said: Well, you know what? The councillor’s from my building; I’ll contact her and talk to her about it. So, yeah...[Interviewer: And did something come of it?] Yeah. Yeah, It improved. They set up more light”.

This instance conforms clearly to the category of “social capital” as suggested by Joseph. The concerns of social housing tenants were communicated to Gwen, a condominium resident, who employed her interpersonal resources (her familiarity with the city councillor), in an effort to catalyze a solution to the situation. To the extent that the presence of the city councillor in the neighbourhood constitutes an increase in the ability of the community to leverage outside resources, the case also provides some support for the ‘political economy of place’ mechanism suggested by Joseph. The nature of the evidence gleaned in this study regarding this incident is insufficient to conclude that this interaction itself caused the material improvement that was its goal. However, what it has established is that such instrumental collaboration between individuals from different tenures *is at least possible*.

Olivia described another example that appears to support the “social capital” mechanism of effect. In attempting to organize collective action in the seniors’ building in response to the many

physical difficulties that residents of that building had experienced, she reported working constructively with Evelyn, an affordable renter in the building who is a former high-level civil servant and, through a previous marriage, has access to certain legal and organizational resources. Olivia recounted how these resources were employed to boost attendance at a tenant meeting:

The last meeting we had, Evelyn, who is the market rent person, she had access to her husband's office. And she helped us...Because of her we had a big turnout. Printed up a lot of things about the...information about the meeting. And we distributed it to every doorstep or knocked on the door. So we have a good way of spreading the word. Because of Evelyn, and that's...because she... she's a market rent person and she has outside resources. We're able to utilize that and that's why we're more successful in engaging our tenants in, uh...in things that are happening in the building".

Again, it is hard to discern from this account exactly what effect this collaboration had on resident attendance or, more broadly, on the ability of residents of this building to effectively pressure the responsible organizations. However, what has been confirmed, is that such co-operation between residents of different tenures may occur as a result of the policy of mixed tenure.

As mentioned above, the decision of the city councillor to live in Regent Park has arguably caused an increase in the "political economy of place". It appears, however, that the chief beneficiaries of this close physical proximity to the literal embodiment of "the political economy of place" have disproportionately been the condominium residents, many of whom reported knowing the city councillor and interacting with her on a regular basis. Kyle, for instance, made this comment:

You can talk to her about all kinds of issues and she's been super responsive...For example, the city garbage guys at like three in the morning were like idling their truck out here while they went to grab a Tim Horton's [coffee] and stuff like that. And so, you know, the city has a rule that they're not supposed to be idling their trucks for environmental reasons but also for noise reasons, right, so a quick call to Pam McConnell [the councillor], I'm like: Hey Pam, the garbage guys aren't following their own rules, right? Solved that problem."

Conversely, the social housing tenants who reported that they had attempted to petition the councillor found her to be significantly less accommodating. While attempting to remedy problems with maintenance in the seniors' building, many residents actively sought out her assistance. According to Olivia: "She never replied to us. I phoned her office. [Another tenant] sent her everything. And she never bothered to say well I got your message and I'm looking into it. So, we have given up on all of that". Robert, another resident of the building, recalled that she had declined to attend a tenant meeting regarding the physical problems citing other engagements. From this rather circumscribed sample of residents it is impossible to tell whether this observed difference in the councillor's accommodation to resident concerns indicates a systematic bias on her behalf. What is clear, however, is that her presence in the neighbourhood does constitute an increase in the 'political economy of place'.

Regarding the other categories of effect, social control and role-modelling, this data provided little and no evidence, respectively. On the question of social control, Salma, a social housing tenant, commented that, "Condo is good. Quiet... Because of its condo everything will be quieter, I think so, because they are taking care a lot, right? When the snow comes they clean everything all the time". While this indicates her appreciation of the condominium management and her view that the presence of market rate residents would keep order in the community, she does not relate specific instances of 'social control', nor did any other resident of either tenure. Likewise, Gavin, as recounted in a previous section, stated that the presence of newcomers had made it more difficult for gangs to operate, an argument in part corresponding to the mechanism social control. Though this assertion is reasonable, he also does not provide a specific account that may lend direct credence to the operation of social control. For the role-modeling postulation, no evidence was found whatsoever.

## **Chapter 7: Discussion**

### **Overview**

The data that has been presented depicts an impression of conditions in Regent Park that are, arguably, more positive than what one would expect from a reading of the available academic literature on tenure mixed communities. Unlike what has been reported by such authors as Uitermark (2007 et al.) and Joseph & Chaskin (2010), there was no indication that routine antagonistic interactions between residents of different tenures occurred. There were, no doubt, specific incidents of hostile interaction reported in the data, perhaps the most dramatic of which was the confrontation between the condominium dog walker and the youths outside the entrance to the condominium building. According to interviewees from the condominium, this instance was the most serious confrontation that took place in the neighbourhood between individuals from different tenures, although it must be stressed that the youths involved were only *suspected* to be from Regent Park. Given the ease with which the concerns of condominium owners are disseminated through the use of the Facebook group, it seems unlikely that all the condominium owners interviewed would have omitted a more serious event. Though this hostile encounter may reasonably be determined to inhabit one extreme on the spectrum of inter-tenure interaction, establishing a more representative picture of such interaction is difficult. None of the public tenants reported having antagonistic interactions with condominium residents, while the only hostile encounters described by condominium owners were second hand accounts. It may be that the lack of youth from subsidized tenant households in this study population is the lacuna responsible for creating an unwarrantedly positive impression of inter-tenure interaction as these youth may be more likely to have confrontational encounters with condominium residents.

