
High-rise housing in Europe

Current trends and future prospects



R. Turkington
R. van Kempen
F. Wassenberg (eds.)

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Preface

In the mid-1990s, a group of researchers came together to consider the current trends affecting high-rise housing and the future prospects for estates across Europe. For some time, concern had been growing over this housing type and about the estates in which they were located. Built after the Second World War as a 'modern' response to acute housing shortage, high-rise housing was seen as a symbol of the new Europe. It was a time when functionalistic planning reigned supreme, when urban designers were confident that they could improve the lives of citizens through radical changes to the built environment. High-rise housing was constructed on a mass scale in the belief that blocks and estates would work for everybody who lived in them.

However, the world has changed since then. Other housing types have taken their place, the single family dwelling represents the ultimate aspiration for many households. Whilst it is clear that the condition and market position of high-rise varies between countries, many complexes have deteriorated physically, socially, and are in the worst cases faced with a multiplicity of problems.

It is in such a context that we decided to produce a book which focused on the contrasting experience and expectations of high-rise housing across Europe. Drawing on contributions from fifteen countries, we have been able to identify how the initial ideas were developed and implemented. As intended, high-rise housing was built in volume, not least in the former communist countries, and in countries in the south of Europe. We have been able to trace the 'careers' of high-rise housing as market conditions have changed across Europe, not least in the remarkable transition from state socialism to market capitalism in Central and Eastern European countries.

What is clear is that, irrespective of status or quality, high-rise housing is here to stay. No country is in a position to ignore or discard this conspicuous legacy of the post-war and mass housing period. With this edited text, we hope to provide the reader with a comprehensive view of the current status of high-rise estates in the selected countries, to assess their position in changing housing markets, and their prospects for the future.

In completing this book, we would like to offer our greatest thanks to the authors of the country chapters whose efforts and patience have ensured its production. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Netherlands Graduate School of Housing and Urban Research (NETHUR) for hosting a seminar in Delft at the start of the project and the Dutch Ministry for Spatial Planning, Housing and the Environment who have covered the production costs of this book.

Richard Turkington
Ronald van Kempen
Frank Wassenberg

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1 High-rise housing estates in Europe

*Frank Wassenberg, Richard Turkington and
Ronald van Kempen*

1.1 High-rise as a European housing phenomenon

Imagine you had landed by parachute somewhere in Europe. You look around and find yourself in the familiar environment of a high-rise housing estate. You recognise the scale, blocks and the managed open space as the unmistakable features of mass housing, but their uniformity and lack of identity are confusing, you don't know where you are and you realise, "I could be anywhere in Europe".

High-rise housing exists throughout Europe. Whether slab buildings or tall blocks, it is the most visible and uniform product of post-war urban planning. In most northern and western European countries, such housing is characteristic of the era of mass housing construction dating from the 1960s. Peak levels of production were achieved with extraordinary speed, before the coincidence of technical and social problems brought about an almost equally sudden decline. The Ronan Point gas explosion in London in 1967; the 1972 demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe high-rise blocks in St. Louis, USA and Oscar Newman's simultaneous 'defensible space' critique created a series of negative images which have blighted the status of high-rise in many countries to this day. As high-rise construction declined in the West, it was beginning to increase rapidly in the planned economies of Central and Eastern Europe, and had it not been for the collapse of the communist system in the early 1990s, it would have continued to the present day.

It was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s that a minor high-rise revival began in the west, and then on a quite different basis. Associated with a new era of urban regeneration, high quality and luxurious blocks for affluent 'childless' households have appeared in waterside or other attractive locations, often close to city centres. Such developments have helped to create a new and more positive image for high-rise housing and have helped to reshape attitudes towards the high-rise legacy of the mass housing period.

High-rise living is a normal way of life for millions throughout Europe. It has been estimated that approximately 6 million people live in high-rise housing estates in Western Europe, and in Central and Eastern Europe, excluding the former USSR, a further 34 million people live in large prefabricated estates of at least 2,500 dwellings, in which high-rise blocks are typical (Knorr-Siedow, 1997).

Figure 1.1 The fifteen countries participating in this research



1.2 Aims and structure of this book

The main focus of this book is the high-rise blocks and estates produced in the mass housing era originating in the 1960s. We will examine how high-rise estates have experienced different ‘careers’ within and between countries, with some experiencing a greater degree of success and others failure. We are seeking here to identify and account for the similarities and differences between high-rise estates from construction to the present time, and especially those factors responsible for their current and future well-being.

In undertaking this analysis, we will focus on the buildings themselves; on their inhabitants; their spatial settings and their location in housing markets. Through this book, we hope to establish a clearer picture of the options available for high-rise estates throughout Europe.

In achieving our aims, we will draw on experience with high-rise housing in 15 European countries, Germany which crosses between Eastern and West-

ern Europe; nine in western, northern and southern Europe, Belgium, Britain, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden, and five countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine (see Figure 1.1).

The country chapters, which make up the bulk of this volume, address the ‘careers’ of high-rise estates since construction, their status and prospects, and include one or more illustrative case studies. It has been our role as editors to synthesise the experience of 15 countries in order to identify patterns and prospects for the high-rise legacy across Europe.

1.3 High-rise housing estates: working definitions

It is first necessary to establish some working definitions. Beginning with the simplest unit of all, the dwelling, we have defined this as a residential building or part of a residential building intended for self-contained occupation by one household, independent of its size.

A flat is a self-contained dwelling in a converted or purpose-built residential building containing two or more such dwellings upon each other. A flat is synonymous with an apartment, although the latter term often refers to more luxurious dwellings. A block of flats is purpose-built and includes semi-public space for the use of occupants of individual flats.

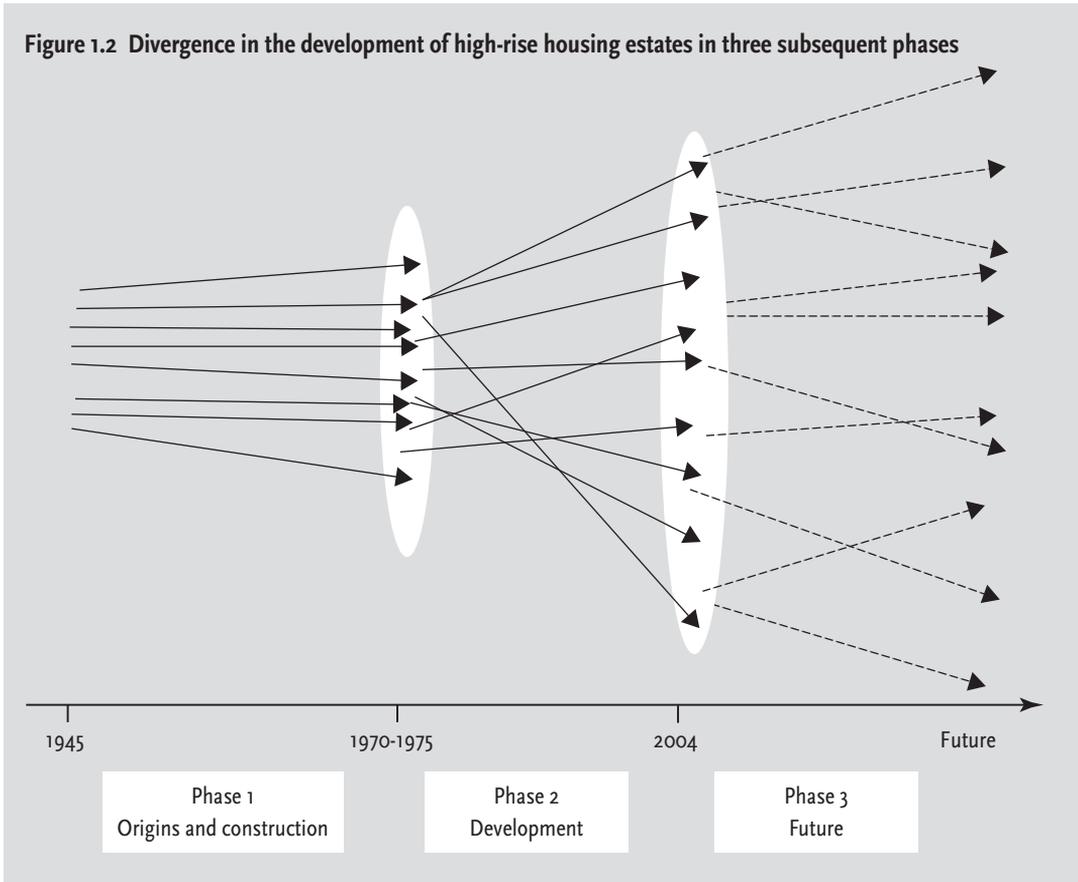
Whilst formal definitions of high-rise housing vary between countries, we have focused on housing from the post-war period which requires a lift to reach the upper floors. In general, this means high-rise is a block with a minimum of five storeys and a lift. High-rise housing may consist of tower or point blocks reaching twenty or more storeys, or slab blocks providing hundreds of metres of separate dwellings connected by lengthy internal or external corridors.

The ‘housing estate’ is not a concept widely used throughout Europe. We have adapted Anne Power’s definition to refer to a distinct and discrete geographic area of public sector housing constructed in the same period (Power, 1997, p. 20).

High-rise housing estates are defined as distinct and discrete geographic housing areas which are dominated by residential blocks of five storeys or more. Many high-rise housing estates, especially in Western European countries, include a mix of design types, but blocks of five or more storeys should form the majority of the estate’s homes.

Despite our attempts at definitional clarity, and as others have experienced (Haffner, 1998), it has not been possible to apply the same definitions of high-rise housing to every country or to obtain the same data. For example, the German use of ‘large estate’ to refer to a minimum of 2,500 flats is specific to

Figure 1.2 Divergence in the development of high-rise housing estates in three subsequent phases



that country, and might be unworkable in Sweden, Denmark or Finland. Similarly, the French term ‘grand ensemble’, which is triggered by the symbolic threshold of 1,000 dwellings and incorporates philosophies of architectural unity and spatial autonomy, is distinct to that country. The planned economies of the former Central and Eastern Europe generated massive and uniform estates of thousands of dwellings, while in some western and southern countries, developments were smaller and more individual in design. As the size and scale of estates may differ enormously between cities, regions and countries, contributors have had to draw on whatever data and information are available, whilst referring to our common definition of the high-rise housing estate.

1.4 Understanding the origins and ‘careers’ of high-rise housing estates in Europe

In order to understand the ‘careers’ of high-rise housing estates in Europe, we have identified three distinct phases, as visualised in Figure 1.2, and relate them to their origins, their development and their future. The first two phases are discussed below, the final phase is considered at the end of the book in Chapter 18.

In relation to the first phase, we are seeking to identify how, why and for whom high-rise estates were built, and how they were first viewed by residents and professionals. It is our contention that most estates started at the same point in terms of their role and status, and that this situation persisted until the mid-1970s, by which time different trajectories were becoming evident within and between countries in northern and western Europe. The events of this period are summarised in Section 1.5 below.

In the second phase, we are concerned to review developments in the 'careers' of estates from opening to the present day, and to identify any changes in their use and/or status. We will begin to outline developments in this period in Section 1.6 below, but will leave a more detailed examination to the country chapters, and provide an overview in the concluding discussion at Chapter 18.

Phase one: great expectations, the origins of high-rise estates

Purpose-built flats in the European dwelling stock

Whilst most high-rise housing in Europe was built in the 1960s and later, its origins date back to the second half of the 19th century when mass industrialisation resulted in mass urbanisation. The tenement blocks and terraced streets of Germany, Britain, Poland and many other European countries provided solutions to the need to provide urban housing in volume and at speed. Concern over resulting 'slum' conditions stimulated the search for healthier urban and housing environments. Ebenezer Howard's influential 1898 plan for a 'Garden City' established the principle of combining the best of 'town' and 'country' in small and low density developments away from the overcrowded city. The 'garden suburb' of the 1920s and 1930s constituted the first genuinely European housing form, built in response to the excesses of unregulated urbanisation.

Most dwelling construction followed traditional ideas in the inter-war years, but by the 1930s, a more radical philosophy had begun to emerge. 'Das Neue Bauen' had its roots in Germany, but was to be of great international influence, especially in the USSR. Stalin's Soviet Union provided the model of collective rental housing for workers on a large scale. This was a strong influence in European countries under communism, and also provided an inspiring example for west European architects and planners, both before and after World War II. According to the principles of 'Modernism', architects and urban planners believed it was possible to construct a new and egalitarian society by providing dramatically improved housing and environmental conditions for the working classes. From 1928 onwards, the 'Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne' (CIAM) organised international congresses which were to have a major influence on high-rise construction. At the third Congress in 1930, Le Corbusier introduced his famous Ville-Radiieuse concept as a universal solution to the European housing problem (see the chapter on Bel-

gium). The free-standing high-rise block was promoted as the only means of achieving modernist building principles, and at the fourth Congress in 1933, the concept of the 'functionalist city' offered the perfect environment for their construction.

State housing policies and the Second World War

By the end of the Second World War, much of Europe had descended into social, physical and economic chaos. Whole cities had been destroyed, their infrastructure wrecked and economies ruined. The lack of sufficient and adequate housing, a problem dating from the 1930s, was worsened by the collapse in construction and war damage of the 1940s. In Slovakia for example, 17% of all homes were destroyed during the Second World War. Extensive population movement made the situation even worse. The re-drawing of Europe's frontiers, especially the movement of Germany, Poland and the USSR's boundaries a couple of hundred kilometres to the west resulted in the migration of hundreds of thousands of people. Eleven per cent of the Finnish population had to move westwards just to stay within Finland.

Despite these pressures, the immediate post-war priority for countries including France, Hungary, the Netherlands and Germany, was to rebuild their national economy. By the 1950s, family formation and the post-war 'baby boom' had placed even greater demands on Europe's housing stock, and a drive to meet housing shortage and improve dwelling conditions gained priority throughout Europe. The new neighbourhoods of the 1950s symbolised the fight against the 'housing enemy'. The role of the state was central in financing and organising house building, and in these years, Modernist or 'Functionalist' ideas gained their most widespread expression. Much state-subsidised housing from this period is characterised by early forms of mass production, and by the construction of low-rise blocks of flats and terraced housing, ideally in open and sunny locations. High-rise blocks were an exceptional feature of this decade.

The 1960s: embracing the high-rise 'solution'

The 1960s were the 'boom years' for building high-rise housing as a frantic effort was made to overcome urban housing shortages. The impact of population growth was compounded by population movement throughout Europe. Labour migration from rural to urban areas grew steadily in such countries as France, Spain and Italy as people moved in search of paid work. To these internal flows was added international migration to such countries as Britain and France, especially where labour shortages attracted young migrants from former colonies. In France alone, 1.2 million people were repatriated after the Algerian war in 1962.

Despite the political priority of meeting housing need, and the efforts made throughout Europe, shortages persisted and showed every sign of worsening.

A common prediction from this time was that, by the symbolic year 2000, populations would have grown between 50 and 100%. In such circumstances, there was an urgent need to identify construction techniques which were quicker, cheaper and more efficient. This can be seen as the first important motive for building high-rise housing.

Seven motives for building high-rise housing

By the 1960s, a series of influences and pressures had coincided which can be characterised as the seven motives for building high-rise housing. These were:

1. the need to solve long standing housing shortages;
2. the development of innovative technologies;
3. a confidence in 'Modern architecture' to reach a more just and fair society;
4. a desire to protect the countryside from mass development;
5. the demand for improved standards of living;
6. competition between municipal authorities in the provision of modern housing;
7. the support of governments for radical solutions to meeting housing problems.

The first motive refers to the quantitative argument discussed above, the second concerning the development of technological innovations was important in enabling homes to be built in volume and at speed. Building in concrete, the use of large prefabricated components, establishing housing factories on site and the rationalisation of the building process all made high-rise technically possible. These 'mass housing' techniques all required high levels of investment by the building industry, which in turn encouraged more building in a high-rise form. Britain provides a good example of many companies developing different systems, but all claiming that the new capacity to build on a large scale made it profitable. The possibility of creating homes through prefabrication reinforced the view that every social problem had a technical solution.

Thirdly, there was great confidence that 'Modernism' applied to housing and urban planning could deliver a more equal and fair society. The achievement of the egalitarian 'functional city' (Ibelings, 1995, p. 110) through high-rise housing represented a powerful expression of the belief that social development could be controlled more effectively than ever before. The Swedish chapter describes how Le Corbusier's idea of the Atlantic steamer was used as a metaphor for functionally integrated high-rise housing estates.

A fourth motive for building high-rise was the belief, identified by Vestergaard in relation to Denmark, that 'The new high density housing would protect nature from the urban sprawl associated with single-family houses'. Göderitz et al. (1957) had demonstrated how a town would spread if each house had its own garden, and compared the land use impact of high-rise

blocks with that of houses in rows or terraces with small gardens (Mentzel, 1989). It was claimed that urban high-rise could be built at the same density as low-rise housing whilst providing more privacy, freeing everyone from the tyranny of petit bourgeois lifestyles and providing more open space.

A fifth motive was the desire to improve overall quality life. It is often forgotten, that in the early 1960s, high-rise flats were relatively luxurious and spacious, provided with such modern amenities as a hot and cold water supply; shower or bath; central heating and a rubbish disposal system. Collective amenities such as childcare, laundry, shopping provision and recreation facilities were all intended to make high-rise living both comfortable and convenient.

A sixth motive was related to the status and symbolism of high-rise housing. High-rise blocks could be used as landmarks and to reflect a town's urbanism and modernity. Municipal authorities and social-housing providers competed with each other to acquire such symbolic buildings, and as a result, high-rise blocks can be found in almost every small town in Belgium, and in most large towns and cities in Britain.

The seventh and final motive for building high-rise was the stimulus and support provided by national governments. In Britain for example, where high-rise construction was associated with slum clearance, additional subsidies were provided to support building costs incurred by municipalities. In the Netherlands, high-rise housing received the largest subsidies from public housing programmes.

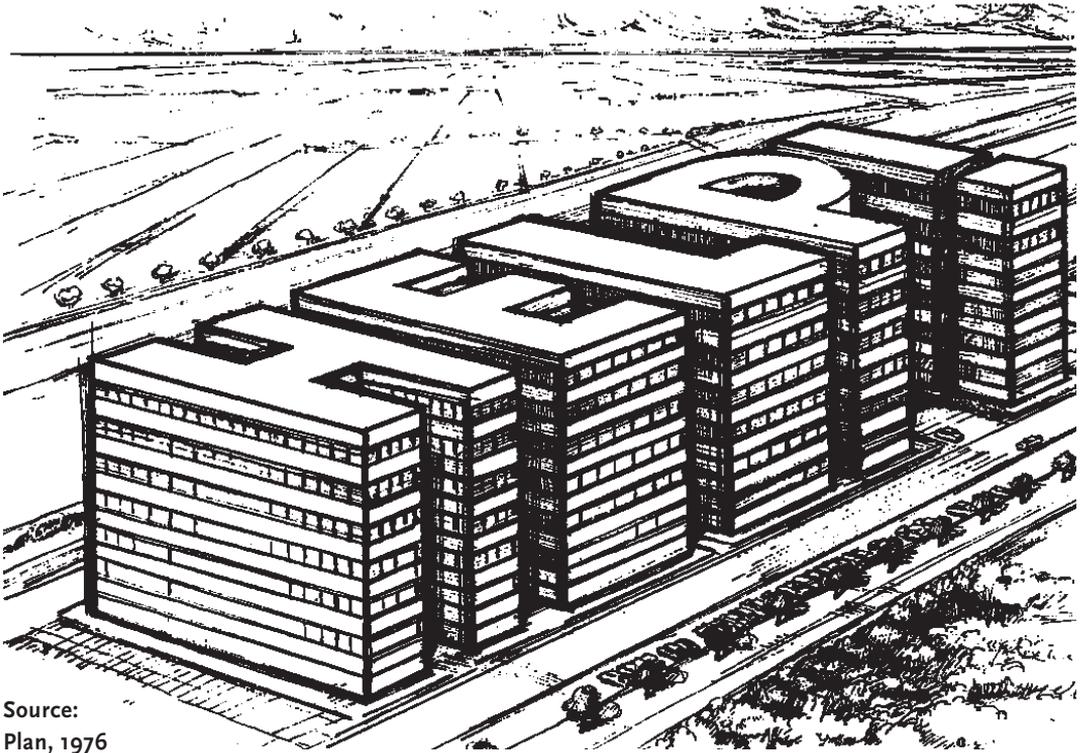
The outcome of the high-rise housing building boom

Similar motives for the production of high-rise housing produced similar outcomes. The first and most striking similarity was the level of production. In Hungary for example, the 1960 Fifteen Year Housing Development Plan succeeded in adding one million new homes, many of which were in mass produced high-rise blocks. In Sweden, high-rise housing dominated the famous 'Million Programme' launched in 1964.

A second similarity was the speed of construction. In France for example, the average time taken to produce a dwelling dropped from nearly two man-years in 1950 to seven months in 1960. As a result, between 1960 and 1980, France built 9 million dwellings, and in any four years in these two decades, more homes were produced than in all of the 1920s and 1930s.

A third common feature was the use of prefabricated construction. Dwelling units could be produced to uniform standards in 'housing factories', with cast concrete panels replacing laborious work with bricks and mortar. Economies of scale were achieved through repeat construction, with tall blocks and uniform streets determined by the technology of the tower crane.

A fourth common feature was the choice of location in that the easiest locations in which to construct large prefabricated blocks were 'green field'



Source:
Plan, 1976

sites at the periphery of existing towns and cities, where tower cranes could repeat their erection in linear streets. Whilst local amenities were planned for estates, they were often inadequate or not provided at all.

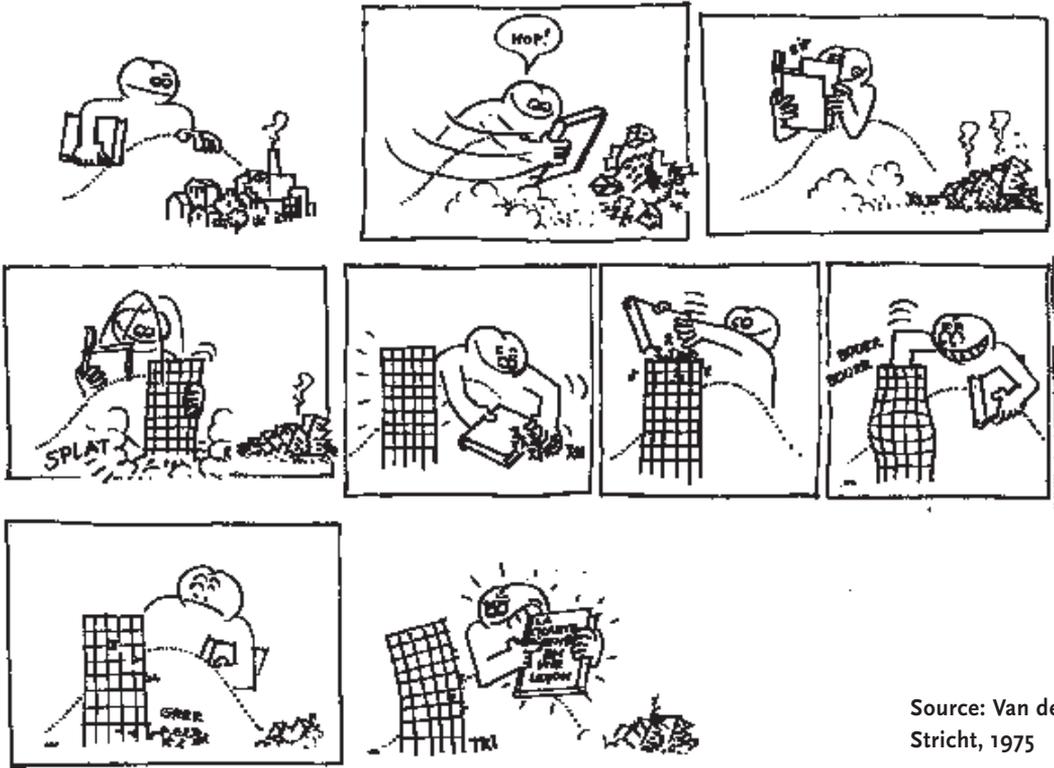
A further feature of this phase was the provision of collective space for communal use. An inevitable consequence of the development of high-rise blocks was the creation of common areas, including halls, corridors, lifts, refuse disposal areas, etc. The use and sharing of such collective space was based on high expectations of people's mutual and collective behaviour. Such ideas fitted particularly well with the Swedish and Danish welfare model, in which state-organised and large scale systems were designed to take care of their citizens, and with communist principles of communal provision practised in Eastern European countries.

A final feature was the construction of high-rise housing by the social (or public) sector to house working-class families. Between 1966 and 1973, over 60% of all social sector housing built in the Netherlands, and two thirds of social housing in France consisted of high-rise blocks. As the concept of social housing did not exist in the centrally planned economies of Central and Eastern Europe, high-rise estates were intended for all classes of people.

High-rise housing represented the ideal housing of its era, egalitarian and modern dwellings which were spacious, comfortable, well-designed and suitably located. In the next phase, these qualities would begin to be questioned and challenged.

Phase two: the 'careers' of high-rise housing estates

Social sector housing production reached a peak in the early 1970s in North-



Source: Van der Stricht, 1975

ern and Western Europe. However, the principles and practice of urban planning changed during this decade and a trend developed towards more low-rise and single-family housing, informed by the slogan that 'Small is beautiful' (Schumacher, 1973). In Central and Eastern Europe, large estates persisted as the main urban form, and as a result, mass housing constitutes the majority of the dwelling stock in a number of countries. In further contrast, high-rise blocks have continued to be built in the south of Europe, where private sector high-rise living is a normal way of life.

Early critics

Whilst it is not the intention of this book to present high-rise as a problematic housing type, evidence of doubts over high-rise living had emerged in the early post-war years. In the USA, for example, Bauer (1952) was one of the first to claim that 'almost universally, families with growing children apparently want to live at ground level'. In a further example from England, Dunleavy (1981) quoted a 1967 Greater London Council report which stated 'that 75 percent of their applicants preferred a house and a garden, although at this period only 9 percent of the authority's housing output was in this form, while 65 percent was in high flats' (both quoted in Mentzel, 1989, p. 280). Limited evidence of families' preference for single-family houses also emerged in the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark in the 1960s. It is difficult to establish how widespread these views were, as in the early years of high-rise construction, consumers' opinions were neither invited nor heard and the views of professionals held sway.

Problems

Problems with the experience of living in high-rise blocks emerged soon after construction, especially for families with young children. As reported in the British, Polish and Danish chapters, where the option was available, people in unpopular blocks began to 'vote with their feet' to be replaced by those with less choice. Such trends coincided with the realisation that conventional approaches to managing social housing were inappropriate for high-rise blocks. The many semi-public and collective spaces including entries, alleys, corridors and garages proved to be very problematic rather than the cosy places where people could meet each other and socialise. In such circumstances, vandalism and public safety became major issues (Krantz et al., 1999).

Cycles of decline

Why do problems occur in public housing schemes? There is no simple answer to this question but Prak and Priemus (1986) developed a comprehensive model for understanding this process. They identified three cycles of decline: technical decline (affecting the estate); social decline (affecting tenants) and financial decline (affecting the viability of the estate). All three cycles may influence and reinforce each other, and are also affected by external factors including government policies, wider social and economic trends and the policies of the owners.

Other authors have analysed the problem of spirals of decline including Power (1997) and E. Van Kempen (1994). One of the most controversial questions the impact of the urban form itself, and Alice Coleman's 1985 study 'Utopia on Trial' accused architects and developers of problematic and high-rise housing estates of generating problems through bad design. However, while large high-rise estates were generally considered unattractive, the case for design determinism was unproven.

Classification of problems

Several authors have attempted to classify the range of problems affecting high-rise estates, including Heeger (1993), Wassenberg (1993), Power (1997), Turkington (1997) and Skifter Andersen (2003), and have identified the following range:

- Structural problems: usually caused by untried construction methods and poor quality materials, and associated for example, with asbestos pollution, poor sound insulation, dampness, condensation and draughts.
- Internal design problems: associated with small rooms, inadequate central heating, sanitary equipment and storage space; the absence of amenities such as lifts and communal facilities, and inadequate external space.
- Urban design or spatial problems: associated with poor location, high building density and problems of traffic and noise pollution.
- Internal social problems: including noisy and other anti-social behaviour;

crime and insecurity and poor neighbour relations.

- Financial problems: for tenants of high rents and service charges, and for landlords, problems of high rent arrears and vacancies, high maintenance costs and large operating losses.
- Competition problems: concerned with the low market position of an estate and poor image etc.
- Management and organisational problems: arising from inadequate maintenance and insufficient resources.
- Legislative problems: concerning the ownership of flats and blocks and the space around them.
- Wider social-economic problems: including high unemployment, poor schooling, drug addiction etc. and intensified where households in similar circumstances are concentrated together.

Problems are evident in every country, but their type and intensity will differ. Legislation is more likely to cause problems in former Eastern European countries undergoing privatisation; structural problems are more likely in countries where new building techniques were experimented with and competition problems are likely to be greater where there is most choice in the housing market.

Measures taken

Measures have been developed to deal with problems as they have emerged, with increasingly complex problems requiring increasingly complex responses. However, we are in danger of straying into the territory of the 'careers' of high-rise estates which are examined for each country below, and summarised in Chapter 18. However, before doing so, it is necessary to establish some theoretical understanding of the position of high-rise estates in housing markets which is the subject of the next chapter.

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2 The changing position of high-rise housing estates

Background developments

Frank Wassenberg, Richard Turkington and Ronald van Kempen

2.1 Factors influencing the position of high-rise housing estates: a framework

Why do high-rise housing estates develop as they do? Why do their functions and positions change? Why does their popularity increase or decrease? In this chapter, we will review the dynamics affecting the changing position of high-rise estates.

In some market situations, high-rise estates are a popular part of the local or regional housing market, whilst in others they represent the least popular 'dead end'. What determines whether high-rise estates will do well or not? Figure 2.1 summarises the factors operating at macro and micro levels which affect the supply of and the demand for high-rise estates, and which are considered below.

The position of a single estate on the housing market will be determined according to the inter-relationship between supply and demand. On the people-related demand side, we can identify the number and types of households looking for a home and the impact of such factors as individual preference, aspirations and resources. The housing-related supply side will be governed by such factors as the number and type of dwellings available, their quality, price, location and reputation. Factors operating at the micro level form the inner circle of Figure 2.1. They consist of supply and demand factors.

At the macro level, the two main factors affecting the position of high-rise estates on the housing market are public policies and mega-trends. The effect of the latter may be great, even though control over them may be limited. Public policies may operate at local or national level, and may range from measures taken to improve a single estate to housing policies affecting the operation of the housing market.

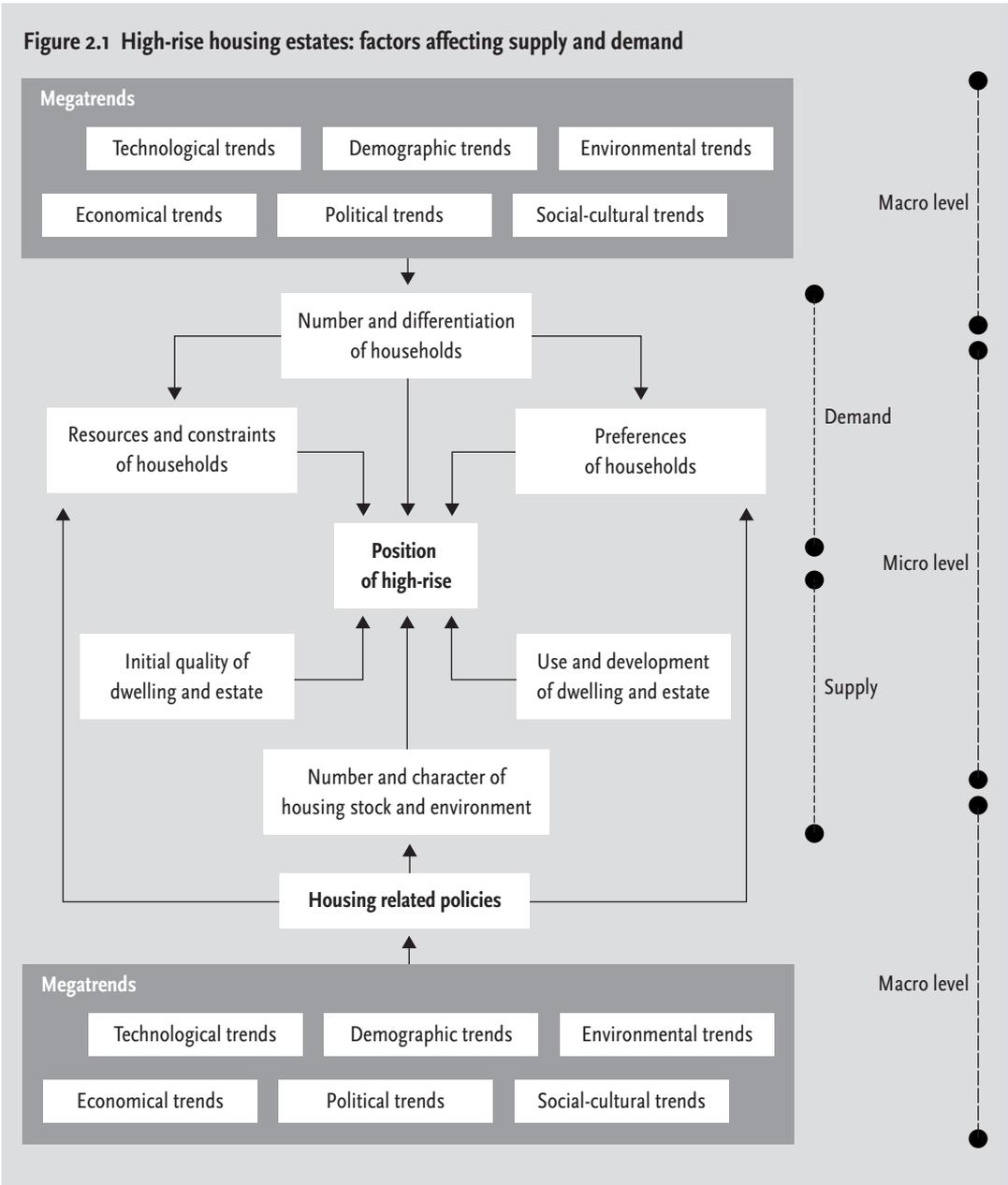
2.2 Factors operating at the micro level

The demand side of the housing market

Several key factors operating at the demand side of the housing market can be identified. They are the number and differentiation of households, preferences and aspirations of households and household resources and constraints.

The number and type of households looking for a home are key variables which are mainly affected by such demographic factors as increased fertility,

Figure 2.1 High-rise housing estates: factors affecting supply and demand



the ageing of the population and immigration flows. The post-war 'baby boom' in many European countries had a major impact on the demand for housing and more older households will increase the demand for more manageable homes.

Such household characteristics as size, composition and age structure are major determinants of housing and locational preference (Clark and Dieleman, 1996). In particular, age intersects with the household formation cycle at the key stages of establishing a stable relationship; starting a family; children leaving home and the death of a partner (Rossi, 1955; Speare et al.,

1975). However, Stapleton (1980) has indicated that this standard cycle holds for fewer and fewer people. Not everybody starts a family and more people stay single, or are single again after a divorce. Moreover, families have fewer children, while people are getting older. As a consequence, the number of small households is growing in all Western countries, especially in the cities.

There is a growing amount of literature that focuses less on household formation and the preferences of traditional groups and more on so-called lifestyle groups. In this approach, housing preferences are not in the main determined by traditional such variables as age, household composition and income, but (more) by preferences in several spheres of life, such as employment and leisure patterns. According to this view, some people prefer to live near certain amenities which are important to them, for example bars and restaurants, leisure facilities or the natural environment.

Each household will then have its own 'subjective hierarchy' of preferences and aspirations which will change over time. For some, it may be to live in an apartment, for others, to be close to work, family, school or the city centre. Preferences may be influenced by the experience of friends and families, marketing or by fashion and the media will be very influential in this process.

When housing circumstances are out of line with aspirations, people will use a range of strategies to change them, from lowering their expectations to adapting their dwelling to 'voting with their feet' and moving out. However, the latter is dependent on the 'strength' of the household in the housing market and the resources available to them (Rex, 1968). A household's resources can take various forms (Van Kempen & Özuëkren, 1998) including:

- financial resources, including income, security of income, and capital assets;
- cognitive resources, including education, skills, and knowledge of the housing market;
- political resources, including the political power people wield, either formally or informally;
- social resources, including the contacts to help find suitable housing or neighbourhood.

All these aspects will influence the position of high-rise housing estates in their local or regional housing markets. When, for example, the number of households looking for a home increases, there will be more competition, which might mean that the number of vacancies in the high-rise stock is relatively low. An increasing number of small, low-income, younger or older households may boost the demand for dwellings in high-rise complexes. A growing number of family households will more often lead to a rise in the demand for single-family housing. Whether these kinds of households actually move to such a dwelling is dependent on the supply within the housing market.

The supply side of the housing market

Also on the supply side of the housing market key factors determining the supply of high-rise housing can be identified. They are the initial situation of the estate, the number and type of dwellings and estates and the use of and development of the estates.

For high-rise estates in particular, their initial quality may be an important factor in determining subsequent attractiveness, determined by, for example, location; the services provided; the organisation of (semi) public space; the materials used; the quality of the block, the size and layout of flats, their tenure and price. Where the initial quality was low, decline may have set in after only a few years, and caused blocks and estates to develop a stigma which is difficult to shrug off (Hastings and Dean, 2000; Heeger, 1993; Power, 1997).

Clearly, where supply exceeds demand, vacancies may occur. However this does not automatically mean that high-rise is always in the losing position. Despite accusations of uniformity, there are many variations in high-rise housing and estates which may affect the dynamics of supply. Important factors include location, design, the height of blocks, the size of flats, their cost and patterns of ownership and renting. For high-rise estates, reputation is a particular issue affected by the extent to which high-rise living is 'normalised' in a locality or country and by the existence of positive or stigmatised identities.

Key factors here include the extent to which residents have chosen to live there or not; the rate of turnover of residents; the quality of management, maintenance and repair and the extent of modernisation. It is widely recognised by housing managers and researchers that high-rise estates require more intensive management than more conventional housing types (see Power, 1997).

The relationship between housing demand and supply

An acute shortage of housing at the national, regional or local level will create a suppliers market, and irrespective of the factors summarised above, flats on high-rise estates may find themselves in great demand. Such situations currently prevail in a number of the countries examined below. Where the opposite is the case, deficiencies which might otherwise be tolerated become obstacles to demand or new alternatives may change patterns of preference and lead to changes in the social composition of estates or increased vacancies.

