Urban disadvantage in Australia
Evolution, anatomy and policy responses

25 September 2014
International comparison
US and Australia

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Themes of presentation

- All disadvantaged places are not alike; serve different functions—some of which are more (‘springboards’) or less (‘flypaper’) socially desirable
- Policy should focus on diagnosing & prescribing remedies for latter (‘flypaper’) types
- Alternative ‘flypaper’ diagnoses: placed-based or people-based deficits
- Placed-based diagnosis → Place-building policies
- People-based diagnosis → Deconcentration policies
All disadvantaged places are not alike
Serve different functions

- Research from AU (Pawson, Burke, Arthurson et al);
- SWE (Andersson, Galster, Musterd: refugee Ports of Entry)

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- Two extreme types: ‘flypaper’ vs. ‘springboard’
- Policy should focus on diagnosing & prescribing remedies for ‘flypaper’ types
Alternative ‘flypaper’ place diagnoses

Placed-based or people-based deficits

- **Place-based** = deficits in education/training institutions; environmental quality, health/recreation services; access to employment/transport, etc.

- **People-based** = deficits in individual values and behaviours as related to neighbourhood collective norms, role models, socialisation processes
Policy responses to ‘place-based deficits’ diagnosis

Place-building

- **Place-building** = spatially targeted investments aimed at improving education/training institutions; environmental quality, health/recreation services; access to employment/transport etc.
Deconcentration = efforts to decrease spatial concentrations of disadvantaged people below threshold and thereby reduce related neighbourhood collective norms, role models, socialisation processes

Programmatic options: social mix in large former housing estates, scattered-site social housing development, inclusionary zoning
Key concept
Thresholds of social problems associated with concentrated disadvantage
Potential social gains
From deconcentration past threshold point

- Simplified demonstration
- Empirical estimate for US:

*IF* population redistributed in top 100 metros such that:

1. all census tracts in 1990 exceeding 20% poverty had their rate reduced to 20% by 2000; and

2. only lowest-poverty tracts allocated additional poor, with each increasing its poverty rate by maximum 5 percentage points … (none exceeding 10%) … then over the 1990s:

Aggregate value of owner-occupied housing stock rises $421 billion (13%)

Aggregate value of rental stock rises $20 billion (4%)
Summary

- All disadvantaged places are not alike; serve different functions—some of which are more (‘springboards’) or less (‘flypaper’) socially desirable
- Policy should focus on diagnosing & prescribing remedies for latter (‘flypaper’) types
- Alternative ‘flypaper’ diagnoses: **placed-based** or **people-based** deficits
- Placed-based diagnosis → Place-building policies
- People-based diagnosis → Deconcentration policies below thresholds