However, the general estimation among those condominium owners interviewed was that only a vocal minority of their fellow residents was displeased by certain behaviours of the local population, and that they seemed to have manifested their displeasure by petitioning condominium management to allay certain of their concerns (i.e. the planter box) rather than through confronting those individuals with whom they were aggrieved. The impression given by this data is more consistent with the conclusions of in-depth studies from the British non-academic grey literature (see Jupp 1999) and suggests that residents of ‘mature’ socially-mixed communities are quite ambivalent about mixing tenures and that such inter-tenure antipathy is rare enough to make the ‘mix’ all but invisible. For instance, a 2005 report by Allen et al., appropriately entitled *Social Mix Twenty Years On: Nothing Out of the Ordinary*, reported that residents considered social mix a ... “‘non-issue’ and even an irrelevance” (Allen et al. 2005:39). If the few adverse encounters reported are indeed “growing pains”, as Kyle described them, then it seems fair to suggest that the “mix” of tenures in Regent Park may also grow to be relatively ‘invisible’. For some, particularly those that have been classed as communitarians, visible cleavages along class lines in the community were already imperceptible. If the goal of such redevelopments is the normalization of perceptions of the neighbourhood, these results may be construed as positive.

Though residents of the neighbourhood may perceive it as a relatively normal one, many participants from both tenures reported that they still experienced stigma from individuals who were not familiar with the redevelopment, a somewhat troubling finding given that the destigmatization of the physical environment through redevelopment in Regent Park is touted as a method to diminish the stigmatization of individuals who reside in the neighbourhood (Dunn & Cahuas 2010). Given the relatively early stage that the redevelopment is currently in, however,

the persistence of such stigmatizing attitudes among outsiders is anticipated by the literature. Hastings & Dean (2003), for instance, conclude that neighbourhood redevelopment schemes can improve the external perception of stigmatized communities, but that negative perceptions of these communities are “tenacious” and linger long after redevelopment is complete. Musterd (2008) reported similar findings in his study of 29 postwar public housing estates across Europe. With a more explicit focus on how policies of tenure mix may serve to alleviate negative perceptions of public housing developments, he determined that tenure mix might improve the external perception of communities, but that the improvements are relatively mild and that negative perceptions have a tendency to persist.

The notion that the private and public buildings in Regent Park cannot be distinguished is another key component in efforts to de-stigmatize the neighbourhood (Dunn & Cahaus 2010). However, it is not clear from this data how effective this strategy has been. As the public tenant Ahmed contends, the normalization of a building’s appearance may lead to a “psychological improvement”, as residents of these buildings may no longer internalize the derelict and stigmatizing physical condition of their residence. However, this lack of physical distinguishability between buildings housing different tenures would not prevent individuals familiar with the demographic profile of the respective buildings or those with a preconceived notion of ‘the public tenant’ as a visible minority, from making assumptions about tenure status. As such, I contend that the benefits of this architectural strategy, if they exist, are more likely to proceed from the former category of effect. It is no doubt of importance to this question that of those respondents who said that they could readily identify members of the respective tenure types, when asked how they could do so, none mentioned actually observing residents entering or exiting the buildings in which they dwelled as evidence - all deduced tenure status from

preconceived notions, whether fallacious or not. Since judgments about tenure status derive from facts external to the appearance of an individual's place of residence, it follows that the claim that indistinguishable buildings are sufficient to create, in Liam's words, "classless living", is oversold.

### **Neighbourhood Satisfaction**

The findings in this thesis are broadly in accord with the literature on the determinants of neighbourhood satisfaction, which has demonstrated that general satisfaction with housing quality and the appearance of the neighbourhood are the most significant predictors of neighbourhood satisfaction. While all condominium owners evinced at least some degree of satisfaction with their residential situation, most public tenants, at least the majority of those in the seniors' building, expressed significant dissatisfaction with their residential circumstances. The key difference between the two groups was the extent to which they were exposed to physical problems within their respective buildings, and the degree to which building management helped or hindered efforts to resolve such problems.

In fact, this inequality between tenures in the acquiescence of building staff to resident needs is arguably the single most significant factor in the divergence of experience among the inhabitants of Regent Park who participated in this study and, to the extent that managerial deficiencies exacerbated the myriad mechanical problems faced by residents of the seniors' building, the leading contributor to residential dissatisfaction for that building's population. Consider this contrast; in the condominium, an employee was likely removed for not responding to a situation that occurred *outside* the building, that is, beyond the area of his professional responsibility. In the



seniors' building, a TCHC official turned off the cooling system in the midst of a September heat wave, with the result that the building's elderly inhabitants were forced to endure temperatures exceeding 30 degrees centigrade in units where the only way to usefully circulate air from the outside is through the balcony doors, which, at the time, were locked due to the concerns about the balcony glass. To the knowledge of survey participants familiar with the situation, the individual responsible had not received any official sanction for his actions.

The vastly dissimilar way members of the respective tenures experienced the balcony glass issue provides a useful illustration of how residents' relationships with building management differed by tenure and is worth examining in more detail. Residents of the seniors' building were required to remove all items from the balcony and then were physically locked out of their balconies by TCHC staff. It was a common sight when conducting interviews in this building to see residents' rooms filled with planter boxes and others paraphernalia intended for placement outdoors. Most residents interviewed expressed a significant degree of displeasure at these circumstances and lobbied, unsuccessfully, to have their rents reduced temporarily on the basis that they did not have full use of their units. The experience of condominium residents was quite different. Though the balconies are considered a "common element" and are owned by the condominium corporation and not the owners of the units themselves, residents were not locked out of their balconies and reported making regular use of them during the period they were ostensibly required not to. Julian, for instance, recounted how:

"...I'd keep using it. I don't know if I was supposed to but I would bring my stuff out, sit on it, and then when I was done I'd bring it in. I'd basically make sure that everything was off the balcony, 'cause I figure they need access to it. So, I didn't want to have my patio furniture out there. But at the same time it's my balcony and I wanted to use it. It's summer. {laughs}...Yeah, so. And I wasn't leaning on the glass or anything so I wasn't too worried about ... You know, falling out.