2.3 Factors operating at the macro level: public policies

Policies affecting housing can be divided between general policies which might affect the housing market, such as fiscal measures, housing policies

affecting for example access to tenure, and specific housing policies aimed at high-rise estates. Policies may originate from different levels of decision-making including the European, regional and local municipal. We have selected here those which have the greatest impact on the future of high-rise estates including:

The use of public subsidies

Public subsidies are particularly associated with the provision of new dwellings, for example to meet housing shortage in the 1950s and 1960s. Such a practice had particular implications for the volume of construction of expensive high-rise estates. Subsidies are also used to achieve modernisation and repair and may determine the provision or otherwise of such additional amenities as lifts, or extra personnel such as concierges.

Subsidies can also be used to support personal housing costs, enabling households to live in a dwelling they could not otherwise afford. In some countries, such as the Netherlands, this means that living in high-rise becomes affordable. The subsidies may also have the effect of 'trapping' populations in the housing circumstances in which they remain eligible for subsidies. Changes in application and entitlement may have a dramatic impact on the population structure of a housing area or estate.

Housing allocation rules

Allocation rules and practices in the public rental sector have had a major impact on the social composition of high-rise estates. For example, housing associations may allocate all dwellings in a block to older or younger people or to a particular social group, or they can exclude immigrant or other minority ethnic households by claiming that no large dwellings are currently available. The role of 'housing managers' as 'social gatekeepers' has been recognised by Pahl (1975, 1977) and Lipsky (1980), and where personal values, assumptions and ideologies can have an influence, there is a risk that stereotypes and racism may affect decisions (Tomlins, 1997). The application of such allocation rules has greater impact where supply is limited.

2.4 Factors operating at the macro level: global 'megatrends'

Megatrends are structural movements which go beyond local developments and operate in the technological, economic, political, demographic, social-cultural and environmental domains. Priemus et. al. (1994) have combined such trends into several scenarios and have argued for their effects on housing in general. In this section, we have focused on those trends with particular implications for high-rise estates (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Megatrends in society and their possible influences on the position of high-rise estates

Trend	Keywords	Effects on the housing market	Effects on high-rise
A. Technological trends: the world gets smaller			
Rapid growth of telecommunication	Technical developments Information technology The Information Society	People have less need to live close to their work A flexible layout for houses	Adaptations to apartments are needed More spacious apartments can respond to new demands
Mobility growth	Transport growth Accessibility Parking problems Congestion problems	Accessible and attractive locations are preferred	Importance of location Benefits for well-located blocks
B. Economical trends: globalisation			
European unification	Introduction of the euro Open markets Free transport of goods and people Enlargement of European Community	Relocation to economically stronger regions Population shift after EU-enlargement	Greater housing demand in economically stronger regions, less in weaker regions
Prosperity growth	Increasing GDP	Greater demand for better quality of housing types Increasing housing market polarisation	Prospects determined by position on the housing market
C. Political trends: the changing role of the state			
Less state intervention, more market provision	Declining welfare state Increasing market provision Increasing personal liability	Personal liability for housing More competition More private sector activity More choices for some	High-rise housing exposed to market competition
Transformation in Eastern Europe	Declining state intervention Declining welfare state More market provision More personal liability Decreasing egalitarian society	Personal liability for housing More competition More private sector activity More choices for some More differentiation between housing areas	High-rise housing exposed to market competition

A. Technological trends: the world gets smaller

Information and communication technology (ICT)

In his famous book from the 1980s, Naisbitt identified the first of ten megatrends as the change from an industrial to an information-based society (Naisbitt, 1984). Whereas the Industrial Revolution was based on labour, products and energy, the current technological revolution is based on information and communication and the creation of a digital society (Spaans, 2000). In the Information Age, Castells argued that alongside the traditional physical space of places, a new world-wide organisation is developing, the space of flows, dictated by networks, streams and hubs of on-line communication (Castells, 1996-1998). Castells also indicates that certain parts in the 'old' western world may be located outside these flows and thus cannot participate in the new economy. This might affect the overall demand for hous-

Trend	Keywords	Effects on the housing market	Effects on high-rise
D. Demographical trends: ageing and immigration			
Ageing	Growing share of retired and pensionable population	Increasing need for housing with care More secure and more manageable homes	Specific opportunities for high-rise apartments and well-located estates
Immigration	Economic and political immigration Illegal immigration	Settlement in low cost areas Multi-ethnic society growths or the danger of a dual society The experience of later generations may differ	High-rise meets housing needs, or where less popular, estates may become stigmatised
E. Social-cultural trends: diversity and choice			
Individualisation and new lifestyles	Changing norms and values Emancipation Greater diversity and choice	Decreasing household sizes Increasing diversity of needs and preferences	High-rise may suit some new lifestyles, but requires certain norms
F. Environmental trends: sustainability, safety and security			
Community safety under pressure	Norms and values	Determining neighbourhood reputations	Negative image created by high crime rates
Sustainability	Environment Ecology	Sustainable quality of building materials Push back energy consumption New building versus renovation	Can high-rise meet this new challenge?

ing, especially the weaker parts of the housing market, including some high-rise estates.

Mobility as the norm

Since the 1970s, there have been continual predictions that more and more people would work from home and live home-based lives. More and more people use IT at home, a development which is leading to higher demands on dwellings themselves, on the need for larger and well equipped dwellings to accommodate more functions, and for well-sited but attractive locations.

Despite evidence of such trends, there has been a continual growth in personal movement and mobility. In many European countries, the number of cars exceeds the number of households, traffic is increasing and congestion is common.

B. Economical trends: globalisation

In all western countries, the industrial manufacturing sector has declined while service sector activity has sharply increased. Many traditional production tasks have been mechanised, automated and computerised, making production more capital-intensive and less dependent on manual labour. Other tasks have been relocated to other parts of the world, where labour is less expensive. In such a situation, businesses act, compete, deal, finance and form relationships on a worldwide basis (Marcuse & Van Kempen, 2000). The question here is whether high-rise estates or residents will suffer as a result of these changes. Our view is that factors such as education are more important than place of residence, although in an urban setting, declining labour market opportunities will affect negatively the income and employment prospects of the inhabitants of low-income housing areas.

The consequences of globalisation for the housing market

As already mentioned, growing differentiation in society can lead to social exclusion with spatial consequences (Madanipour et al. 1998). The creation of internal open markets in the EU has enabled people to move to gain employment in the economically healthiest regions. The growing prosperity and enlargement of the professional middle classes has increased the demand for more quality and diversity in the housing market. However, as the chapter on Germany will examine in relation to the former GDR, where the dynamic is to leave rather than to stay, the consequences for the housing market can be devastating. With the enlargement of the EU, a similar population shift may take place between Eastern and Western Europe resulting in additional demand for low cost housing in the West and a declining market with increased vacancies in the East.

Prosperity for some

A second major economic trend in the post-war years has been an increase in the wealth and prosperity of many people, especially the professional middle classes in the expanding service sector. This is in direct contrast with evidence of growing social exclusion among those whose skills are limited and whose (mainly manual) employment continues to decline. Many authors have pointed to the dangers of creating 'dual societies' in which a growing social and economic 'underclass' is concentrated in certain estates or neighbourhoods, including high-rise estates (Castells, 1989; Wilson 1987, 1996; Taylor, 1995).

European Unification

One of the most visible manifestations of globalisation within Europe is European Unification. Originating in 1948, the European Community reached 15 members by 2000 and will enlarge substantially to include more Eastern European countries in 2005. The tangible consequences of European Unifica-

tion are the open internal market; the free movement of goods and people; European-wide legislation and from 2002, the adoption of the euro. Although a slow process, more and more responsibilities are being devolved to the European Community level. However, in the field of housing a European policy seems far away.

C. Political trends: the changing role of the state

Restructuring welfare states in Western Europe

In Western European countries, the restructuring of the welfare state is one of the most important political developments. In some countries, the welfare role of the state has always been limited, but in others it has been comprehensive and well-developed. Its main principles have been twofold: to provide support for those who are excluded from the paid work force for example, the unemployed, the old and the ill, and secondly, to provide subsidies to support such basic social provision as education, social services and housing (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

Since the mid-1980s, the welfare activities of states have been in retreat (Lundqvist, 1992). Characterised by the phrase 'less state and more market', a new ideology has swept Europe which advocates less state intervention, more reliance on 'market' provision and on people providing for themselves. Economic prosperity during the 1990s shifted the emphasis on the private housing sector. The resulting economic cutbacks have had a major impact on the public housing sector.

Housing in a retreating welfare state

The restructuring of the welfare state can especially be felt in housing. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, housing diminished in political significance in favour of market provision and an increase in personal responsibility in almost all Western countries. Subsidies for house building have been dramatically reduced, the social rented sector has continued to decline and the owner-occupied sector to expand. Where less financial support is offered for housing costs, households have to rely more on their own resources and low income households are relegated to the poorer segments of the housing stock. For low cost high-rise housing, the impact can be two-fold, either becoming an important housing resource or the site of increased social exclusion and segregation.

Transformation in Eastern Europe

A description of the main consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union is best left to a contributor from one of the countries affected:

'After 1989, due to the radical political and economic changes, Eastern European countries began a new phase in their development. The orthodox principles of state-socialist redistribution of income and goods (e.g., housing) were

replaced by the rules of the market, setting off profound changes within these societies' (Kovacs, 1998).

The impact of this continuing process of transformation is still being felt, including the growth in income inequalities within countries; the reduced role of the state; the processes of restitution and privatisation and attempts to create post-socialist societies and economies.

Housing in a transformed Eastern Europe

The restitution and privatisation of housing has been one of the most important processes in Central and Eastern European countries since 1989/1990. In most former socialist countries, housing which was privately owned before the Soviet era has been returned to its former owners or their descendants, and former social housing has been sold to its tenants at heavy discounts. As a result, many former socialist countries now have a high rate of home ownership, and there has been a huge expansion in private sector activity (Schwedler, 1998).

According to Douglas (1997), privatisation has been considered a positive development in all Eastern European countries, especially by states relieved of responsibility for its provision and maintenance. However, 'post-privatisation housing systems face a number of problems' (Tsenkova, 2000). One is that low-income households have become homeowners without the ability to maintain and sustain the quality of their asset. Another is that the limited residue of public housing may be insufficient to enable municipalities to provide for those with special needs, for socially marginalised households, or to meet rising homelessness. Much of this remaining stock tends to be concentrated at the periphery of large urban centres, often in large scale and high-rise housing estates.

D. Demographical trends: older and more diverse populations

Ageing

Demographic trends such as ageing are among the more predictable megatrends. In the years after the Second World War, all European countries had to cope with a baby boom. In some countries, the boom faded away within a few years, while in others including Ireland, the Netherlands and Poland its effects persisted until the 1960s or later. The 'baby boom' cohorts have boosted the demand for services as they have successively required child care, education, employment, housing and elderly care services. The large cohorts of the late 1940s and 1950s will create a 'boom' in retirements and in the older population in the period 2010-2020.

Immigration

Immigration may have political or economic motives and has been a major feature of post-war European development. The relative economic prosperity

of the west has drawn in significant populations from poorer countries, many of which were former colonies of the host country. Illegal immigration can add to the flow of 'official' migrants, and through chain migration may have a major impact on specific cities and neighbourhoods (Burgers 1998).

Housing and demographical trends

It is clear that older people have distinctive housing needs and preferences, especially when personal or social care needs increase. Issues around limited mobility and poor health can be met by providing secure and manageable dwellings, an alarm system and care services, and by ensuring effective heating and home insulation.

Future cohorts of the elderly are likely to be very different from previous generations. In the past, the elderly in Europe have experienced recession, war and scarcity, whilst more of the future elderly will have grown up in times of economic growth and relative prosperity. As a result, they are more likely to own their home and to be mobile car owners, and to have much higher expectations concerning their future housing and care needs.

The impact of migration is less easy to determine. Large immigration flows may increase the competition for housing, and immigrants may have the weakest market position (Sarre et al., 1989). Segregation of immigrants may lead to stigmatised areas, and high-rise estates are likely to be among them. Immigration may also lead to tensions with the established population, especially when the process is rapid. However, immigration may also serve to support markets in which there is an over-supply of housing, subsequently providing a degree of stability.

First generation migrants tend to settle in neighbourhoods which offer available and affordable housing, and where family or community contacts are already established (Van Kempen & Priemus, 1999). Where high-rise estates have represented this segment of the market, they have played an important function in housing those newly established in the country. The Bijlmermeer in Amsterdam provides a perfect example of this process. The options and preferences of second and subsequent generations are less easy to predict, although experience from the UK suggests that very different paths are taken according to the relative economic success of different ethnic groups.

E. Social-cultural trends: diversity and choice

Individualisation and changing lifestyles

Individualisation takes place when collective values and norms associated with established faiths and belief systems break down, and individuals are able to exercise personal choice in their lifestyles and in relation to employment and the housing market (Van Kempen et al., 2000).

The growth of personal choice and distinctive rights for different social

groups is a key megatrend at work in contemporary Europe. Originating with the emancipation of women, a growing series of social groups, from young people, migrants and the elderly to single parents, homosexuals and those with a physical disability have established distinctive needs and the right to their own choices.

Whilst norms and values change rapidly, the housing stock tends to remain relatively stable, and people must either adapt to it or adapt housing to their needs. Some housing has proved more flexible than others, and high-rise housing, which has the potential to meet some of the new needs, is technically less adaptable.

Life courses have also changed rapidly in the last two or three decades. Among the main changes in many countries are a growth in relationship breakdown and the postponement of family formation. As a result, the demand for and turnover of housing increases. Even for those who have established a stable relationship or a family, there may be less stability in place of residence. Labour market opportunities may increase the need to move, and more movement to access better quality homes or neighbourhoods is a well established pattern. Where both partners are working, the demand for manageable homes may match that from much older households.

Such options are not open to everybody, and for low income households, choices will be limited or in decline, especially where labour market opportunities are reduced and the welfare state is in retreat. Such a dynamic is clearly associated with the fortunes of many post-socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

Social-cultural trends and their effect on housing

A very visible effect of the process of individualisation is the number of smaller households. Whilst conventional family households have been in the majority, they may now be outnumbered by single, childless couple, divorced, elderly, and single parent households. While the average household size is falling and there are less people per square kilometre, more households means the need for more homes of different types.

The greater individualisation of lifestyles creates contradictory situations in high-rise housing. Whilst many blocks show little individuality, they can offer the anonymity which suits a more private and individualised lifestyles. At the same time, the desire for anonymity may conflict with a greater awareness of neighbours in flats and the need for a more social way of living.

F. Environmental trends: achieving sustainability, safety and security

Concern over quality of life, the future of the natural and the built environments and their sustainability has never been greater. Since the Brundtland Commission's report *Our Common Future* in 1987, sustainability has become a

key word. The report questioned the necessary relationship between economic growth and environmental pollution, and promoted the alternative of sustainable growth supported by ecologically sound techniques. In two World Congresses, in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and Johannesburg in 2002, the overall aims behind a sustainable future are worked out in more concrete agreements. Such concerns cut across national and continental boundaries, although progress has proved highly variable.

In relation to housing, attention has turned to such issues as insulation; the use of ecological building materials; building regulations; recycling and a preference for the refurbishment and re-use of the existing stock instead of demolition and new building. Questions over the sustainability of high-rise housing may have particular consequences for its future.

A good quality of life depends on both the dwelling itself and the environment in which it is located. At the beginning of a century characterised by new uncertainties, the safety and security of home and neighbourhood have taken on even greater significance. Concerns include the priorities of ensuring safety from crime and anti-social behaviour, from dangerous road traffic, from other sources of noise and from environmental pollution. Whether this requires such formal provision as air conditioning and 'gated communities' or the informal scrutiny provided by friends and neighbours, the importance of a safe and secure home environment continues to grow.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with the factors affecting the position of high-rise housing estates on the housing market. We have attempted to identify key supply and demand factors which have particular consequences for high-rise estates, and to establish the influence of public policies and megatrends. In the following chapters, we will see how supply and demand factors are operating in each country. We identify the public policies of relevance and the extent to which megatrends are shaping the current and future position of estates. In chapter 18, we will seek to summarise the impact of these trends in relation to the future for high-rise estates across Europe.

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3 Sweden

High-rise housing in a low-density country

Lars-Erik Borgegård and Jim Kemeny¹

3.1 Introduction

Sweden is one of the most sparsely populated countries in Europe and might be expected to be the home of low density and low rise housing. Somewhat surprisingly Sweden, together with Denmark, was one of the leading nations in Europe to build high-rise housing (Rådberg, 1988; 1991). How is it then that Sweden with its vast land, low population density and long tradition of single-family housing became one of the leading nations for high-rise construction in Europe? This contradiction requires some explanation.

Three stages of high-rise planning and construction can be distinguished in Sweden. The first phase is the building of tower blocks, especially residential high-rise buildings, that lasted until the mid 1960s. These buildings were generally carefully designed and laid out, they housed a mixed population and are still attractive in the housing market. The second phase, during which most high-rise was constructed, followed on from the early suburbs such as Vällingby, but blocks were now built in prefabricated form in stereotyped environments. Layout usually followed the planning style of that time with angular lines and a tenure structure easy to detect from the outside – municipal or co-operative high-rise buildings of multi-family housing and single-family houses in owner occupation. The third and final stage constituted a mix of different high-rise buildings, by function (residential, hotels, offices and plazas); location (central, semi-central and peripheral) and by ownership (private corporations, private and public housing companies). This third stage also reflects a withdrawal – or at least a distancing from interventionist planning by the state and municipalities in deference to more private interests.

Traditionally Sweden was an agricultural country characterised by single-family housing. This is not the case today, with more than 85% of the population living in urban areas. The spatial redistribution required created a huge demand for housing in urban areas, which in turn gave rise to the construction of new apartments, some of which were in high-rise buildings. Urbanisation began quite late in Sweden, the fastest, most concentrated and most sustained period was in the thirty years following the end of the Second World



Population	8,876,744
Population density	20/km ²
Capital	Stockholm
GDP per capita	€17,069
Housing stock	4.3 million

¹ This chapter is being published posthumously with respect to its main author, Lars-Erik Borgegård, who was originally asked to write the chapter on Sweden and who invited me to jointly author it with him. I wish to acknowledge my debt to his contribution.

War. During that time the population living in urban areas rose from 60 to 85%. Most of this increase resulted from the movement of population from the countryside in the south and from the forests in the north. Population gravitated from the inland of northern Sweden to the industrial towns along the Baltic coast and towards the southern population centres (The Population, 1991). Immigration became increasingly important and by the late 1960s and early 1970s, substantial ethnic minority populations, principally from Finland, Greece, the former Yugoslavia and Turkey had become established in the urban parts of Sweden.

During the period 1945-1990, when the population increased by 28% and the number of households by 80%, housing became a major priority of social policy (Hårsman & Scheele, 1997). The spatial redistribution of the population the increase in the number of one and two-person households and rapidly increasing purchasing power all fuelled the demand for housing. Partly as a result of these structural changes, but also as a response to them, Sweden's housing stock grew by 51% between 1960 and 1990. The house-building industry became highly industrialised and produced standardised units in all types of housing, including multi-family units during the 1960s and early 1970s. However, high-rise buildings never became more than a relatively small part of the total dwelling stock. The traditional Swedish block of apartments was in low-rise three or four storey buildings, only nine per cent of all dwellings in Sweden today have 5 storeys or more (SCB, 1998). As we shall discuss in this chapter, the 'problem' of high-rise housing that exercises the minds, emotions and imaginations of planners and policy-makers is concerned as much with the tenure form and the area in which the buildings are located, as with the buildings themselves.

The Swedish housing stock in general, as well as most residential areas, are generally very mixed with respect to housing type and tenure. The one exception is residential areas built during rapid urbanisation in the 1960s and early 1970s, and which are recognisable in most Swedish towns and cities. They are the result of what became known as the 'Million Programme' which will be reviewed below.

3.2 Influences from abroad

The origins of the Million Programme have to be understood in the context of the Swedish welfare model combined with architectural influences from abroad, particularly the functionalist ideology most prominently expressed by the Swiss architect Le Corbusier. Social welfare policy went hand in hand with physical planning ideology.

Johan Rådberg (1997) in his book entitled *The Dream of the Atlantic Steamer*, has claimed that the roots of Swedish housing policy after the Second



North Biskopsgården, Gothenburg. These massive monolithic million-programme buildings have been heavily criticised. This is one of the less monolithic as the facade is broken up by balconies and colour.

Photo: Camilla Palander

World War can be traced to functionalist ideals generated by Le Corbusier and his contemporaries who emphasised the benefits of large scale collective housing over individual and small scale projects.

'The modern project' to build a new society by demolishing the slums and fostering new citizens in the 'Peoples Home' was carried out by the social democratic party, and by planners. Swedish architects and planners, such as Uno Åhrén and Arne Markelius, were strongly influenced by the ideas of Le Corbusier, Gropius and the European CIAM (Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne) Group. The first proposals for a massive construction of high-rise buildings in Stockholm were set out as early as 1928. Le Corbusier sketched out plans for high-rise buildings including 10 storey blocks on Norrmalm (the northern part of central Stockholm) and on Brunkeberg overlooking the waterfront of central Stockholm. Whilst this plan did not come to fruition, the 1930 Stockholm exhibition gave impetus to the new modern housing form (Pred, 1995).

Good housing conditions were one of the corner stones of the welfare programme of the 1940s. Alva and Gunnar Myrdal introduced the idea of society fostering individuals to become good citizens in the context of physical and social public planning. In the early 1940s, a new master plan for the 'The Future Stockholm' proposed housing the population in suburbs of 10,000 inhabitants, with 75% single-family and row housing, while providing good services in the city centre. Seven years later, the model suburb was based on 16,500 people and the proportion of multi-family housing raised to 66%. The famous Vällingby suburb had only 10% of its buildings in the form of single-family and row housing (Rådberg, 1991).

3.3 Early examples of high-rise construction

The King's Towers (Kungstornen) built in 1924-25 on one of the major commercial streets in Stockholm were the first high-rise buildings in Europe and included a restaurant at the top of one tower (Caldenby, 1990). The impact of

the Kungstornen on the new skyline of Stockholm reinforced the image of a trendy, glittering city with a 'fast pulse'. One of the most famous pictures from the armistice of 1945 was of the celebrations before King's Towers, confirming their status at the very centre of the city.

Immediately after the Second World War, a Royal Housing Commission was launched and the creation of a public housing sector was proposed (SOU, 1945). As a neutral country, Sweden had the advantage of not having suffered war damage to its housing stock. The first generation of high-rise residential buildings was well designed and carefully laid out in the urban landscape. One of the more prominent examples which had a major influence on high-rise building in Scandinavia was the Danviksklippan, constructed during the Second World War on a small rocky island close to Stockholm city centre. In all, nine 8 to 10-storey houses comprising almost 400 apartments were laid out, the point blocks centred round a rock and overlooking Lake Mälaren (Jensen, 1966).

Other residential high-rise building soon followed outside Stockholm. Built in 1948-53, one influential example was the Rosta estate, an 11-storey building in Örebro at the entrance to a residential area of star-shaped 4-storey housing in the so called 'Milky way' area (Jensen, 1966; Egerö, 1979; Edh, 1993). The Rosta estate, at the edge of the growing city, was designated for families coming mainly from slum cleared areas, and a high-rise building of 78 apartments for single households balanced the demographic structure of the area. A 'hotel lobby' provided a range of facilities, with shops, schools and other facilities close by. The Rosta estate was an example of a 'model residential area' in the style of community planning, (Franzén & Sandstedt, 1981), and reflected all the facets of the Swedish model with high quality housing, a social security programme and a high-rise building in a middle sized town.

One of the most famous suburbs in Sweden is Vällingby, some 10 km north east of the centre of Stockholm. Vällingby was the prototype for residential areas planned during the Million Programme period between 1965 and 1974. The expansion of the Stockholm metropolitan area was closely linked to the growth of the subway, and access to subway stations was important when planning the new suburbs. One-bedroom apartments in high-rise complexes (of 11 storeys) were built close to subway stations, with mainly three-storey housing within 500 metres. single-family housing was built beyond this zone. Public as well as commercial services like schools, nurseries, small shops and laundry facilities were located close to these houses. In Vällingby, of a total of 8,000 dwellings built, 90% were multi-family housing, mainly for public rental with a small proportion in the co-operative sector (Sax, 1998). The suburb was designed with a segregated traffic system including pedestrian and cycle lanes between the different neighbourhoods and Vällingby centre.

Not only housing was planned at Vällingby, one of the founding ideas in planning was the so called 'ABC' concept (work, housing and service centre).



A 1950s limited-equity rental 'point-house' (*punkthus*) in the popular Gävle inner suburb of Southside, just a 10 minutes walk from the town centre: a very common type of high-rise housing.

Jobs were supposed to be created for 50% of the workforce, which meant 10,000 to 12,000 jobs in the case of Vällingby. This plan proved to be too optimistic, however, as the final total only reached approximately 25% (Sax, 1998).

3.4 The Swedish experience

Arguments in favour of high-rise

Among the arguments in favour of high-rise building was the shortage of land or its high cost in urban centres. However, whilst it could be demonstrated that a higher population density could be achieved than in low rise buildings, high density could also be achieved in low rise (3-4 storeys) areas (Rådberg, 1988).

Another argument for constructing high-rise buildings was to meet population growth. This 'urban containment' argument developed in Britain after the Second World War in response to concern over how to house the people migrating to London (Jensen, 1966). However, this argument has since been rejected in relation to Sweden, because of very modest population growth by international comparison (Rådberg, 1997).

One of the main arguments for high-rise buildings was the creation of a social fabric with close neighbourhood connections. Le Corbusier used the metaphor of the Atlantic steamer containing all the functions of a modern city including residential areas. It was suggested that this created opportunities to meet people, make connections and exchange ideas. There has been a never ending, and inconclusive, discussion in the planning literature concerning the relationship between the physical structure and the social environment (Sandström, 1989).

Rosengård, Malmö: a typical 'One Million Programme' estate

Rosengård is one of the best known Million Programme areas in Sweden, it was built when Malmö was an expanding industrial city in the 1960s and 1970s and the textile industry, shipyards and food industry were still important. Rosengård was built between 1967 and 1974 and was designed for 20,000 people. The area consists of 7,000 dwellings which makes it one of the biggest multi-family areas in the country. The area was built in a great hurry using industrial production techniques and based on the economic formula that a combination of eight storey and three storey blocks (without an elevator) resulted in the lowest cost per square metre.

The area is divided by a motorway, over-bridged by a shopping centre. One of the principles governing the planning of the area was the catchment area required for the shopping centre as well as the number of children needed for the secondary school. When the area was built Rosengård was seen as new and modern and part of the reshaping of Malmö's old 'class society' (Stigendahl, 1999). The district of Rosengård is not homogenous though, it consists of 10 residential areas including 100% single-family housing, 100% municipal housing, co-operative and private rental areas. What is obvious, though is the correlation between high-rise buildings, tenure and the percentage of the immigrant population (Områdesfakta för Malmö, 1998).

A couple of years after the area was built, problems began to emerge. One of the most influential and critical Swedish reports – 'The case of Rosengård' analysed the Million Programme areas from a political theoretical perspective (Flemström & Ronnby, 1972). This report became the starting point for all discussion of Rosengård and similar areas. It had been supposed that the buildings oppressed people and a number of feature stories described high-rise housing in the area as 'the Great Wall of China' (Ristilammi, 1994). The critiques received impetus from radical political movements in Europe and Sweden, and were nourished by the economy hitting the old 'industrial' city of Malmö especially hard.

Three consequences of the critique of the area and its economic problems were the ending of further building of similar residential areas; a flight to neighbouring municipalities offering single-family housing and increasing social, and especially ethnic segregation (Ristilammi, 1994). Another consequence was an increase in vacancy rates, and by the middle of the 1970s, the municipal housing company (MKB) had 2,000 empty properties. One of the first refurbishments of a Million Programme area took place in Rosengård in the 1970s. The outer environment was partly reshaped, playgrounds were built above and underground garage and walls were constructed between streets and houses to create a sense of privacy and to give the area a less monolithic appearance (Vidén & Lundahl, 1992). A 'Programme of Integration and Activation of the Administrations of Leisure and Social Services' was implemented in order to improve the community spirit of the area. Finally, a plan was developed in co-operation with the municipal housing company, the tenants' movement and other actors in the housing market to ensure that housing maintenance reflected local needs and requirements (Alfredsson & Cars, 1997). These discussions were the forerunners to a national and local state partnership developed in the 1990s to combat residential segregation.

Arguments against high-rise

The British Garden City Movement had a major influence on the Gothenburg housing exhibition of 1923, where a number of low density housing areas in semi-central areas were demonstrated, the so called Landshövdingehus (cement construction in the first floor and wooden construction above). Although these houses and areas became very popular, the functionalist group gradually became stronger and outnumbered the low-rise housing advocates (Rådberg, 1991).

In the 1940s, there was great concern that high-rise buildings created barriers between people, especially between mothers and their children when the ideal household was a married couple with two or more children (Dahlström, 1957; Landström, 1958). Despite extensive research in Vällingby and other suburbs, the negative perception of high-rise buildings could not be confirmed. On the other hand housing preference studies in the last half century showed a massive preference for single-family housing and low rise (Krantz & Frösslund, 1972). More recently, site and location factors as well as the social composition of neighbours have been of growing interest (Bergenstråhle, 1984; Siksiö & Borgegård, 1991; Pettersson, 1997; Andersson et al., 1992; Fransson et al., 2002). One of the most critical reports on high-rise buildings was Newman's (1973) work identifying high crime rates in anonymous and 'empty' high-rise areas, a theme in the Swedish critique of the Million Programme.

High-rise housing estates and the 'Million Programme'

During the period 1965-74 the famous Million Programme was implemented, with the aim of building 100,000 dwellings each year during 10 years. What is less known, however, is that in addition to these building activities, a large proportion of the older unmodernised housing stock was demolished. The net result was an increase in Sweden's housing stock of about 650,000 new dwellings, combined with a general rise in quality (Byggforskningsrådet, 1990).

The new Million Programme residential areas were greatly inspired by early suburban neighbourhoods such as Vällingby and Årsta. Many of the same ideas were applied, such as the adoption of 'neighbourhood units', the separation of traffic and a planned centre incorporating public and private facilities. One of the main aims behind the planning of residential areas was to create good democratic citizens. The means of achieving this were to build at high quality with a good range of services including schools, nurseries, churches, public space, a library, and meeting places for different groups of households. A principal aim was to mix and integrate different groups of households through the spatial mixing of tenures.

3.5 Some current housing and housing market characteristics

The relationship between houses and apartments

In 1998, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics, there were 2,319,328 dwellings in multi-family buildings and 1,952,114 in single-family buildings, making a total of 4,271,442. 9% of all dwellings in Sweden in 1998 was in 5-storey buildings or more, which is about 384,000 dwellings.

Figure 3.1 Housing production 1957-2001, one or two-dwelling buildings and multi-dwelling buildings

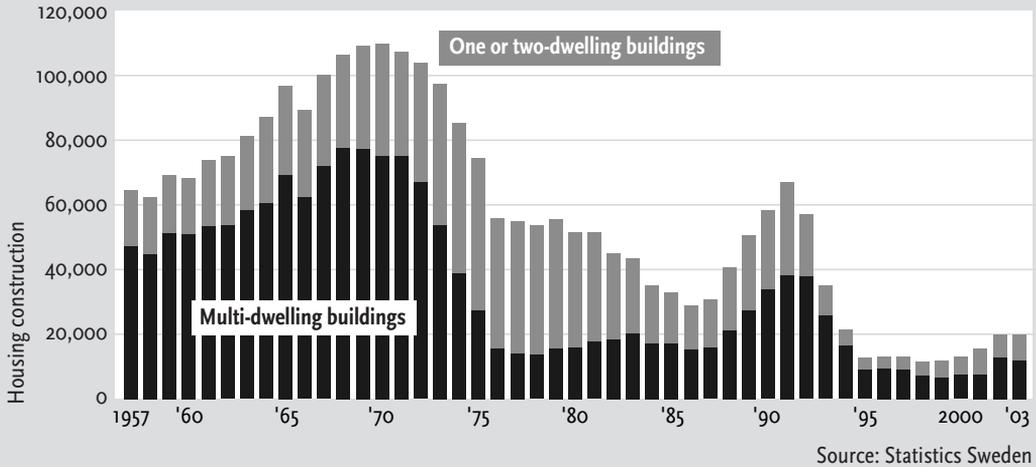


Figure 3.1 shows the housing production in Sweden, divided among family houses with one and two dwellings, and multi-family buildings. The effects of the Million Programme is clearly visible.

One of the explicit goals of Swedish housing policy was to provide housing in a variety of dwelling types and forms of tenure. This policy was clearly successful (Tables 3.1 and 3.2). However, one of the failures of Swedish housing policy has been that this variety does not extend to combinations of dwelling type and tenure. In particular, there are very few houses for rent and no apartments may be owner-occupied. The overwhelming bulk of houses are owner-occupied, while the majority of apartments, including those in high-rise complexes belong to the rented sector, with a substantial minority belonging to the co-operative sector.

What has been happening in Sweden since the 1990s in the Metropolitan areas, especially in central Stockholm, is the conversion from private multi-family housing to co-operative ownership in order to capitalise the high property prices of the central location.

The relationship between suburban and city centre apartments

In general, suburban apartment buildings are newer and more modern and therefore have better facilities and higher standards than inner city apartments. In order to modernise the old housing stock, state subsidies were targeted at the renovation of the stock, especially during the 1980s. There is a trade-off between housing standards and location in the Swedish rental market. The rent-setting system has in practice tended to result in price-sensitivity to standards at the expense of location. By contrast, actual demand for rental housing reflects the opposite, location is seen by tenants as more important than housing standards (Siksiö & Borgegård, 1991; Fransson et al., 2002).

Changes in the social structure of municipal housing

Problems associated with many of the Million Programme housing areas cannot be understood without reference to the subsequent increase in single-

Table 3.1 Dwelling types in Sweden, 1960-1990

Year	One and two-family houses	Multi-family houses	Total
1960	1,258,000	1,417,000	2,675,000
1965	1,293,000	1,582,000	2,875,000
1970	1,338,000	1,844,000	3,182,000
1975	1,469,000	2,061,000	3,530,000
1980	1,626,000	2,043,000	3,669,000
1985	1,778,000	2,085,000	3,863,000
1990	1,874,000	2,169,000	4,043,000

Source: Census data, Statistics Sweden, 1998

family housing construction. In the second half of the 1970s, the construction of single-family housing (a 'villa boom') took place in every Swedish town and city. There is a strong preference for single-family housing in all age and socio-economic groups and in almost all ethnic groups (Almqvist, in progress; Pettersson, 1997). The institutional basis for this period of 'the dream of the single-family house', was good economic conditions and the State making interest loan costs tax deductible. One effect of this single-family housing programme was a substantial outflow of households with children from multi-family units. The effects are clear, multi-family housing, and especially high-rise complexes, became less and less popular.

Table 3.2 Tenure in Sweden, 1960-1990

Year	Municipal houses et al.	Co-op houses	Private houses	Total
1960	356,000	299,000	2,020,000	2,675,000
1965	490,000	394,000	1,992,000	2,876,000
1970	688,000	458,000	2,035,000	3,181,000
1975	841,000	506,000	2,183,000	3,530,000
1980	815,000	584,000	2,207,000	3,606,000
1985	917,000	624,000	2,320,000	3,861,000
1990	936,000	683,000	2,385,000	4,004,000

Source: Census data, Statistics Sweden, 1998

Some of the main features of the socio-economic transformation of the municipal housing sector are an increasing overrepresentation of single mothers with children, and increasing proportions of young, elderly, unskilled and immigrant households (Heinstedt, 1992). The perceived concentration of 'problem households' and a high turnover of households have stigmatised some areas (Olson, 1993).

Recent criticism of the Million Programme has been considerable. Two main points have been raised, firstly that large-scale multi-family housing areas are composed disproportionately of high-rise buildings. Although in some cases this criticism may be accurate, it is based on a misleading stereotype. The so called 'concrete suburbs' do not consist solely of prefabricated high-rise buildings, most properties are only 1-3 storeys high and brick is the most common material for facades. The design of the internal environment was almost always carefully planned and an improvement on previous the older (overcrowded) housing stock (Vidén, 1992).

The second main criticism has focused on the poor quality of the outer

environment, and to a certain extent, this is valid. Parking areas were not well designed, playgrounds were poor, and there was a lack of variety in landscaping. The external environment was often flat, with no contours. However, parks and forest leisure areas are close to most residential areas (Vidén, 1992).

3.6 Counter reactions

Physical and environmental improvements

A Million Programme improvement programme was launched in the early 1980s, both to reshape the outer environment and replace some components in the apartments (especially poor quality window frames). In many of these improvement projects, tenants were involved to some extent. However, another problem emerged in the early 1980s when the number of vacant apartments increased and municipal housing companies were badly affected. Most of the vacant units were 3-4 room apartments in suburban Million Programme areas. These apartments were supposed to accommodate 'typical families' of two children, but due to the structural demographic and socio-economic changes mentioned earlier, these apartments were now either too big or too small. A more preferable alternative for households with children was to move to an owner occupied house.

Many of the housing companies affected by high vacancy rates were temporarily 'rescued' by the huge refugee immigration wave in the second half of the 1980s. The Government established an immigrant and refugee dispersal policy, the so called 'Whole of Sweden policy', in order to relieve the high pressure on the Metropolitan areas of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö, and to counteract segregation. The policy operated through a combination of subsidies from the Government to the local municipalities and contracts between the Government and the municipalities to house refugee groups in vacant municipal apartments (Borgegård et al., 1998).

For a couple of years the system worked quite well, but when the refugee programme subsidy period was terminated, many of the refugees moved to their relatives in the metropolitan areas. Again, many of the municipal housing companies faced major economic problems from high vacancy rates, especially where population was declining because of out-migration from the north and from formerly important factory towns in the central Steel belt (SOU, 1997). In an effort to counteract this, action was taken by the companies to enhance the attractiveness of the dwellings and areas.

Reshaping the space between the blocks, restructuring apartments by glazing balconies, creating new and more individual entrances, and painting blocks were the main measures. In some cases, more radical means were used, some of the apartments were demolished, some were partly redesigned (for example in the form of terraces), some were sold, while others were

moved from the public rental to the co-operative or private rental sectors. Whilst improvements were made to the housing stock and the environment, social problems often moved on to another area and were not solved (Ericsson, 1997).

During the 1980s, and complementary to these measures, tenants became more involved in managing the housing stock. In many areas, this involvement was only token, but in others it was more profound. In the residential area of Holma in Malmö, for example, a programme for self-maintenance was introduced, which meant a reduction in the monthly housing costs of those tenants involved in painting, cleaning etc. (Alfredsson & Cars, 1997).

