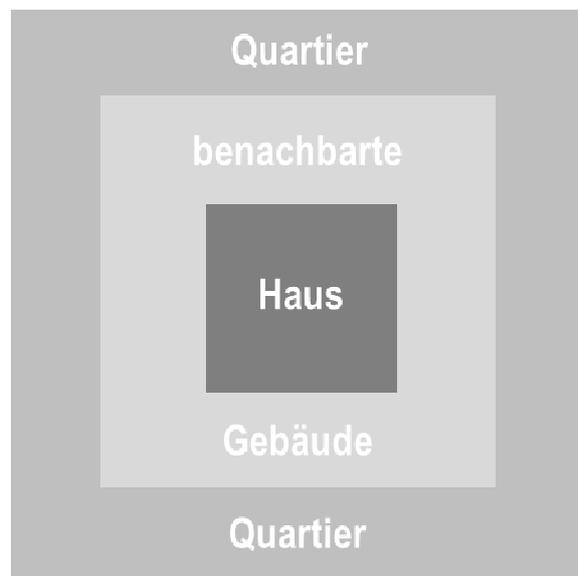


# Social mix and good neighbourhood in new districts

Planning, construction and management of inclusive residential complexes

English Abstract



**WEEBER+PARTNER**

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## English Abstract

### Social mix and good neighbourhood in new districts

- Planning, construction and management of inclusive residential complexes -

#### Status quo

Attaining social diversity within residential districts is a vital objective of urban development and housing policies today. Therefore, within a growing heterogenous society, planning of residential complexes has to cater to the increasingly challenging conviviality. This research deepens the knowledge about neighbourhoods which aim for social heterogeneity, desiring low-cost apartments, varied options of housing and the inclusion of households with difficulty in gaining access to the housing market.

#### Research topic

High rates of satisfaction with residential conditions and positive neighbourhood are indicators of success for socially diverse new districts. Further benefit expected for the districts can be proven in multiple ways and will not be discussed in the research at hand. Instead, the factors of impact, conditions and instruments for a successful social mix in new districts, will be investigated.

14 housing associations of different types – mostly municipal associations, but also cooperative and private ones – participated in the research project with a total of 16 examples. The focus of this research on the associations' and residents' perspective lies on these case studies which have been analysed with the help of workshops with representatives of the housing associations, conversations with key actors on site, an evaluation of the documents as well as an inquiry among residents (with a total of 484 interviews). The aim was to develop findings which encompass the individual case studies and, if possible, are transferable. All phases of socially mixed new districts are analysed – from the project development to the property management.

#### Concepts for socially mixed new districts

Social mix refers to different, but often times interdependent, aspects. These entail the scale and scope of the diversity, combined financing, specific target groups, mixed uses and requirements from the municipalities and federal states. This leads to differentiated concepts of social mix.

- ▶ District related mix: The concepts of social mix are developed specifically for the district, the unique local housing offers in the entire district are complemented with the new buildings according to the needs, which are no standard strategies.
- ▶ Small-scale mix: Subsidized and privately financed rental apartments are mixed on a small scale inside a building. The housing associations and the residents are equally satisfied.
- ▶ Mix with private property: It is understood that mixing buildings of private ownership and tenancy has a stabilizing effect on the district. However, managing the conflicting interests of housing associations and owners' communities is more challenging.

- ▶ Well-balanced mix: The housing industry considers a mixing rate of three thirds as beneficial: around one third of subsidized rental apartments, privately financed rental apartments and private owner-occupied apartments – this has also been confirmed through the inquiry with residents.

### **Built-spatial design of socially mixed new districts**

For the social mix, building typology, density, combination of apartments, floor plans of the apartments and the residential environment are also relevant. In essence, the residential qualities for the socially mixed districts are defined by agreement on a development program.

- ▶ Competitions: The associations recommend the implementation of competitions procedures since they perceive competitions as a basis for a high quality of urban design and social mix.
- ▶ Design: The social mix is unlike to be visible in the appearance as the residential complexes are mostly designed uniformly.
- ▶ Mix of apartments: A diverse and differentiated combination of apartments is a main indicator of success for socially mixed new districts, specifically, this applies to the apartment sizes and types as well as buildings.
- ▶ Specific forms of housing: It becomes increasingly self-evident to integrate collective housing offers – especially for people with need for assistance and care-taking – into the residential complexes, contributing to the diversity.
- ▶ Quality of the residential environment: The residential environment influences the social life in the district significantly. Well-rated outdoor facilities significantly promote neighbourhood contacts.

### **Management of socially mixed new districts**

In the context of property management, it is important to foster harmonious conviviality and avoid conflicts between the residents with appropriate preparations and instruments, not only during the occupancy planning of the residential complex but also on the long-term.

- ▶ Occupancy planning: With regards to the occupancy planning of the apartments by experienced specialists, the housing associations value leeway for a good reason. In order to avoid discrimination, training and evaluation are necessary tools.
- ▶ Consequent management: The administration is carried out professionally with high aspiration. Rules are imposed rather strictly in order to prevent conflicts in the neighbourhood and thereby ease the way socially diverse people live together.
- ▶ Fostering social life: Opportunities for interaction are provided spatially as well as through community work.
- ▶ Life in the neighbourhood: A friendly-reserved neighbourhood community is appreciated. Good neighbourhood above all means, to live together without significant conflicts.

### **Conclusion**

Today, the discussion about social diversity and segregation in the context of housing is no more an "either/or", but is discussed openly. The housing associations involved in the research explicitly want to aim for social mix within their districts. The associations as well as

the residents do not have any difficulty with diversity in the new buildings. However, it would be too short-sighted to tie social diversity to occupancy rates alone. Essentially, the social mix relies on diverse housing typologies and forms with multifaceted floor plans for households with different life situations and needs in combination with a range of financing options including subsidized and privately financed rental apartments as well as privately owned apartments. Social mix has to be implanted within architectural diversity.