This more blithely attitude towards the situation was echoed by most other condominium residents interviewed. Obviously unaware of the predicament of individuals in the seniors' building, Kyle commented "...you can't actually police it and keep people off their balconies" when asked whether he still made use of his balcony during this period (he did). He provided this account that demonstrates how accommodating Daniels officials were to the appeals of residents:

They closed the park for I think about a month or two. That was kind of annoying but I think it was after barbeque season so... It was less annoying than it otherwise would have been. And the other thing that they blocked off for a while was the garden up on the tenth floor... as a result of the potential for exploding glass but when everyone pointed out that your stupid, utterly exclusionary and fascistic rule that no one can access the space at all, meant that everyone's plants would die, {laughs} what they basically did was they declared like a three foot exclusion zone like around the glass railing. So, all of a sudden the rest of the space was perfectly safe as long as you stayed away from the glass railing.

The situation is in some ways akin to a crude natural experiment in that the two populations were subject to a uniform exposure (i.e. there was a chance that their balcony glass would crack or shatter), with the key variation in how individuals experienced the effects of this uniform condition between the tenures being the degree of latitude accorded them by building management in observing the rules. Employing the mode of causal induction known as the 'method of difference', proposed by J.S. Mill in *A System of Logic* (1843), and assuming that both populations have an equal propensity to experience and report their displeasure with this situation, it is reasonable to infer that the marked contrast in attitudes between the tenures owes primarily to this key differential enforcement of managerial strictures. Further, it also seems logical to conclude, though no residents expressed it in precisely these words, that a great deal of their dissatisfaction resulted from their perceived lack of control. This accords with the work of Evans et al. (2003) who have demonstrated that a lack of control over maintenance issues is associated with an increased risk of psychological distress. While the relationship between the condominium

corporation and residents appears to have been generally co-operative, the seniors' building residents, by contrast, had little power to affect the circumstances of their tenancy and seemed to be subject to the whims of a largely indifferent or distracted managerial class. Put another way, condominium management acted *with* and *on behalf* of residents, while TCHC management acted *upon* them.

One area where the link between the findings of this research and the literature on neighbourhood becomes less clear is on the availability of amenities, which was found to be relatively unimportant when compared to other factors by Parkes et al. (2002). Individuals in this study were unanimous in their appreciation of the availability of such amenities, with responses not appearing to differ systematically between tenures. It may be that the presences of such resources, while appreciated, is not sufficient to countervail the effects of dissatisfaction with general building quality. Another aspect of the community on which the results of this study and those reported by Parkes et al. (2002) are distinguished, is the relative importance of perceptions of crime. For those residents who had resided in Regent Park prior to the redevelopment, these changes to the perceived prevalence of crime were the most welcome feature of the redevelopment. In the study of Parkes et al. (2002), fear of crime was found to be relatively less important to satisfaction with the neighbourhood, although a small but statistically significant association was observed. Parkes et al. (2002) did note, however, that the effect was strongest in the most deprived neighbourhoods, which may account for the importance subjects accorded the prevalence of crime in Regent Park, arguably one of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the city of Toronto. Sampson (1999) provides one potential reason why the most deprived neighbourhoods are most susceptible to fear of crime. He reports that a high level of crime and disorder prompts outmigration from affected neighbourhood. Persons in the most disadvantaged

neighbourhoods would presumably have the least ability to relocate, perhaps explaining why these individuals are more vulnerable to perceptions of crime.

### **The Effects of Physical Redevelopment**

Though residents from both tenures expressed satisfaction with the physical aspects of the neighbourhood, it is not clear from the data presented in this study to ascertain whether the new physical design of the community has been effective in altering undesirable behavioural patterns, or whether reductions in criminal and antisocial behaviour have been the result of changes in the demographic composition of the neighbourhood brought about by the redevelopment. While the term “new urbanism” is not used in the RPSDP, the physical redevelopment plan for Regent Park has been informed by a ‘new orthodoxy’ in planning, of which the principles of new urbanism are an integral part. Eschewing the modernist planning tendency towards segregated land use and automobile-centric design, the new orthodoxy in planning emphasizes “land use mix, diversity, compact urban form, transit-oriented development, and environmental sustainability” (August 2007:10). Talen (2002) argues that tenure mix, or at least some degree of heterogeneity in the socio-economic status of residents, is central to the new urbanist ideal. Studying the *Charter of New Urbanism*, Talen finds that its tenets are concerned primarily with establishing a sense of community, promoting social equity and ‘the common good’. While authors such as Burton (2000) have argued that new urbanist design may promote social equity by improving accessibility to services, it remains unclear how effective new urbanism can be in achieving the lofty and rather nebulous goals it sets out for itself. Harvey (1997:2) has critiqued new urbanism as being physically determinist and ignoring larger structural processes that determine individual wellbeing, in effect, recreating the fallacy of modernist design that “spatial order is or can be the

foundation for a new moral and aesthetic order”.

The RDSDP reveals its new-urbanist colours in its optimism that local amenities can foster “interaction across income, ethnicity and tenure” (TCHC 2007c:10). This confidence is unfounded in data. In her study of a mixed income community in Seattle, Washington, which had been constructed along new urbanist principles of design, Kleit (2005) found that the use of community facilities did not make residents more likely to connect with residents of a differing tenure. Particularly relevant for the case of Regent Park, with its high proportions of recent immigrants, is her finding that the single most important factor determining interaction with homeowners is being a non-native speaker of English, with which it was negatively correlated. This seems to accord with the findings from this study, with respondents not fluent in English less likely to report having social interactions with other members of the community not from their same ethnic or linguistic group.

This is also consistent with the work of Camina & Woods (2009) and Atkinson & Kintrea (2000), who distributed diaries to residents of mixed-tenure housing estates and asked them to record all their activities on and off the housing estate for an entire week. After analyzing the data from these diaries, both groups of researchers found no evidence of significant inter-tenure socialization. Atkinson & Kintrea (2000:615) remarked that “owner-occupiers inhabit different social worlds to [subsidized] renters”, an apt description for the situation in Regent Park. Similar results are reported by Jupp et al. (1999) in their study of ten mixed income estates across England, involving over 1000 interviews with residents. They find that local amenities such as shops and pubs were rarely used to meet other residents, regardless of tenure. This is also borne out by this data, as only one respondent reported meeting an individual from another tenure group while making use of a local amenity.