Differing views of the Million Housing programme areas and the new planning ideology

Whilst criticism of the Million Programme from the outside has been severe over the years, there are contradictory views. Many people prefer to live in areas where they have friends, especially those from their country of origin. Foreign visitors to these so-called 'depressed areas' gain quite a different impression as most are not visually deteriorated or run down. There is also a difference between the impressions created by statistical data and the perception of those living there, whose quality of life is supported by both the Swedish welfare state and municipal housing companies. Finally, whilst there is a perceived correlation between Million Programme areas and stigmatised high-rise buildings, this is false as there is a near absence of them in some areas.

In the 1990s, a new approach concentrating on disadvantaged areas and putting resources into solving their problems marks a major ideological shift from universal to selective welfare. It may well be that this new approach represents a sea-change in public policy that will begin to permeate other areas of welfare besides housing.

Modern high-rise buildings

In some of the regional capitals, new high-rise buildings have been placed in city centres, but mainly for non-residential uses. In Västerås and Umeå, high-rise hotels have been built, creating much local controversy, and in Stockholm, the 'Skatteskrapan' is a high-rise building for the Local Taxation Authority to south of the city centre and the Wennergren Centre, north of city centre is a hotel for international researchers. There are also recent examples of high-rise building in external commercial centres, for example hotels in Örebro, Jönköping, Halmstad and Arlanda. Finally, in the last two decades, there have been a number of mainly office high-rise buildings erected in Gothenburg in good waterfront locations (Caldenby, 1990; Imberg, 1991). In the Malmö region, the 'Turning Torso' is a 186 metre high residential building in the new East Harbour and the Scandinavian Tower is being constructed on

the plains to the south of Malmö with access to the Öresund bridge/tunnel. This is intended to be the tallest building in Scandinavia and to symbolise the renewed power and potential of this growing region (Andersen & Borgegård, 1999).

3.7 Concluding remarks

The main question underlying this chapter is why there has been such a strong emphasis in Sweden on the construction of high-rise buildings, given that it is a sparsely populated country, with an ideal of single-family housing extending back for generations. As indicated above, there are many possible explanations to these riddles.

Some of the leading architects had been abroad studying ideas of planning and transportation in Europe and the US and came back to implement them in Sweden. The influence of the 'functionalists' steadily increased symbolised by the promotion of their ideas at the Stockholm Exhibition 1930. The Swedish welfare model is also part of the explanation for high-rise building. Since the 1930s, the dominant ideology has been that the welfare state should 'take care' of its citizens. This ideology supported large scale solutions, for the provision of schools, day care, communal facilities – and for housing. Such ideas gave rise to a planning philosophy based on certain population numbers, for example, the 'neighbourhood unit'. The planning link to transportation should also be noted as the commitment to rapid public transport enabled the city centre to be connected to suburbs including high-rise buildings. A further explanation is the heavy demand for new housing, stimulated by relatively late urbanisation after the Second World War, which put pressure on housing demand in urban areas all over Sweden. Later on, in the 1960s and early 1970s, the demand was high in central and southern Sweden, especially in the industrial towns and cities with growing service sectors. During the Million Programme, a rational choice was made to construct prefabricated concrete multi-family blocks, with relatively uniform apartments. A corporatist alliance between house builders, their association, housing companies, architects and planners also partly explains the preference for the high-rise concept in the Stockholm region and elsewhere (Egerö, 1979; Billing & Stigendahl, 1994). Finally, Sweden has a long tradition of administering and planning from above, which placed 'the experts' in a strong position, and led to a neglect of the role of 'ordinary people'. The period until the 1970s could be described as the regulation or interventionist period, when the government had a key say in what should be planned and built. However, starting in the late 1970s, a more decentralised and individualistic approach to planning developed. Private corporate initiatives emerged and politicians and corporations expressed their power by building high-rise structures, such as

hotels, offices, sport arenas and commercial centres (Imberg, 1991; Caldenby, 1990). Whilst responsibility for high-rise construction may have passed from the public to the private and corporate sectors, the symbolic power of the tall block remains as strong as ever.

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4 Denmark

Limited problems but intensive action

Hedvig Vestergaard

4.1 Introduction

High-rise housing became an issue in Denmark in the 1940s, even before the first high-rise estate – Bellahøj – was built in 1952-53 on the edge of Copenhagen. From the early fifties to the mid-seventies, high-rise blocks were built in several Danish cities and in the Copenhagen area. However, high-rise is not synonymous with problem housing and due to early doubts over its suitability, relatively little was constructed. Only about 3% of the Danish housing stock consists of high-rise flats, and less than 2% is located in blocks of 7 or more storeys.

As elsewhere in Europe, the promotion of high-rise housing in Denmark was closely associated with the desire to achieve a modern and rational way of life, combining proximity to nature with an urban location. The high-rise estate would be connected with the city through accessible public transport, and would provide such amenities as cinemas, cafés, shopping facilities and schools. Within the block itself, meals, laundry, cleaning, library, reception, child care etc. would all be provided. Such facilities would replace the domestic servant – who became virtually non-existent by the end of the 1950s – and free the housewife and mother from being tied to the home 24 hours a day. Cooking and child care were to be taken over by staff paid for by residents out of their rent. The new high density housing would also protect nature from the urban sprawl associated with low-rise single-family houses (Buhl, 1948). For many in the 1950s, high-rise living was a real ambition, encouraged by the planners' vision of a 'good life' to be enjoyed in tower blocks.

As Table 4.1 demonstrates, almost all the high-rise stock in Denmark was built after 1950 during a period of accelerated urbanisation and migration from rural areas. The construction of high-rise flats, as part of flat construction, fell from a record 11.5% in the period 1950-1974 to less than 4% after 1974. 40,000 units or 1.7% of the total housing stock were located in blocks of 7 or more storeys. By 1999, Denmark had a total housing stock of almost 2.5 million dwellings, 59% of which were single-family houses and 39% flats in multi-storey blocks (see Table 4.2). The majority of the social or non-profit housing stock was in multi-storey blocks.



Population	5,368,854
Population density	125/km ²
Capital	Copenhagen
GDP per capita	€20,515
Housing stock	2.5 million

Table 4.1 Number of housing units in multi-storey buildings by year of construction and number of storeys in Denmark, 1950-1994

	Construction period			
	Total	Before 1950	1950-1974	1975-1994
Number of storeys	916,599	485,913	316,042	86,391
1-5	840,548	458,155	273,366	81,624
6	35,283	26,532	6,454	1,577
7 and up	40,768	1,226	36,222	3,190
Percentage distribution				
Number of storeys	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1-5	91.7	94.3	86.5	94.5
6	3.8	5.5	2.0	1.8
7 and up	4.4	0.3	11.5	3.7

Source: Danmarks Statistik, Special data compiled for this article

Table 4.2 Housing stock by type and ownership in Denmark, January 1999

Type of building	Ownership							Total	%
	Private person, ltd. company	Social housing association	Housing society	Other association, foundation etc.	Municipality	Other public authority	Other		
Farm houses	133,867	11	4	733	590	555	80	135,840	5
One-family houses									
detached	985,372	8,964	6,104	4,129	2,210	2,254	1,297	1,010,330	41
semi- or undetached	131,787	116,347	29,548	11,061	7,213	916	13,801	310,673	13
Multi-storey buildings	265,841	347,250	119,903	51,056	19,612	5,224	154,595	963,481	39
Student hostels	2,305	5,312	6	22,597	263	2,118	723	33,324	1
Other	15,958	880	197	2,010	1,391	713	790	21,939	1
Total housing stock	1,535,130	478,764	155,762	91,586	31,279	11,780	171,286	2,475,587	
%	62	19	6	4	1	0	7		100

4.2 High-rise in the housing market

The first phase of construction

Until 1939, when a new building law was adopted, buildings of more than 6 storeys were not permitted in Denmark (Lund, 1951). However, as elsewhere in Europe plans were developed during the Second World War to relieve post-



Bispehaven, Hasle, Århus built between 1969 and 1973 comprises seven blocks of 7 storeys; 12 blocks of 4 storeys and four blocks of row houses of 2 storeys. The estate is located close to the ring road but far from the urban centre. Today the city has grown towards the estate.

war housing need. One of the first questions taken up by the founding committee of the Danish Building Research Institute in 1947 was the economic advantage of high-rise compared with lower-rise blocks (Arctander et al., 1954). It was concluded that variations in building prices were so small, and influenced by so many factors, that the question could not be decided on the basis of economic calculations alone.

In conceptual terms, the ideas of Le Corbusier – representing the European tradition – inspired the architects and planners of Danish high-rise to plan projects on the outskirts of the city. This new housing was one component of contemporary urban development, and by offering pleasant views of nature, offered a unique relationship between residential blocks and the natural environment. This concept was beautifully expressed in the Bellahøj high-rise estate constructed on the outskirts of Copenhagen in 1952-53. The result of a competition held in 1944, the winning proposal was completed by four different housing associations each using their own architect (Bellahøjbebyggelsen, 1951). Constructed in eight and ten storey tower blocks, a total of 1,300 flats of up to 3.5 rooms were provided with service and recreational facilities. This was the first high-rise estate in Denmark.

The 1960s: the high-rise wave and reactions to it

During the 1960s, further high-rise estates were constructed, mostly consisting of slab blocks of 7-15 storeys. They are to be found mainly in the environs of Copenhagen and include Høje Gladsaxe, Domus Vista, Milestedet in Rødovre, Store Hus in Hvidovre, Grønnevej in Sorgenfri and Brøndbystrand in Brøndby. The trend for high-rise estates also reached other cities resulting in



Sorgenfrivang II, built between 1957 and 1959, consists of three high-rise blocks, each of 14 storeys. It is located close to an S-train station – Sorgenfri – north of Copenhagen. The estate is very popular and families with children like to live there. The blocks are connected by a very attractive, well maintained and heated walkway, and the facades have recently received a major renovation.

Nøjsomheden in Helsingør; Fjordparken in Kolding Axeltorvet in Horsens; Langenæs in Århus; Bispehaven in Hasle outside Århus; Hotel Mercur in Viby outside Århus; Grønlandstov in Aalborg and Kridthuset in Kvaglund outside Esbjerg.

One of the main problems of all large scale social-housing estates from the late 1960s and early 1970s is that either they did not receive or received too late the service facilities that were part of the original concept. In addition the management of high-rise projects often from the beginning did not agree with or did not understand the concept for the household services. Often a high-rise project never got a chance, or a change in management made it deteriorate.

No sooner had this wave of high-rise building begun than doubts began to be expressed about the suitability of such housing for families with children. In 1967, the Danish Building Research Institute published guidelines on good housing which did not recommend high-rise homes for families (Vedel-Petersen, 1967). References were also made to English and Swedish research (Sheppard, 1964; Sandel & Wohlin, 1960), none of which supported the continued construction of high-rise housing for families. In 1969, the Danish Building Research Institute published further research which compared children's living and play environments in Søndermarken, a multi-storey housing area consisting of 15-storey tower blocks, with conditions in three-storey blocks in Tingbjerg (Morville, 1969a). The overall conclusion of the research was that children prospered less well in high-rise housing estates:

"Children from the high blocks start playing out of doors on their own at a later age than children from the low blocks."... "Young children's outdoor play depends on the height of their homes above ground."... "Young children in the high blocks have fewer contacts with playmates than those in the low blocks."... "The average number of periods spent out of doors by children from the high blocks is only half that of children from the low blocks." (Morville, 1969a, p. 75).



The tower block built at Grønlandstov in Aalborg in 1963 was associated with crime and drug addiction. A physical renovation programme, closely connected with a social project, was completed in 1994. The situation has changed dramatically providing a renewed architectural appearance, refurbished flats and many collective facilities.

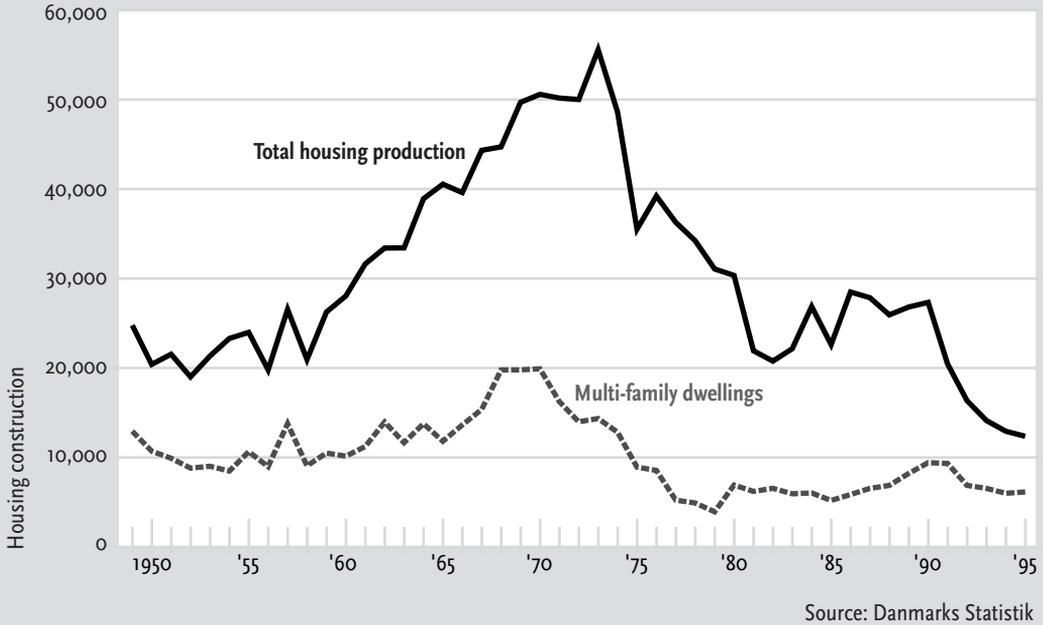
Arising from this report, a pamphlet was produced which advised on how to alleviate these problems and how to plan for children living in multi-storey areas (Morville, 1969b). However, criticism of high-rise housing persisted. At that time, permission to build a housing project supported by state loans had to be obtained from the Ministry of Housing, and one of the consequences of the current debate was a reduction in the likelihood of obtaining such loans for building high-rise housing.

House building in Denmark decreased from more than 50,000 units in 1971 to less than 30,000 units by the end of the decade. The number of multi-storey dwellings completed also fell, but by less than total completions (Figure 4.1). Over the same period, vacancies began to appear at an alarming rate in large scale housing estates built by housing associations in the late 1960s and early 1970s. High vacancies and a rapid turnover of tenants were experienced in large flats with four or more rooms, and in high-rise blocks with smaller flats including Kridthuset in Esbjerg and Grønlandstov in Aalborg. The problem of hard-to-let flats persisted until the end of the 1980s (Vestergaard, 1993).

Rethinking high-rise housing

From the mid-1970s, the construction of large housing estates and high-rise blocks ended, and projects changed in type and density from large scale multi-storey and small scale low density to high density low rise. It has not been possible to identify the precise date when high-rise construction was formally ended by the Ministry of Housing (Miljøministeriet Planstyrelsen, 1991). However, it is likely that an informal end was administered by civil servants at the start of the 1970s (personal communication with Flemming Lethan, Danish Ministry of Housing, October 1996).

Figure 4.1 Total housing production and multi-storey production in Denmark, by year of construction, 1949-95



The prospect of building new high-rise housing returned around 1990, when a number of developers presented plans for projects close to city centres, including Stjerneplads in Århus and Orestad in Copenhagen, and on harbour fronts including Langelinie in Copenhagen and Frøsiloen at Svendborg. Such proposals have prompted concern over the potential increase in traffic and a greater demand for parking, and have stimulated a review of how to respect historic city fronts, landscapes and skylines (Miljøministeriet Planstyrelsen, 1991). With the exception of hotel projects in Orestad, political resistance and a lack of finance have ensured that none of these projects has come close to realisation.

This renewed interest in high-rise is not related to the wider housing question, such projects are designed to provide very high quality business facilities combined with hotel accommodation and housing for affluent older people who make few demands on costly municipal services.

4.3 Problems and interventions

The emergence of 'troubled housing estates'

Data on the current residents of high-rise housing are not available. However, in view of the allocation policies applied to most high-rise blocks, single people and childless couples are the most likely residents, and very few children are likely to live in them. Since the 1970s, there has been a general exodus of families with children from social-housing estates to single-family houses. From the 1980s, in blocks such as Kridthuset in Esbjerg; Store Hus in Hvidovre and Grønlandstorv in Aalborg, flats were only let to households without children.

Evaluation studies of troubled housing estates undertaken since 1983, identified that housing associations have targeted younger people, as at Kridthuset in Esbjerg or the elderly, as at Grønlandstov in Aalborg. On such estates, blocks had become problematic both to manage and let, and tenants had often accepted a flat only to move to a more popular estate managed by the same housing association. The original collective and service facilities including the restaurant, reception, laundry etc. had been closed down as uneconomic, and the managers of these blocks looked upon them as failures.

It is apparent that difficult high-rise housing experiences more or less the same type of problems as other difficult-to-manage housing estates. As housing associations are not allowed to reject anyone on the waiting list or those allocated from municipal social services departments, high-rise blocks are just as likely to receive problem households. As municipalities have the right to allocate households in acute need to every fourth empty flat, any social estate with a high turnover risks accumulating a concentration of problem tenants.

State intervention: initial programmes

By 1985, many social-housing estates were facing the real threat of a financial, physical and social collapse. Physical decay and poor maintenance were obvious, active tenants were leaving and passive tenants were being left behind. Such problems had been accumulating since the early 1970s, and in response, the Danish Parliament decided to fund a scheme of improvements for troubled housing estates built between 1965 and 1975, some of which were wholly or partly high-rise. The scheme was based on the 'Act for the Remortgaging of Certain Sections of Non-profit Housing Associations' and an amendment of the 'Act on Mortgage Credit Institutes and Act on Residential Building', (Act No. 248 of 6 July 1985). Blocks were to be renovated; damage and defects made good; the exterior environment improved, and the economy of the estates stabilised. Whilst no funding was targeted at such measures as providing social workers or developing social activities, it was hoped that such intervention would help to improve social conditions on estates.

The overall aim of the programme was to raise standards so that troubled or 'socially depressed estates' could be lifted out of the vicious circle of constantly growing problems. The main targets were high tenant turnover, empty flats, maintenance backlogs, poor physical surroundings, negative reputations and a concentration of tenants experiencing social and economic problems.

In 1992, when the effects of the 1985 improvement programme had been evaluated, it was concluded that, despite extensive financial, physical and environmental improvements, no significant change in social conditions had been achieved (Christiansen et al., 1993). The initiative had had no influence on the social composition of estates, which still consisted of tenants experiencing economic and social problems. However, on all the estates investigat-

ed, tenants expressed a high degree of satisfaction and evaluated the improvements positively. In two thirds of the estates, more than 90% of tenants claimed to be satisfied or very satisfied with living there. This finding suggested the hypothesis that, unless very anti-social and disorderly behaviour is present, existing residents will express a high degree of satisfaction with improvements to their housing.

The overall conclusion of the evaluation was that blocks had been safeguarded against physical decay and outdoor areas had been transformed into more pleasant places. However, whilst the physical basis for achieving more socially balanced estates had been created, social problems experienced by residents such as long-term poverty, dependence on social welfare, unemployment, substance abuse, stigma and crime still required creative and targeted action (Christiansen et al., 1993).

State intervention: the 'ghetto' problem and recent programmes

In September 1993, seven months after a new social democrat-led coalition had taken office, and one month before the local elections, a Governmental Urban Committee was established. The aim of this Committee was to solve the so-called ghetto problem of non-Danish residents becoming concentrated on large social-housing estates. The use of the term 'ghetto' had no basis in the literal meaning of the word, but arose from the need to identify a political enemy. As pressure had come from social democratic mayors seeking re-election, the new government had to take decisive action.

The Governmental Urban Committee was headed by the Minister of the Interior who was joined by the Ministers of Social Affairs, Housing, Justice, Church and Education. An investigation of the extent of the 'ghetto' problem was undertaken in 1993, as a result of which 72 of Denmark's 275 municipalities claimed to have one or more 'troubled' housing areas, almost all of which consisted of recently built social-housing estates. Based on the views of local authorities, the investigation ranked the specific problems identified, the first four of which were general issues for the Danish population of unemployment, low income, family and abuse-related problems. Ethnic and language relating to immigrants and refugees were ranked as the fifth most important problem. Other important problems were related to crime and mentally handicapped residents. Based on this investigation, the Urban Committee rapidly formulated a 30-point strategic plan, twenty of which related to immigrants and refugees (Byudvalget, 1994a).

In the autumn of 1994, the Urban Committee launched a new and more general programme for troubled housing estates. It included eight model projects in six municipalities, introduced a package of measures to deal with physical renovation, focused on the need for refinancing and led to the employment of 100 social workers to work in troubled housing estates all over Denmark. A budget of DKK 1.6 Billion (€200 Million) for 1994-1997 was

allocated to support a broad range of 'social' activities, such as seasonal events for all residents and activities for special groups such as the young, abusers, girls with an immigrant background, immigrant mothers etc.

Funding was shared between the State, the National Fund of Housing Associations and municipalities. All the model projects were financed by the state whilst the costs of employing 100 social workers was shared two thirds by the State and one third by the Fund of Housing Associations. Initially, the State provided most funding for the programme of social activities and the municipalities the least, a balance which was to be reversed over a four year period (Byudvalget, 1994b). The programme also re-scheduled DKK 10 Billion (€1.3 Billion) worth of loans supporting rent reductions; physical improvement projects; economic reconstruction and social initiatives.

The Urban Committee programme was originally based on joint applications by housing estates and municipalities for detailed and fully costed projects. A willingness and ability to co-operate on solving problems locally had to be demonstrated. Overall, the strategy can be characterised as a change from an indirect to a more direct approach to solving social problems (Byudvalget, 1994b).

An evaluation of the Urban Committee initiatives implemented before 1998 has identified a generally positive impact and the prevention of further decline (Skifter Andersen, 1999). The market position of the estates involved has been stabilised, and the trend for self-supporting households to be replaced by those on temporary social benefits has been arrested, but social problems still prevail (Skifter Andersen, 1999; Vestergaard et al., 1999). The Urban Committee initiative was extended in 1998 and a comprehensive urban policy programme was launched in February 1999.

4.4 The future for high-rise housing in Denmark

In the Danish context, high-rise symbolises a failure in housing construction in the 1960s and 1970s. Too much housing of one type was built in one place at one time creating a mono-culture of housing, frequently lacking appropriate services. As there are no studies of private rented or owner occupied high-rise blocks, it is not possible to determine how they are performing. As they do not receive households allocated by municipal social services departments, a superficial and unsurprising impression is that they experience less social problems.

High-rise found its place after 1950 when migration to urban areas increased the demand for housing. This trend has levelled off or reversed as companies have moved to the suburbs or to more rural areas in search of freely available space. Since the early 1990s, this trend has accelerated as

increased economic activity and population growth have coincided with a trend towards 'softer' work situations in which it is not necessary to be at work to do a job. Better transport links and infrastructure provision, including widespread private car ownership, have also made it possible for people to live further away from their places of work.

In contrast, some people are guided less by their work and travel needs, and more by 'cultural consumption'. There is an expectation in Denmark for middle aged people to return to the city when their children have left home. This trend might encourage housing with the kind of services included in the original concept of high-rise. Tax reforms could also make it possible for residents to opt for more labour intensive household services. A step was taken in this direction in 1994 with the introduction of subsidies for home service companies. In principle, this change makes it possible for private households to buy services net of taxes, a concept which might also be extended to groups of households living in the same building or estate. Care of the elderly and of children might be eligible which would also increase the level of employment.

Until recently it was difficult to imagine high-rise housing returning to any prominence as a building form in Denmark, or for any part of the dwelling stock to be demolished. In view of the mortgages still held on estates by the state, local authorities and financial institutions, such an option has occurred only exceptionally and remains politically unacceptable. As a result, the existing high-rise stock will remain in use for the foreseeable future.

In terms of new construction, the opening of the new Øresund Bridge between Malmö in Sweden and the southern part of the Copenhagen metropolitan area has returned high-rise to the urban agenda. A new investment and urban development plan has been created for an area located between the city of Copenhagen and Copenhagen Airport. The intention is to build a new town – Ørestaden – within the next 25-30 years to serve the metropolitan area of Copenhagen, the area of south-west Scania and the Baltic region. As this proposal envisages a centre including high-rise blocks, this radical housing design from the 1950s finds itself part of a futuristic vision for the 21st century.

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5 Finland

High-rise in suburbs in the forest

Timo A. Tanninen

5.1 Introduction

Finland was late to industrialise, but after 1950, its rate of urbanisation was one of the fastest in Europe. New developments were strongly influenced by 'modernism', and contemporary architecture was highly valued. Industrial methods of construction were used to produce multi-family housing in suburban locations planned according to functionalist principles. The outcome was the creation of mixed estates of low and high-rise housing, providing homes for one million people, one fifth of the current population.

Three quarters of Finland's 2.45 million dwellings and 86% of its flats were built after 1950 (see Figure 5.1). Almost 48,000 blocks comprise 42% of the entire housing stock, of which 16,500 have at least 5 storeys, the height at which a lift is compulsory. The proportion of high-rise housing varies from 5.4% in Lahti and Tampere to 8.4% in Turku and 15.3%, in Helsinki (Ministry of the Environment, 1997).

Most modern housing estates in Finland consist of low or mid-rise blocks of 3-5 storeys. Although there is no official definition, blocks of 6 storeys or above which are 'taller than trees', are popularly identified as 'high-rise'. Such housing, which is to be found on high density suburban housing estates, has not been defined as a problem in Finnish housing debate. High-rise housing needs to be understood in the context of suburbanisation in general, and the development of high density suburbs in particular. This chapter will focus on the problems and possibilities of housing estates of multi-family blocks and high-rise housing will be examined in the context of post-war suburban development where empirical evidence is available.

5.2 Post-war suburban development

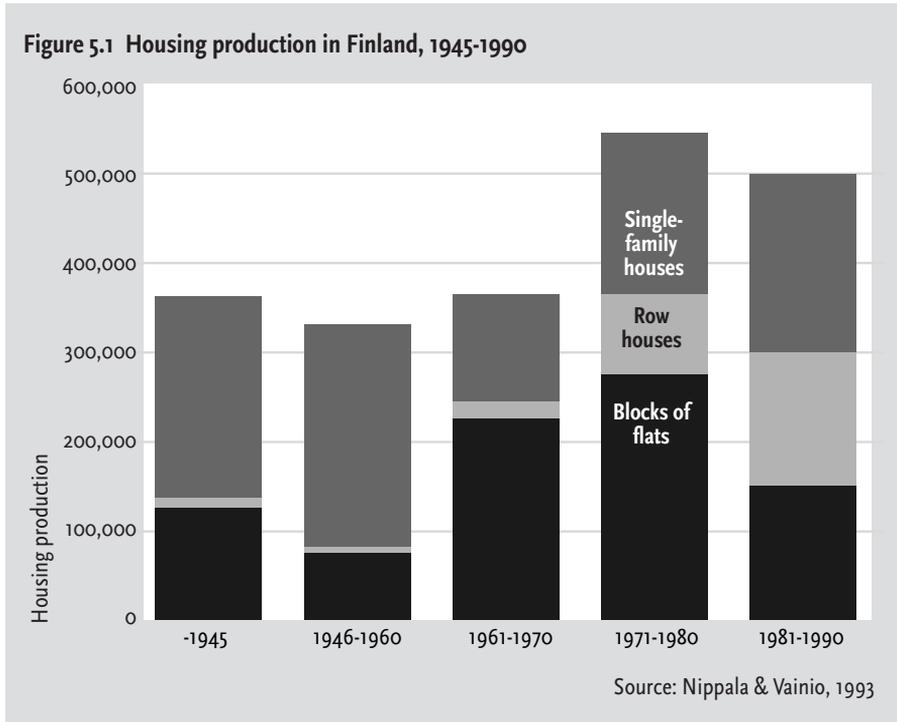
Three phases are identifiable in post-war suburban development:

- slow growth in the 1950s, followed by expansion in the 1960s and 1970s;
- a levelling off in housing output and growing regional differences in housing markets in the 1980s, and;
- the impact of unstable socio-economic conditions in the 1990s and of new housing policies.

Immediately following the Second World War, the Finnish State had the major task of housing 423,000 war refugees from Karelia, the territories relin-



Population	5,183,545
Population density	15/km ²
Capital	Helsinki
GDP per capita	€17,751
Housing stock	2.5 million



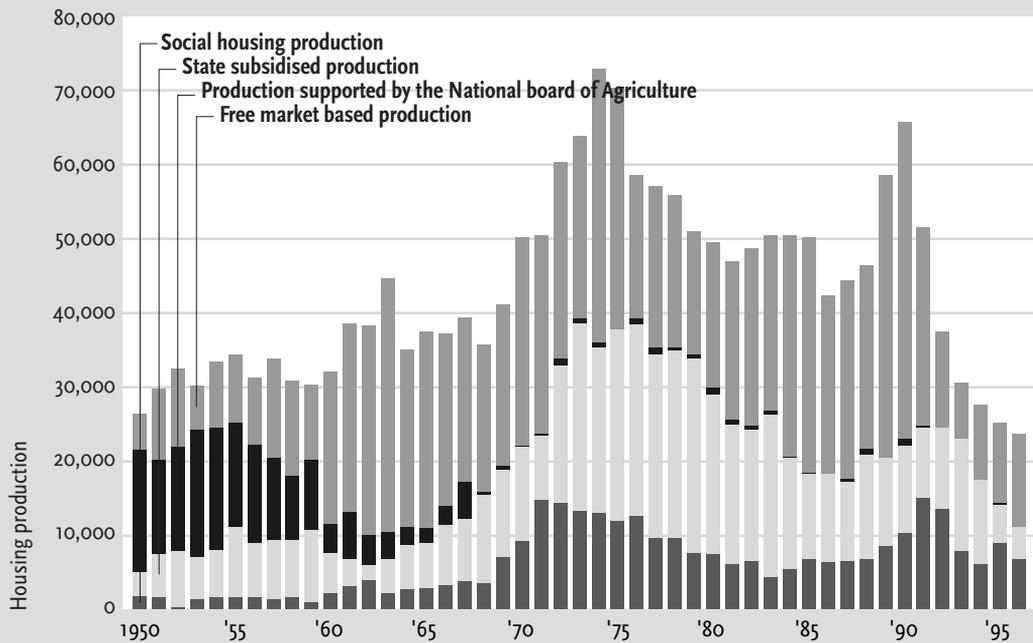
quished to the former Soviet Union. 11% of Finland's pre-war population was lost including Viborg, the second largest town with a population of 100,000. In order to house the Karelia refugees, Finland implemented a resettlement policy in the south and west of the country, and constructed new agricultural villages in the north and east.

It was not until 1949 that urban housing problems began to receive attention, when the 'ARAVA' programme began to provide state subsidies for both privately owned and social rented housing. The outcome was a rapid acceleration in housing output, and from the 1960s, a major expansion in suburban development. During the same period, young people born during the post-war baby boom began an exodus from country to city in search of work. The overall effect has been a growth in the proportion living in towns of 50,000 or more, from 32% in 1950 to 72% at the present time.

In the 1960s, Finland possessed only limited legislation governing land-use planning, and municipalities lacked policies which might have guided urban development. The result, in a country with a large surface area and a population of only 5 million, was a dispersed settlement structure and extensive suburban development (Maula, 1990). New suburban neighbourhoods were built on low cost land, mostly in forests on the outskirts of cities, and between 5 and 10 kilometres from the centre. Nicknames like 'suburbs in the forest' and the 'sleeping city' describe them accurately. The 1960's estates combined low and high-rise housing, were moderate in size and accommodated different sectors of the population. Working class households predominated only where the majority of housing was social rented.

During the 1970s, the concept of the 'compact town' gained support. Following strict planning principles (Hankonen, 1994), commercial activity was

Figure 5.2 Housing production in Finland per sector, 1950-1996



Source: author's summary of Finnish housing statistics

concentrated in such locations, and the associated growth in residents generated monotonous high-rise neighbourhoods. The 1970s were a period of record housing production, when the overall stock grew by 25%, the urban stock by 45% and the number of flats increased by 250,000.

The boom in building suburban neighbourhoods ended in the late 1970s, and in the following decade, the pattern of production changed (see Figure 5.2). Most housing was built without subsidy and outside price regulation. Fewer flats were constructed, and most of these were high quality apartments in city centres. The construction of single-family houses, especially in short rows increased, as did the share of owner-occupation. However, an annual rate of 10.6 flats per 1000 people between 1975 and 1990 remained the second highest in Europe after Greece.

A current ratio of 474 dwellings per thousand people compares well with ratios in other Nordic countries, including Denmark at 466:1000 and Sweden at 481:1000 (European Housing Statistics, 2000). However, an average of 30 sq.m. living space per person falls well below averages ranging from 43 sq.m. in Norway to 49 sq.m. in Denmark (Boverket, 1993).

5.3 The characteristics of suburban housing estates

Finland has about 300 suburban housing estates whose populations range from 700 to an average of 3,500; the smaller the town, the smaller its subur-



Housing Estate in Tapiola, a sub-centre of the city of Espoo. Designed by prominent Finnish modernist architects Aarne Ervi, Aulis Blomstedt, Viljo Renvall, Kaija and Heikki Sirén and based on Garden City ideas. Built between 1952 and 1957.

ban neighbourhoods. Two exceptionally large developments are Helsinki's Kontula, with 18,000 people and Tampere's new town Hervanta which houses 22,000 people. Overall, one million people live in suburban neighbourhoods in Finland, 20% of the total population (see Figure 5.3). This ratio varies from 10% in municipalities of 30,000 or less to 45% in larger towns and 50% in the Helsinki region. One quarter of homes built since the 1950s (370,000 dwellings) are located in suburban neighbourhoods, and 80% are flats in mixed low or mid-rise blocks.

On average, every third dwelling in suburban housing estates is a rented flat, 130,000 of which are in the social rented sector (Seppälä et al., 1990). In about one quarter of Finland's suburban neighbourhoods, between 40 and 60% of the flats are social rented, and in

only about ten neighbourhoods does this proportion reach more than 80% (Seppälä et al., 1990).

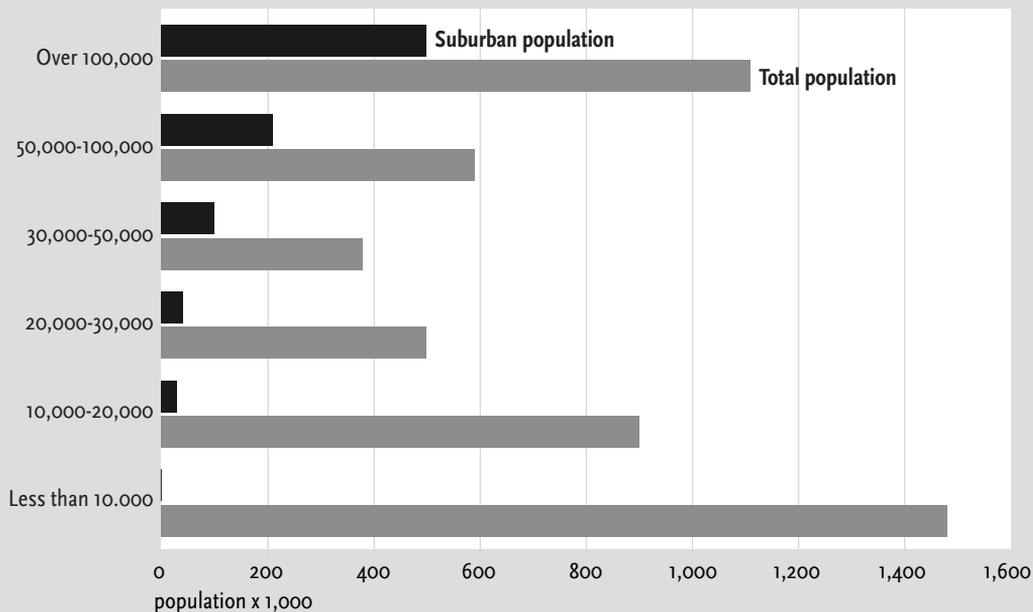
In the Helsinki region, which houses 21% of total population, construction of suburban estates began in the 1950s, nearly tripled in the 1960s, and reached its peak in the 1970s. Elsewhere, such construction began later and was concentrated in the 1970s before declining rapidly during the 1980s.

With 66% of total stock and 60% of suburban housing in owner occupation, Finland can be considered a typical 'home-owner' nation (Statistics of Finland, 2000). Its tenure structure is the main difference with other Nordic Countries where social-housing Companies or Co-operatives predominate. A typical Finnish housing estate has a mixed ownership structure dominated by so called 'condominium-buildings' managed by a joint stock company which determines how residents must manage their homes, block and the environment.

Purchase prices and rent levels vary according to the quality, age and location of estates. In the Helsinki region, prices are on average 60% higher than national figures, and in suburban housing estates prices are approximately 65% of those in the city centre. Rent levels follow the same pattern. In the Helsinki region, rents are 30-40% higher than the national average, and in suburban multi-family estates, they are 70-75% of those charged in the city centre (SVT, 2001).

Suburban neighbourhoods are of a reasonably high standard and in general, they are not socially segregated (Ministry of the Environment, 1997). However, problems ranging from a high turnover of residents to vandalism have

Figure 5.3 The proportion of suburban residents in relation to the total population in Finland, by size of municipality, in 1990



Source: Seppälä et al., 1990

been identified in one suburb in four (Seppälä et al., 1990). Whilst 30% of neighbourhoods have been identified as pleasant living environments, 20% are regarded as poor quality with major problems. Most problems occur in areas built in the 1970s, of which 60% are regarded as over-developed and 'monotonous', while 40% suffer from poor environmental quality. The same 40% of estates has been identified as having a 'high-rise and monotonous building profile' (ibid.).

5.4 Social and demographic trends in suburban high-rise housing estates

In Finland, as in other countries, suburban neighbourhoods have experienced major changes in recent years as the number of families with children has decreased, the population density has declined and residents have grown older. From an average of 2.45 persons per suburban dwelling in the 1950s, this ratio had fallen to 1.9 by the 1980s (Seppälä et al., 1990). Most neighbourhoods continue to reflect average income levels and have retained their share of middle class residents. A survey of estates in the Helsinki region failed to identify any general decline, although relative deterioration was evident on some estates and others had deteriorated significantly in regions where local industries had been lost (Lankinen, 1994).

In terms of ethnic composition, suburban housing estates remain largely homogeneous. A total of only 70,000 people living in Finland were born

Housing Estate in Kaleva, near Tampere city centre, built between 1949 and 1953.



abroad, and most came from the former Soviet Union and were of Finnish origin. The proportion of immigrants at 1.4% is one of the lowest in Europe, although it reaches 4.6% in Helsinki and over 10% on some estates (Ministry of the Environment, 1997).

Social rented housing makes up only 15% of the total stock, a lower proportion when compared with such Scandinavian countries as Sweden and Denmark. Such housing is aimed at special needs groups, it is frequently associated with social problems and retains a low status in Finland (Pirainen, 1993). Where social rented housing is present, the incidence of low income groups, of single-parent families, children and young people and of social welfare clients increases. Social rented estates from the 1960s and 1970s are regarded most negatively, one third are regarded as having a low status, and only 15% as having a pleasant living environment (Seppälä et al., 1990).

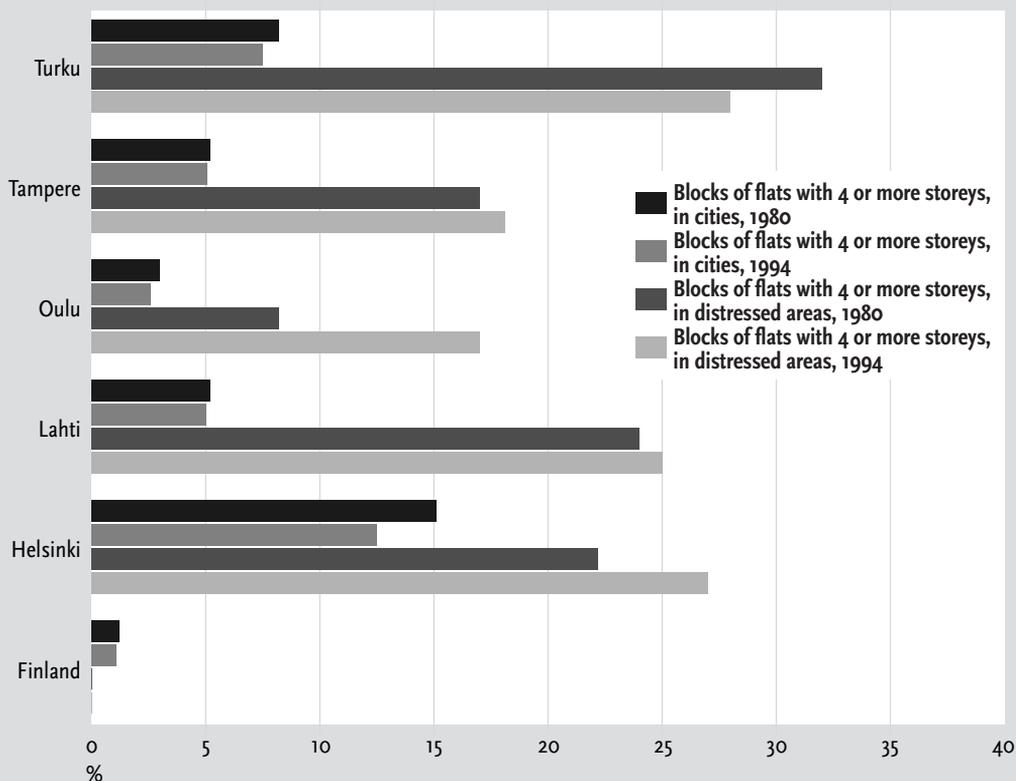
Developments during the 1990s have highlighted emerging problems in Finland's 'social environment', such as neighbourhoods in which 35-50% of the working population are unemployed. Long-term unemployment and a high dependency on social assistance are increasingly concentrated in some neighbourhoods in the Helsinki region, and these trends are the alarming first indicators of emerging social segregation.

5.5 High-rise housing in 'distressed areas'

Research focusing on high-rise and suburban housing estates is a new phenomenon in Finland. A major study undertaken by the Ministry of the Environment between 1995 and 1997 applied the OECD's criteria of a 'distressed area' to neighbourhoods of at least 2,000 inhabitants in the seven largest cities of over 100,000 inhabitants. The resulting data summarised the situation in 293 neighbourhoods housing 27% of the total population and over 39% of urban residents (Ministry of the Environment, 1997).

38 neighbourhoods in five cities met the OECD's criteria, and whilst they

Figure 5.4 High-rise housing in 'distressed areas' in Finland, 1980 and 1994

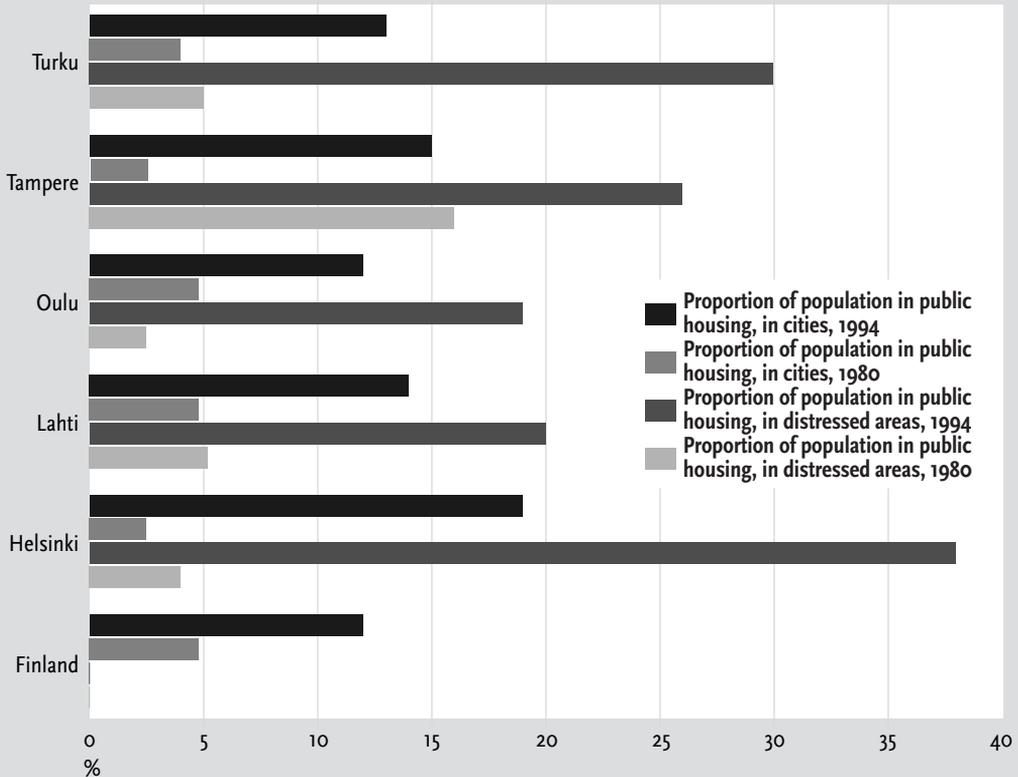


Source: Ministry of the Environment, 1997

included both old and new areas, the majority were estates of multi-family blocks. Between 15 and 20 estates, or 5-7% of the total sample had fallen into a spiral of decline or showed clear signs of such a trend. High levels of unemployment (of at least 25%); increasing income differences; the incidence of low-income groups and empty dwellings were all concentrated in these estates (Ministry of the Environment, 1997). In almost one quarter of the 38 'distressed areas' studied, over 40% of the housing stock was in high-rise blocks, and in four, the proportion exceeded 50% (see Figure 5.4). In 'distressed areas' in Helsinki and Turku, the proportion of social housing exceeds the local average by almost 20%, and there is a clear overlap between the proportion of social housing and the volume of high-rise blocks (see Figure 5.5).

However, 10-12 storey tower blocks hardly exist, and the international debate over the influence of their design on behaviour is less relevant to Finland. The problems emerging so far are relatively moderate, and by international comparison, Finnish neighbourhoods remain of good quality. One explanation may be, that in comparison with the work of Le Corbusier and Gropius, Nordic functionalism was characterised by humanism and a greater sensitivity to nature (Wiklund, 1995). The second explanation is that, by leveling out income differences and by providing equal rights to education and other forms of social and health provision, the Nordic Welfare State model

Figure 5.5 Share of residents in public housing in 'distressed areas' in Finland , 1980 and 1994



Source: Ministry of the Environment, 1997

has provided effective protection against slum development (Ministry of the Environment, 1997). As a result, the majority of high-rise housing estates are doing quite well.

5.6 Clarifying the problems

Not surprisingly, reputation and status vary widely between suburban housing estates in Finland. By the late 1970s, criticism of large estates had begun to appear in the media and within 10 years, the first lettings problems had emerged in declining industrial regions. From planners and politicians to residents and the mass media, different groups have had their own views. Drawing on reports published by the Ministry of the Environment (Osara & Viirkorpi, 1994), it is possible to construct a profile of problems affecting suburban housing estates constructed in the 1960s and the 1970s, as follows:

- **Technical problems:** Some blocks of flats have problems arising from construction methods and the materials used in roofs, facades, balconies and windows. Stairways, kitchen interiors and bathrooms are in need of refurbishment some 20 to 30 years after construction.
- **Appearance and qualitative problems:** These include the image and condi-

tion of the physical environment, obsolete green areas and poor courtyard design, inadequate storage, playground and car parking facilities.

- Competitiveness problems: These are caused by changing regional employment levels and the associated impact on housing markets. High vacancy levels are followed by financial problems for the social-housing associations affected (Osara & Viirkorpi, 1994).

A further list of problems was compiled by civil servants working in Finnish municipalities (Ministry of the Environment, 1997), with emphasis given to:

- the low status and bad reputation of some areas which may arise from blocks perceived as too monotonous and constructed at too high a density;
- poor housing conditions. The need for repairs to blocks and flats was identified by two out of three local authorities;
- environmental problems were related to the quality of green spaces and courtyards for half of all local authorities;
- a homogeneous population structure was associated with high proportions of social housing and an above average concentration of social problems.

Other problems arose from poor maintenance and inadequate service provision, and from traffic, planning and management issues.

A study in eight stagnating regions has emphasised the extent of problems now facing some estates (Ministry of the Environment, 1997). Over the past 10 years, and as a result of economic recession, deprivation has become concentrated in areas in which social rented housing is predominant (43-75% of all homes) and where vacancy levels are high (about 10%). In such neighbourhoods, incomes are well below local averages and unemployment (at 30-52%) is well above average. Despite a generally buoyant demand for housing and an improving economic position, recent research has revealed that some neighbourhoods in the Helsinki region have concentrations of long-term unemployment and high levels of social assistance dependency (Lankinen, 1998). The key question is whether some Finnish estates are entering a spiral of decline, and if so, whether anything can be done to counteract it.

5.7 Achieving improvements

Area-based and experimental renovation projects have, since the 1980s, provided experience with intervention in three main areas as follows:

- Design and spatial measures: These have focused on improving the estate infrastructure and green spaces by providing such services as kindergarten, schools, health centres, youth and sports facilities and improving the urban quality of neighbourhoods.
- Structural measures: Both social rented and condominium housing have

been refurbished and additional construction work undertaken to provide, for example, additional storeys (with lifts) larger flats, external bicycle sheds and improved storage facilities.

- Social measures: Social, cultural and health services have been improved by making additional provision, by undertaking community work and by stimulating voluntary organisations and residents' associations (Osara & Viirakorpi, 1994).

Whilst selling rented flats is one way of overcoming the social homogeneity of estates, this has been practised only exceptionally in Finland. The most important development in the 1990s has been a new emphasis on area-based and cross-sectoral approaches, enabling the inclusion of local residents as partners in the improvement process (Ministry of the Environment, 1997). Area-based projects led by local authorities have sought to achieve an integrated approach to physical refurbishment combined with the development of local services geared to such special needs groups as the elderly and young people.

5.8 Current dilemmas and future prospects for high-rise housing in Finland

During the 1990s, Finland suffered a serious economic recession. Unemployment climbed to a record 20%, the state's deficit reached a third of its total budget and public loans amounted to almost 65% of GNP. As a result, the state has reduced its role in housing policy, public expenditure on housing was cut by 10%, the National Board for Housing was abolished and housing allowances reduced by FIM 1.5 billion (€0.3 billion). The 1995 'rainbow' government continued this process and identified social policy, including welfare and housing, as the main target for reduced expenditure. As a result, the pattern of output by housing sector changed significantly and annual production of new homes fell to its lowest level since the Second World War, declining to 27,000 in 1994.

Whilst the economy recovered in the second half of the 1990s, the government's priority has been to reduce unemployment, and resources for housing have remained limited. Funds for improving suburban estates have to compete with finance for new homes and the growing demand for housing allowances. Despite these constraints, in 1995, the Housing Fund of Finland initiated a programme of repairs to over 50 suburban estates dating from the 1960s and 1970s. The main motive was to stimulate employment and strengthen the public rented sector (Viirakorpi, 1997). Subsequent studies have identified that, while physical refurbishment has been effective, the impact on residents' social and employment circumstances has been minimal (Laiho,

Housing estate Olari in the city of Espoo. Designed by architects Simo Järvinen and Eero Valjakka. It received the State government's Architecture Prize in 1975. Built between 1969 and 1973.

1998). One of the main reasons may be that while central government provides information, co-ordination and limited funding, it is dependent on local authorities to undertake the improvements (Ministry of the Environment, 1997). In turn, responsibility for suburban neighbourhoods is divided between municipal departments ranging from housing and town planning to social and health services, and communication between them is poor. As a result, centrally-determined aims have been undermined at the level of local implementation.

Thinking ahead, the need to modernise and repair the stock of flats will continue to grow. It has been estimated that 30-35,000 flats, including 7,000 in the social rented sector needed to be renovated each year during the 1990s, whilst the rate of repair was about half that level (Nippala & Vainio, 1993). By 2000-2005, this requirement will double but the source of future funding is uncertain.

For the future, we need to understand those mechanisms which produce variations in the status and reputation of different types of suburban estate. One possibility might be an application of Fischer and Winnick's filtering theory which identified the age of estates as the main factor in their changing status and market value (Brzeski, 1977). Other factors of relevance might include their location; the level of expenditure at the time of construction; initial and subsequent patterns of residence; the character of local and regional housing markets and mechanisms for allocation and maintenance (Van Kempen, 1994). Whilst a multidimensional theory might help to explain the spiral of decline on some estates and how to avoid it, three prospects are suggested for the future:

■ *Prospect 1: Implementing a general development programme*

The first prospect is based on the view that the majority of residents in Finland's 300 suburban neighbourhoods are satisfied and feel they are pleasant places in which to live. Most flats are middle-rise of 3-5 storeys, they are privately owned and are located within high quality green areas close to the natural environment. Problems are moderate, and the need to meet the changing requirements of residents provides the basis for determining future development. Due to a 1992 reform, it is easier for private condominiums to receive public funds for their renovation. By providing grants equivalent to 10-20% of the total repair cost, the Housing Fund of Finland can stimulate



Hervanta in Tampere, one of the biggest housing estates in Finland. Planning was based on the 'Daughter City' concept by architect Aarno Ruusu-vuori and constructed in the late 1970s.



the refurbishment of individual blocks. However, as ownership within estates is divided into many condominiums, it is difficult to initiate more comprehensive renewal projects without co-ordination by municipalities.

- *Prospect 2: Special measures to counteract social segregation*

In the Helsinki region, we can identify a coincidence of large scale and high-rise estates with social rented housing. Poor design has combined with difficult-to-manage and low demand housing to generate social segregation and in turn, this contributes to the declining status and reputation of these estates. Design measures and technical refurbishment are not enough to upgrade these areas. Comprehensive and integrated rehabilitation programmes, involving all relevant departments and requiring state funding, will be needed to secure their competitiveness. 'Urban' and 'neighbourhood management' may benefit from international experience, and a pilot project has already begun in the Helsinki region with funding from the URBAN Programme of the European Union.

- *Prospect 3: A radical prognosis*

In municipalities which have suffered from industrial decline, and where the local housing market is weak, a new approach will be needed. The State currently provides 10-15 million FIM (€2-2.5 million) each year as 'first aid' to avoid the bankruptcy of municipal owned associations who have about 7,000 flats vacant, but they lack the resources to improve their stock or its environment. As a first stage, the analysis of local and regional housing markets might enable a strategy to be developed for the future. The demolition of redundant blocks could be combined with a change of use for others and the refurbishment of the remainder. 'Ear-marked' funding will be required either from the state or the Housing Fund of Finland, but implementation must be determined and achieved through partnerships at the local level. Privatisation has not been a theme in Finnish housing policy, but its time may well have come.

Whilst the achievement of the second or third prospect will be difficult, securing the future for suburban, and especially high-rise housing estates in Finland, remains a challenge for this new millennium.

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6 Italy

High-rise as an urban way of life since the Roman Empire

Marco Cremaschi

6.1 Introduction

Most people in Italy live in flats (see Table 6.1), which make up 54% of the total dwelling stock compared with detached houses (30%) or semi-detached houses (14%). More than 90% of flats are located in the metropolitan core, whereas houses are more typical in the suburbs or in small villages. Although flats are smaller than houses, dwelling conditions remain good and are above the average for the total stock (Cremaschi, 1996).

Defined as 6 storeys or above, Italy's four million high-rise flats (Table 6.2) are a common feature of the main metropolitan areas and are not exclusively associated with the social-housing sector (Ferracuti & Marcelloni, 1982; Padovani, 1984; 1996; Tosi, 1990). Built mostly in the post-war years, and on the periphery of industrial towns, such areas provided a 'learning experience' for new immigrants to the city. Many post-war films by 'neo-realismo' directors, or by Pasolini (Fofi, 1982) used them as a backdrop to narrating the tough apprenticeship of arrivals from deprived rural regions to such cities as Rome, Milan and Turin.

Regional variations in dwelling type are very marked in Italy. For example, the proportion of single-family houses varies from 17% in the industrial regions of the north-west to 40% in the rural and tourist south; from 7.7% in the cities to 40% in non-urban municipalities. The distribution of high-rise housing provides an even greater contrast. In the five main cities of Rome, Milan, Turin, Naples and Palermo, the proportion averages close to 35%, and they account for 40% of the national high-rise stock. It is interesting to note that Rome and Milan have a large proportion of pre-Second World War high-rise housing (at 18% and 10% respectively) and together have 28% of the total high-rise stock, equivalent to 1.1 million flats.

High-rise housing is not an issue per se in Italy, although issues have evolved and developed around it over time. For example, early criticism of the 'spatial enclosure' of high-rise estates has diminished where external areas have been transformed and social integration increased (Höllinger & Haller, 1990). Although the location and segregation of estates remain major issues, concerns must be viewed in a broader policy context. For example, the labelling of high-rise estates as 'deprivation areas' is related to a wider concern over social exclusion, and concern over their location is one dimension of a 'peripheral areas' issue concerned with inequalities in metropolitan areas.

High-rise neighbourhoods only became the subject of special interest when



Population	57,715,625
Population density	192/km ²
Capital	Rome
GDP per capita	€17,514
Housing stock	25 million

Table 6.1 Number and percentage of dwellings by type of building in Italy, 1991

Building type	Buildings	Dwellings	% of dwellings
H o u s e s			
Single-family houses	7,578,575	7,578,575	30.3
Two-family houses	1,732,655	3,465,309	13.7
Rural houses	457,500	457,500	1.8
F l a t s			
3-8 dwellings per building	1,402,000	5,951,345	23.8
9-15 dwellings per building	240,000	3,142,060	12.6
16-30 dwellings per building	131,000	2,656,948	10.6
More than 30 dwellings per building	57,000	1,776,785	7.1
Total	11,598,730	25,028,522	100

Source: author's calculation based on the 1991 Census

Table 6.2 Total dwelling stock, number and percentage of high-rise housing in Italy, 1951-1991

Census	Housing stock	Dwellings in high-rise buildings*	% of high-rise housing on total dwellings
1951	11,411,000	370,000	3.2
1961	14,214,000	1,340,000	9.4
1971	17,434,000	2,790,000	16.0
1981	21,937,000	3,690,000	16.8
1991	25,030,000	3,970,000	15.9

* Six storeys, plus ground floor, upwards.

Source: author's calculation based on the 1991 Census

attention turned to urban renewal in the early 1990s. Just a few high-rise districts present really problematic conditions, the 'Zen' estate in Palermo, 'Secondigliano' in Naples, 'Tor Bella Monaca' in Rome, 'Japigia' in Bari and a few neighbourhoods in Turin, Genoa and Milan are considered the worst examples in Italy. However, they are typical of neither social-housing estates nor peripheral residential areas, and problems are just as likely to be found in historic city centres in Genoa, Naples or Palermo.

This chapter addresses those situations in which the spatial segregation of high-rise housing, especially stock in the social sector, coincides with urban deprivation to generate a deeper sense of social exclusion. As we shall see, the Italian experience provides some mixed conclusions.

6.2 The origins of high-rise housing

Although the mass production of high-rise housing is a recent phenomenon (Table 6.3), urban development in Italy has long been associated with multi-storey living. For example, during the Roman Empire, the citizens of the capital were accustomed to living in dwellings (*insulae*) of 7-8 storeys or above (Carcopino, 1940). By 1945, in Rome and Milan, almost 200,000 flats were concentrated in high-rise buildings, approximately 6-7% of their present dwelling stock.

Such housing originated at the end of the nineteenth century when comfortable 5-6 storey flats were built in 'modern' residential districts encircling the historic cores of many towns. Such areas are now part of central business or

Table 6.3 Dwellings in high-rise buildings* by period of construction for Rome and Milan

	Dwellings in high-rise buildings	%	Dwelling stock	%
R o m e				
Before 1919	21,643	4.2	123,477	7.6
1919-1945	71,686	13.8	183,006	11.3
1946-1961	146,799	28.3	390,682	24.1
1961-1971	166,109	32.0	481,219	29.6
1971-1981	67,502	13.0	299,867	18.5
up to 1991	45,872	8.8	145,580	9.0
Total	519,611	100	1,623,831	100
M i l a n				
Before 1919	14,086	2.4	178,257	11.1
1919-1945	44,526	7.5	191,640	11.9
1946-1961	147,487	24.9	366,626	22.8
1961-1971	255,318	43.1	482,298	30.0
1971-1981	79,351	13.4	219,149	13.6
up to 1991	51,442	8.7	168,384	10.5
Total	592,210	100	1,606,354	100

*Six storeys, plus ground floor, upwards.

Source: author's calculation based on the 1991 Census

residential districts, and are often fashionable neighbourhoods for the upper classes. High-rise construction developed on a large-scale after the Second World War, when new blue-collar belts were added to these earlier middle class developments (Coppo & Cremaschi, 1994).

Post-war mass housing was the result of national policies and private sector activity. Both public and private sectors were concerned with the provision of low-cost dwellings, especially for rural migrant workers moving to large and medium sized urban areas. Compared with

the poor conditions from which they had come, life as an industrial worker in a modern flat was highly valued and a much improved position.

Initially, high-rise living was compared unfavourably with previous – and idealised – rural lifestyles, and urbanists in the modernist tradition expressed concern about its social and economic costs. Fears were raised that high-rise housing would be socially and technically unsuitable for the new ‘urbanites’, and its alleged social mix might jeopardise their ‘morals’ (Piccinato, 1946). Measured by density of people per hectare, high-rise had only a narrow competitive advantage over medium-rise housing which became the typical urban form. For example, more than 40% of dwellings in Milan’s Lombardia, the first urban industrial area in Italy, are in blocks of only 4 storeys or less (Cremaschi, 1996).

During the first period of growth from the 1950s to 1964, the number of high-rise flats grew from approximately 135,000 in 1951 to 379,000 ten years later (Padovani, 1996). Almost 50% of all high-rise housing was built between the early 1960s and mid-1970s, with the metropolitan areas taking most new production (46%), and population growth (39%). Public investment in new housing declined from 25% of total output in 1951 to 6% in the period 1961-1965. As public finance diminished, local authorities became more involved in promoting low-cost home ownership, mainly through the provision of land. In 1962, local authorities were authorised to purchase, even by compulsory means, large tracts of land for social and low cost housing, and all major cities took advantage of this power.

Social-housing estates in Genoa (by Antida Gazzola)

Genoa is an older industrialised city in the north of Italy with a population of about 670,000 inhabitants. PraVoltri and Begato are estates located in the western suburbs of the city, and have populations of about 20,000 and 10,000 inhabitants respectively. Both were built on public land under the Social Housing Act (Law 167/1962), partly by private individuals who joined co-operative societies in partnership with local authorities ('edilizia convenzionata'), and partly by state-supported social-housing agencies ('edilizia sovvenzionata') which are wholly subsidised.

Most of the housing was built in the 1970s and 1980s, about one third of which consists of blocks with 6 or more storeys (mostly social sector), combined with semi-detached houses and three-storey buildings (usually privately or co-operatively owned). Most high-rise blocks, (of up to 24 storeys and referred to as the 'towers'), are in the social sector, and their populations have lower incomes than the rest of the neighbourhood.

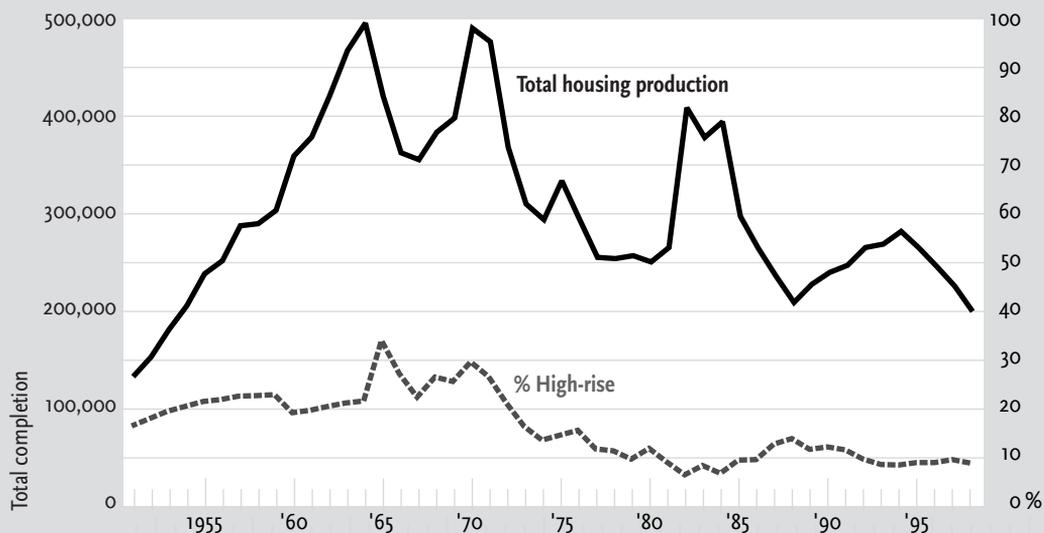
One of the present and future problems is the allocation system for social-housing which excludes the 'real' poor in greatest need, such as the homeless and immigrants from non-EU countries, whose numbers are increasing rapidly (Tosi, 1994). In the public estates, there are frequent problems with the administration of the blocks and the provision of services which may be obsolete, absent or inadequate for the aged and those with changing aspirations. There are also problems with organised crime and with unemployment, especially among the young. So far, the only action taken has been the privatisation of part of the social-housing stock and the provision of day-to-day maintenance. The debate about the future of spaces between blocks is still continuing, with possible solutions including the provision of new social or private sector dwellings or a combination of both sectors; providing green space, private gardens or play equipment etc. The upgrading of these estates will depend on the capacity of the local administration, and on the viability of reversing the unintended creation of single function estates.

Although it was common for high-density estates to be built on comparatively cheaper peripheral sites, public and private developers operated in different locations. The post-war policy of 'housing for the working class' resulted in the mass construction of multi-dwelling social-housing estates in outer and isolated locations. Speculative private sector developments followed, filling the gap between the centre and the peripheral ring, on land already provided with an infrastructure.

6.3 The development of high-rise housing

The second period of high-rise construction took place between 1964 and 1977-78, with a peak in 1970. Another peak occurred between 1982 and 1984, and even though the number of social rented completions has declined continuously since 1981, a state supported housing programme has continued. Whilst allocations remain under municipal control, local housing agencies have responsibility for construction, management and maintenance. Such agencies were almost compelled, by a combination of land costs and limited technical experience to opt for high-rise blocks, and as a result, such housing constituted 80% of social sector output during the 1980s. Whilst housing output has varied over the last fifteen years, the high-rise completion rate has remained constant at about 25-30,000 flats per year (Figure 6.1)

Figure 6.1 Total housing production and proportion of high-rise in Italy, 1951-1998



Source: Estimation on Istat (National Institute of Statistics), Cresme, Padovani

In a more recent attempt to halt the decline of the major metropolitan areas, public subsidies have been provided to build private housing for those unable to afford market rents. This policy produced an increase in private sector high-rise completions in the late 1980s, and resulted in a wave of middle class family households moving from peripheral neighbourhoods to new outer urban estates. Consequently, new private rented and high-rise housing has been used as a tool to support urban housing markets, and the state's withdrawal from providing social housing for those unable to afford a home has been matched by the provision of subsidies for the middle classes.

The continued construction of high-rise housing contrasts with the growing trend of families building their own conventional homes. Such an activity is quite common in Italy, especially in the countryside. Over the past 15 years, construction by families has accounted for at least 30% of new housing (CRESME, 1998), a trend accompanied by an increase in movement beyond the metropolitan areas in search of better housing conditions. If these trends continue, the high-rise share of dwelling production will continue to decline.

Due to poor municipal record keeping and the extent of informal and illegal house building, data on total completions are considered to be underestimates. In particular, official data on high-rise are believed to underestimate the level of construction by almost one third, a problem especially relevant to the major period of high-rise construction in the 1960s and 1970s.

However, each national census records the number of buildings of 16 dwellings or more and which are assumed to consist of 4 storeys or above. The 1991 census recorded 188,000 such buildings providing approximately 4.4 million homes. It is further estimated that almost 150,000 high-rise buildings of 6 storeys or above provide homes for 3.9 million dwellings, or nearly 16% of total dwellings.



Late high-rise schemes in Genova: Pegli 3. Photo by Roberto Bobbio

6.4 The social characteristics of high-rise neighbourhoods

In Italy, social housing is intended to house the urban poor and tenants are selected according to such criteria as having a low income, reaching old age or eviction from the private sector. Consequently, social-housing neighbourhoods and public sector high-rise estates house more people at risk of poverty (Mingione & Zajczyk, 1992). In Italy, such groups appear less conspicuous and less concentrated than in other European countries, although urban poverty is greater and more concentrated in the southern cities.

The populations of social-housing neighbourhoods are mostly very stable, and eviction is unusual, even when family income has increased beyond the eligibility level. The consequences of this practice are twofold: on the one hand, and to the detriment of the public finances, many social-housing flats are occupied by people paying a lower rent than they can afford. On the other hand, upward mobility can create a mixture of tenants, and contrasts with the social uniformity generated by applying strict allocations criteria. Where turnover is very low, the resulting population stability encourages the development of social cohesion and growing older together may have the unintended consequence of making communities stronger.

Whilst the inhabitants of social sector high-rise housing tend to be poorer and more deprived than average, a mixture of social rented, private rented, co-operative and owner-occupied housing is quite common in the later and larger estates. In 'Piani di zona' (public land for social-housing and partially subsidised housing), the main tenure is co-operative ownership (35-50%), and the share of social housing falls in the range 20-40%. Such (mainly high-rise) neighbourhoods are larger than either public or private housing estates.

Building type and housing tenure tend to coincide on different housing

**Late high-rise schemes
in Rome: Serpentara.**

Photo by Alessandro Calabrò

estates. In Brescia, for example, and despite efforts to avoid social segregation, an official report has identified that: “the social rented sector is concentrated in high-rise blocks; subsidised private rented in some low-rise buildings; whereas owner-occupied and co-operative-owned sector preferred semi-detached houses” (Cicccone, 1985, p. 3). Social conditions in private sector high-rise developments are little different from those in surrounding neighbourhoods. Households in peripheral urban areas are drawn mainly from lower middle income, blue or white collar families, often at an advanced stage in their life cycle. Patterns of tenure, floor space and other features are close to those typical for the country, although the level of ownership is likely to fall below the national average of over 70%.

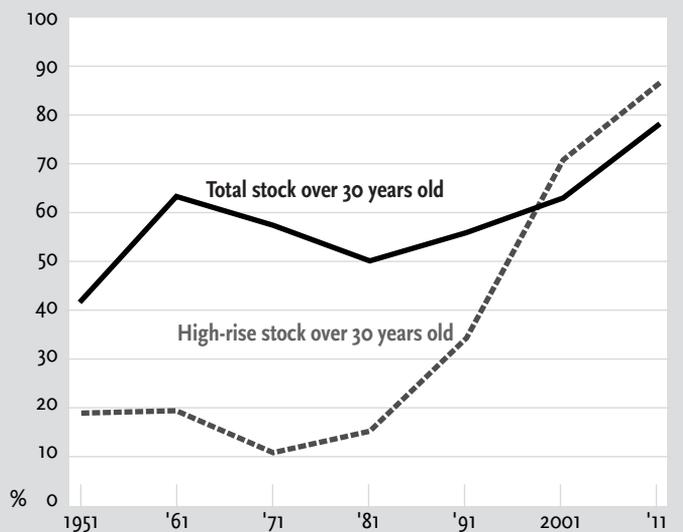


6.5 Problems, measures and the future for high-rise housing in Italy

Concern over the experience of neighbourhoods and communities in cities has emerged only very recently, stimulated by a financial crisis in public housing and a decline in urban quality. The problem of social integration in local communities and the failure of the ideology of the ‘neighbourhood’ have served to focus political and popular attention on declining high-rise areas (Coppo & Cremaschi, 1994). Serious problems now affect the oldest and poorest social rented estates housing concentrations of families and unemployed residents dependent on a welfare system. A new programme for social housing supports ‘integrated’ renewal projects intended to create new and socially diverse neighbourhoods, including social rented high-rise estates. Projects have to satisfy such criteria as using both public and private finance; combining refurbishment with new construction and achieving multi-functional uses.

The question must be asked whether Italy has a specific problem with its high-rise housing per se. Such a relationship is not clear. Satisfaction with high-rise living tends to be linked with the quality of maintenance, to the incidence of technical and social problems or to location, rather than to the form itself. For example, in common with any other housing located at the metropolitan periphery, high-rise estates are just as likely to experience such environmental problems as nuisance, pollution, traffic congestion, etc. Only where a

Figure 6.2 Total housing stock and high-rise housing stock in Italy, over 30 years old, 1951-2011



Source: Estimation on Istat (National Institute of Statistics), Cresme, Padovani

range of problems has become concentrated, have 'problem estates' emerged.

The future for high-rise housing estates is intimately bound up with the emerging 'maintenance problem'. Since the Second World War, the proportion of older homes has declined as new construction has increased. The critical age of thirty years before the need for renewal has never affected more than 50% of housing, but this share is now increasing (see Figure 6.2).

Over 50% of high-rise housing now falls within this 30 year category, and over the next ten years, almost all blocks are likely to require major repair. The specialised improvement work required will make major demands on the construction industry in terms of both the type and volume of work required. Until now, renovation has focused mainly on historic dwellings or on small housing schemes, but the techniques required for this work are unlikely to be relevant to the high-rise sector. For the estates themselves, new programmes stress the importance of the quality of the urban environment, the need to improve the overall appearance of estates and to provide working and leisure spaces next to residential buildings.

There is also a growing need for programmes to deal with wider urban issues, in particular the incidence of 'problem areas' and the widespread problem of the urban 'outskirts'. Social sector high-rise estates are disproportionately affected by the concentration and segregation of the under-privileged and socially excluded, and the 'rejuvenation' of such neighbourhoods is likely to be the focus of new policies: "The neighbourhood is the appropriate place to carry out a dynamic and relevant analysis of the difficulties faced by its inhabitants, and within which all the family, community and institutional networks can be mobilised" (Commission of the European Union, 1993, p. 53).

Whilst working within a defined locality may enable a targeted and partnership approach to intervention, it cannot provide all the answers. As in other countries, local efforts to improve the worst social housing areas have had to be supported by national policies. The issue is not only the recovery of an estate's physical environment but also the need to deal with the social and economic circumstances of its inhabitants. New programmes foresee new construction; refurbishment; new commercial premises and the provision of green

Rome's Corviale: 'machine for living in' needs retooling (by Stefano Sampaolo)

Amongst the so-called 'problem estates', architectural innovation will require special attention and treatment. The Corviale social-housing estate is located on the southern periphery of Rome. It was designed by an eminent architect at the beginning of the 1970s and was completed between 1975 and 1982. The most distinctive features of this estate are its architectural form, a 9-storey building; its size, approximately one kilometre in length and its scale, providing thousands of dwellings. One long corridor at the sixth level is intended to act as the internal, commercial 'street' of the complex. The main building was designed for 6,300 households, and was influenced by Le Corbusier's 'unité d'habitation' in Marseilles. The idea behind the building was to integrate dwellings, shops and facilities in a single complex while stressing the border between town and country. The block attempts to reformulate symbolically and literally the limitation of urban expansion and has a deliberately ambiguous role as half bridge and half dam.

The estate has succeeded in achieving one of its ambitions: it offers a townscape which contrasts

dramatically with the surrounding green space and low-density neighbourhoods. However, the original aims have not been achieved. Although all the flats are occupied, public facilities and social services have not been completed and are still lacking. Shops along the internal street were never opened and all are illegally occupied for residential purposes. Even worse, poor construction quality and a lack of maintenance have contributed to the rapid decay of the building and at least most of the 73 lifts need replacing. At the initiative of the estate's residents and less than 20 years since completion, an agenda has been established for its renovation and the local authority and housing agency have prepared a programme for the estate's comprehensive rehabilitation.



The monstrous 1 kilometre long building of Corviale in Rome.

Photo's by: Alessandro Calabrò

and open spaces etc., but such comprehensive approaches may still be unable to deal with complex blocks and estates with 'bad reputations'. For the first time in Italy, demolition has entered the vocabulary of housing policy, and some blocks with special features and problems are now on the verge of such a fate. For example, one of the many buildings in Naples was demolished in 1998, and almost one thousand families rehoused in new low-rise buildings on the same site. Whether or not this is the start of a new trend is yet to be seen.

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7 Spain

High-rise as urban phenomenon

Luis Cortés Alcalá

7.1 Introduction

In Spain, the construction of high-rise apartment blocks is historically an urban phenomenon, focused on the large metropolitan areas of Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Bilbao, Seville and provincial capitals (Benidorm, Cadiz, Valladolid, Santander etc.). Their development began in the early 1960s and continued into the latter half of the 1970s. More recently, during 1980s there was a significant reduction in high-rise building, a fact which is largely attributable to the impact of recession combined with the influence of 'austerity planning' development policies (Campos Venuti, 1978). Recently, the massive production of high-rise housing has been revived, coinciding with an overall increase in the production of new housing, especially in the bigger cities and in some coastal areas.