There was some degree of support for the notion among participants that the physical re-design of the community, along New Urbanist lines, whereby so-called ‘blindspots’, areas without a direct line of sight to the road, were eliminated, had contributed to the decrease in criminal activity. However, none of the participants who had resided in Regent Park immediately prior to the redevelopment cited the change in the physical layout of the neighbourhood as having made the community a safer place. As described above, these individuals attributed the improvements to the change in the population of the neighbourhood. Instead, it was largely the condominium residents, none of whom had lived in Regent Park, save for one, who attributed the decrease in crime and antisocial behaviour to the physical redesign of the community. Being, in general, a more educated group than the public housing tenants, this may in part be due to their greater familiarity with the precepts of New Urbanism and its proponents. Indeed, many mentioned such writers as Richard Florida and Jane Jacobs during interviews. However, only Phillip had extensive experience in the Regent Park community prior to its redevelopment. On the subject, he stated “You have to understand, growing up here, one of the biggest reasons why... why crime was an issue is ‘cause there’s so many little pockets of ... you know darkspots, areas where crimes could be committed, without anyone even noticing”. This is a general statement, however, and it is not clear whether it was derived from experience or from a familiarity with the literature on New Urbanism or related subjects.

### **Sociality in the Community**

The relative lack of interaction between individuals both within and between tenure groups is consistent with the consensus in the sociological literature on the factors that determine social ties in modern industrial societies. Residential stability and common socio-demographic

characteristics have been established as more important than proximity. As early as 1961, Herbert Gans argued that social ties in the urban environment were determined more by the common backgrounds and interests of individuals than by propinquity. This disputed the previous notion of Wirth (1938), who argued that the urban environment served to destroy the traditional social ties of kinship and community and portrayed a bleak image of urban life, envisaging the lives of urban dwellers as fragmented and separate from the rest of society (Campbell & Lee 1992). Kasarda and Janowitz (1974) developed what they termed the “systemic” model of community, which sees “length of residence as the key exogenous factor that influences attitudes and behavior toward the community” (Sampson 1988:767). That is, this model asserts that the “assimilation of newcomers into the social fabric of local communities is necessarily a temporal process, residential mobility operates as a barrier to the development of extensive friendship and kinship bonds and widespread local associational ties” (Kasarda & Janowitz 1974: 330; as cited in Sampson 1988). This model was given empirical backing by Sampson (1988) in his study of British survey data. He found that length of residency had both individual-level and contextual effects on the number and density of friendship ties, on levels of participation in community affairs, and on ‘community sentiment’, while population density did not significantly impact these observed relationships. Continuing along this vein, Fischer (1982), in a famous study, found that the factor most significant in determining the scope and nature of an individual’s social network was their level of educational attainment, while Wellman (1979; 1988:86) argues that sociality transcends traditional spatial limits in modern industrial societies and that social structure, rather than spatial structure, determines the “essence of community”.

### **Evidence for Harmful effects of Redevelopment**

In their studies of public housing redevelopments, both Manzo, Kleit & Couch (2008) and Keene & Geronimus (2011) report that the displacement caused by the redevelopment process may serve to disrupt networks of social support and diminish the salutary benefit that these networks provide. Researchers such as Thompson and Bucerius (2012) have also reported that the redevelopment has had the effect of fracturing extant social networks within Regent Park, particularly among youth. This position is not supported by this research, although the makeup of the study population was vastly different. For the individuals in this study who had lived in Regent Park prior to the redevelopment, none mentioned that the redevelopment process had frayed bonds with friends or relatives. Indeed, the decrease in the perception of crime may actually serve to engender stronger social networks, as evidenced by Gavin's testimony that residents of the old buildings were often reticent to leave their units for fear of criminal activity. The lack of reported disruption to social networks among respondents in this study, however, may owe to the fact that all displaced individuals were re-housed during the construction process somewhere in the downtown core of metropolitan Toronto.

### **The Benefits of Mix**

The theoretical framework supplied by Joseph (2006) is given credibility in that most subjects cited beneficial effects of tenure mix that may be subsumed by one of Joseph's four categories. It is reasonable to assume that had a framework for the potential benefits of mix been derived entirely through inductive means, the result would have appeared quite similar to that proposed by Joseph. Though this framework corresponds closely to resident opinion towards the benefits of



mix, attempting to fit reported instances in which the mixed nature of the community has benefited Regent Park's population of social renters exclusively into one or another of the categories suggested by Joseph is not a simple task. The complexity of the cases reported precludes their obvious delimiting - it seems that these cases may best be described as combinations of different mechanisms.

Consider the case reported by Gwen, who transmitted the concerns of subsidized tenants about poor streetlighting to the local city councillor. As a condominium owner, her familiarity with the city councillor and history of active involvement in civic affairs suggest that her presence in the community may well be considered an increase in the "social capital" of the neighbourhood. Clearly, this interaction represents an instance of instrumental collaboration towards common ends, satisfying Putnam's (1993) definition of social capital. However, it also seems to have relied upon the decision of the city councillor to locate to the neighbourhood, in addition to the apparent preferential treatment given to the appeals of condominium owners, both facts that correspond more closely with the political economy of place category of effects. Again, it is impossible to tell from this data how consequential Gwen's appeal on behalf of her subsidized neighbours was in the eventual improvement of street lighting. However, what this study has demonstrated is that these types of interactions are *at least possible*. Given that Gwen's case is among the clearest examples of the benefits of mix to emerge from this data, it is useful to analyse it more closely, and to postulate about what factors were *necessary* for the situation to transpire as it did. The immediate or proximate conditions for the encounter were made possible by the subjects' use of public space (both Gwen and the subsidized tenants were walking their dogs at the time they met), a venue for the casual social interaction that was required for information about tenant concerns to be communicated to condominium owners. A more distal, though arguably more important cause,

was Gwen's communitarian ideals. Her conception of the redevelopment as a socially beneficial venture and her desire to participate in the community provided her impetus to advocate on behalf of the social tenants. It is quite conceivable that other condominium residents who had become aware of tenant concerns through casual social interaction, but who were without Gwen's altruistic ideals, would not have pursued the matter. As such, it seems reasonable to infer that the simple presence of middle-class owners in a public housing community is not sufficient to increase the social capital of extant population. In order for the benefits of increased social capital to accrue to residents of public housing, the in-movers must be motivated to interact with and appeal on behalf of public tenants, a motivation evinced by the communitarian respondents of this study. This data also suggests that such individuals would be significantly less likely to locate to a redevelopment that they viewed as exclusionary or, in Kyle's words, "pure gentrification". The tenant right of return was a crucial factor in allaying the concerns among communitarians that their decision to locate to the neighbourhood would contribute to the disenfranchisement of public tenants. As such, this right of return may also serve as a contributor to the social capital of public tenants, in that, altruistic upper-income individuals who may serve as conduits to certain institutional resources are not disinclined to settle in the redeveloped community.

With such little regular interaction between residents of different tenures, the benefits of increases in social capital are more potential than realized. Should residents of different tenures integrate more closely, it is very likely that such instances of inter-tenure collaboration would occur more regularly. It is of importance to this question that no study participants from the condominium were aware of the serious physical troubles that caused such vexation in the seniors' building, though the two buildings are less than 100 metres apart. The great care taken to serve the needs of condominium owners and to isolate them from the ordeals of public tenants in the neighbourhood

acts as a serious barrier to instrumental collective action. That is, the physical separation of tenures leads to a fragmentation of common purpose and the impossibility of common solutions.

### **Limitations**

There are many limitations inherent in this study that make generalization of findings beyond observed cases (i.e. to the Regent Park neighbourhood as a whole) problematic. Firstly, the study population was relatively unrepresentative of the wider Regent Park community. According to data from the 2011 federal census, seniors (individuals aged 65 and over) make up just 6% of Regent Park's total population, but comprise precisely 25% of the study population (City of Toronto 2012). Where seniors were relatively overrepresented, children and youth were underrepresented. Though they comprise 36% of Regent Park's total population only 1 individual in the study population was aged 24 years or below. With respect to the ethnic composition of the study population, at the time of writing, data was only available from the 2006 federal census, before the movement of condominium residents into the community. Comparing the population of visible minorities in the study population to this data profile, however, suggests that individuals not of a visible minority are overrepresented. They comprised 33% of the study population but in 2006 made up only 23% of the population of the community (City of Toronto 2007). Individuals of Chinese origin made up nearly 17% of the study population, compared to the nearly 16% of the total population of Regent Park they accounted for in 2006 (City of Toronto 2007). However, 3 of the 4 individuals of Chinese origin in the study population were residents of the condominium, so it seems reasonable to conclude that the Chinese population of subsidized tenants is relatively underrepresented. Until the availability of data from the 2011 census that takes into account the changes in the ethnic composition of the neighbourhood due to the in-movement of condominium residents into Regent Park, it is not possible to ascertain exactly how representative the study

population is of the community as a whole.

Another limitation of this study is that only four participants had been residents of Regent Park immediately prior to the redevelopment. That is, returning individuals represented less than a third of the residents of social housing buildings in this study. It is not evident what accounts for this dearth of returning residents. Although these four individuals provide important insights about how they perceive the neighbourhood to have changed since the redevelopment (chapter 4 is devoted to their testimony), the main focus of this paper, by necessity, is on current conditions in Regent Park. Additionally, owing to the nature of the recruitment protocol for this study, there is a distinct possibility of response bias in collected data, though it is not possible to establish whether this potential bias would systematically over-represent either positive or negative views towards the project in either of the main tenure groups. Further, although all displaced households were guaranteed the right of return, there is some indication from previous research in Regent Park (Johnson 2010, Cahaus 2011) that certain groups of residents, particularly members of the West Indian community, have not returned to the neighbourhood. This suggests the possibility that respondents may exhibit a positive bias towards the redevelopment, although two of the four returning individuals were harshly critical of certain aspects of the project. Finally, no participants from either tenure in this study resided in the town homes. Any significant divergence in experience between residents of Regent Park who live in high-rises and those who inhabit the town homes would not be detected by this study.

There are some ways in which this underrepresentation of certain groups within Regent Park may be partially reconciled in this study, primarily through the use of proxy informants. These are individuals with intimate knowledge of certain populations not well represented in this study. For instance, Chun, a Chinese resident of the social housing building, spoke on behalf of the

population of Chinese seniors in the community and described many of the challenges they faced, although he personally had not encountered many of these problems. Another proxy informant, James, is an educator in the community and relayed some of the perceptions reported by his students. Although this indirect reportage of data falls short of direct personal experience, it does provide a useful substitute for populations who have been left out of this study.