High-rise estates originated as a response to the urgent need to provide housing for those migrating to the country's major economic centres in the 1960s and 1970s. The extent of housing shortage, combined with the speculative approach adopted by house building companies, led to poor standards of construction. Some of these estates have steadily descended to the bottom of the housing market, forming large and homogeneous areas, inhabited by those with little choice.

About one third of the total housing stock in Spain is not used as a main or permanent home, a very high proportion in comparison with other European countries. The number of second homes and holiday houses has grown significantly since 1950, when they made up 2.8% of the dwelling stock. By 1996, this figure had reached 15.3%, or more than 2,700,000 dwellings, to which must be added almost three million 'empty' homes.

Rented housing has declined from 53% of the total in 1950 and 41% in 1960, to only 12.5% at the present time. Spain has one of the lowest proportions of low-cost public housing in Europe: only 7.6% of rented housing falls into this category. Consequently, only 1% of the total stock consists of low rent social housing (Leal, 1992).

At present, Spain is entering a new phase of housing change, characterised by the growing housing needs of young people and other social groups such as foreign immigrants. This phenomenon is particularly marked in the bigger cities, where property prices spiralled at the end of the 1980s and into the 1990s. The pressures on the urban housing market have created an upward filtering process, but not all neighbourhoods are in a position to benefit from it.



Population	40,077,100
Population density	79/km ²
Capital	Madrid
GDP per capita	€13,726
Housing stock	19.2 million

7.2 Housing policy in the post-war years

Broadly speaking, housing policy in Spain began in the 1940s. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), a considerable proportion of the country's housing stock was destroyed, leaving thousands homeless. In its first years in power, the Franco regime devoted itself to the construction of political and social bases, creating a state that was both interventionist and repressive (Maestre, 1979). Holding on to power became its central concern and all its political activities were channelled in this direction. The regime's support for countries defeated in the Second World War led to a level of international isolation which was to last throughout the 1950s, an isolation which brought about a period of intense poverty.

The impact of migration

It was during the 1960s, largely due to the 'Plan de Estabilización' of 1957, that modernisation – in every sense – began in earnest. A new economic programme led to the development of Bilbao, Barcelona, Madrid, Asturias and Valencia as industrial centres. As employment growth in urban areas led to rural depopulation, the map of Spain was redrawn (Nasarre et al., 1988). The proportion of people living in areas of more than 50,000 inhabitants grew from 31% in 1950 and 36% in 1960 to 44% in 1970 and 51% in 1991. A good indicator of this remarkable shift in population is that 15% of the population, a total of four million Spaniards migrated between 1961 and 1971, many to seek employment outside Spain.

The major cities were unable to house all those who moved to them, and people began to build their own homes on waste land or at the periphery. This phenomenon of 'shanty-ism' or 'do-it-yourself housing' (Capel, 1983) developed rapidly and the 1960 Housing Census recorded the presence of 128,000 such rudimentary homes, over 50,000 of which were in the Madrid area alone. By 1970, this latter figure had risen to over 110,000, accommodating more than 550,000 people.

Quantity, quantity.....

A Ministry of Housing was created by the Franco regime in the early 1940s, its first policies designed to ease the problems caused by economic development. State intervention extended to the provision of social housing and plans to deal with the shanty towns. The resulting construction policy was intended both to stimulate the economy and solve the housing shortage. Emphasis was placed on quantity not quality, and the houses produced were often small and badly built using inferior materials. In the new neighbourhoods, mainly located on the urban periphery, almost everything was absent including amenities, transport systems, shops, street lighting and green spaces.

Numbers were the central tenet of Francoist housing policy. The state was actively involved in building social housing by giving financial assistance to developers and by promoting new development. Between 1957 and 1967, 83% of housing completed in Spain received public financial support. However, whilst the state was the primary force driving residential construction, the direct provision of public housing never reached the levels seen in other Western countries.

The economic prosperity of the 1960s improved the purchasing power of workers, and enabled the development of a housing market based on owner-occupation. The share of owner occupied housing rose from 46% in 1950, to 57% in 1970, 78% in 1991 and 81% in 1999, giving Spain one of highest rates of home ownership in the European community. This period was characterised by the construction on a grand scale of estates of high-rise blocks whose growth helped to create the present metropolitan structure of Spain (Leira et al., 1981).

Urban crisis

House building policy, especially between 1950 and 1985, resulted in the almost exclusive construction of high-rise blocks. This phenomenon can only be understood in terms of a social and political context shaped by a 'productivist' model of economic growth. This model generated a major urban crisis in the early 1970s. An increase in social problems and common feelings of frustration combined with economic recession and the disintegration of the Franco regime produced massive social change (Castells, 1981). After the death of Franco in 1975, a process of democratic transition began in Spain which coincided with the worst years of economic recession.

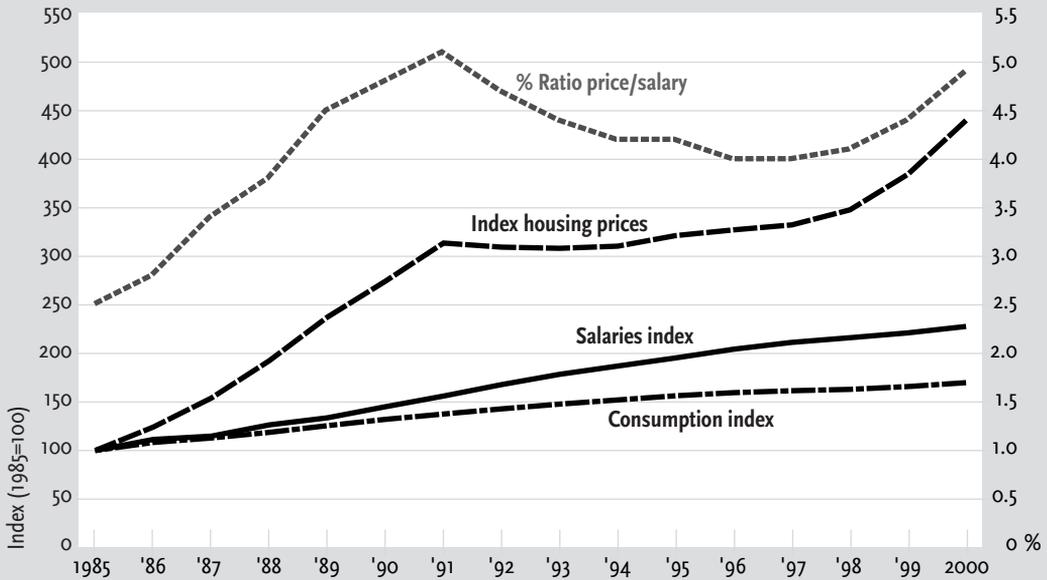
The recession paralysed the construction industry, house prices fell, the volume of unsold stock increased and new development by private companies slowed down. The result was a return to public building programmes. Following a pact between the 'Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE)' and the 'Partido Comunista de España (PCE)', the first democratically elected town councils were controlled by the political left. One outcome was a general overhaul of urban planning policy and a refocusing of activity on urban renewal and the modernisation of city centres. As a result, renovation and rebuilding became the basic elements of housing policy.

New housing demands

Whilst the first half of the 1980s was characterised by an international recession, the second half was characterised by strong economic growth (Figure 7.1). House prices were driven up causing problems for those wishing to move up the housing ladder, including inhabitants of substandard housing and young people wishing to enter the housing market.

The growth in property prices in the second half of the 1980s was stimulat-

Figure 7.1 Housing, wages and consumption prices in Spain, 1985-2000



ed by the development of new forms of single-family housing such as detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. The Comunidad of Madrid was typical of the trend towards low rise housing, based on the demands of emerging groups in society including professionals, entrepreneurs, administrative workers and teachers (Cortés & Leal, 1995).

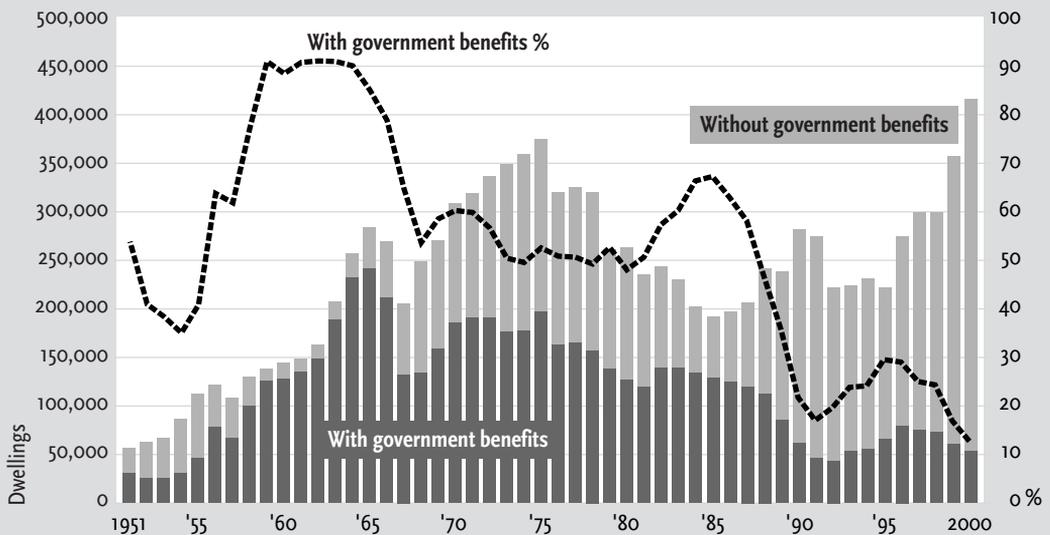
After a few years of economic crisis, the 1990s have been characterised by production levels unknown in the 1980s, especially of private sector single-family homes and apartments in three or four floors blocks. Whilst detailed figures are not yet available, high-rise blocks have also been produced in significant numbers with different types of schemes provided for the high cost, tourist and social-housing sectors.

Protected housing

The provision of social housing in Spain has differed significantly from practice in other European countries. Until the 1960s, low income tenants living in private rented dwellings were protected from rent increases and eviction by strict rules, and rights passed on from one generation to the next. Private landlords had no incentive to invest in maintenance, and when new and more profitable opportunities arose, many dwellings were sold.

Housing subsidies – in operation since the late 1970s – were directed mainly at the inexpensive owner occupied sector, known as ‘protected housing’. Because of the indefinite duration of private rental contracts and the stimulation of owner occupation, there is no direct relationship between tenure and income. However, whether or not a dwelling is ‘protected’ is an indicator of the socio-economic status of its occupants (Kruijthoff & Baart, 1998). Currently, public sector activity in housing is focused on the cheaper owner occupied sector. Development plans are based on providing direct financial assistance

Figure 7.2 Annual housing construction with and without government benefits in Spain, 1951-2000



to buyers and developing houses at favourable prices. In recent decades, the most practical means of realising plans has been the development of high-rise housing estates at the edge of towns.

The present housing market is divided between those who demand high quality – and typically detached – housing, and the large numbers of young people trying to enter the market. Under present conditions, the young are forced into the more affordable sectors such as previously inhabited or ‘protected housing’ (Cortés, 1992).

7.3 Post-war housing construction and the contribution of high-rise housing estates

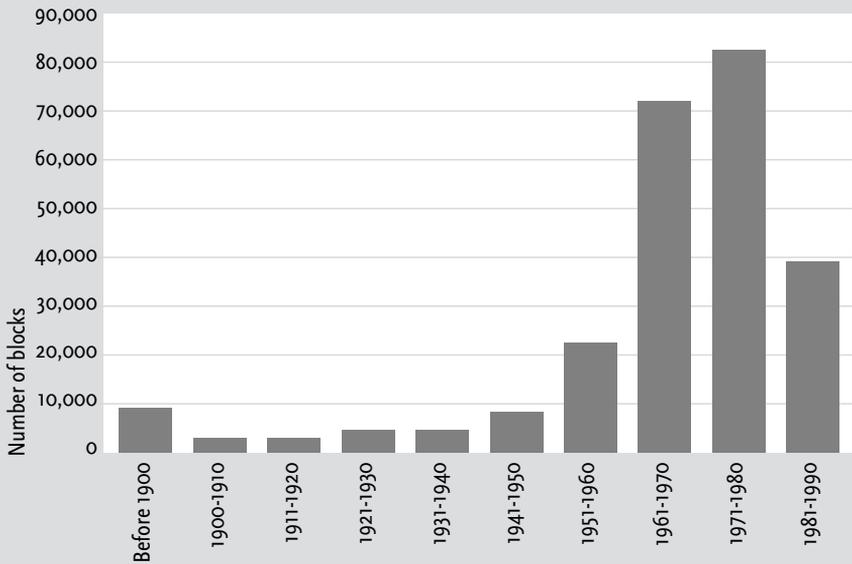
Periods of housing construction

Housing construction in Spain has passed through several phases over the past 50 years (see Figure 7.2). In the 1950s, housing production reached an average of about 100,000 dwellings per year (3.6 per 1,000 inhabitants), of which 63.8% received some public support. The public system was born in this period while the private sector played a lesser role.

In the 1960s, the production of housing increased rapidly, with annual averages of more than 235,000 dwellings (7.6 per 1,000 inhabitants), of which 74.8% received public support. Processes initiated in the 1960s continued in the 1970s when output levels peaked at around 322,000 new dwellings per year (9.5 dwellings per 1,000 inhabitants), of which 52% received public support.

The 1980s were characterised by the impact of international recession, by a reduction in house building and by an increased role for the state. Construction levels fell to an average of 5.6 dwellings per 1,000 inhabitants, 60% of which received some form of state assistance. Since the early 1990s, the average number of completed dwellings has climbed to 245,000 per year at a rate

Figure 7.3 Blocks of more than five storeys in Spain by date of construction, number and percentage, 1990



of 6.3 dwellings per thousand people. However, the rate of public intervention fell to a low point affecting only 27% of total output.

Once the economic crisis of the early 1990s had been overcome, Spain entered a new period characterized by massive output levels, reaching an average of 281,000 homes per year (at a ratio of 7.2 dwellings per 1,000 inhabitants). State intervention in housing construction has fallen to an all-time low, with the rate of public support affecting only 21.4% of output. It is likely that this level of intervention will be maintained over the next few years, and limited to socially excluded groups.

The contribution of high-rise housing

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed a huge growth in the housing stock. The number of dwellings per thousand people doubled from 228 in 1950 to 460 in 1995. The production of such an enormous number of dwellings was made possible by the construction of large-scale and high-density housing developments (Figure 7.3). The imperative was to provide housing in the shortest time possible with the amenities and estate infrastructure provided later, if at all. One consequence of the high volume of construction is the comparative youth of Spanish housing with dwellings constructed after 1960 representing over 68% of the current total. However, this does not mean that it is necessarily in good condition. A characteristic of housing built in the 1960s and 1970s is its poor quality, although the recent modernisation of estates has brought about considerable improvement. Flats lacking water or electricity, or in need of urgent repair, fell from 40% in 1950 to less than 2% in 1991, a figure comparable with the national average.

In 1990, 30.4% of all dwellings were located in high-rise blocks of five or more storeys. Including large apartment blocks in such resorts as the Spanish

Costas, this is equivalent to 5.2 million dwellings in almost a quarter of a million blocks, about 78% of which were built since 1961 (National Statistical Institute, 1990). An important characteristic of high-rise estates in Spain is their concentration in municipalities of more than 100,000 people. Whilst they house only 42% of the population, they host 70% of the total high-rise stock. In the big cities, over 60% of the population lives in high-rise (Table 7.1). The vast majority of people own their high-rise flats, with figures close to the national average for all housing.

High-rise housing in Spain is not homogenous, it is not possible to consider it as one building type or place it in one building period. As building density was the common criterion for subsidising housing between 1960 and 1985, it is possible to find housing estates of the same type with marked differences in the quality of dwellings and the social profile of residents. This situation has begun to change only recently as a consequence of the trend towards building more detached and semi-detached housing.

7.4 The inhabitants of high-rise housing estates

Three representative estates

Because high-rise estates are a normal housing type in Spain, it is not possible to generalise about their inhabitants. In order to demonstrate the social heterogeneity of high-rise in Spain, three examples of typical high-rise estates are considered below.

Type A estates consist of non-subsidised and privately owned dwellings, for example Estrella' in Madrid. Estates belonging to this type are located close to city centres, the flats are of high quality and are priced accordingly. The inhabitants of these estates belong to the (upper) middle classes, and unlike many west European countries, Spanish cities have been able to retain a large proportion of these affluent populations. Though there are a few elite suburban towns, suburbanisation has not been restricted to high- and medium-income families.

Type B estates were built and administered by private developers for owner occupation, for example 'Moratalaz' in Madrid. This type of area provides affordable dwellings on the urban periphery, and as the process of suburbanisation continues, prices rise steadily. This type of estate has an intermediate social structure, with several classes of people living close to each other.

Type C estates consist of public dwellings, such as the areas of 'Orcasitas', 'Palomeras Sureste' and 'Amposta' in Madrid. As with Type B, they are located

Table 7.1 Percentage of dwellings in buildings of more than five storeys by city size, in Spain, 1990

City size	Percentage of dwellings in buildings of more than five storeys
More than 500,000	60.7
100,001-500,000	52.8
50,001-100,000	37.2
10,001-50,000	20.6
2,001-10,000	5.3
Less than 2,000	1.4
Total	30.4

Source: National Statistical Institute, Buildings Census, 1990



An example of a Type A estate in Madrid. Non-subsidised and privately owned apartments of good quality, close to the centre.



An example of a Type B estate in Madrid. High-rise built by private developers for owner-occupation, located on the urban periphery.

in peripheral areas, but in contrast house mainly lower working class or unemployed populations. The flats are smaller, facilities are inadequate and the environment may remain poor. In some streets, there is a high proportion of low-cost public rental dwellings, whose inhabitants have indefinite rental contracts. However, there may also be a proportion of privately owned flats,

**An example of a Type C estate in Madrid.
Public dwellings in the urban periphery.**

many of which have been sold in recent decades.

Type A estates tend to enjoy better services and facilities, and the flats are of better quality. For example, floor space may exceed 100 square metres, almost double that which may be found in Type C estates. Differences are apparent in such aspects as central heating, the provision of piped gas, the employment of porters/janitors and the general condition of buildings.

Residents of the three types of estates

Residents in the three types can be characterised according to three social indicators: level of education, and the rate and type of employment. Illiteracy amongst those over ten years of age is a primary indicator of educational attainment. The highest proportions

are found in Type C estates (5%) and the lowest in Type A (0.5%). This pattern is repeated for the proportion of residents in receipt of a higher education. The lowest proportions are in Type C areas (1.6%) and the highest in Type A (17.6%), figures for Type B are in the middle. 90% of Type A residents aged 20-21 are studying at university, a proportion which falls to 54% in Type B, and only 30% in Type C, much less than the national average.

Employment is now the key indicator used in social assessments of housing developments, unemployment is an enormous problem in Spain and stood at more than 20% in 1997. Data for the three types of estates is only available for 1995, when the overall rate was 22.9%, the highest in the European Community. At close to 20%, unemployment was most serious and widespread in Type C estates, while in Type A, it reached barely 10%. Unemployment rates were higher amongst women in each type of area, reaching 25% in Type C and 14% in Type A. With all these figures, it must be remembered that employment levels in Madrid are above the Spanish average, and that unemployment elsewhere will exceed these.

The employment rate amongst young people is a key factor in social differentiation. In Type A estates, most of those aged 16-19 are involved in academic study, and only 5% are in paid employment. However, this is not the case for young people in Type C areas, where the employment rate is around 50%. Here, young people leave the education system sooner to take jobs which reflect their already low level of educational attainment.

The extent of social differentiation is further reflected in the concentrations of social groups by estate. For example, Type A estates include over 30%



A programme for the remodelling ('Remodelación') of Madrid

From 1976 onwards, and following the Franco period, a major scheme was implemented to restructure the city of Madrid. In terms of housing, the result was the construction of more than 37,000 dwellings intended to re-house more than 150,000 residents from 30 of the city's poorer neighbourhoods. This represented a real revolution in the housing conditions of a considerable proportion of the Madrid population. This intervention had a particular impact on three types of areas: on 'shanty towns' of self-built housing; on areas of temporary dwellings provided by housing associations and on areas of public housing ('Pobladors Dirigidos'), the majority constructed in high-rise blocks. The latter suffered from poor quality construction and a lack of communal facilities, and despite repairs deteriorated over time.

Pressure for the remodelling programme originated from a strong residents' movement and their radical plan of action. Various alternatives were rejected in preference for the demolition and complete rebuilding of neighbourhoods. The remodelling process was achieved with the active participation of residents at all stages including agreement over the quality and design of dwellings and the layout and amenities of the new neighbourhoods. Discounts in the cost of land and construction amounted to 15% of the total price or 7.5% if rented, and final housing costs were even lower than for comparable public housing. Whilst the costs were very high, the Remodelling Programme represented a real step forward in the fight against substandard housing in Madrid.

professionals compared with only 6% in Type C. In contrast, the proportion of industrial manual workers reaches 29% in Type C estates compared with only 5.5% in Type A (Leal, 1994).

7.5 Problems and interventions

As demonstrated above, high-rise areas in Spain vary according to building period, ownership, quality and location. However, if we concentrate on those estates at the urban periphery, especially of Types B and C, we can identify three distinct phases in their development, in the problems which have emerged and in the approaches taken to dealing with them. In general, the construction of high-rise areas has been associated with the modernisation of Spanish society. In the first period, the emphasis was placed on production and problems arose with the quality of flats and the inadequate provision of amenities. Windows did not fit, piping leaked, walls cracked, water heaters did not work, and so on. Improvements came slowly, and some areas were of such poor quality that the only option was demolition and reconstruction (see for example, the case of the remodelling ('Remodelación') in Madrid). Improvements to the interior of dwellings were left to the inhabitants themselves.

The second phase of improvement was aimed at the environment of high-rise estates. This was implemented in the latter half of the 1970s, following the Franco period, when democratic local government had been established. In this second phase, attempts were made to provide the amenities absent since construction including green spaces, pavements, street lighting, schools, shops and public transport.

We are now in the third phase of problems and interventions. In general

those large and peripheral estates which have traditionally housed working class populations are the deprived areas of today. Socially excluded groups are increasingly concentrated in Type B and especially Type C areas, and problems of unemployment, delinquency and drug abuse are growing, especially among the young. The traditional social structure and sense of community in such areas has collapsed, leaving young people increasingly vulnerable at the margins of society.

7.6 The future role and position of high-rise housing estates in Spain

The current housing market situation in Spain is characterised by unique circumstances. In the context of the price rises experienced since the late 1980s, the greatest problem has been housing shortage, especially for young people wishing to leave home. At present, the only means of meeting their needs would be to provide 'protected housing' which, in order to be affordable, would be of limited floor area and organised in blocks of more than four storeys. Meeting these new needs would require a level of output far in excess of those achieved in recent years, and the only option appears to be a return to the volume construction of high density and high-rise housing estates.

This raises the question of what will happen to existing high-rise areas of types A, B, or C? One important process taking place is 'residential filtering'. A high proportion of first-time buyers opt for previously occupied housing in some of these estates, with implications for a change in their social composition. Due to the high level of house prices, areas selected by the middle classes may well experience an increase in social heterogeneity. This is more likely to take place in areas which have been modernised, even if they still suffer from some of the problems indicated in Section 7.5 above.

It is unlikely that residential filtering will proceed at the same pace in areas in a poorer state of repair. Residents are already abandoning the worst estates for better areas, and as local prices fall, such estates attract marginal social groups and others with difficulty gaining access to the housing market. As social problems become even more concentrated, this process accelerates the deterioration of such estates, and the contrast with more socially stable and better off areas increases even further.

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8 France

From dreams to disillusion

Maurice Blanc and Jean-Marc Stébé

8.1 Introduction

Following the end of the Second World War, France faced a major housing crisis. A response was slow to emerge, and it was not until the late 1950s that a vast programme of state-subsidised and suburban high-rise housing estates was implemented, the so-called *grands ensembles*. Since their creation, such high-rise estates have been controversial. Whilst some compared them to rabbit hutches, for others they provided decent and modern housing, much better than the slums from which they had come.

As early as the 1970s, the deterioration of high-rise estates had become a major concern within urban and social policy. During the 1980s and early 1990s, ethnic riots occurred in France, mostly in suburban high-rise areas and not, as in Britain, in the inner cities (Blanc, 1992). Subsequently, some tower blocks were demolished, events which received international media coverage, but the usual strategy has been to implement improvement schemes. Such schemes have, however, failed to change the overall poor reputation of high-rise housing.

Surprisingly, high-rise housing and estates have received little statistical attention. A national survey was conducted in 1965, but as it was never repeated, it still constitutes an invaluable source on high-rise estates in their early phase (Clerc, 1967). French housing statistics only differentiate between single-family houses and collective buildings, which incorporate two or more dwellings (INSEE, 1995). Therefore, semi-detached houses, terraced houses, *maisonnettes*, low-rise and high-rise housing cannot be identified separately, and strictly speaking, no distinct data on high-rise housing are available. However, as most social housing was built after 1945, mainly in state-funded high-rise estates, it is usual to associate high-rise with (poor quality) social housing. In 1988, 95% of the social rented housing stock was built after 1945 and 68% between 1949 and 1974 (Union des HLM, 1988).

High-rise estates were only built between 1949 and 1974 and almost exclusively in the social-housing sector. As 13.5% of the French housing stock (28.7 million units) are social housing and approximately two thirds of social housing are high-rise flats, we can conclude that a maximum of 9% of the total stock are social rented high-rise dwellings (slightly under 2.6 million units). Existing data relate either to the social rented sector as a whole (incorporating most high-rise and other forms of social housing), or to the so-called 'sensitive' or 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods. By 1993, 16% of the social rented stock, mostly dilapidated high-rise estates, had been subject to improvement



Population	59,765,983
Population density	110/km ²
Capital	Paris
GDP per capita	€18,244
Housing stock	28.7 million

schemes (Geindre, 1993; Stébé, 1998). For these reasons, we shall use data on social housing in general and dilapidated and/or improved social housing in particular, as indicators of the high-rise stock. In doing so, we cannot avoid a strong bias towards 'problem estates'. 'Good' high-rise estates do exist, mainly among the smaller ones, but separate qualitative as well as quantitative data are absent for them.

In order to understand the French experience of high-rise housing, it is necessary to explain the meaning of 'grand ensemble'. A rough translation is a high-rise housing estate. An ensemble is a housing development or estate, but the concept also incorporates modern ideas of architectural unity and spatial autonomy. Whilst grand is used symbolically to represent the threshold of 1,000 units, grands ensembles were always more than just aggregates of buildings. The concept was developed in the 1950s and 1960s in accordance with Le Corbusier's Charter of Athens ([1943] 1957). Grands ensembles were located far from places of work and designed exclusively for residential use. As elsewhere, they were built using industrial processes and constructed at high density. They consisted of a combination of tower and smaller blocks (usually 5 storeys without lifts), and sometimes included a small area of detached, semi-detached or terraced houses. The estates were usually provided with schools, playgrounds, shopping facilities and community centres.

8.2 The creation of high-rise housing estates

The housing stock in 1945

France's post-war crisis had its roots in the policy vacuum prevailing between 1918 and 1939. At the end of the First World War, the French government had instituted a rent freeze. As a result, private landlords were discouraged from repairing existing housing or building new homes for rent, whilst social landlords received hardly any help at all. No effective housing policy accompanied this *laissez-faire* approach. The primary reason was that France was very much a rural country, with 48% of the 1936 population living in the countryside (see Figure 8.1). Consequently, villages were over-represented in Parliament and ruling bodies paid little attention to urban needs. Furthermore, house building had still to develop beyond the local craft stage and to become an established industry.

The outcome was that housing supply was unable to meet demand. Between 1919 and 1938, only 1.6 million dwellings were built in the whole of France, an average of 80,000 per year. In the same period, Germany built four million new dwellings (an average of 200,000 per year), and the United Kingdom 3.7 million (185,000 per year) (Stébé, 1998). To aggravate the situation, 400,000 dwellings were destroyed during the Second World War and 1.4 million were seriously damaged, about one fifth of the 1939 housing stock (Guer-

Figure 8.1 Development of the French urban and rural population, 1836-1990 (in millions)

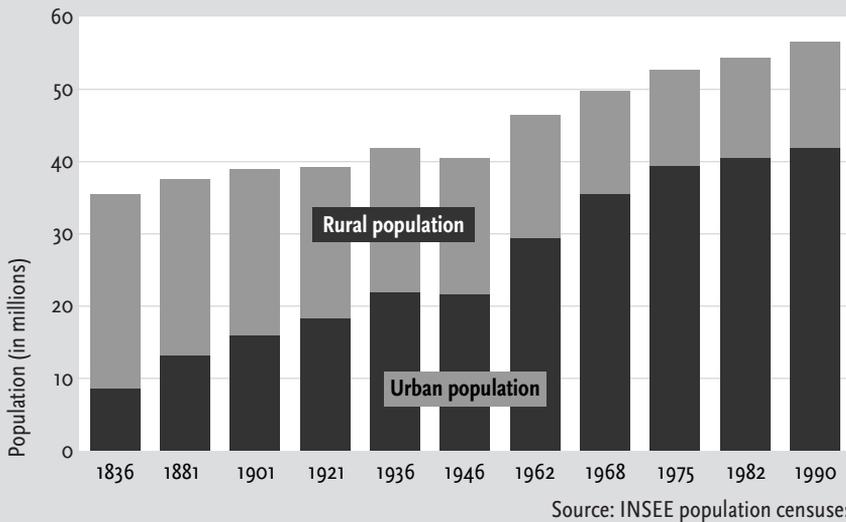


Table 8.1 Indicators on the comfort of high-rise housing estates in France in the 1960s

Dwelling amenities	High-rise housing estates 1965	1962 Census			
		France	Urban areas		
			<100,000 inh.	>100,000 inh.	Paris area
Shower or bath	99	28	34	38	36
Washbasin only		6	6	6	10
Running water inside dwelling	39	42	42	34	
Running water inside building	2	1	1	5	
No water inside the building	19	12	7	5	
Unknown	1	6	5	6	10
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Clerc (1967)

rand, 1966). By 1945, of a total of 13.4 million dwellings in France, more than 750,000 were substandard (unhealthy, overcrowded, etc) and only 1.2 million (barely 9%) met modern standards of 'comfort', defined as the provision of running water, an inside water closet, shower or bath, electricity and central heating.

Ten years later, the situation had hardly changed. According to the 1954 Census, 36% of the population lived in overcrowded dwellings, a finding repeated in 1962. In that year, 19% of dwellings had no running water, 39% had running water only in the kitchen, and barely 28% had either a shower or a bath (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.2 New dwellings in France, 1951-1990

	War damages reconstruction	Rented social housing	Social home-ownership	Private sector	Total
1951-1955	167,900	94,600	305,500	99,100	667,100
1956-1960	119,500	313,400	871,100	129,700	1,433,700
1961-1965	27,600	406,100	1,102,000	205,600	1,741,300
1966-1970	1,100	556,900	1,112,000	461,500	2,131,500
1971-1975	0	596,900	1,006,500	933,800	2,537,200
1976-1980	0	373,900	983,000	808,700	2,165,600
1981-1985	0	298,000	1,024,000	344,500	1,666,500
1986-1990	0	265,000	838,100	478,100	1,581,200

Source: Taffin (1993)

Housing policy after 1945

Both the public and especially the private sector made a slow start after 1945, with less than 15% of new dwellings contributed by the private sector in the 1950s. This proportion increased to over 40% by the 1970s, mainly as a result of a trend towards home ownership, then decreased slightly in the 1980s as a consequence of the economic crisis. Overall, the owner occupied sector increased from 45% of the dwelling stock in 1970, to one household in every two in 1984, and reached 55% by 1999. Meanwhile, the private rented sector decreased slightly, from 22% in 1970 to 18.5% in 1992.

Habitation à loyer modéré (HLM – dwelling with a moderate rent) is the French expression for social housing. Post-war construction began at a low level, with only 10,000 completions in 1951. Following a policy change in 1958, yearly output grew to over 120,000 dwellings in the early 1970s, when one new home in every four was social rented housing. Since then production has declined, from 110,000 in 1975 to 47,000 in 1990 (see Table 8.2 and Blanc & Bertrand, 1996, for more detail). After 1981, the socialist government's support for the social rented sector was constrained by the economic crisis. According to the Department of Infrastructure and Housing (DAEI, 1994a, 1994b), the social rented sector represented 6% of total stock in 1963, jumped to 26% in the late 1960s, then fell to 18% in the early 1980s and to 13.5% by 1991.

Demographic changes

Two key trends, both originating before the Second World War, were significant in the post-war period: population growth and migration from rural to urban areas. Since the 1946 Census, the French population has grown steadily, reaching 58.7 millions by the end of 1997 (INSEE, 1998a). In the same period, the urban population almost doubled growing from one half to three quarters of total population (Figure 8.1). Urban population growth has been concentrated in the suburbs, with a slight decline, since 1975, in city centres (Table 8.3). The building of high-rise housing estates in the 1960s was a major contributor to this suburban growth.

Between 1954 and 1968, 1.8 million farmers migrated from the countryside,

Table 8.3 Population growth rates in urban and rural areas in France (%)

Type of commune	1962-1968	1968-1975	1975-1982	1982-1990
Central cities	1,29	0,58	-0,06	0,12
Suburbs	2,66	2,09	0,93	0,86
Peri-urban rural	-0,27	0,12	1,19	0,95
Traditional rural	-1,35	-1,64	-1,05	-0,52
Total	1,15	0,81	0,46	0,51

Source: INSEE population censuses

and following the end of the Algerian war in 1963, over 1.2 million people were repatriated to France. They all needed accommodation, and in 1965, it was estimated that another 740,000 dwellings would be needed annually for the next ten years in order to meet housing shortage (Mathieu, 1963). However, output averaged little over 400,000 in the period 1965-1968, and only reached 546,000 in 1972.

The influence of Le Corbusier's architectural functionalism

While the acute and long term housing shortage was the main factor behind the choice of high-rise housing, it was not the only one. After 1945, Le Corbusier was highly successful in persuading planners and politicians of the necessity of a 'modern' and 'functional' city ([1942] 1957). According to Le Corbusier, a defined space was required for each social function, and grands ensembles were the appropriate answer to the housing needs of society (Stébé, 1998). Housing could be produced quickly and cheaply by applying new industrial building techniques, with further gains in productivity achieved by using prefabricated elements in large numbers (HLM aujourd'hui, 1989). Such modern and functional estates would provide good quality housing and prepare their inhabitants to become members of tomorrow's 'urban civilisation'.

The government's apathy and the 1954 'abbé Pierre' campaign for the homeless

Although needs were acute and growing, housing was not a political priority after the Second World War. Monnet's 1945 Master plan did not even consider housing, and less than 200,000 dwellings were added between 1945 and 1951. In 1952, whilst the United Kingdom was building at the rate of 47 homes per 10,000 people and West Germany at a rate of 99, France had reached only 20 (Stébé, 1998). During this period, French housing policy was limited to the rebuilding of war damaged dwellings on the same site.

Meanwhile, popular dissatisfaction was increasing, and the freezing winter of 1954 proved a turning point. In February of that year, a priest named 'abbé Pierre', a member of the first post-war Parliament and founder of the 'Emmaus Communities' for the homeless, made a call on radio with unexpected effects. It stimulated a social movement against homelessness which



Demolition of Les Minguettes near Lyons. Photo: Mairie de Vénissieux (Rhône), DirectionCommunication

combined direct help, traditional assistance, mass meetings, street demonstrations and press campaigns against the housing crisis. Combined with questions to Parliament, a reluctant government was compelled to act.

The construction of high-rise housing estates

Between 1954 and 1958, urgent action was taken to deal with the housing crisis, including the provision of exceptional funds for the rapid construction of so-called 'emergency estates' (cités d'urgence); a contest to build improved collective dwellings and the provision of experimental building sites for testing new prefabrication techniques. The construction of high-rise housing estates was launched in 1958, with the creation, under the new and interventionist Gaullist 5th Republic, of zones à urbaniser en priorité or ZUP (Priority Housing Areas).

By the late 1950s, every French city, whether conservative or working class, was proud to have its modern satellite neighbourhoods. High-rise housing became a symbol of the urban 'avant-garde'. The new estates were celebrated for their technical achievement: for example, 4,000 dwellings were built at the same time in La Courneuve (a Parisian suburb) and a 400 metre long block was constructed in Haut-du-Lièvre (a Nancy suburb).

The new high-rise homes conformed to modern standards of 'comfort', and as they were intended for families with children, most were provided with three or four rooms (plus a kitchen and bathroom). At the time of the 1962 Census, the average French home had 3.09 rooms per dwelling, whilst high-rise flats averaged 3.3 (Clerc, 1967).

Despite such advances, criticism of the new estates soon emerged. The infrastructure was often incomplete, and high-rise residents had to endure such problems as noise, poor amenities, confusion over the use of public space etc. The ZUP planning process was abandoned, and no high-rise hous-

ing estates were built after 1973. A new planning process was created, the zone d'aménagement concerté or ZAC (Concerted Planning Area), which enabled housing to be combined with other functions. The ZAC areas constructed in the 1970s, consisted mainly of single-family houses, and whilst a few multi-storey flats were provided, none were in high-rise blocks.

By 1964, France had 200 high-rise housing estates and around 365,000 flats mainly located in the larger urban centres (Clerc, 1967). Around half of all high-rise housing, and 30% of the French housing stock, could be found in the Paris region (Ile-de-France), followed by concentrations in such industrial and urban areas as Lyon, Marseille, Lille and Toulouse. However, even relatively small cities in the provinces such as Alès, Caen, Chartres or Montbéliard have high-rise housing estates.

8.3 The inhabitants of high-rise housing estates

Initial trends

In 1965, high-rise residents were relatively youthful, and a high proportion were married. Almost half (48%) were aged 0-19, compared with 34% nationally, and the same percentage were aged 20-64 years, slightly less than the national average of 54%. Those aged 65 or over made up only 4% of high-rise dwellers compared with a national average of 12% (Clerc, 1967).

Whilst foreign and/or minority ethnic households were initially under-represented, middle class households were over-represented. A 1967 survey of the population of Paris and its suburbs revealed that manual workers constituted 39% of the total, but only 14% of those living in social, mainly high-rise housing (Barou, 1992; similar data from the 1975 Census are quoted in Barre, 1976). Office workers made up 21% of the Paris population, and 14% of those living in social housing whilst 'middle executives' (cadres moyens) constituted 14.5% of the city's population and 18% of those living in social housing.

This over-representation of middle-class households can be partly explained by the effects of housing shortage. In such a situation, getting a high-rise flat was a considerable achievement. Blue and white collar workers, the lower middle classes and young professionals all longed for a new and 'comfortable' high-rise home (Alteréco, 1998). Young middle class people starting an independent life experienced the greatest difficulties, and although typically viewed as the first step towards home ownership, a modern high-rise flat offered an affordable, decent and independent alternative (Chamborédon & Lemaire, 1970).