Although these findings have provided support for two of Joseph's (2006) categories, it is not clear that unambiguous generalizations may be inferred from this data. Much of the apparent success with regard to the mixed nature redevelopment appears to stem from case-specific conditions largely beyond the control of planners. Chief among these is the decision of such a sizeable population of 'communitarian' condominium owners to locate to the community. It is not clear that such individuals could be enticed to a development and it is impossible to say exactly how much the special conditions of the redevelopment contributed to their decision to locate to Regent Park. Given that phase 1 units in Regent Park sold for below normal market value, purchasers were not confronted *ceteris paribus* with a choice between a tenure mixed development and a purely commercial development. All residents of the condominiums, even the communitarians, cited price as a significant attraction to Regent Park, and many spoke with satisfaction about the appreciation of their property values and their financial acumen in having made such an investment. For instance, Megan, a communitarian, made this comment when describing an exchange with a colleague who had asked whether she felt that a recent shooting in the neighbourhood might negatively affect her property value: "Well, you know, this is a two bedroom condo with a huge balcony that is literally on a street car line. I can walk to the very middle of the financial district in twenty to twenty-five minutes. The only way our property value is going to go down is if the shooting occurs in our unit". However, even if interview subjects

have overstated the degree to which the mixed nature of the development figured in the decision to locate to Regent Park, this does not necessarily diminish the honesty of their convictions or the extent to which these convictions may lead them to become productively involved in community affairs. Megan, quoted above, although obviously satisfied with the financial aspect of her decision to locate to Regent Park, reported being relatively involved in the community and having attended several community meetings. She is a lawyer specializing in human rights law and reported that she declined to serve as a member of the condominium board because “...I feel like if I’m going to volunteer my time, I’d rather volunteer in the wider community... Like, they don’t need me here...I think I would probably be better... I could better contribute, you know, in wider Regent Park...” Even if she had been attracted solely by price, this does not diminish the advantages that her skills and willingness to become involved have for the community.

### **Concluding Remarks**

It is difficult to frame the redevelopment in monolithic terms. An initiative of this scope has multifarious effects on the diverse population affected, a population comprised of individuals holding orthogonal or conflicting interests. Even those individuals most affected by the redevelopment appear to simultaneously hold seemingly contradictory views and have difficulty in formulating a coherent characterization of the redevelopment. Aaron, for instance, a resident of the seniors’ building, described the redevelopment as a “total failure” and a “scam”, though he also remarked “I like it here. As a matter of fact I really enjoy living here”. We must therefore be dubious of commentators who make simple, all-encompassing declarations about the project, especially when these pronouncements are not grounded in data gathered from those individuals most affected by the redevelopment. For those authors most critical of the Regent Park project,

such as August (2007) and Kipfer & Petrunia (2009), the lack of clear empirical data on the efficacy of tenure mix has been used to elide the possibility that tenure mix may produce beneficial results for subsidized tenants. For these authors, empirical considerations are not even a primary concern – they employ the case of Regent Park in order to critique broader issues, particularly the advance of neo-liberal orthodoxy in urban policy. For instance, Kipfer & Petrunia (2009:111) suggest that “the redevelopment project of Regent Park is a multipronged, racialized strategy to recolonize; segregated and long-pathologized, but potentially valuable central city space in the name of diversity and social mixity”. Likewise, August (2007:i) concludes that rather than prioritizing an improvement in the lives of its disadvantaged residents, the main objectives of Regent Park’s redevelopment are “(1) promoting gentrification to expand the urban tax base, (2) promoting the *image* of a liveable city as an economic strategy, (3) erasing symbolic failures of planning history, and (4) achieving ideological goals” (emphasis in original). While some of these arguments are compelling, such doctrinaire concerns went unmentioned by study subjects. Those individuals who had been residents of Regent Park prior to the redevelopment were unanimous in their view that the initiative had been beneficial for the community. Doubtless, the public tenants were, relative to the condominium owners, disempowered. The sharp divergence of resident experience between tenures regarding maintenance issues clearly demonstrates this. However, there is no evidence to suggest that the special circumstances of the redevelopment have contributed to this inequity. That is, it is not evident that public tenants of Regent Park are *more* disempowered than subsidized tenants in other public housing developments by dint of their co-habitation of the neighbourhood with condominium owners or renters. Rather, the nascent ‘mix’ in the community may serve to enable further collective instrumental action with residents of the condominium building, something that would make public tenants in Regent Park relatively *less* disempowered than other public tenants. In general, the mixed nature of the community seemed

relatively unimportant to most subsidized tenants interviewed, though most expressed support for the policy of tenure mix. For these individuals, more proximal issues took precedence, a finding that lends support to Bradford's (2007:4) observation that "inclusive places are constructed through local choices about seemingly 'banal' and 'prosaic' matters of territorial management".

This data has shown that residents consider the redevelopment to have been an unalloyed improvement in the condition of the neighbourhood, while most participants who resided in Regent Park prior to the beginning of the project reported that the redevelopment had substantially improved their wellbeing. Insofar as the mixed nature of the redevelopment has made the physical redevelopment of the community possible through access to private capital, then the policy of tenure mix can be said to have indirectly benefited subsidized tenants. This study also provides support for the notion that tenure mix has the potential to improve the social capital of these tenants, and has shown that instrumental collective action between residents of different tenures is possible. Such interactions, useful as they provide subsidized tenants with the greater institutional capacities and knowledge of higher-income in-movers, appear to require more than mere propinquity. They seem also to depend upon the motivations or predilections of those in-movers. Should this population of communitarians remain in Regent Park (and there is no indication from these interviews that they will not), it is likely that constructive relationships between residents from different tenures will occur with more frequency. As such, this data provides justification for cautious optimism regarding the policy of tenure mix and the future of Regent Park.



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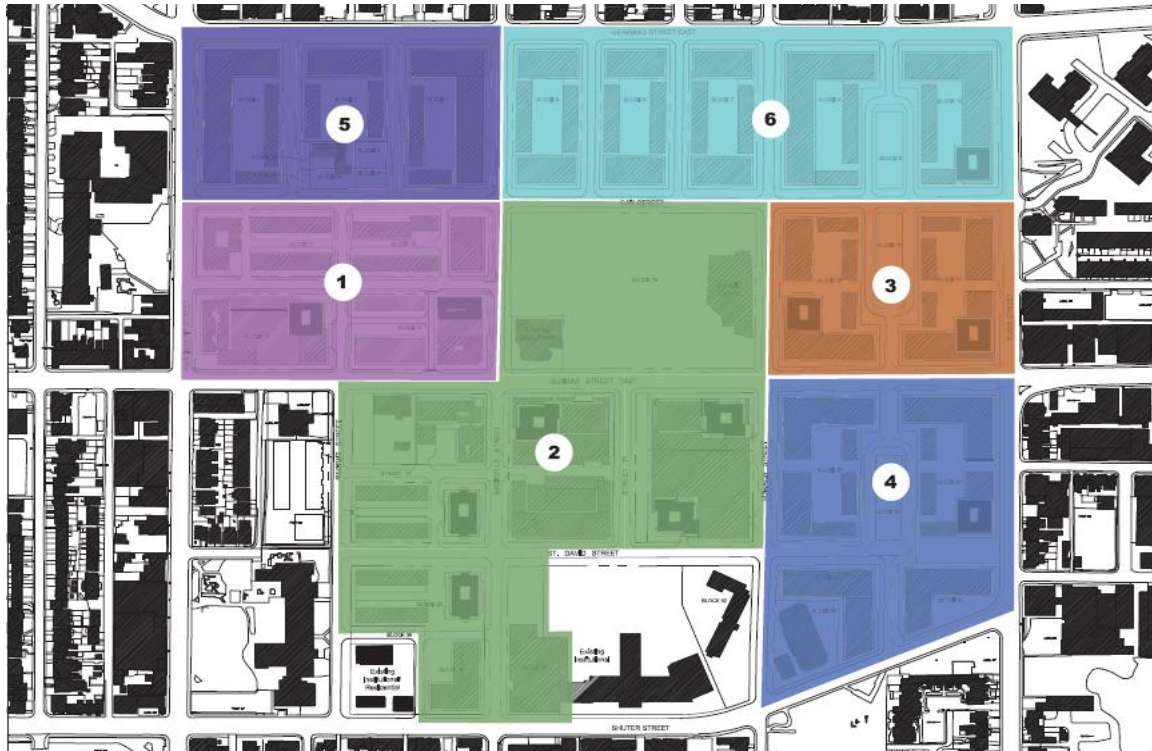
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## Appendix 1: Images



**Figure 1:** Phasing plan for the redevelopment of Regent Park Source: TCHC (2008), Retrieved from [http://www.torontohousing.ca/webfm\\_send/5331/1](http://www.torontohousing.ca/webfm_send/5331/1)



**Figure 2:** Aerial photo of Regent Park prior to redevelopment. Source: The Globe and Mail (2005). Retrieved from <http://www.globaltoronto.com/pages/story.aspx?id=6442713757>



**Figure 3:** View of a redeveloped section of Regent Park including onsite grocery store.

Source: The Toronto Blog (2011). Retrieved:

[http://thetorontoblog.com/2011/03/04/neighbourhood-watch-regent-park-revitalization-creates-massive-construction-zone-on-dundas-st/regent-park-phase-1-development-at-parliament-and-dundas-february-15-2011-img\\_2038/](http://thetorontoblog.com/2011/03/04/neighbourhood-watch-regent-park-revitalization-creates-massive-construction-zone-on-dundas-st/regent-park-phase-1-development-at-parliament-and-dundas-february-15-2011-img_2038/)





**Figure 4:** View of the planter box separating the coffee shop entrance from the condominium entrance. Photo by the author.

## Appendix 2

### Recruitment Flyer

#### DO YOU LIVE IN REGENT PARK?

We are seeking volunteers for a project on how Regent Park's redevelopment as a 'social-mixed' community has affected everyday life in the neighbourhood.



We are looking for Regent Park residents **ages 18 and over** – both condo residents well as tenants with Toronto Community Housing (TCH) who live within the redeveloped areas of Regent Park.

If you choose to take part in this study you will be invited to a one-on-one interview to talk about living in Regent Park. Your participation would be limited to one session, lasting 45 minutes to 1 hour.

To thank you for your time you will receive **\$25.00 cash**. Your confidentiality will be protected and taking part in this study *will not affect your status with TCH or any other housing agency*.

For more information about this study, please contact:

**Daniel Rowe**

Department of Health, Aging & Society  
at (xxx-xxx-xxxx) or email rowedj@mcmaster.ca

**This study has been reviewed by and received ethics clearance through the McMaster Research Ethics Board.**

Call XXXX or email: rowedj@mcmaster.ca	Call XXXX or email: rowedj@mcmaster.ca	Call XXXX or email: rowedj@mcmaster.ca	Call XXXX or email: rowedj@mcmaster.ca	Call XXXX or email: rowedj@mcmaster.ca	Call XXXX or email: rowedj@mcmaster.ca	Call XXXX or email: rowedj@mcmaster.ca
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### Appendix 3: Letter of Information/Consent Form

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**Project Title:** Investigating the Impact of Social Mix on Community Life in Regent Park

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**Student Investigator:**

Daniel Rowe, Hon. BA

Master's Candidate

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Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

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**Faculty Supervisor:**

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**What am I trying to learn?** I hope to learn **how Regent Park's redevelopment as a 'socially-mixed' neighbourhood affects community life and what parts of the redevelopment most affect resident satisfaction with the neighbourhood.**

**What will happen during the study?** I am planning to interview 25 to 30 Regent Park adult residents of the redeveloped Regent Park - both condo residents and tenants with Toronto Community Housing (TCH). Participation is voluntary and your contribution will be made up of a one-on-one interview with me that will take between 45 minutes and



1 hour to complete. With your permission, I will be making an audio recording of the interview as well as taking handwritten notes. For your participation you will receive **\$25** in cash at the conclusion of the interview.

Some examples of questions I will ask you include:

- How long have you lived in the Regent Park neighbourhood?
- Do you belong to any clubs or community organizations?
- What is your opinion of “social mix” in Regent Park? Is it something that you notice?

You will also be asked some basic demographic information such as your age, ethnicity, cultural affiliation and educational background.