The initial impact of living in a high-rise flat cannot be underestimated. M. Bernard, a long term resident of 'the four thousands (dwellings)' estate, and a former communist Councillor of la Courneuve (a Parisian suburb), declared in

Figure 8.2 Income of French social housing (HLM) tenants, 1973-1988

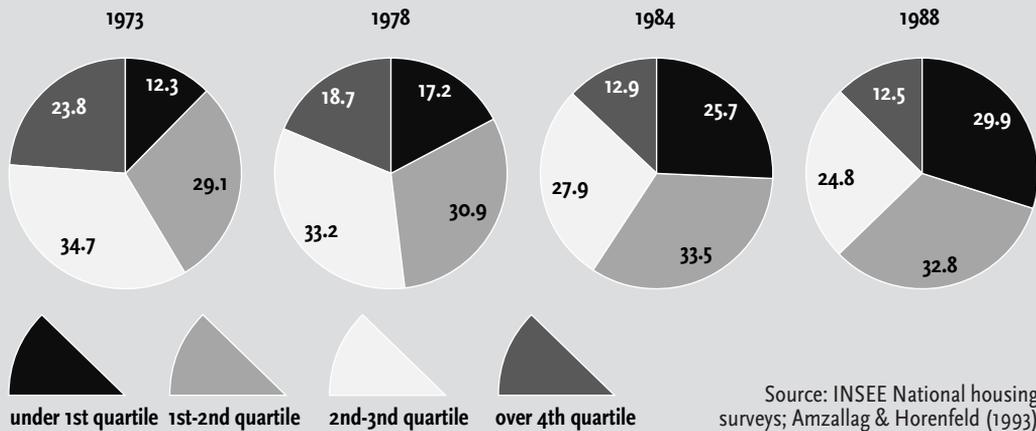


Table 8.4 Development of households' incomes for different kind of categories in France, 1973-1988

	1973-1978	1978-1984	1984-1988
HLM tenants	63,9	76,5	11,6
All tenants	71,6	86,6	14,6
All households	78,8	97,6	17,2

Source: INSEE National housing surveys and Amzallag & Horenfeld (1993)

an interview for the TV magazine *Télérama*, (14.4.93): "HLMs (social housing) you cannot imagine today what an extraordinary opportunity they represented for us. We were moving from slums to settle into modern buildings submitted to strict hygienic standards. You must keep in mind what was working class housing up to the 1930s: a room large enough for a bed,

that was the legal definition... So, HLMs were a paradise!" (our translation). This extract clearly illustrates the typical overlap between HLMs and the new high-rise housing.

Subsequent trends

Some 30 years later, the picture has changed considerably. The average French dwelling has four rooms and 86.4 sq.m., and whilst superior to the private rented sector (3.1 rooms and 67.6 sq.m.), the average social rented dwelling has to make do with 3.3 rooms and 69.9 sq.m. (INSEE, 1995).

In terms of social profile, Figure 8.2 and Table 8.4 show that, between 1973 and 1988, the proportion of tenants from low-income groups increased, and their incomes tended to grow more slowly than the national average (Amzallag & Horenfeld, 1993; Blanc, 1998). The lower middle classes tend to avoid high-rise housing estates and prefer to own a single-family house. However, the population of social housing is still relatively young with almost 33% aged 19 years old or less, compared with a national average of 26.5%.

For 'difficult' estates within improvement schemes, the proportions of single parent, large and 'foreign' families (mostly from North Africa) are now above the national average. Although recording ethnicity is unconstitutional

in France, nationality is taken as a rough indicator of ethnicity (Blanc, 1992). As a result, 18% of estate residents can be considered 'foreign' compared with 6% of the French population (Geindre, 1993; Delarue, 1991). By the early 1990s, unemployment rates on such estates varied from four to 58%, but an average of 20% was almost twice the national rate. High levels of school failure are common in difficult high-rise estates, together with petty criminality (fights, racial harassment, robbery in cellars, drug abuse, vandalism, etc). Teenagers, and sometimes younger children, are increasingly involved in such activities.

Even the most dilapidated high-rise estates have a small amount of private letting by owners unable to sell at a satisfactory price. As they can get only a very low rent and are not eligible for subsidies, most are unwilling or unable to pay for maintenance and repair, and offer worse housing conditions than improved social-rented housing (Garin, 1996). In some cases, this situation has aggravated the degradation of the housing stock.

8.4 Disillusion and decline

Planning dreams and social realities

The challenge for urban planners, inspired by Le Corbusier, was not simply to create high-rise housing estates, but real *cités radieuses*. This term could be taken to refer to 'Radiant Cities and/or estates' as *cit * means both 'city' and 'estate' in French. Functionalist planning sought to achieve the integration of all social classes in one community, with high-rise estates as the 'melting pot' from which new urban social forms might emerge. It soon became apparent, for a combination of geographical, technical and ideological reasons, that high-rise estates were very different from what had been intended.

The need for cheap building land resulted in estates being located in peripheral areas, poorly connected to the urban core. For this reason, many high-rise estates in Paris are located in the outer suburbs and as illustrated by the St-Eloy estate in Woippy, this has contributed to the marginalising and exclusion of their residents.

High-rise estates were built quickly and cheaply for large numbers of households. As a result, quality was neglected, whether architectural, environmental or technical. Tenants complained that rooms were too small (the 'kitchenette' was the most criticised), dwellings suffered from poor sound and heat insulation, the building fabric deteriorated quickly and only minimal adjustments could be made to external space to meet new demands.

Last but not least, town planners had dreamt of creating communities powerful enough to overcome social class divisions. They ignored the warnings of sociologists ranging from de Tocqueville, Weber and R.E. Park to Jean-Claude Chambor don and Madeleine Lemaire (1970) that physical proximity does not per se facilitate social intimacy. On the contrary, it often encourages social

Woippy Saint-Eloy, Metz

Woippy Saint-Eloy is a good example of a relatively small high-rise housing estate, located in the suburbs of Metz, in eastern France. A new high-rise estate was built there by two social landlords, one of which housed mainly foreign families. It was expected that the new residents would be pleased to be within walking distance of their place of work, but instead, they complained about being isolated in such an enclave. Both the Council and local population were opposed to the new settlement, but were unable to prevent it.

Construction began in 1965 with single-family houses followed by tower blocks. 938 homes were built in seven years, almost one third of which (296) were single-family houses, an unusually high proportion. The population reached 3,250 in 1968, stabilised at 4,200 in 1975, but fell to 4,030 by 1990 (a 4% decrease). In 1968, unemployment was insignificant in Saint-Eloy, and 88% of employed heads of household were industrial workers. In 1990, 30% of household heads were unemployed, only 40% of the working population were employed and the estate's population was predominantly low income. Health problems were significant and infant mortality is twice the national average; school failure and youth criminality were reported at high levels. On the other hand, the stability of the tenant population was a conspicuous feature. 32% of households living in Saint-Eloy in 1990 had been there since the 1975 Census, mainly in single-family houses, and 18% had lived there since construction between 1965 and 1970.

Major problems developed quickly, with the deterioration of buildings; dampness and mould growth; cracks in walls; vandalism in common areas, etc. Tenants' associations, social and health workers and local sections of left wing political parties were all mobilised to convince the local and national authorities to do something. Implemented between 1978 and 1982, Saint-Eloy became one of the first HVS operations intended to stimulate community life and improve the urban quality of the neighbourhood. It is now an ordinary high-rise estate with frequent but minor problems between young people (not all of foreign origin) and other so-called 'locals'.

distance, and unfortunately, this is precisely what happened on high-rise estates in France from the very beginning.

The changing social composition of high-rise estates

Among the first high-rise dwellers, a distinction needs to be drawn between young and upwardly mobile middle class households and the inner city poor, rehoused after slum clearance. The former were usually very critical of their new neighbourhood, and subsequently moved on. Among the latter, some were proud to be among neighbours in a better social position, but the majority complained of being housed far from the city centre in housing unsuited to their way of life. Whilst some described the experience as 'deportation', they had little choice in this process, and by default, they formed the stable populations of estates (Chamborédon & Lemaire, 1970).

Neighbour disputes were frequent between these sub-groups, for example, conflicts occurred about noise which was aggravated by the lack of adequate sound insulation. As a result within a couple of years, upwardly mobile tenants moved to suburban single-family house or to a gentrified inner city area, especially when their children reached school age. This trend was strongly encouraged by the housing policies pursued after 1969. On the supply side, the building industry was encouraged to deliver low cost single-family homes in volume. On the demand side, low-income home buyers were eligible for

long term loans at low interest rates. Consequently, home ownership became affordable for social housing tenants able to pay their rents regularly, and in the 1970s, many moved out of high-rise estates (Taffin, 1987). The resulting population movements have played a major role in accelerating social segregation on high-rise estates, a trend which has contributed to their poor reputation.

After 1973, the economic crisis accelerated the process of stigmatising high-rise housing. Unemployed tenants could no longer afford to move out, and newcomers drawn from minority ethnic groups were in a more precarious economic situation. The economic crisis had the unexpected consequence of encouraging the large scale settlement of North African families on high-rise estates. In 1974, the immigration of new workers was halted, and only families joining resident heads of households were permitted to enter the country. Algerian workers, who had previously shuttled between jobs in France and families across the Mediterranean were afraid of being refused re-entry, and as a result, they sent for their families to live with them. However, in order to obtain residency permits, North African workers needed 'decent' housing, and the only option was to rent low cost social, and frequently high-rise housing.

At first, social-housing organisations were happy to fill their empty flats with foreign families paying their rents regularly. By 1982, whilst 13% of French households were tenants of a social-housing organisation, the proportion for minority ethnic households was 25%. For North Africans, the proportions were even higher reaching 34% for Algerians and 40% for Moroccans (1982 Census). A downwardly mobile French population, with little prospect of moving from high-rise estates, came face to face with an immigrant population in a mirror image of their own apparent failure. Co-existence has been tense and difficult (Blanc, 1991), and provides a partial explanation for Le Pen's Front National electoral success.

8.5 High-rise housing improvement schemes

Within only a few years, flats and estates which had been viewed as modern and attractive were being refused and rejected, criticised for their inhuman scale and poor environmental quality and associated with overcrowding and dilapidation. Estates were even accused of generating maladjustment. As vacancy rates reached 30 or 40%, some social landlords faced bankruptcy and intervention was inevitable.

By the mid-1970s, initiatives were being introduced to improve estates and restore their popularity. In 1977, a partnership programme was launched between central government and HLM on some dilapidated high-rise estates. Termed *Habitat et vie sociale* (HVS – housing and community life), the pro-

Haut-Du-Lièvre, Nancy

Nancy is also located in eastern France. By the late 1950s, central government funds initiated an ambitious housing programme with two related aims: urban renewal in the inner city and the creation of large social-housing estates at the periphery. In the city centre, the Saint-Sébastien area now hosts a commercial centre, offices for service activities, car parking facilities and expensive housing.

Saint Sébastien's evicted residents were offered flats, mostly in the first high-rise estate, called Haut-du-Lièvre. Located at the periphery, it became the biggest and most isolated estate, located on a plateau overlooking Nancy. Its location gave birth to the local distinction between living at 'the top' (negative) and 'downtown' (positive), and it quickly became the most stigmatised estate. Built between 1958 and 1969, it consisted of 3,400 homes, 85% of which were social housing. Concentrated in 14 blocks, two are famous for their size, they are over 400 metres long, have 20 storeys and consist of some 1,700 dwellings. The private sector includes a tower block in co-ownership, and a small area of single-family houses.

Those rehoused in Haut-du-Lièvre were dependent on low and/or precarious incomes, and found their new rents barely affordable. Whilst some were happy to exchange their slum for better housing, others objected strongly and spoke of their 'deportation'. By rehousing them far from the city, urban renewal destroyed their way of life. Their lifestyles contrasted, and at times, came into conflict with those of young professionals attracted by 'modern' social housing. From the mid-1970s, the middle classes began to move on to owner occupation leaving a residual population 'trapped' in the estate, and increasingly stigmatised as 'problem' households.

Between 1983 and 1988, a rehabilitation programme was implemented which included some limited demolition, the conversion of a complete stairwell of flats to 30 offices, and the reduction of the social housing stock to 2,600 units. The remaining dwellings were modernised, providing better heat insulation, new bathrooms, etc. and the built environment was improved to include green spaces and car parks etc. Unfortunately, for technical and financial reasons, sound insulation was not provided.

Another aspect of the rehabilitation strategy was the promotion of economic activity within the estate. This has had a limited impact, but has slowly improved the range of services offered in the neighbourhood. Students were encouraged to move in and now form 30% of residents, a figure equivalent to the previous vacancy rate. Some are involved as volunteers in community associations, but the majority have a limited relationship with their neighbours, their 'real life' is elsewhere and they do not stay long in the area.

At the time of the 1990 Census, Haut-du-Lièvre had some 6,800 inhabitants and is currently Nancy's poorest estate. The physical and architectural rehabilitation of this high-rise housing estate has improved both housing and the built environment, but has failed to achieve its main aim of transforming the area into an attractive community in which better-off tenants are happy to live.

programme was intended to improve housing combined with strong community participation. In 1981, the new socialist government reviewed the scheme and found that while housing had been modernised, there had been little tenant involvement. As a result, a new and more ambitious programme, called Développement social des quartiers or DSQ (social development of neighbourhoods and/or communities) was launched in 1982. Job creation for unemployed tenants was given priority, but there is no evidence of any significant impact (Dubedout, 1983).

Subsequently, a controversial programme called *régie de quartier* was introduced to encourage self-help groups to take responsibility for the image and maintenance of their neighbourhood. *Régie* means both 'production' (of a play) and 'self management', and a *régie de quartier* should involve the 'production of a new sense of neighbourhood' by the community itself. Whilst



Haut-du-Lièvre, overview after rehabilitation.

Source: Office Public d'Aménagement et de Construction de la Ville de Nancy (Office for Social Housing, City of Nancy).



Haut-du-Lièvre, the same entrance, before and after rehabilitation.

Source: Office Public d'Aménagement et de Construction de la Ville de Nancy (Office for Social Housing, City of Nancy).

some saw this programme as the first step towards the professional inclusion of tenants, others viewed it as a source of cheap labour for cleaning and repairing high-rise estates (Félonneau, 1989).

Funding these schemes has been a central issue. Both HVS and DSQ rely on the availability of housing allowances (APL, Aide personnalisée au logement; personalised housing benefit) to fund estate improvement, but with unintended consequences. Modernised housing produces higher rents, which are met for low-income tenants by increased levels of APL. In the short term, low-income families can afford to live in a modernised dwelling, but large families will lose their entitlement as their children grow older. Households with incomes slightly above the level of eligibility for APL have seen their rents rise significantly (often by 40 to 50%). For the better off high-rise tenant, this has proved a powerful incentive to move out and become a home owner (Taf-

fin, 1993). Such a trend contradicts the aim of making high-rise estates attractive to a wide range of tenants, whilst the effect of APL has been to produce new segregation patterns, concentrating the poor on modernised but still socially devalued high-rise housing estates (Stébé, 1995).

8.6 The future for high-rise housing estates in France

The stock of high-rise housing remains substantial in France. In 1992, 89% of the social rented stock was in 'collective' buildings (of two or more dwellings), ranging from 98% in Ile-de-France to 69% in Nord-Pas-de-Calais. The option of mass demolition was raised as early as the mid-1970s, but was quickly abandoned as impractical. Firstly, construction loans were far from being repaid, and any significant demolition programme would be very expensive for the state. Replacement housing would be more expensive for the vast majority of high-rise tenants, and therefore unaffordable. Some demolition took place in the 1980s and 1990s, mainly tower blocks in Lyon's suburbs.

Most social landlords are fearful of housing only the very poor in devalued high-rise estates, and have been searching for solutions to attract better-off residents to improved estates. Initial attempts have centred on attracting middle class populations in search of a high quality urban infrastructure. Unfortunately, the few initiatives which have offered the co-ownership of high-rise flats have been a failure. A further strategy has attempted to 'balance' the poor by attracting students, and a 1997 reform which gave them the right to APL has made high-rise social housing affordable.

Implemented in Haut-du-Lièvre in Nancy, it is still too early to assess its long term effects on the community life of the estate. A first impression is that the majority of students act as temporary residents and have only limited contact with their neighbours. However, some are now becoming involved in community activities, for example helping children with their homework, or organising sport and leisure activities.

What will happen to high-rise estates in France in the future? France has one of the highest unemployment rates in the European Union and is still experiencing a housing crisis which sees empty dwellings combined with increasing homelessness. More recently, strong emphasis has been placed on the promotion of economic activity on high-rise estates, but this is difficult to achieve. It is difficult to reverse the trend for high-rise housing to be avoided by the better off and left to the poor with little choice. High-rise tenants are often viewed as second-class citizens, stigmatised by the simple name of their estate. Mixing the population of high-rise housing estates through some form of social engineering does not appear to be a realistic prospect.

Social landlords have now repaid construction loans incurred when build-

ing high-rise estates in the 1960s and can now contemplate the controversial option of large scale demolition. It is argued that the tallest towers and largest blocks should be destroyed and replaced by smaller units on a more 'human' scale. Most tenants are very critical of the quality of their housing, but they have very mixed feelings about the impact of demolition. Some are 'attached', in the double meaning of the word, to both their homes and their neighbourhood. Low income tenants recognise that new housing will be an improvement but raise the question, recurrent since slum clearance in the 19th century, of who will benefit? Will new housing still be affordable for them or will it be available only to a more affluent population? Some demolition might be acceptable as part of a wider neighbourhood strategy, but it is not the solution in itself. It must be carefully planned and its consequences communicated to tenants who will need clear answers to the question of replacement housing.

Involving tenants in transforming their estates is an extremely arduous process, and everybody is suspicious of it, including councillors, officers, professionals and even tenants who do not believe that their views will be taken into account (Blanc, 1999). Notwithstanding these huge difficulties, grass-roots democracy currently offers the only route to building a future into French high-rise housing estates (Smith & Blanc, 1997).

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9 Belgium

Impact of modernism in a divided country

Nicolas Declerck

9.1 Introduction

Whilst Belgium is divided into three communities, the Belgian housing market has for more than a century been typified by a high percentage of privately-owned housing. The Housing Law of 1889, which represented the first state involvement in housing policy, introduced a range of financial measures to persuade the working classes to buy or to build their own home. The Catholic government saw the traditional house as the cornerstone of both family and society, and believed that the working man would act more responsibly if he was working for his own home: “Small landed property also works on the moral and material elevation of the family. The small owner feels responsible for the conservation of his property, which is part of the national heritage: but at the same time he also feels more safe, independent, autonomous. Responsibility and independence are basic to the development of the human personality” (Strauven, 1985: p. 60).

The Taeye Law of 1948 superseded the 1922 Moyersoen Law in continuing to provide subsidies to those buying or building their own homes. As a result, the number of owner occupiers has increased from 39% to 65% over the past 50 years, reaching a maximum of 74% in Flandres with a lower rate in Brussels with its higher temporary and foreign populations (Figure 9.2).

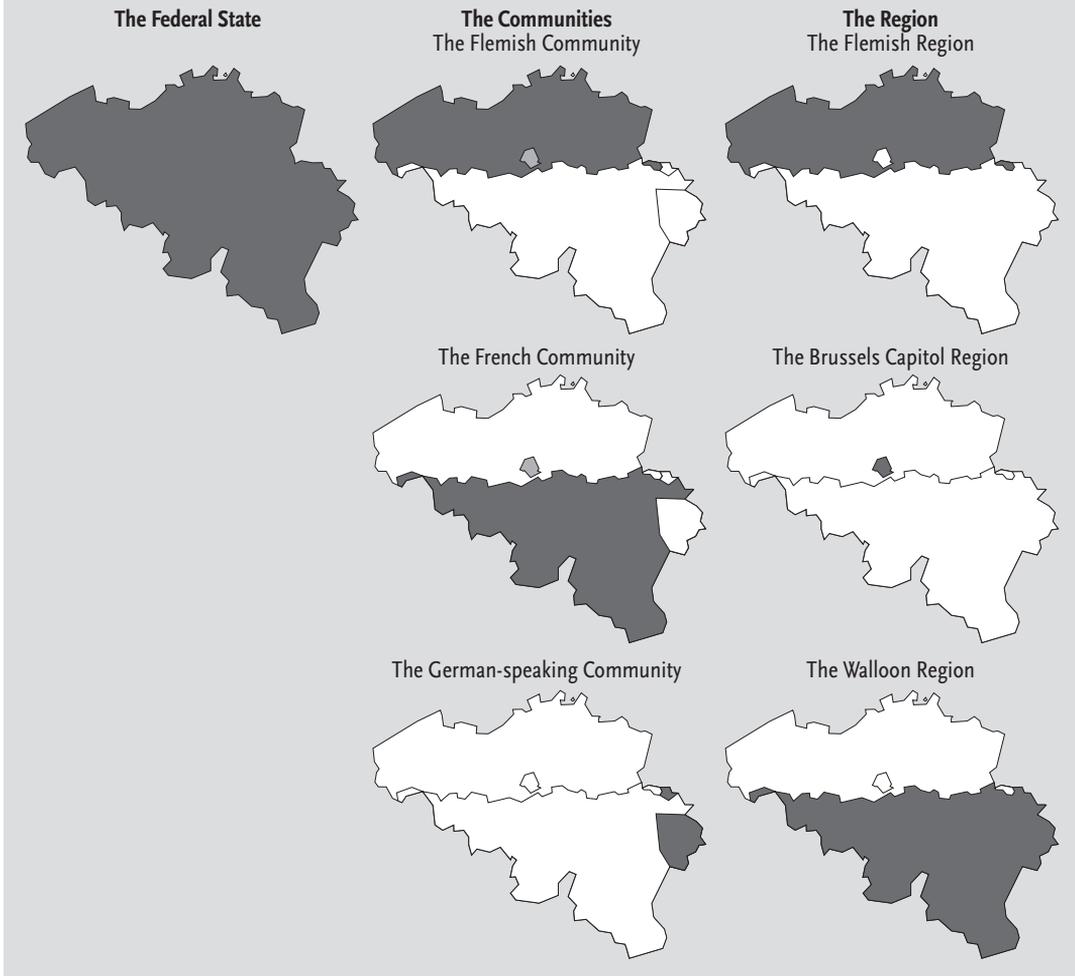
In terms of housing type, the last Census completed in 1991 recorded a total of 3,748,164 dwellings of which 79% were single-family houses and 21% flats in apartment blocks.

Having created an efficient federal structure in recent years, decision-making is no longer in the exclusive hands of the Federal Government or Parliament. One reason for this development is the division of the country by linguistic and cultural identity. With 30.528 km² and more than 10 million inhabitants, Belgium is situated at the meeting point of the Dutch, French and German languages. Populations and Communities are based on each language, consisting of the Flemish Community (13.522 km² and almost 6 million inhabitants); the French Community (16.844 km² and 3.3 million inhabitants) and the German-speaking Community (854 km² and 70.100 inhabitants). The role of the state in decision-making has also been reduced by the devolution of power to the Flemish, Brussels Capital and Walloon Regions. Whilst the federal State retains important powers in relation to foreign affairs, defence, justice, finance, social security and important sectors of public health and domestic affairs, the Regions and Communes are entitled to pursue their own foreign relations policies. Most significantly for this chapter,



Population	10,274,595
Population density	337/km ²
Capital	Brussels
GDP per capita	€20,315
Housing stock	3.8 million

Figure 9.1 A country of regions and communities



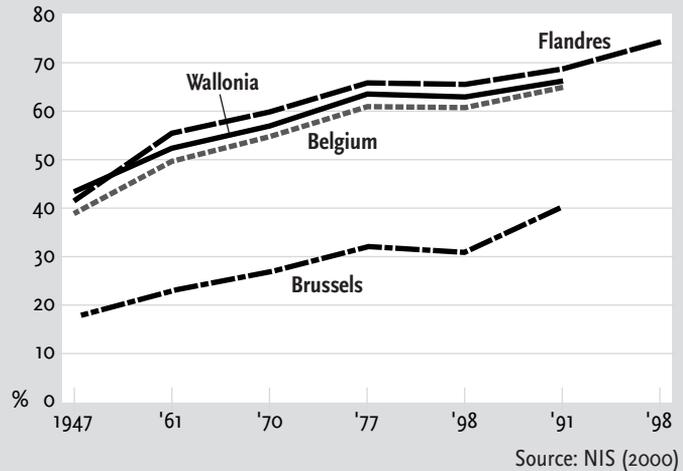
each regional government is responsible for its own housing policy. In terms of local government, the country is further divided into ten provinces and 589 communes.

9.2 Building high-rise housing

The pioneers of Belgian high-rise housing

One of the Belgian pioneers of modernist architecture, and a man closely connected with the CIAM Congresses, was Victor Bourgeois (Strauven, 1985). At the second CIAM Congress in 1929 in Frankfurt, Bourgeois introduced his proposals for the 'minimum surface dwelling'. This new type of housing, presented as a 'tool' for personal use and care, was intended to support a new society in which men and women would be equal. The achievement of this new society was symbolised by the installation of such modern provision as hot and cold running water, an indoor toilet, a bathroom, a fully equipped

Figure 9.2 The growth of home ownership in Belgium, 1947-1998



kitchen and a rubbish disposal system. These innovations were intended to support the development of a healthy and happy society, although the lifestyles associated with them would have to be encouraged. As Hoste explained: “If residents are not coming forward, a little persuasion is permitted. I don’t hesitate

for one moment: with little traffic, complete safety; living in the middle of green space with parks and sports facilities at the base of each complex; well lit and well-equipped homes; the sun in every room and a terrace or roof garden on every home, all those who experience this will see how radically their lives can be changed; how the nice environment of their home will encourage the social side of their life” (Hoste, 1937).

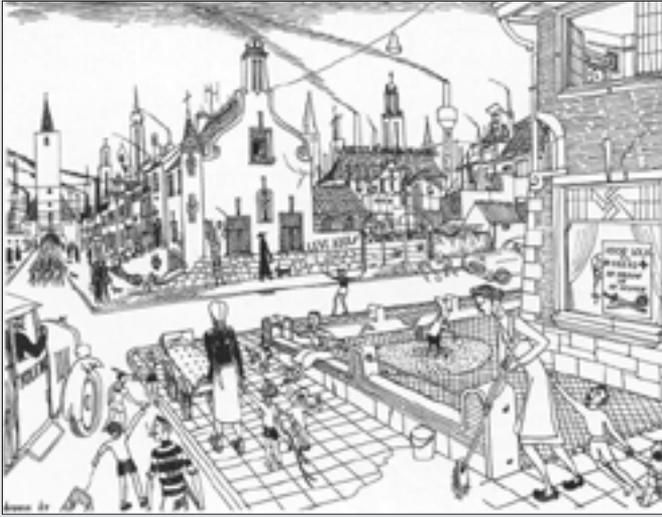
The economic crisis of the 1920s put pressure on architects to identify ways of reducing public expenditure on housing. Modernist architecture appeared to offer a solution in the construction of ‘minimum surface dwellings’. Traditionally, architecture in Belgium had been concerned with developing small communities outside cities, but modernist architecture was interested in organising the whole of society. The old and dirty city was to be replaced by the new and healthy city. The new city: “...would not be made for the eye, for perspective or for the dilettante tourist, but for the welfare of the inhabitant who works, entertains and rests in the city” (Bourgeois, V, 1931, *Les Conférences de la Société Centrale d’Architecture*, in: *L’Emulation*, 1931, 51/8, p. 260).

At the third CIAM Congress in Brussels in 1930, most participants supported Le Corbusier’s belief that the *Ville Radieuse* and the high-rise block offered the only solution to the universal housing problem (Smets, 1977). Just as mechanisation had revolutionised manual labour, new and modern housing would revolutionise lifestyles, and high-rise came to symbolise the power of the proletariat in their historic struggle with the bourgeoisie.

High-rise for the working classes?

Although most Belgian architects had accepted the CIAM ideals, and many master plans had been drawn up, no high-rise blocks were built in the 1930s. In common with European welfare state principles, the mission of Belgian social-housing policy in the past 50 years has been to build decent and affordable dwellings for the less well-off and for those with low incomes. It was only after the Second World War that, for utopian and ideological reasons, high-rise was promoted as the major housing type for the working

Figure 9.3 Catholic and Socialist views of each others housing ideas



Source: Braem, 1954

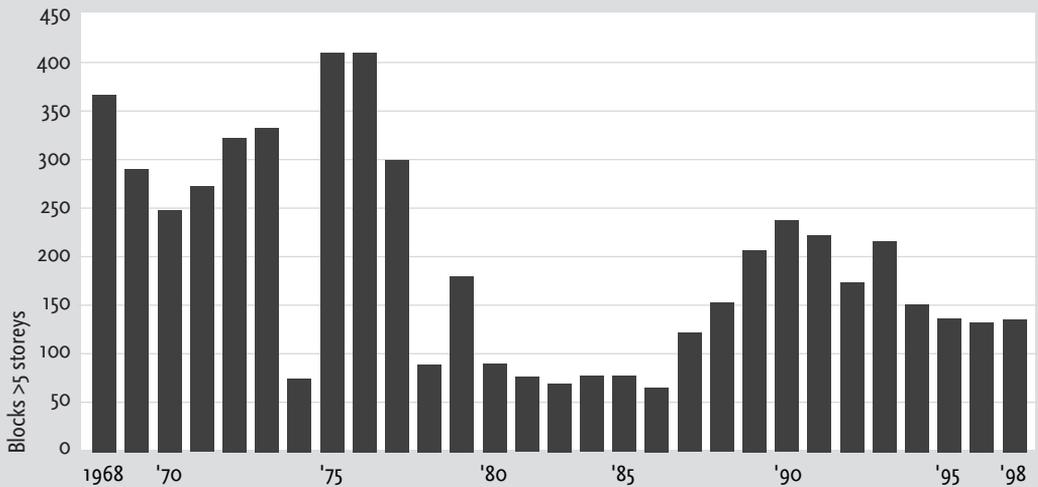
classes.

High-rise housing was defined in terms of a building equipped with the latest technology relating to elevators, heating, rubbish disposal, etc and provided with a concierge (Delhay, 1946). The first schemes were designed by Renaat Braem and Van Kuyck and built in Antwerp. Van Kuyck had begun the first large scale social-housing project in the city, Luchtbal in 1936, which he finished in 1956. The Luchtbal complex is the largest housing master plan ever completed in Belgium with over 1,500 dwellings. Following CIAM principles, Renaat Braem pioneered the construction of free-standing social high-rise complexes with the Kiel estates in Antwerp, begun in 1949 and completed in 1958. Built within the existing city structure, most of the blocks surrounded an inner courtyard, like the Wiener Höfe in Austria. Very short after the Kiel project, Braem began his

'model quarter' at the Heysel in Brussels in 1956, presented to the press at the 1958 Brussels World Exhibition. The quarter was meant to be a prototype for the new housing of the future, and from the early sixties, many modernist architects began to imitate his ideas. Rivalry broke out between the different housing companies to have the largest estate, rivalries which persist to the present day (Strauven, 1985).

...or high-rise for the bourgeoisie?

In contrast with the social classes for whom modernist architects had planned high-rise housing, it was the bourgeoisie who recognised the potential of such a lifestyle. The major reason for their preference was a shortage

Figure 9.4 Annual production of new buildings of more than 5 storeys in Belgium, 1968-1998

Source: NIS (1968-1999), Yearly Reports

of servants in the 1930s, which was making it difficult to maintain large homes on the outskirts of towns and cities. One solution was to build luxury apartments along principal axes close to city centres, and in Brussels and Antwerp such apartment buildings, built before World War II, are still desirable today (Moley, 1999).

As the 1950s and 1960s went by, the architectural influence and social ambitions of CIAM faded away, exterior walkways and vertical circulation zones disappeared, garages and shops were built at ground level and orientation was ignored as dwellings were built on both sides. In smaller towns and villages, the construction of social housing became more a compromise between the thoughts of the more traditional Catholic and more progressive socialist wings within housing companies (see also figure 9.3 for an illustration of the Catholic view of socialist building and the other way around). Typically, one or two high-rise buildings were developed in a garden-city environment, and such mixed developments are typical of many smaller towns and villages.

9.3 High-rise in the Belgian housing market

Figure 9.4 provides details of all apartment buildings with more than 5 storeys built since 1968, and including the social large scale housing estates. The chart shows a dip in the construction of large buildings around 1980, caused mainly by the economic and political crisis at that time, and a revival from 1990.

In 1991, about 21% of all dwellings were flats in apartment buildings, including 8% in high-rise blocks (Table 9.1). Over the past decade the trend towards privately-owned single-family houses has increased, and as a result, the proportion of dwellings in apartment buildings and high-rise fell to 19% in 1998, including 8% in blocks of more than ten dwellings.

Table 9.1 Housing stock in Belgium, 1991 (cell percentages)

	Single-family houses		Less than 5 floors		High-rise		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Owner-occupied houses	2,252,965	60.1	36,449	1.0	178,237	4.8	2,467,651	65.8
Private rented houses	558,754	14.9	378,895	10.1	76,424	2.0	1,014,073	27.1
Social rented houses	138,549	3.7	77,268	2.1	50,624	1.4	266,440	7.1
Total	2,950,268	78.7	492,612	13.1	305,285	8.1	3,748,165	100

Source: NIS (1997), NIS (2000), VHM and SWL

Only 7% of the Belgian housing stock is in the social rented sector, a rather low figure compared to Europe. Of these, 77,000 units are in low-rise flats and 51,000 in high-rise (1.4%). Of all 305,000 Belgian high-rise flats, 178,000 or almost 60% is owner occupied. This share is more or less comparable with the national average.

As Figure 9.5 indicates, the proportions of high-rise differ between the major regions with the highest proportion living in flats in the Brussels region. In 1984, the Brussels region had 37,040 social dwellings, of which 53.4% (19,759) were in buildings of more than 5 storeys. The total number of social dwellings has decreased since 1984, mainly due to the sale of dwellings to their occupants.

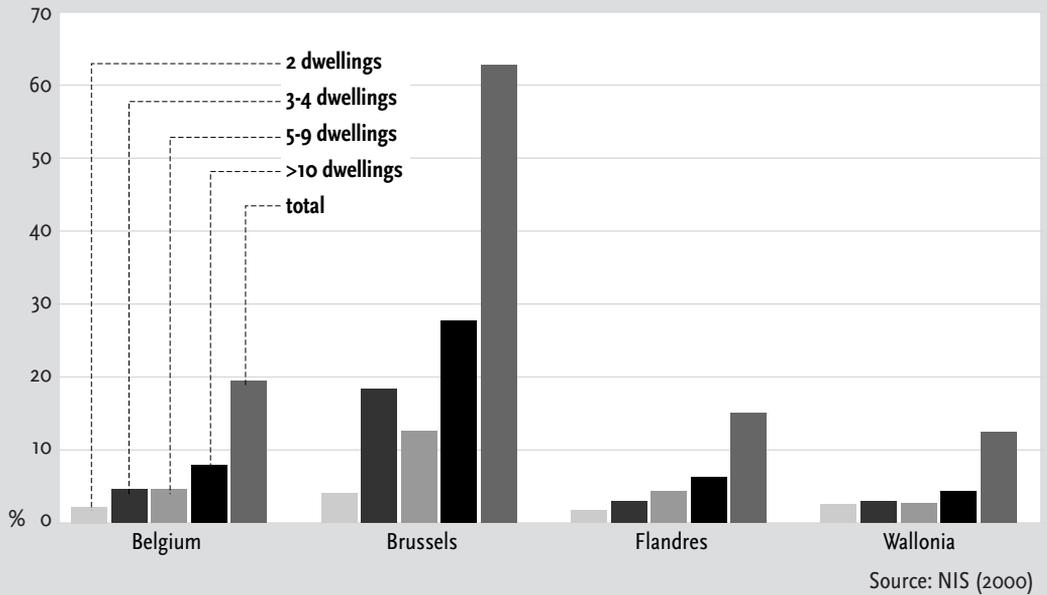
Recent shifts in housing policy: segregation in the social-housing sector

Problems caused by the approaching federalising of Belgium and the oil crisis of the seventies caused a collapse in housing construction, especially in the social-housing sector. As a result, the construction of social high-rise estates came to an end.

Since the 1970s, most housing has been built for home ownership, and has resulted in a polarisation between those who can afford this tenure and those excluded from it (Goossens, 1982). Since 1990, the impoverishment of social tenants in large estates has become more visible, and housing policy has shifted towards ensuring provision for minority groups and the less well-off, whilst attempting to avoid over-concentrating the poorest in the social sector. The main criterion for obtaining a social dwelling in Belgium is income. In 1998 in Flandres, almost 58% of tenants had a yearly income of less than €12,400 and in Brussels 59%. From 2001, the maximum income limit was increased by 10% which has meant that local housing companies are no longer compelled to take only deprived tenants and can accept those in paid work.

As a result of rent arrears problems, many housing companies are having difficulties maintaining large housing estates. In 1999, supplementary funds were made available by the government to help housing companies renovate their stock, but only if the dwellings were sold to their residents afterwards. Where large scale social-housing estates are concerned, the role of the housing company would change from landlord to a managing real estate agent.

Figure 9.5 Dwellings in apartment buildings in Belgium (percentage of total stock, 2000)



9.4 Living in high-rise housing

Belgian law prescribes the rights and responsibilities of owners towards the maintenance of buildings, and every owner must contribute to general costs of the whole building according to their share. However, as the Belgian umbrella company for real estate agents, BIV-IPI, does not keep data about the stock their members manage, it is very difficult to gain a reliable idea of the average private high-rise resident. Furthermore, information about private housing stock or its residents is protected by Belgian laws on privacy.

In the social sector, it is difficult to gain much more information. Due to paternalism, the housing companies have no tradition of investigating their tenants' views; their primary aim was to house the less well-off, irrespective of their opinions. This lack of interest in tenants' views has its roots in the modernist period when all residents were supposed to be equal. Individual participation and questions of income, class, status or ethnicity were irrelevant when the tenant was seen as universal. It is only in the last decade that awareness has grown that all tenants are not equal and that different lifestyles can cause friction and conflicts.

Antwerp was the first Flemish city to undertake an investigation of tenant satisfaction, and the first neighbourhoods to be investigated were the districts with the highest levels of social dwellings, Europark, Luchtbal Noord and Luchtbal Zuid in 1999 and Silvertopcomplex in 2000. These neighbourhoods, exclusively composed of large scale housing estates, were thought to be the ones with the highest levels of dissatisfaction. A frame of reference was constructed by assessing the levels of satisfaction for the whole Antwerp district, then assessing variations by neighbourhood. Despite the negative

rumours, the remarkable finding was that residents in the large estates rated their neighbourhoods above the Antwerp average. Only residents in the Silvertopcomplex had a lower degree of satisfaction with only 36% of tenants positive about their neighbourhood (RegioStat, 2000).