**What are the risks involved with this study?** There are relatively few risks involved with this research. However, you may feel some discomfort in describing negative experiences you’ve had in the Regent Park neighbourhood. If at any time you feel uncomfortable and wish to stop the interview you are welcome to do so. Also, you may withdraw from the study after signing the consent form at any time up until I submit my results to the School of Graduate Studies at McMaster University. Should you choose to withdraw, all information provided by you will be destroyed unless you grant me specific permission to use the data that I have already collected. You will suffer no consequences in choosing not to answer a question, stop the interview, or withdraw from the study. If, after completion of the interview you are upset or in need of help, you will be offered a resource sheet listing local resources which offer assistance.

Toronto Community Housing (TCH) or any other housing agency will **NOT** be aware of your decision to participate in this study. Participation in this study will have absolutely no impact on your status with TCH or any other housing agency. They will not be provided access to your personal information or any information which you provide to me. TCH will only receive a 3-4 page summary report of what I learned by doing this study and a copy of my 120-150 page thesis if they wish.

**Who will know what I said or did in the study?**

- Your confidentiality will be protected. Your name will not be used nor will any information which could identify you personally. Only my faculty supervisor and I will know whether you have chosen to participate in this study. Any staff that may

be hired to transcribe your interview responses will be sworn to keep your information private by signing an oath of confidentiality. Any information you choose to provide will be kept in a locked filing cabinet or on a password protected computer to which only myself and my faculty supervisor have access.

- After completion of the study, all information provided by you that does not identify you personally will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and may be used in future research.
- All documentation that identifies you personally will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and destroyed within five years.

PLEASE NOTE: Your confidentiality may be compromised if your answers to any of the interview questions cause the interviewer to suspect child abuse in your household. We are required by law to report any type of child abuse. Only information which indicates a risk of harm to yourself or other people will be shared.

**Are there any benefits to doing this study?** There are no direct benefits to you for taking part in this project. However, by choosing to participate in this project you will contribute to a better understanding of what aspects of neighbourhood revitalization contribute most to resident satisfaction in redeveloped public housing communities. This will benefit not only residents of Regent Park but also residents of other public housing communities which are slated to be redeveloped (eg. Lawrence Heights), as this research may be used to target resources more effectively.

#### **How do I find out what was learned in this study?**

I expect that this study will be completed by the spring of 2012. I will be making a 3-4 page summary report available upon completion. If you would like to receive a copy of this summary report please indicate this on the Statement of Consent.

**Questions about the Study.** If you have questions or require more information about the study, please contact Daniel Rowe, the Student Investigator at rowedj@mcmaster.ca or at this local number (xxx-xxx-xxxx).

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat

Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142

c/o Office of Research Services

E-mail: [ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca)

### STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Daniel Rowe of McMaster University. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested. I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time without having to provide a reason or suffer any consequences.

I understand that handwritten notes will be taken during the interview.

I have been given a copy of this form. I agree to participate in the study.

**A) I agree to the audio recording of the interview      YES    or    NO**

Name of Participant (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE CIRCLE YES OR NO:**

**A. YES** I would like to receive a 2-3 page summary of the study's results. Please send it to this email address \_\_\_\_\_ or to this mailing address

\_\_\_\_\_.

**NO** I do not want to receive a summary of the study's results.

**B. Can I contact you at a later date if I need to ask you about any more information?**

**YES      or      NO**

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT INVESTIGATOR:**

**I have received and reviewed the consent form.** To my knowledge, the participant is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent.

Name of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 4**

### **Interview Guide**

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1. Please tell me a little about yourself. How old are you? Were you born in Canada or in another country? How do you identify culturally and/or ethnically?

2. Are you currently employed? Do you have a long commute to your place of work?

3. Tell me about your educational experience. Has your education been useful in getting a job?

4. Please tell me about your living arrangements? How big is your household? Do you live with members of your immediate or extended family?

5. How long have you lived in the Regent Park neighbourhood?

6. Could you describe Regent Park? How is it different from other neighbourhoods in the city? How is it similar?

7. Were you familiar with Regent Park before it was redeveloped? How has the redevelopment changed the neighbourhood? How different are the people in the neighbourhood?

8. Do you spend most of your time in the Regent Park area? What kind of activities would take you outside Regent Park?

9. What are some things you do outside Regent Park?

10. What are some reasons you moved into Regent Park?

11. What are some things you like about living in Regent Park? What are some things you dislike about it?

12. What do you think is the most significant part of the redevelopment? For instance, do you think that the new “mix” of people is the most important part? The new community amenities (health centre, grocery store, swimming pool)? Physical renewal of the buildings?

13. What do you think about the other residents of Regent Park? Are there obvious differences between groups of residents? How might you define these different groups?

14. How many of your neighbours do you know on a first name basis? Can you tell me how you met some of these people?

15. Have you ever borrowed household items from a neighbour? Have you ever counted on neighbours to watch over kids or pets? Have you ever invited one of your neighbours into your home for a meal? Have you been invited into other people's homes for a meal?

16. Do you belong to any clubs or community organizations?

17. Do you think people in Regent Park are friendly?

18. Is living in a neighbourhood where everybody knows each other desirable to you?

19. Do you think that people in this neighbourhood get along?

20. Do you think people can be counted on to help each other out?

21. Do you think people in Regent Park can be trusted?

22. Do you think people in Regent Park share the same values?

23. Do you think people in Regent Park could be counted on to intervene if they saw someone painting graffiti? Do you think they would intervene if they witnessed a fight?

24. What do you think Regent Park residents would do if the Regent Park Community Health Centre was threatened with closure?

25. Have you ever received information about a job through a neighbour? If so, did you end up getting this job?

26. Have you heard of anyone getting a job through their neighbour?

27. Do you often use the grocery store in Regent Park? Do you ever meet people there? What about the Tim Horton's?

28. Are you familiar with the Regent Park Social Development Plan?

29. What is your opinion of "social mix" in Regent Park? Is it something that you notice?

30. Do you think it is important that people "mix" in Regent Park?

31. How do you think we would know if this "mix" is working? How would we know if it wasn't working?