Their quiet and friendly environment was the most frequently mentioned positive aspect, followed by green open space and social contact with other residents. The most negative aspects were inadequate shopping facilities, followed by nuisance from smell and noise and problems with collecting rubbish. For 7% of residents, the increase in minority ethnic residents was considered a negative factor, the same proportion who chose the maintenance of staircases, elevators and the presence of litter. For Luchtbal Noord 78% of those who had a high opinion of their living conditions did not want to leave the neighbourhood or the estate. For those with a low opinion, the proportion was still 61%.

Not one resident complained about their dwelling itself, but despite this, the social-housing companies have begun a major renovation and modernisation programme, and the next survey will attempt to identify whether it has been successful. In terms of vacancies and turnover, rates vary between estates, according to their history and location. Some estates in Ghent and Antwerp have turnover-rates of over 10% a year, while the Flemish average is almost 5%. It is not unusual for rumours about an estate to persuade some tenants to leave and to frighten others away, and small incidents on already stigmatised estates might well be exaggerated by the media.

9.5 The future for high-rise in Belgium

So far, only a few estates in Belgium have been affected by serious social and technical problems. The worst estates include those in Nieuw-Ghent and the three estates from the Silvertopcomplex in Antwerp where the severity of problems makes demolition more likely. However, a major factor working against any demolition is the 66 year loan period for public housing. Most estates are only halfway through the repayment term, and demolition will result in lost income whilst loan payments are still due. Refinancing the loan is not feasible and some housing companies believe that the best solution would be for the regional government to take over the payments or the loan. A further problem associated with demolition is that there are not enough dwellings available to re-house tenants whilst their blocks and estates are renovated. Waiting lists for flats on large housing estates can vary from ten months (Aurora, Nieuw-Gent, Ghent) to almost five years (Leeuwerik, Bruges), and any reduction in the number of flats due to demolition or renovation would cause problems for most Flemish housing companies. As a result, architects have to plan complex renovation programmes in phases.

Silvertopcomplex, Antwerp

The estate with the highest turnover rate in Antwerp is the Silvertopcomplex. This estate consists of three blocks of 19 storeys, two have 228 dwellings (Towers I and II) and the other has 152 dwellings (Tower III). Begun in 1970, the blocks consist of a concrete frame and insulated prefabricated panels, and from the very first, severe problems were experienced with moisture and water penetration. This quickly resulted in vacancies, the complex developed a bad name and social problems followed. Those who could wait for a dwelling did so, but those who had no choice were moved into one of the blocks. Typically, these were families with multiple problems.

Following media interest in the problems, research was undertaken in March 2000 to assess residents' quality of life (RegioStat, 2000). 64% rated this very low, a much worse level than the average for the Antwerp district. The relevant social-housing company De Goede Woning (The Good Dwelling) was already aware of problems, and several social workers had been working with residents since 1997. Although a major problem is the many nationalities and languages present, the monitoring identified that residents recognised the benefits of employing the social workers at the Silvertopcomplex.

A further investigation has concentrated on the technical condition and physical appearance of the three blocks and concluded that, whilst the concrete frame was in bad shape, the concrete

panels were still in generally good condition (WTCB, 2000). The investigation established that the corners where the panels meet are not insulated and that the windows are not entirely water-proof. An inspection identified that the main cause was water penetration at the panel joints, of which there are 43 km on the three estates. At present, an architect has been pointed to investigate the renovation and total cost for the renovation, although the minister of housing is an opponent of high-rise within the social-housing sector. The renovation cost for the three towers is estimated at €35 million.



Many large housing estates in the Flemish region have been or are being renovated and adapted to meet the changing needs of society. 81% of all Flemish companies have already carried out major renovations to deal with serious problems such as water penetration and decaying concrete.

There are a number of examples of successful estate renovation programmes such as the work undertaken between 1989 and 1990 of the Neermeersen in Ghent. The residents of the first three buildings to be renovated were very excited about the work, and most tenants took the opportunity to redecorate homes in which they had lived for many years. Residents were proud of the renovation work, and almost fifty years since construction, these large scale housing estates can be as popular as ever.

Following renovation, it is not unusual for the original inhabitants not to return (Krantz, 1999) as they have taken the opportunity to live in a new environment. For example, the Vennekant complex in Malines was renovated in 1999 as a result of which the original 1949 estate of 48 dwellings and 4 storeys was extended to 60 dwellings with 5 storeys. To achieve the latest comfort

Nieuw-Gent, Ghent



Nieuw-Gent is a typical post-war neighbourhood consisting almost entirely of social dwellings. The estate consists mostly of 11 high-rise buildings varying from 6 to 16 storeys, and housing almost 1,600 people. Built between 1975 and 1979, this concentration of monotonous high-rise blocks stands in open green space. There is a major concentration of low income groups and unemployed people, most of whom lack employment skills.

Due to the low spending power of local residents, many shops have closed or moved to other neighbourhoods and, although the complex is situated on the outskirts of Ghent, transport links with the city are poor. Despite its recent construction, Nieuw-Gent is already suffering from serious social and technical problems. The first 1972 master plan was developed by several housing companies but they merged in 1988 to form De Goede Werkmanswoning (The good Working Man's Housing), which is now responsible for the high-rise stock. Some blocks provide studio flats which function as transit dwellings for younger people, many of whom move on within a year. Most of these temporary tenants take no responsibility for their dwelling or environment, to the great annoyance of the remaining and elderly residents. Vandalism, damage and litter dominate the appearance of the complex, and disposing of all this rubbish and repairing malicious damage are expensive. Most tenants are drawn from the lowest income groups and annual rent arrears amount to €720,000. The costs of maintaining and renovating flats when people move out worsen the financial situation of the housing company. As there are insufficient funds, neither demolition nor refurbishment are feasible, a situation which is not restricted to Nieuw-Gent. The idea that maintenance, repair and refurbishment should be paid for out of rents is not realistic for most social-housing companies as their rental income provides insufficient revenue (Wassenberg, 1999). A further major problem is that there is no possibility of temporarily re-housing those displaced by any renovation work. Despite such a negative situation, the social-housing company, assisted by social workers and the city of Ghent have recognised that action must be taken. A national competition was launched in 1999, inviting architects and city planners to design and develop a new master plan for the estates. Unfortunately, and despite total prize money of BEF 2,5 million (€62,000), only two teams submitted proposals to deal with Nieuw-Gent's very complex situation. After a second invitation, an architect's practice experienced in similar projects was chosen, and the outcome of their proposals is now awaited.

standards and comply with legal regulations, the renovation cost about €2,5 million, or about €41.000 a dwelling. Only three of the original elderly tenants returned, and the block received mostly new and younger tenants including some problem families, single people and a drug addict. Within a year, the

block and neighbourhood had gone into marked decline, and major repairs had to be carried out to vandalised elevators and entrance doors.

The high-rise housing stock in Belgium is ageing, and more than 62% of blocks are more than 25 years old. However, there is a major difference between the social and private sectors in relation to renovation. Most privately-owned high-rise housing stock is more than 30 years old, but the owners are obliged to maintain the building 'as a good family man'. Most renovation concerns the exterior, especially façades and balconies, but internal renovation is at the expense of the owner. This private owned housing stock is mostly situated in the city and is mainly occupied by elderly and young starter families without children. For younger people, living in a high-rise dwelling in the city is seen as a temporary solution before moving out of the city once they have children and buy (and often build) a home of their own.

In the social sector, problems go beyond the technical and increasingly concern tenants' social and financial circumstances which underpin the viability of estates. As estates reach the age at which they need their first technical repair and renovation, social-housing tenants are becoming increasingly polarised to include the most vulnerable sections of the community. The dilemma for housing companies is how to respond to the coincidence of technical, financial and social problems. Housing companies with problematic estates have already begun to introduce social support programmes for their high-rise tenants, alongside major renovation schemes. As demolition is virtually taboo in Belgium, the housing companies are hoping that such measures will enable their estates to withstand the social, financial and technical problems of the next 30 years.

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10 The Netherlands

Modernist housing in a developed welfare state

Frank Wassenberg and Ronald van Kempen

10.1 Introduction

In the Netherlands, as in so many Western European countries, the high-rise housing boom started in the 1960s. One of the most important reasons for this boom was the enormous housing shortage that resulted from the Second World War. In the 1950s many dwellings in the Netherlands were built in low-rise multi-family structures, whereas the 1960s and early 1970s can be seen as the high-rise period.

In the first decades after the Second World War the battle against the housing shortage was a higher priority than concerns about housing quality and consumer preferences. The post-war housing estates, including high-rise, fulfilled the basic housing needs of the time. Nowadays, even though some people seem to be quite content in their high-rise apartments, many consider them as undesirable, although growing prosperity means that people expect better quality housing and are able to pay for it. The main problem with high-rise, as well as the low-rise blocks of the 1950s, is that they do not meet the modern-day preferences. Not enough people want to live here, so high-rise now provides temporary housing for many when nothing else is available. Many of these people will be gone after a few years. This transitory nature can cause conflict with people who have lived in the same dwelling for more than 20 or 30 years and have grown accustomed to the neighbourhood and all its facilities, neighbours, acquaintances and friends.

About 6.7% of all dwellings in the Netherlands have been built in high-rise structures, most of them in the social rented sector. As will become clear in the next section, the production of social housing in the Netherlands has been very important in Dutch housing policy. Enormous amounts of money were put into social housing, resulting in generally good quality housing in this sector. This also holds for many high-rise estates. Strategies to improve high-rise neighbourhoods are often not only aimed at solving problems, but also adapting to the wishes of the modern consumer. If problems do arise, it is often possible to find solutions and to improve the situation (which cannot be easily said for problems relating to high-rise complexes in other countries presented in this volume).



Population	16,067,754
Population density	387/km ²
Capital	Amsterdam
GDP per capita	€19,200
Housing stock	6.5 million

10.2 Population growth and housing policies

The 1950s: building up after the Second World War

Shortly after the Second World War, the population of the Netherlands increased rapidly, due to the high birth rate and the low death rate. Unlike other West-European countries, the post-war baby-boom continued for twenty years. It was only at the end of the 1960s that the birth rate dropped sharply. The population growth resulting from this baby-boom called for a rapid expansion of the housing stock. These demographic developments compounded the acute housing shortage caused by war damage – one fifth of all dwellings had been destroyed or badly damaged during the Second World War – and the standstill of construction during the war years.

The large housing shortage has almost continually set the national agenda for housing policy. The 1947 Census of Population revealed a shortage of about 300,000 dwellings. During the 1950s, the main institutions of the welfare state were established. In order to alleviate the housing needs numerous measures were introduced, such as rent control, housing distribution, subsidised loans to both housing associations and municipalities and property subsidies for the construction of new dwellings which were primarily used to expand the social rental sector. The social-housing stock increased, from approximately 140,000 dwellings in 1945 (10% of the stock) to more than 540,000 (25%) by 1960 (Van Weesep & Van Kempen, 1993). Many of these dwellings were constructed in large-scale developments.

Neighbourhoods from the 1950s are a mix of low-rise blocks of flats and single-family dwellings, most of them in the rental sector. They are characterised by half-open blocks of buildings, arranged in a fixed pattern with a communal courtyard. The urban design was strongly influenced by the CIAM ideas, with much attention to light, air and space. Most of these dwellings had three or four rooms, with a total living space of about 50-60 sq.m. They were aimed at housing young families. Rents were generally low, but higher than in many pre-war rental dwellings. Apparently, at that time these dwellings were considered large enough to serve this function.

The 1960s: start of the high-rise boom

When the results of the 1960 census were available, it became clear that the extensive building programmes of the 1950s had been insufficient to solve the housing shortage. Despite the level of housing production, the demand for housing had not declined.

In the non-subsidised sector, unfavourable market conditions, like high interest rates on long-term loans and the rise of construction costs undermined efforts to build sufficient dwellings. The government intervened with an anti-cyclical construction policy which was the most powerful fuel for growth for the social rental sector at that time. Between 1961 and 1970, over

one million new dwellings were built, of which three-quarters were subsidised (Van Weesep & Van Kempen, 1993).

In 1963, the Ministry of Housing issued an important white paper in which the main aim was a drastic expansion of the building capacity. House building should be faster and above all in larger quantities. This became technically possible with the development of new techniques in house building, which made building in high-rise structures easier and far cheaper than previously. Extra government support was given to series production. This opened up the way to a high-rise boom.

Standardization and repetition became the buzzwords of this period, resulting in neighbourhoods with many identical housing types. This does not mean that areas from the 1960s consist mainly of one housing type: many show mixed housing types. Sometimes high-rise predominates, but more often there is a mixture of high-rise blocks, low-rise blocks and single-family dwellings. Moreover, the areas with high-rise apartments are characterised by green space (as well as open car parks and parking garages) between the complexes. There are few private outdoor spaces. Often the functions of living, working, recreation, and traffic are spatially separated (Wassenberg, 1993).

In comparison to the low-rise dwellings built earlier, the high-rise dwellings differed in their physical lay-out, but were generally also more luxurious. A facility like central heating gave the new high-rise dwellings an initial qualitative advantage in comparison to other social rental dwellings, for which this luxury was not available. The consequence was that, on average, high-rise dwellings were more expensive. These relatively high prices prevented the high-rise housing complexes becoming areas for the urban poor, as they just could not afford to live there. Indeed, the new high-rise dwellings were meant for middle-class people, most of whom still lived in the crowded inner cities. However, the problem was that they never came to the high-rise estates.

Housing production after the high-rise wave

In the 1970s, the rising affluence of Dutch society was spread widely throughout the population. In combination with increasing access to mortgage loans, this sparked growth in home ownership. The proportion of owner-occupier dwellings in new construction rose from 40% in 1974 to 60% in 1978. The government used subsidies to promote new construction in this sector as well. Between 1971 and 1980, 1.2 million new dwellings were built, less than a quarter of which without subsidy. Thus, the expansion of the social rental sector kept going at the same pace in the 1970s.

The building of high-rise continued until the early 1970s. However, from the mid-1970s onwards, house building was characterised by more variation, in reaction to the uniformity and size of scale. Small series and differentiation

replaced standardisation and repetition. Neighbourhood designs became characterized by more playful plot plans and winding street patterns. Cars were admitted, but in a subordinate position. Occasionally, in the neighbourhood design, some integration of living and working in the district was even pursued. In fact, it was not until this period that the ideas of the CIAM were abandoned.

From the early 1970s onwards, many single-family houses were built in new suburbs which perfectly fitted the demands of many households, especially families with children. The booming Dutch economy resulted in higher wages, so many households could afford to pay more for housing and decided to move to these new suburbs which were located in more attractive surroundings. The suburban setting combined good quality housing with an environment that was well suited for a 'familistic lifestyle'. More people than in previous decades could afford to buy a dwelling and those who could afford it left their social rented apartments that were built in the 1950s and 1960s. The high-rise flats from the 1960s lost their inhabitants to the new suburbs and were not able to attract the middle class families they were planned for. Instead, people with less choice in housing moved in, many of them by making use of housing allowances to pay the rather high rents.

The Dutch government was slower than other West European countries to make fundamental changes in its national housing policy in the 1980s (Lundqvist, 1992). Cut backs in property subsidies and hefty rent hikes did occur and, not surprisingly, the number of recipients of housing allowances increased immensely. By the end of the 1980s, more than 25% of all renters received housing allowances, a percentage that rose to 31% by the year 2000. The high-rise estates turned out to be not the most attractive part of town. In periods of scarcity they were filled up, but when the market eased, as for example in the mid 1980s, or the end of the 1990s, vacancies occurred.

10.3 Housing in the Netherlands

Large numbers of dwellings have been built in the Netherlands since the Second World War and record productions of more than 150,000 dwellings per year were attained in 1972 and 1973, finally alleviating the housing shortage (Figure 10.1).

The proportion of rented dwellings declined in the second half of the 1970s, while the owner-occupied sector gained in importance. However, after the second oil crisis at the end of the 1970s, the owner-occupied sector collapsed. The Dutch government reacted almost immediately: the building programme for the social sector increased, in relative as well as in absolute numbers. From the mid-1980s onwards, the combination of a thriving economy and a change in governmental housing policy to promote owner-occupation led to a

steady rise in the number of owner-occupied units. In 1999, 78% of newly-built dwellings were owner-occupied, a post-war record.

The current housing stock in the Netherlands totals of 6.5 million dwellings, 80% of which have been built since the Second World War. Out of the total stock, 35% belong to the social rented sector, 11% is privately rented and 53% is owner occupied. Almost all social housing in the Netherlands is owned by housing associations. However, large differences exist if a comparison of owner-occupied units across the country is made. In the city of Amsterdam, for example, only 12% of the housing stock was owner-occupied in the early 1990s, a percentage comparable with such capitals as Beijing or Tirana. In the city of Rotterdam also, owner-occupied dwellings form only 18% of the housing stock by that time.

The Dutch housing stock shows differences between regions, provinces and cities. For example, in the two largest cities (Amsterdam and Rotterdam) over 55% of the total stock belong to the social rented sector, whereas in the more rural provinces of the country this percentage is 'only' about 30-35%. This relatively large number of social rented dwellings is one of the causes of a concentration of low-income households in the cities. It is remarkable that even in the Dutch countryside the social sector has a greater presence than in many cities all over Europe.

Dwelling types

In every year since 1960, the majority of the newly built dwellings were single-family houses (Figure 10.2). In 2001, 29% of the total housing stock in the Netherlands consisted of multi-dwelling structures (high-rise and low-rise), the remaining 71% being single-family houses. However, impressive regional differences exist. In the northern and southern provinces, over 85% of the total housing stock consists of single-family houses, whereas cities like Amsterdam and The Hague only have 15% and 21% single-family dwellings, respectively. It will be clear that a single-family house in an urban setting is difficult to obtain. On the other hand, multi-family dwellings are rare in the less-urbanised parts of the country.

The types of households that occupy the social rental sector in the Netherlands are rather diverse. In fact, most people who prefer to rent rather than to buy are relegated to the social rental sector. For this reason, the social rental sector houses many people, both young and old, with a relatively high income, who pay a low rent. In contrast, there are many people with a low income who live in expensive rental dwellings, receiving a housing allowance. Both forms of mismatch have prevented Dutch cities becoming spatially segregated in terms of income. Moreover, urban planning in the Netherlands has, with some exceptions, always been characterised by a mix of housing types within neighbourhoods. This has also been the case in high-rise areas, as will be shown later.

Figure 10.1 Housing production by ownership, in the Netherlands, 1960-2001

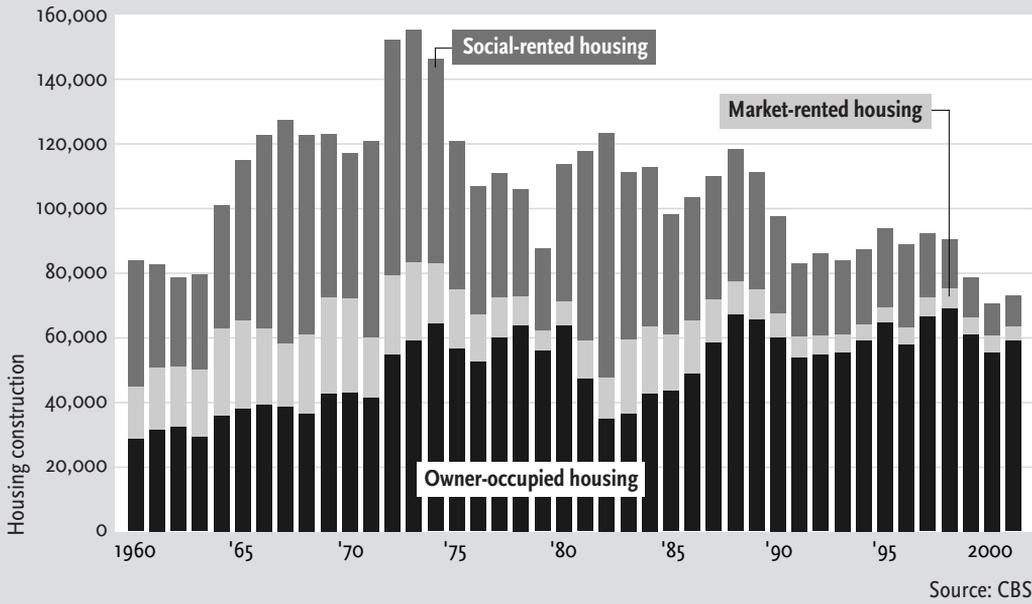
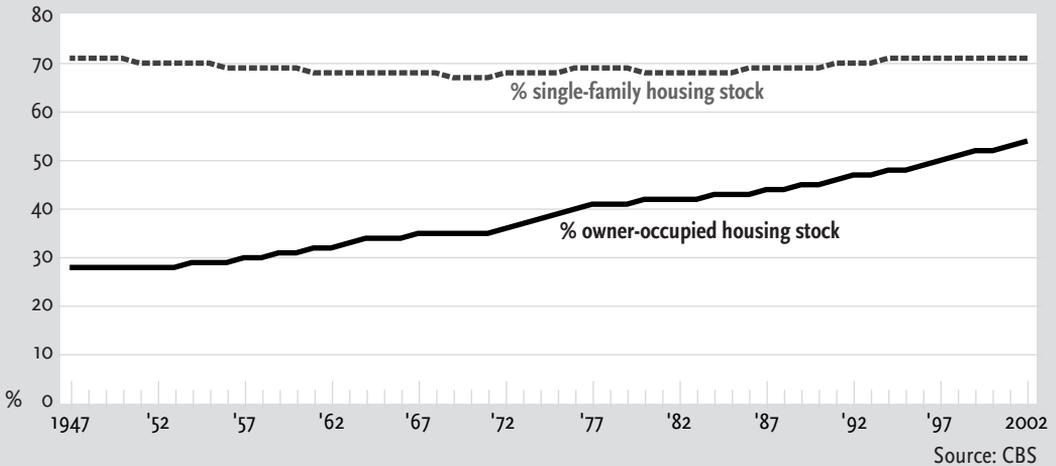


Figure 10.2 The housing stock according to type and ownership, in the Netherlands, 1947-2002



The high-rise wave

The heyday of high-rise construction in the Netherlands was between 1960 and 1974, when 60% of all high-rise (defined as 5 storeys and up) was built. If we consider only the types with 7 storeys and up, this figure rises to 70%. At present, high-rise apartments account for 6.7% of the stock (422,000 dwellings), amounting to about one fifth of all multi-family buildings and 4.1% are in blocks with at least 7 storeys. The high-rise wave started in 1964 and disappeared around 1974, as quickly as it had started (Figure 10.3). The

Figure 10.3 The high-rise wave: proportion of high-rise housing in the overall production, the Netherlands, 1962-1977

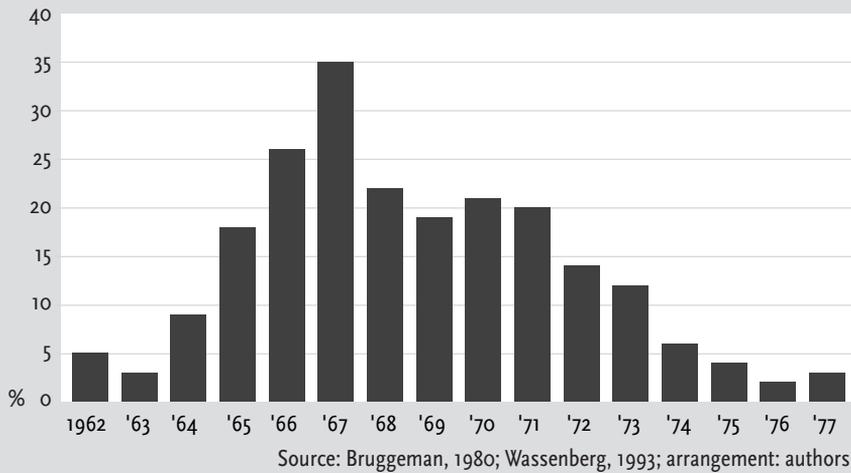


Table 10.1 Type of buildings and ownership in the Netherlands, 1998

type	High-rise apartments (5+ storeys)	%	Low-rise apartments (1-4 storeys)	%	Single-family houses	%	Total	%
Social-rented houses	250,800	59.4	872,400	57.3	1,127,000	25.6	2,250,300	35.5
Private-rented houses	99,100	23.5	395,600	26.0	364,500	8.3	859,200	13.5
Owner-occupied houses	72,100	17.1	253,600	16.7	2,906,400	66.1	3,232,000	51.0
Total	422,000	100	1,521,600	100	4,397,900	100	6,341,500	100

Source: WBO 1998

high-rise boom must be seen in the right perspective as even in these years, single-family houses predominated. It is clear that the high-rise boom did not mean that the production of other dwelling types stopped. Moreover, high-rise was not constructed everywhere but was typical of urban environments and mainly occurred within the rental sector. About 60% of high-rise dwellings are in the social rented sector (see Table 10.1). Nevertheless, high-rise housing comprises a relatively small share, only 10%, of the total social rented stock.

High-rise housing more expensive to live in

Generally, high-rise housing is more expensive to live in than the average rental dwelling. In Table 10.2 a comparison is made of (a) the inhabitants of the dwellings dating from the high-rise boom (1960-1974), with (b) all social rented dwellings and (c) the total housing stock of the Netherlands. The table

Table 10.2 Rents and rooms in high-rise housing estates in the Netherlands, 1998

	Social sector high-rise housing 1960-1974	Total social sector	Total housing stock
Rent per month	€334	€308	€316*
Rooms**	3.34	3.56	4.14

* Average rents for rented sector.

** Average number of living rooms and sleeping rooms.

Source: WBO, 1998

shows that living in high-rise dwellings is relatively expensive. This can be partly explained by the fact that the other two categories are very mixed with regard to building period. On top of the net rent, there are extra service costs in high-rise for maintenance of semi-public spaces, lighting, concierges, etc.

Higher rents do not automatically mean larger dwellings. In high-rise the average number of rooms is 3.3, whereas the social rented sector as a whole has an average of 3.6 rooms. An average house in the Netherlands has 4.1 rooms. Many of the larger houses are single-family houses and can be found in the owner-occupied sector.

10.4 The inhabitants of high-rise housing

Although high-rise was initially developed for middle income households, they did not show enough enthusiasm to fill up all the flats. Low-income households could generally not afford the rather expensive high-rise dwellings. This situation changed in 1974 when rent subsidies were introduced, providing low-income households with the opportunity to live in a dwelling they had not been able to afford, including many high-rise dwellings. Vacant dwellings in the high-rises were from that moment on generally allocated to starters or starting families on the housing market, people in a mobile stage of their housing career, often with a relatively low income. Many of them leave these dwellings within a limited time.

Who live in Dutch high-rise housing at present? Table 10.3 gives a general impression of the inhabitants of high-rise estates built during the high-rise wave. These are average figures which do not show the many differences that can exist between blocks, even within the same neighbourhood. The mean household size is smaller in high-rise than when the total stock is considered. This can be explained both by the on average smaller size of high-rise apartments and by the preferences of families with children for single-family dwellings. The small average household size in high-rise housing can be attributed to the large number of households without children (82%). Many of these small households are one- or two-person elderly households, so-called 'empty-nesters' who had previously lived with their children. These households moved in two or three decades ago and have never left, either because they were satisfied or because no other alternatives existed. A second impor-

Table 10.3 Some characteristics of inhabitants of high-rise housing in the Netherlands, compared with national figures, 1998

	Social sector high-rise housing 1960-1974	Total social sector	Total housing stock
Mean size of household	1.7	2.0	2.3
% single	53	43	30
% two parents with child or children	10	20	32
% over 65 years	37	28	21
% working	45	49	64
% on benefit	19	23	14
% two lowest income classes*	29	29	18
% foreign nationality	6	7	4

* Up to HFL 2,000 (€910) net per month in 1998.

Source: WBO, 1998

Table 10.4 Propensity to move and satisfaction in the Netherlands, 1998, in %*

	Social sector high-rise housing 1960-1974	Total social sector	Total housing stock
Planning to move**	18	14	11
Satisfied with dwelling	81	79	87
Dissatisfied with dwelling	6	8	4
Satisfied with surroundings	76	80	86
Dissatisfied with surroundings	12	10	6
No / hardly any vandalism or graffiti	61	74	80
Fear of harassment or robbery in neighbourhood	20	12	8

*The percentages of those satisfied and dissatisfied do not add up to 100, because those who are neither dissatisfied nor satisfied are not in the table.

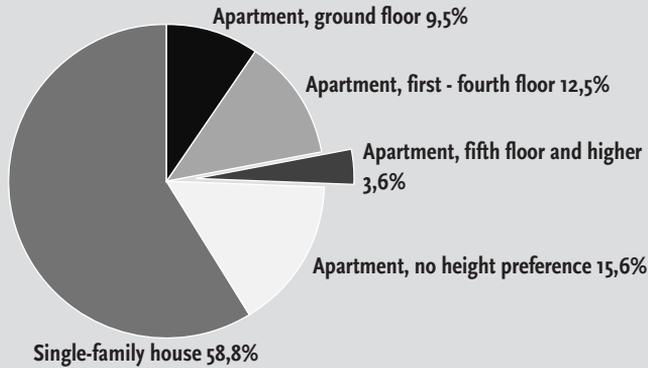
** Concrete plans to move within two years.

Source: WBO 1998

tant category of small households comprises the young starters in the housing market who usually fill the vacancies that the elderly create when they die or move to a nursing home.

It is clear that high-rise housing in the Netherlands is generally not chosen as a place to live by family households, who prefer to live in single-family dwellings, even in urban areas. If a household can afford to live in a single-family dwelling, they will generally move from the apartment as soon as possible. This compounds a bipolar age structure in many high-rise blocks, leaving elderly and young starters in their twenties.

Figure 10.4 Housing preferences and desired housing type, in the Netherlands, 1998



Source: WBO, 1998

The relatively large number of elderly people in high-rise is reflected in the low proportion of working people and in the relatively low average income of the high-rise inhabitants. Within the total housing stock there are 64% of households with at least one person working, which results in a significantly larger

income. Many of them live in owner-occupied, single-family houses.

While in some countries high-rise apartments have a very large proportion of immigrants, this is not the case in the Netherlands. The relatively high rents of many high-rise apartments probably prevent large numbers of low-income immigrants moving into these dwellings, despite the possibility of receiving a rent subsidy. People from the Netherlands Antilles and the former colony of Surinam more often live in high-rise, while immigrants from Turkey and Morocco are rarely found.

The vast majority of the Dutch population (89%) do not anticipate a move within two years (Table 10.4). But while 14% of the residents in social rented housing plan to move, 18% of the residents of high-rise estates plan to move within two years, putting them way above the national average.

Most people are satisfied with their dwellings, including those in high-rise estates. Therefore, we can conclude that high-rise housing in the Netherlands cannot always be considered a bad place to live, at least not according to the present inhabitants. The relatively small number of dissatisfied people in high-rise housing might be explained by the generally high quality of high-rise dwellings in the Netherlands, due to the high standards to which they were built.

However, people do not only live in a dwelling, they also live in a neighbourhood. Those living in high-rise are on average more dissatisfied with their living environment than those in other areas, especially neighbourhoods with mainly single-family houses. Problems such as the safety of the area, fear of robberies, pollution and vandalism, annoyances from neighbours, the monotony of the physical lay-out and the quality of the outside spaces, all contribute to these negative evaluations. As we shall see in the next section, a lot of problems in the Dutch high-rise are indeed due to the environment and not the dwelling itself. In fact, many surveys show that the dwelling itself is one of the strong points of the high-rise estates.

Is high-rise popular among house hunters? As we have already mentioned, the single-family house is the most popular housing type in the Netherlands. Less than 4% of those who want to move within the next two years prefer the

higher stories of high-rise blocks (Figure 10.4), a lower percentage than that offered by the existing stock. Recently, there has been a slight increase in the preference for high-rise and for flats in general. This is partly due to the attractiveness of modern luxurious high-rise blocks in city centres in the 1990s. This growing appreciation for flats in general has impacted on the older high-rise estates as well.

10.5 Problems and measures

Problems

The problems associated with high-rise housing estates are highly varied and complicated. The main problems of high-rise neighbourhoods in the Netherlands, according to Wassenberg (1993), are structural faults, indistinct outside spaces, easy access to the estate for strangers, monotony, high housing costs, neglected surroundings, a 'weak population composition', vacancies, high mobility, and a poor image. In most cases neither a single problem nor a single cause can be indicated, but rather intricate combinations of causes and effects that are responsible. Prak and Priemus developed a model in 1986 to explain why a process of decline, once it has begun, apparently leads, of its own accord, to further decline. Spirals of physical, social and financial decline intensify each other, thus deepening the whole process.

As was mentioned in the previous section, most of the Dutch high-rise dwellings are of good quality. Structural problems are rare and the inside of the dwellings is generally not problematic. On the contrary, the spacious layouts are among the most favourable characteristics of many high-rise flats. The net rents are moderate, but service charges are high which makes living in high-rise on average relatively expensive.

What is often more problematic is the urban design, which causes problems like insecurity and lack of social control, due to the way the area has been built (large, monotonous blocks, separate lanes for pedestrians, bikes and cars, bushes along the sidewalks). Moreover, the competitive position of high-rise is generally not good. In some estates, social problems are on the increase. This might be a consequence of the allocation process, whereby households with little choice on the urban housing market end up in high-rise. These households may cause conflicts. Crime, vandalism and feelings of insecurity occur frequently precisely in this type of post-war district (Elsinga & Wassenberg, 1991), of which the Bijlmermeer area in Amsterdam is a typical example (see Case Study).

Integral and interactive strategies

Many measures are possible in order to prevent and combat problems in high-rise housing. All these kinds of measures have been used in one or more high-

Voorhof in Delft

Voorhof is the high-rise area in Delft (100,000 inh.), an historic city situated between The Hague and Rotterdam. The Voorhof neighbourhood is centrally located in town, a typical 1960s area with a strict division between functions. There are 6,300 dwellings, of which 4,550 (72%) are in high-rise of 10-20 storeys. Over half of the dwellings are social rented, and another 25% private rented. The remaining part is owner occupied, half of them former private rented dwellings, sold during the last decade.

The city of Delft is, because of its location, its university and historic atmosphere, a rather popular place to live. This is reflected in the least popular area – the Voorhof high-rise – where there are never any vacancies never occurred, not even in times when the housing market has relaxed. Problems also exist, however. Unemployment is double the urban average- and the local image is not good. For many Voorhof provides temporary living. The most needy part of the Voorhof area in terms of regeneration is Poptahof, the part closest to the city centre. Most obvious here is the population composition: 62% is non-Dutch, three times the local average. The dwelling stock in Poptahof is very biased: 99% of the about 1,000 dwellings are social rented and 80% are in ten storey slab blocks.

Despite the relatively moderate problems, plans are proposed that are rather drastic and remarkable, starting with the Poptahof area. The main motive is prevention: it is expected that the consumer's wishes of future residents will not fit with the present dwelling stock. What is remarkable is that the high-rise blocks will stay, but the 20% low-rise flats will be demolished. The overall goal is to develop Poptahof into an attractive urban area. The plan utilises the opportunities the urbanity and the central location offer. The high-rise blocks will be modernised, dwellings joined together, and new dwellings will be built, using part of the oversized infrastructure that surrounds the neighbourhood on all sides. The new dwellings will be either more expensive single-family dwellings or housing for the elderly. One of the first actions was to build a new tower block, to house the elderly.

The plans go much further than just dwellings. The main shopping centre in the middle of the area gets a facelift, small employment projects are stimulated, division between functions is decreased and small-scale employment is stimulated. A separate management plan is made for improving the immediate environment in the short term, about pollution, maintenance, playing gardens. The municipality, the

rise estates in the Netherlands. One of the most expensive measures is an integrated renewal approach. Integrated renewal takes place when everything is changed simultaneously, with the help of many measures at the same time, such as demolition, refurbishment, new buildings, changing traffic situations, new shopping facilities and reconstruction of green areas. It may also include other kinds of measures, like training and putting to work the unemployed living in the renewal area. Gardeners and flat watchmen can be appointed, to control the surroundings and increase the cleanliness and safety. In general, all these plans and measures are discussed with all participants in an interactive way. Integrated and interactive are keywords for most of the renewal schemes in the Netherlands nowadays. The two cases illustrate two different kind of approaches, both integral and interactive, but with differing outcomes.

10.6 Present policies for high-rise housing estates in the Netherlands

Around 1990, the government reconsidered its role in housing. The conclusion was that housing was not a high priority any more, as it had been for



Voorhof in Delft is a typical area from the 1960s, with a lot of social sector high-rise housing. Despite relative moderate problems drastic plans are proposed, aimed at preventive regeneration, cultural diversity and sustainable investments.

housing association and the owner of the shopping centre made the plans that are discussed with all participants, including the residents and the shopkeepers. The cultural diversity is the motto for the plan: World living in Poptahof (Werelds wonen in Poptahof).

Special attention is paid for the sustainable aspect. More water is introduced in the area, the energy efficiency will be improved, water and sewage systems will be separated, and green spaces are improved. An interesting element is the 'Open School'. All kind of activities are organised in the school building for all inhabitants after school times: computer and language lessons, kindergarten, hobby clubs, elderly activities, indoor sports, etc. Another experiment is setting up a residents' association for the area. Like condominium associations set appointments for an apartment building, agreements are made to improve a neighbourhood. As a result, people in a street decide themselves to invest in more green, a bicycle track, better cleaning or more lighting. (Sources: Delftwonen, 2001; Gemeente Delft, 2000).

decades. The role of the state was limited to the renewal of the old stock and maintenance of post-war dwellings was the responsibility of residents and owners. In the case of the high-rise housing estates these were mostly housing associations. Another policy item was the planning of new suburbs on the outskirts of cities. According to consumer preferences and government policy, the majority of new dwellings were developed as single-family and owner-occupied houses for middle and higher income groups. Building in these new suburbs, called Vinex-neighbourhoods was delayed until the end of the 1990s. There has been a lot of discussion about the possible effects of the attraction of these new areas on the inhabitants of the old stock, for example the high-rise estates. However, even though people continue to move, no dramatic consequences have been observed.

During the 1990s, it became clear that a more active role for the government was still necessary in the cities. More and more, cities became known as centres of poor people, poor housing and poor jobs (or no jobs), while the surrounding region prospered. The cities were not the engines of the national economy any more and their revitalisation became a hot item. Physical renewal of old houses alone was not enough and more attention was required for the needs of the people living there, and for the economic func-

Amsterdam's Bijlmermeer

Without a doubt, the Netherlands' most well-known high-rise housing estate is Bijlmermeer, located in the south east extension of Amsterdam. High-rise apartment buildings may be found throughout the Netherlands, but nowhere as many as in Bijlmermeer. There are 13,000 dwellings in 30 very large blocks, which were laid out in a honeycomb pattern. Since the very beginning, the Bijlmermeer has continually attracted attention, initially because of its daring and innovative design and later on for its problems. Nowadays, the Bijlmermeer is an example of large-scale renewal. The Bijlmermeer was built between 1968 and 1975. The master plan projected 90% high-rise in a mono-functional area dedicated to what was then considered modern living. All modernistic ideas were represented: separation of functions (living, working, recreation), a great deal of space, and park-like landscapes. Traffic flows were separated: pedestrians and cyclists circulate at ground level, while cars drive up above.

Soon after its realisation problems began in the area. First of all, there was the unfinished character of the area. Facilities like stores, spaces for sport and recreation and public transport only were realised years later. Secondly and more importantly, the dwellings did not correspond with the housing preferences of the intended families. They were more attracted to other cities around Amsterdam where single-family houses with gardens were built. As a result, large vacancies arose, rising to 24% in 1984. People with less choice on the market were allocated. At present, about 40% of the population comes from the Netherlands Antilles and the former colony of Surinam, another 40% from other countries, particularly West Africa, and a mere 20% of the population have Dutch roots. Thirdly, there were enormous liveability problems. Several surveys held among residents mention severe problems with safety, pollution, nuisance, robberies, degradation, etc, which the management could not handle. The media found it very easy to confirm the negative image over and over again.

Many solutions were tried. The first one was to stop building new high-rise. Originally, another Bijlmermeer-south was planned. Later on, a single-family housing area replaced it and as a result 'emptied' the old Bijlmermeer. During the 1980s, the management was improved, physical improvements were made, public facilities were opened and the high rents were reduced. Furthermore, improvements



Large-scale demolition is supported by its inhabitants.

tioning of the city as a whole. The focus changed from solving problems to meeting chances and potentials.

A new Big Cities Policy, aimed at improving the quality of the living environment in urban areas, was put together in the second half of the 1990s. It was based on three related pillars: physical renewal of neighbourhoods, social renewal (more jobs, better schooling) and economic renewal (including more employment, vital cities) (see Van Kempen, 2000). Urban renewal policy can be considered as the physical pillar of the Big Cities Policy. The most



Half of the blocks are demolished, the other half refurbished.

to the area have taken place since the mid-1980s, including a metro line to the city, a large shopping centre, a new football stadium for Ajax, and large cinemas and theatres. Just opposite the railway station, one of the most expensive office areas of the Netherlands was built. In fact, the location of the Bijlmermeer changed from an isolated satellite town into a hot spot (Van Kempen & Wassenberg, 1996).

However, the dwellings remained unpopular and the liveability problems were still unsolved. In 1992, the same year as the El-Al Boeing crashed in the area, radical plans were introduced after years of debate, maintenance experiments, adaptations and partial solutions. A quarter of the area would be demolished, another quarter sold and the remaining part improved. New types of houses were planned. Besides the physical renewal, social economical measures were introduced and better maintenance to improve liveability problems. These included job creation, education for adults, stimulation of ethnic entrepreneurship, measures to improve safety, neighbourhood warden schemes, and plans to decrease the uncontrolled public spaces.

When the renewal was about half way (planning included), in 1999, a broad evaluation took place. The question was whether the renewal should be intensified. Residents have an important say in these decisions. In 2001 all the residents of the remaining blocks were interviewed (Helleman & Wassenberg, 2001). The results were remarkable: two thirds were in favour of more demolition, and 60% were in favour of the demolition of their own house. In two blocks the opinions were opposite. Demolition gives residents rights to choose another dwelling in the Bijlmermeer or in Amsterdam, and they are given compensation for expenses. In 2002 a Final Plan was accepted, in which an additional 3,000 high-rise flats will be demolished and replaced by the same number of dwellings (Projectbureau Vernieuwing Bijlmermeer, 2002). All the blocks will be demolished, except for the two blocks where residents had other preferences. Besides houses, the plans contain measures for more local businesses and amenities, parking facilities, green areas and water.

For more about the Bijlmermeer, see Helleman and Wassenberg, 2004.

important policy documents in this field are the White papers on Urban renewal in 1997 (Ministry VROM, 1997) and People-Wishes-Housing in 2000 (Ministerie VROM, 2000).

Physical renewal of neighbourhoods built after 1945, including a considerable number of high-rise areas, is considered particularly necessary to meet the demands of the present and future consumer. Restructuring the housing stock and transforming the unpopular neighbourhoods into vital areas have

become the main catch-phrases. Diversification of the housing stock is happening by demolition, new building, of rental homes to tenants, renovation and upgrading. This goes hand in hand with a transformation of the area by restructuring the physical infrastructure, shopping centres and other amenities and the green areas. These physical measures are accompanied by social measures in the field of schooling and language programmes, programmes for the elderly, youth and foreigners, crime reduction, pollution and vandalism.

The two case studies in this chapter show two different integral approaches for two areas where high-rise dominates. Both approaches are the result of an intensive process involving many parties, in which residents participate fully and physical, social and economic measures are combined. However, the result is that in one area the amount of high-rise will be halved, while in the other the numbers will stay the same or even increase. This difference maybe provides an insight into the broad future perspectives for high-rise estates in the Netherlands. The reasons to intervene are the same: the main question is whether these high-rise estates will fulfil future preferences when a structural low demand is expected. What can be done? One option is to demolish the surplus housing nobody actually wants, and replace it with something people do want. This option has already been applied in some places across the country, especially in areas with the lowest demand in the Netherlands. The other option is to refurbish the high-rise apartments, to upgrade them and make them more attractive to those who prefer high-rise. In this way high-rise can profit from the better image created by the more recently-built blocks in city centres or other locations. Of course, refurbishment only makes sense when the buildings are located in an attractive environment and an attractive location.

An intensive approach is necessary for both options. Leaving the high-rise blocks as they are, waiting for things to happen, is not a very wise strategy. In our opinion radical policies are inevitable. No uniform measures are possible nor recommendable, even though most of the high-rise blocks were built in a uniform way. Each situation needs its own policy, depending on the local circumstances. What will be necessary is an intense process in which many participants work together to come to a sustainable result.

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11 Britain

High-rise housing as a ‘doubtful guest’

Richard Turkington

11.1 Introduction

The future of social sector high-rise housing in Britain stands at the crossroads. From confident beginnings, this chapter traces how the role and status of blocks and estates has been transformed over the past 40 years, to the point where the extreme options of retention or demolition are increasingly a reality. As the social sector undergoes radical restructuring and change, public sector high-rise housing must fight for its place in a vigorously competitive housing market. As we will see, the outcome will be determined by a complex of factors whose roots lie in the uncertain status of ‘flats’ in British society.

The American cartoonist Edmund Gorey entitled one of his most entertaining stories, ‘The Doubtful Guest’ (Gorey, 1957). This identity captures perfectly the British attitude towards high-rise housing which, in the public sector, has remained controversial since construction. Whilst controversy centres on the experience of living in high-rise housing, it is aroused by the symbol of the tall block. This has undergone dramatic change, from a symbol of social progress in the 1950s and 1960s to a symbol of housing failure not ten years later. A more recent revival as a symbol of urban regeneration and modern urban housing has failed to challenge the conventional view that high-rise housing was a mistake. Public sector high-rise includes some of the most stigmatised housing in British society, yet its counterparts in the private sector, not least the modern blocks of high-density London, symbolise the most affluent urban lifestyles. Such contradictions are a constant accompaniment to the story of high-rise housing in Britain.

The predominantly negative view of high-rise might seem surprising in view of the long tradition of multi-storey living in urban Britain (Sutcliffe, 1974; Towers, 2000). Pressures on land availability and its cost; the historic shortage of urban housing and the nineteenth century dependence on the speculative provider combined to produce multi-storey housing by both intention and default. The near insatiable demand for housing in the inner cities of early Victorian Britain resulted in a continual sub-division of conventional houses to create insanitary and overcrowded ‘rooms’ for impoverished families. The lesser status of flats in the British housing system may well have its roots in this early experience of ‘multi-storey living’. By contrast, the purpose-built ‘tenement flat’ became an accepted feature of Victorian London and urban Scotland, and remains so.

However, this experience was not typical. After the First World War, both public and private sectors adopted the family house – low density and garden



Population	59,778,002
Population density	245/km ²
Capital	London
GDP per capita	€17,470
Housing stock	24.9 million

city inspired – as the ‘ideal’ home. The continued cultural dominance of the family house in British housing design cannot be underestimated, and helps to explain the problematic status of public sector flats (Ravetz with Turkington, 1995; Sim, 1993). At the present time, homes are being built in both public and private sectors which incorporate design features recognisable a century ago, high-rise remains the ‘outsider’ in British housing design.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and with the exception of London, the private sector showed little interest in building flatted schemes. In the public sector, tenement flats were only provided where special subsidies were necessary to achieve high densities. 1930’s slum clearance programmes produced some dramatic multi-storey schemes, most notably in Leeds and Liverpool. Their design and layout were strongly influenced by examples from central Europe some of which were visited by official delegations (City of Birmingham, 1930; Department of Health for Scotland, 1935; London County Council, 1936). Their visual impact was achieved by their scale and ‘Modernist’ styling rather than by their height, which did not exceed 5 storeys. Little evidence is available of the acceptability of this first generation of public sector multi-storey housing.

11.2 The career of high-rise housing estates

Preparing the way: the 1940s and 1950s

While Le Corbusier and Modernist architects had introduced the image of the tower block, the circumstances of 1945 made it a reality. A combination of four million homes damaged or destroyed; an unsolved pre-war housing shortage and two million new marriages saw housing emerge as a first priority of post-war governments (Cleeve Barr, 1958). A powerful vision of a new urban society was provided by progressive architects and urban planners working within a newly-created town planning system. Represented as modern and efficient, blocks of offices and flats found their place within this vision (Glendinning & Muthesius, 1995).

With the exception of construction in London and by the sea, the private sector showed little interest in building tall flats. Their construction was dependent on municipal initiative, and once again delegations were sent abroad to inspect model schemes. Groups of local politicians and officers left Liverpool in 1954 to visit the United States, and Sheffield in 1956 to visit a range of European countries (City of Liverpool Housing, 1954; City of Sheffield Housing, 1956). Both reported favourably on what they saw, although the Liverpool delegation’s expressed reluctance to use the term ‘skyscraper living’ is indicative of an underlying conservatism. No tenants were included in this investigative process, Britain had no tradition of such consultation and tenants were expected to be the passive but grateful recipients of new housing.

Such a relationship was to be severely tested in the years to come.

As symbols of modernity, tall flats began to appear in London public housing schemes from 1947, although most blocks built in the 1940s and 1950s were 3 or 4 storeys in height, with five the maximum permitted under building regulations. As the decade progressed, the political pressure grew to meet the continuing demand for family housing and to replace almost one million nineteenth century slum dwellings. As the argument in favour of building more flats and to a greater height grew in strength, some remarkable changes in attitude can be found. In Birmingham, the municipality had long opposed the building of any flats yet was one of the first to construct an estate of tall blocks, opening Duddeston in 1954.

The 1960s: the high-rise 'boom'

As the pro-flats argument gained momentum, so the number and height of blocks increased. However, as the official report *Flats and Houses* had established (Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1958), taller blocks were more expensive to build than other forms of housing. The deciding factor in their construction was the state subsidy paid to municipal housing authorities, which was increased in 1956, and further modified in 1961. "The numbers of high-rise dwellings (6 storeys and above) rose from 6,000 in 1956 to 17,000 in 1961, 35,000 in 1964 and 44,000 in 1966. Within the high rise category there was a marked trend towards increasingly tall blocks. Blocks of 10-14 storeys expanded from 0.7% of public housing in 1955 to 8.4% in 1963. Blocks of 15-19 storeys expanded from 0.1% in 1955 to 8.3% in 1964" (Dunleavy, 1981, p. 41).

Construction methods and types of blocks varied tremendously (Association of Metropolitan Authorities, 1984). Companies imported technologies from countries with established experience of high-rise construction, especially from Scandinavia. Their new-found confidence was communicated to housing authorities through direct lobbying and by the government's National Building Agency (Dunleavy, 1981).

The distribution of high-rise housing coincided with the worst incidence of housing shortage and slum conditions. Greater London; urban Scotland especially Glasgow; the North West and West Midlands regions accounted for almost 80% of the high-rise blocks constructed during this period. Where schemes were associated with slum clearance, construction on inner city sites weakened the link with the Modernist vision of the Radiant City. At best, high-rise was included in schemes of 'mixed' housing types, at worst this was expedient housing devoid of any governing principle. Layout was influenced by the well-established concept of the 'housing estate'. In theory, this should have ensured an infrastructure necessary to support community development, including shops, schools, leisure facilities etc. In reality, the pressure to achieve housing targets and cost constraints regularly undermined such intentions with disastrous consequences for developments on peripheral sites.

Birmingham City Council's 'High-rise Repair Programme'

Birmingham City Council, with a total stock of over 90,000 homes, has over 350 tower blocks. It was one of the first municipal housing authorities to review the future of its high-rise stock, and in 1979 began a policy of designating some blocks for use by older people. As this answered neither the problem of deteriorating quality, nor the demand for family housing, the City Council initiated a 'high-rise repair programme'. In 1984, a 'Multi-Disciplinary Team' was established to determine the structural problems facing the stock, to prioritise requirements and prepare an implementation plan. The first task was to undertake a structural survey, identify defects and the extent of repairs required. As a result, the following options were developed:

- a short term option of under 10 years for blocks with severe structural problems which cannot be resolved at economic cost;
- a medium term option of over 10 years following repairs where there are no immediate structural defects, and where a long term solution may be economic in the future, and,
- a long term option of over 30 years following repairs for those blocks in good structural condition.

Architects and technicians translated these options into appraisals of work and costings were provided by quantity surveyors. The Technical Services Section consulted with the Neighbourhood Housing Office and with tenants' groups to determine the best course of action. The resulting repairs were carried out as the city's capital repairs budget permitted, or were incorporated into bids for state funding. Despite the comprehensiveness of this strategy, progress has been impeded by a lack of resources which has led to its virtual suspension. Only 10% of blocks have been repaired to a thirty year life-span, half have received short-term remedial repairs; one third are awaiting attention, and one in ten are due for demolition.

Eligibility for public housing was determined according to an applicant's position on the municipal waiting list. Working families with young children received the highest priority, single people and recently settled migrant workers received the lowest priority. This led to an almost exclusive emphasis on providing family housing, whether in conventional or high-rise dwellings. The social vetting still operated by municipal housing authorities, combined with local residency rules, attempted to ensure that tenants were drawn from the 'respectable' working classes who would pay their rent and look after their home.

However, the situation could vary significantly when new tenants were drawn from slum clearance schemes. In some cases, socially diverse communities were rehoused together, but in others, the social composition of residual populations resulted in far more older, unemployed or single people being rehoused in tall blocks (Power, 1993). It is clear that some estates were socially imbalanced and unsettled from their opening, with major consequences for their subsequent development.

An initially high level of satisfaction with internal standards was recorded for the first generation of high-rise tenants whose flats were built to generous 'Parker Morris' space standards, and provided with modern kitchens and bathrooms (Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1961). However, few municipal housing authorities were prepared for the complex task of managing high-rise blocks and estates. This lack of experience coincided with a trend away from more intensive management practices just when the oppo-

site was required. The systematic failure to provide amenities in blocks and on estates aggravated a situation which was finely tuned to any shift in management, maintenance or allocations policies. The 1970s saw this delicate balance tip in the wrong direction.

The 1970s: the 'abandonment' of high-rise housing estates

The decline in the status of high-rise housing was far more dramatic than its ascent. Two events brought about its downfall. Firstly, the gas explosion and partial collapse of the Ronan Point block in east London in May 1968 raised wider questions concerning construction methods, quality and safety (Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1968). Secondly, national economic problems resulted in significant public sector spending cuts, high-rise subsidies were ended in 1967, and restrictive Housing Cost Yardsticks were introduced. Approvals of blocks of 5 storeys and above fell from 25.7% of all public housing in 1966 to 1.2% in 1976, and of blocks of 15 storeys or above from 10.6% to nil – the high-rise 'boom' had ended.

Although financial and technical factors can largely explain the sudden demise of the high-rise programme, other problems had also emerged. Despite the absence of systematic monitoring, evidence of problems associated with high-rise living had been accumulating since the 1950s, with concern centred on its impact on children and families (Department of the Environment, 1975; Gittus, 1976; Jephcott with Robinson, 1971; Royal Institute of British Architects, 1957). The only official study of life at 'high density' was not published until 1970, by which time their construction had largely ended (Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1970). This Report recorded widespread dissatisfaction with the environments inside and outside blocks; with the quality of facilities for play, clothes drying and storage; with the reliability of lifts and with the location of blocks in relation to local facilities.

As public spending declined, economies made by municipal housing authorities in management and maintenance made bad situations even worse. Accompanied by a new scepticism from architects and planners, a strong and adverse public reaction against high-rise housing gained momentum. The media view was that high-rise housing had failed, a perspective reinforced by high profile examples of the abandonment of poorly constructed blocks. As early as 1979, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council at Birkenhead on Merseyside became the first housing authority in Britain to demolish high-rise housing, disposing of two 11-storey tower blocks after an existence of only twenty years.

The consequences of this reaction against high-rise cannot be over-stated. In many locations, tenants with choice, particularly working families moved elsewhere to be replaced by those with least choice, including single people, the rehoused elderly and 'problem families' (Power, 1997). Such situations were reached most quickly on estates whose slum clearance populations had



Northwood Tower in London is an example of comprehensive refurbishment from the 1990s.

never settled. Local politicians and housing professionals frequently turned their backs on high-rise housing, and their indifference to its fate sanctioned a level of neglect which was to have disastrous consequences. The persistence of this negative view of high-rise housing has been remarkable, and it was not until the 1980s that contrary evidence emerged of satisfied tenants living in structurally sound blocks.

The 1980s: the ‘rediscovery’ of high-rise as a social-housing resource

After 1980, high-rise was ‘rediscovered’ as a housing resource, and for two reasons. Firstly, the option of demolition was severely constrained by its high cost and the lack of any subsidy to pay for it. Due to the structure of

blocks and their proximity to other housing, demolition costs of half a million pounds per block were not unusual at this time. Secondly, the election in 1979 of a Conservative government committed to increasing owner-occupation and reducing the public sector’s role in housing provision had a dramatic impact on the high-rise stock. The introduction of the ‘right to buy’ for municipal tenants in 1980 has resulted in the sale of over one third of ‘council housing’. Not surprisingly, those dwellings sold have been the most popular, typically single-family houses in inter-war ‘cottage estates’. Sales of flats, especially in high-rise blocks, have been as low as ten per cent of the total, and concentrated in London and Scotland.

Of the 1.5 million dwellings sold in England under the ‘Right to Buy’ programme between 1980 and 2001, less than one in five were replaced with new social housing. As a result, high-rise housing has grown as a proportion of the municipal stock. In the city of Bristol for example, two houses were let for every flat in 1980, but ten years later, the situation had reversed. At the same time, the demand for social housing increased, and municipal housing authorities were obliged to view their high-rise flats as assets rather than liabilities.

Despite these pressures, there were no centrally co-ordinated policies for the use and refurbishment of high-rise blocks, and any initiative remained with municipal housing authorities. Most viewed the long-term future of their high-rise stock with scepticism, but a few acted more boldly. For example, whilst Liverpool maintained a policy of neglect, the municipality of Wirral across the River Mersey was one of the first to pursue a comprehensive refurbishment strategy (National Housing and Town Planning Council, 1990). Other initiatives were

Demolition accelerated in the 1990s as the poor structural condition of blocks and estates has been revealed.

less costly and included such provision as secure entry systems and decentralised estate management (National Housing and Town Planning Council, 1997). A growth in the demand for housing for older people led to successful experiments with the designation of blocks as 'sheltered housing', and other specialist uses included housing for students and single people.

Local refurbishment initiatives, such as the London Borough of Islington's 'Estate Action Programme' (EAP) and Liverpool City Council's 'Urban Regeneration Strategy' had little impact on practice in other housing authorities, and were constantly undermined by central government constraints on capital expenditure. The belated introduction of the national Estate Action Project (EAP) in 1986, provided a funding source for the capital refurbishment of housing estates from which municipalities could bid on an annual basis, (see Section 11.4). EAP provided the first opportunity for the comprehensive refurbishment of high-rise blocks.

1990-2000: rethinking the future of high-rise housing estates

The 1990s were a decisive decade for high-rise housing. As the demand for affordable homes grew, some housing authorities had to abandon policies of excluding families from flats, whose condition continued to deteriorate. For example, Birmingham City Council abandoned its 15 year 'no children in flats' policy in 1992, then discovered through extensive technical survey, that 200 of its 414 high-rise blocks required 'urgent' structural repair (Birmingham City Council, 1994).

The argument for reviewing the future of high-rise housing was promoted by a network of residents' groups in tower blocks and strengthened by the findings of surveys of tenants' views (The National Tower Block Network, 1992). For example, research undertaken for Housing Action Trusts managing tower blocks in Liverpool and Castle Vale, Birmingham revealed significant numbers of tenants, especially those resident for many years, who were satisfied with their homes. This unexpected finding had the effect of obliging both Trusts to consider the retention and refurbishment of blocks, although this has not necessarily secured their future. Unfortunately, these 'case studies' have also revealed the high cost of refurbishing neglected blocks and its viability. In Castle Vale, Birmingham, only two blocks are to be retained from an initial total of 34, and in Liverpool, over two thirds of their 67 blocks have been approved for



demolition or demolished. Experience in Liverpool and Birmingham captured the dilemma facing Britain's high-rise stock at the end of the 1990s. The comprehensive refurbishment of a limited number of blocks had been achieved with dramatic results, but such transformations were exceptional.

High-rise housing estates for the 21st century

In the first decade of the new century, Britain's public sector high-rise stock is the subject of contradictory housing and policy trends (Cowan & Marsh, 2002). The first arises from the requirement on local authorities to consider the option of transferring their housing stock to a housing association, and over half a million homes have been transferred in this way. Known as 'large scale voluntary transfer', this route enables the new landlord to borrow substantial private capital for the refurbishment and modernisation of its stock. This option was initially taken up by smaller rural authorities with conventional stock, but has since been pursued by larger urban authorities with substantial numbers of high-rise blocks, including Coventry and Glasgow. In all cases, the requirement on the local authority to develop a business plan requires necessitates an assessment of the value and viability of all its housing, including high-rise flats. This process represents the best opportunity in a generation to take stock of the legacy of public sector high-rise housing and achieve its refurbishment - or replacement.

Whilst the outcome of this process is as yet unclear, a further trend is having a major impact on the future of all social housing. In the late 1990s, a number of municipal housing authorities and housing associations in the north of England experienced a sudden and unexpected collapse in the demand for their rented homes, a trend which has now extended to parts of the urban Midlands. Such a change in fortunes has been largely accounted for in terms of relative economic prosperity enabling greater access to the private market, and to owner occupation in particular. The consequences for high-rise housing vary by location, but where demand has fallen substantially, the future for unrefurnished stock is very uncertain. However, a counter trend also needs to be recognised where overheating housing markets have so reduced access to owner occupation that the demand for social housing is on the rise again. The future prospects of public sector high-rise housing hangs on the direction of these market trends.

A further issue concerns the means of accommodating the huge population growth projected for London and the south-east region. High density and high-rise housing schemes are under active consideration by central government and municipal planners, a development which complements a recent and rapid growth of interest in private sector high-rise housing. The discovery of a niche market for apartment-based 'city living' in such locations as Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool and Manchester has led to a flurry of activity to build ever larger and more luxurious tower blocks for childless professionals

Table 11.1 Number of apartments in blocks of six storeys and above, by period of construction and tenure, in England, 1996

	Pre-1850	1850-1899	1900-1918	1919-1944	1945-1964	1965-1980	Post- 1980	Total
Local authority	0	0	0	4,000	109,000	142,000	5,000	260,000
Housing association	0	3,000	1,000	1,000	3,000	8,000	1,000	17,000
Private rented	1,000	1,000	0	4,000	2,000	4,000	2,000	14,000
Owner-occupied	0	0	0	3,000	12,000	17,000	0	32,000
Total	1,000	4,000	1,000	12,000	126,000	171,000	8,000	323,000

Source: Department of the Environment, 1998

and older retired 'empty nesters'. Ironically, as the twenty first century unfolds, high-rise housing is firmly back on the urban agenda.

11.3 High-rise housing estates: a contemporary profile

In contrast with other types of public sector housing, the stock of high-rise housing has remained largely intact in terms of totals and patterns of ownership. Data have to be collated from a wide range of sources including the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR); the five-yearly House Conditions Surveys; local estimates and surveys.

Stock totals

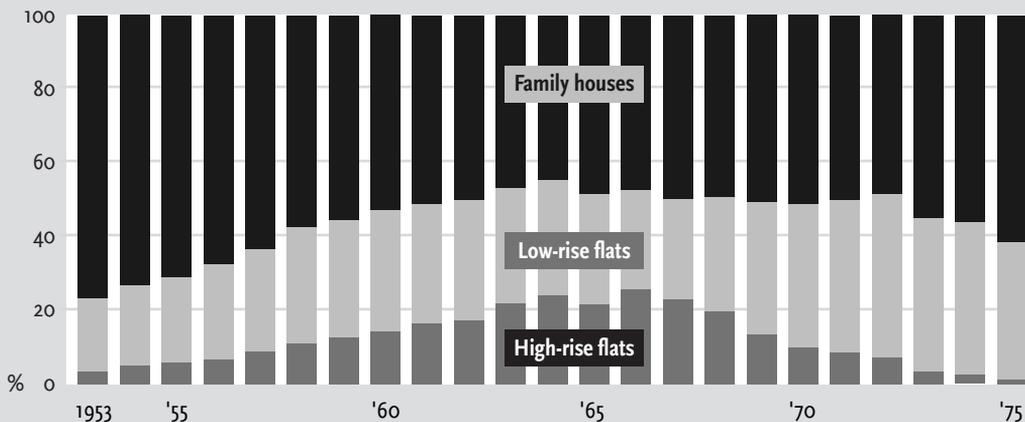
Table 11.1 provides a breakdown of England's high-rise stock, defined as flats in blocks of at least 6 storeys high. This breakdown clearly demonstrates that high-rise housing was mainly provided in the period after 1945 and by the local authority sector, where it largely remains. Most of the housing association stock is the product of stock transfer from local authorities, and most of the owner occupied stock has been created through the 'right to buy' scheme.

In all, 208,000 flats in six to 11-storey blocks make up just under 1% of England's 21.1 million homes, and 120,000 flats of 12 storeys and above contribute a further 0.6%. Combined together, approximately one home in every 60 is a high-rise flat.

Figure 11.1 summarises approvals given by central government to English and Welsh municipal housing authorities to build houses and flats of different types in the 22 years after 1953, actual production tended to occur about a year later. The pattern of production of high-rise flats is clearly visible, rising in the 1950s, peaking in the 1960s then coming to an almost complete end by 1975. Other conclusions are that the volume of low-rise exceeded high-rise flats for all years considered, and that in most years, the production of single-family houses exceeded that of flats.

The tight control on public expenditure since 1979 has resulted in only a minority of blocks being comprehensively refurbished, and it is not difficult

Figure 11.1 Local authority approvals by building form in England and Wales, 1953-1975



to find blocks in virtually as-built condition. The overall condition of the high-rise stock can be judged by the finding of the 1996 English House Conditions Survey that 10% of high-rise flats were estimated to be 'unfit for human habitation' (DoE, 1998).

Despite the almost guaranteed publicity gained by demolishing a tower block, only a small proportion have met this fate. The London Borough of Hackney claims the European record by having 'dropped' 17 tower blocks, and if their condition continues to deteriorate, the pace of demolition is likely to increase.

Ownership and tenure

High-rise housing remains a predominantly public sector dwelling type. Despite the encouragement of the Conservative government prior to 1997, the private sector has shown little interest in purchasing blocks from municipal owners. In the West Midlands region for example, only three blocks, or less than one per cent of the total number have been transferred, and with contrasting degrees of success. Over the same period, housing associations have demonstrated a similar reluctance to purchase or build high-rise blocks. Transfers from municipal housing authorities to housing associations have been rare, and only three have taken place in the West Midlands region.

In view of the above discussion, it is not surprising that the majority of those living in high-rise blocks remain the tenants of municipal housing authorities. This is despite the 1980 'right to buy' legislation which gave tenants the opportunity to purchase their flats. This opportunity was complicated by the initial reluctance of banks and building societies to lend money on such non-standard housing. Whilst this situation has improved, a remaining problem has been the obligation on owners to contribute to the maintenance and refurbishment of blocks – still owned by the municipality – through a 'service charge'. In London in particular, there has been more enthusiasm for buying flats at heavily discounted prices, but such housing has proved vulnerable in private housing markets which have experienced two 'booms' and a 'crash' since the late 1980s. It has not been unusual for 'right to buy' owners to approach the municipi-

pality to buy back their flat, especially when dramatic increases in service charges have been imposed, and where flats are subsequently discovered to be structurally defective, the local authority is obliged to buy them back.

The populations of public sector high-rise housing estates

This is an area of great change and one of considerable concern. Initial populations were typically young families receiving an income from full-time work, with a minority of elderly, childless and single tenants. Three trends have transformed these populations. Firstly, where blocks were 'abandoned' by the first generation of tenants, they were replaced by those with less choice, for example, the unemployed, students and 'problem families'. Over the years, some unpopular blocks were used by municipal housing authorities as 'dumping grounds' for difficult tenants.

Secondly, since 1979, the decline in the availability of affordable rented housing necessitated a system of allocation by priority housing need. Typical client groups included statutorily 'homeless' families; the seriously physically ill, and those rehoused from mental hospitals or other institutions.

Finally, those residents who settled in the 1960s have reached retirement age and beyond. Whilst they may have little in common with more recent neighbours, they usually share a dependence on state welfare benefits. In contrast with their original role, high-rise estates house predominantly low income populations including many older tenants in poor health. For example, the 1995 social surveys undertaken for the Liverpool HAT revealed that: 51% of tenants were retired; 45% had an income at the level of state benefits; 45% of households contained somebody with a long-term illness, and; 20% of all tenants were unemployed (Liverpool HAT, 1995). Similar social profiles could be found in blocks and estates throughout Britain.

11.4 Intervention on high-rise housing estates

Vulnerability

From insecure beginnings as an unconventional product of state housing policy; through decades of stigma and rejection; the low status of high-rise housing in Britain is matched by its vulnerability to deterioration (Turkington, 1997). Other forms of British housing, including a substantial stock of 19th century terraced houses, have proved remarkably durable, but the same cannot be said of 1960's high-rise flats. Such housing has accumulated a range of problems of great complexity. The use of over one hundred building types; the application of untried and untested construction methods; the use of poor quality materials and low work standards have left a legacy of enduring technical problems.

Poor design, particularly affecting the defensibility of semi-public space

have aggravated problems in blocks affected by crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Inadequate and unsuitable facilities for children and young people have been a source of constant complaint, accompanied by a lack of amenities such as shops, crèches and places to meet and socialise. As elsewhere in Europe, the failure to complete such facilities has blighted the social development of many estates, a situation compounded by inadequate and/or expensive public transport systems.

Underpinning many of the problems identified above has been poor management and maintenance. The absence of intensive local management services can result in a failure to recognise or respond to problems as they appear, and the dependence of so many people on a single environment means that any deterioration can have immediate and far-reaching consequences for all its' residents.

From refurbishment to regeneration

A major consequence of the stigmatising of high-rise housing is that no initiatives have been targeted specifically at the improvement of blocks or estates. Intervention has been achieved largely by their inclusion in more broadly-focused refurbishment programmes (Turkington, 1998 and 1999). Under the Conservative government of 1979–1997, such schemes reflected the ideological imperative of accelerating the privatisation of municipal housing. As the least likely candidate for such a transfer of ownership, it is arguable that such non-standard housing was less likely to be included in such schemes.

Before 1986, intervention on estates was funded at the municipal level and was dependent on their initiative. In that year, the national 'Estate Action Project' (EAP) was introduced and remained the main vehicle for delivering capital improvements for over a decade (Department of the Environment, 1996). A frequent criticism of EAP was its failure to address wider questions of the socio-economic conditions within and beyond estates. The adoption of a broader approach to intervention is characteristic of policies of the 1990s. For example, the central government 'City Challenge' programme, introduced in 1992, continued the practice of holding 'ugliness contests' whose 'winners' gained regeneration funding. One of the programme's most dramatic successes was the transformation of the stigmatised Hulme estate in Manchester, although the comprehensive demolition of its system-built flats served only to confirm the negative view of such housing.

From April 1994, twenty public schemes in five government departments, including the 'Estate Action Project', were combined under a 'Single Regeneration Budget' for England and Wales, and a 'Programme for Partnerships' for Scotland. This decision reflected an acceptance of the need for an even more inter-disciplinary and co-ordinated approach to regeneration, further symbolised by the 1996 launch of the competitive Estate Renewal Challenge Fund. After May 1997, the Labour government introduced its 'New Deal for Commu-

The Liverpool high-rise 'Housing Action Trust'



This Liverpool view typifies mixed estates including high-rise flats from the 1960s.

'Housing Action Trusts' (HATs) were developed in the early 1990s to increase tenant involvement in the refurbishment of selected municipal estates over a ten years period (Karn, 1993). Most refurbishment programmes have been organised geographically around one estate or neighbourhood, but the Liverpool HAT is unique in focusing on one type of housing – high-rise blocks – irrespective of their location in the city.

By the time the HAT was created, the blocks had become extremely run-down, and some

blocks had not been modernised or repaired since opening. In some of the management areas, as many as 40% of flats were vacant and abandoned, and an average of 23% were empty. Preliminary social surveys revealed concentrations of low income and especially older households, for whom health and social care services were increasingly a priority. Three quarters of residents described themselves as 'satisfied' with their homes although most were dissatisfied with the heating system and external maintenance.

A first priority was to determine the condition of blocks and estates; to identify refurbishment options and commence improvement work. A technical survey revealed an unanticipated level of problems and suggested refurbishment costs averaging £90,000 per unit, far in excess of the cost of building new homes. As a result, the HAT has been faced with difficult decisions in balancing the preferences of tenants, 60% of whom are over sixty years old, with the viability of refurbishment.

The final stage has been to determine which blocks could be retained at an economic cost, and which would have to be demolished and replaced. However, the outcome is not encouraging for the future of high-rise housing elsewhere. Of an original total of 67 blocks, 27 have been demolished, 26 are due for demolition and refurbishment has been approved for only 14 blocks. The number of conventional replacement houses now far exceeds the total of refurbished flats, and ironically, the high-rise Housing Action Trust has become a low-rise landlord.

nities' to regenerate the most 'deprived neighbourhoods' in Britain and most recently, launched a Housing Market Renewal Programme to intervene in areas of market collapse in the north and midlands. However, whilst the continued extension of intervention beyond 'housing estates' is to be welcomed, high-rise estates are in even greater competition for limited resources.

The effectiveness of intervention

Despite the absence of national monitoring, significant progress has been made in dealing with this housing legacy. Intervention has focused on man-



Improvements to community safety, such as these CCTV cameras, have been a priority of high-rise improvement.

anagerial, technical and design issues for two main reasons. Firstly, managerial changes, such as introducing new allocations policies, do not require major capital expenditure, and those with revenue implications such as a concierge service can be funded through service charges. Secondly, the major source of capital funding from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, the Estate Action Project, placed an almost exclusive emphasis on physical refurbishment as the prelude to tenure transfer. It is only in the latter half of the 1990s that a broader focus on estate regeneration has enabled such social priorities as better youth facilities; a crèche for working parents or improved transport links to be given greater emphasis. Given this context, what has been achieved?

From the late 1970s, management innovation has focused on making better use of blocks by designating some or all floors for specific client groups such as single people, students, mature couples or older people. More general changes have centred on making blocks more secure through introducing secure entry, concierge and close circuit television (CCTV) systems (Farr & Osborn, 1997). These have proved extremely popular, although they may result in increases in rent levels or service charges. In some cases, the decentralisation of housing management has allowed a neighbourhood office to be located in a tower block. Clearly, there are limits to the impact of management change, a block may be made more secure or designated for specific client groups but lifts may remain unreliable and flats hard-to-heat.

Technical refurbishment is intended to increase the life-span of a block and improve tenants' quality of life. It is the most costly form of intervention and may be directed at one or all of flats, blocks and the estate environment. A range of measures is now available from rebuilding blocks through over-cladding and roof renewal to window replacement and the installation of new heating systems. Comprehensive refurbishment provides an opportunity to redesign environments, sometimes with radical consequences. Imaginative repainting or the use of colourful cladding has given blocks a new and individual identity and internal remodelling can provide space for more lifts, a concierge service or communal facilities. Redevelopment of external grounds can deal with 'confused space'; provide play areas and replace barren landscapes with secure private or communal gardens.

A major area of development has been the involvement of tenants in the process of change, from consultation over redesign issues to the self-manage-

ment of blocks or estates through ‘tenant management organisations’ or genuine housing co-operatives. However, the co-existence of retired tenants with a new generation of low income families and disadvantaged younger households, raises uncomfortable questions about the achievement of a balanced and compatible representation of interests. The opportunity for self-management can bring people together or expose the gulf between them, and for those whose lives are a daily struggle, it may be yet another burden.

High-rise housing can provide easily managed and low maintenance homes offering a high level of security against crime in a communal setting. Whilst blocks have been successfully designated for particular needs groups, the challenge for the longer-term is to create environments which work for all households, including families. Despite the experience gained in refurbishing blocks and regenerating estates, no single model for effective intervention has been established. The media profile gained by a recent promotion of such ‘electronic intervention’ as CCTV perpetuates the constant fascination with ‘technical fixes’. Whilst technological innovation is an essential element in securing the future of tall blocks, it is only one of many forms of intervention. Despite the practical progress made, we still lack a conceptual or methodological model to assess the effectiveness of intervention. Graham Towers model for ‘re-forming’ lower rise multi-storey housing represents a bold attempt both to typologise forms of intervention and to gauge their effectiveness, but has yet to be applied on a wider basis (Towers, 2000).

11.5 The future for high-rise housing estates in Britain

The prospects for high-rise housing in Britain have been blighted several times over, firstly by its low status in the public sector; then by the residualisation of the municipal housing stock; more recently by the cumulative effects of decades of neglect and finally, by the growing problem of the low demand for social housing. The rate of demolition has increased, but it is inconceivable that resources will be available to demolish and replace over 270,000 homes in England alone. Such a scenario is more likely where poor quality blocks coincide with low levels of demand, such as in parts of Merseyside, the Midlands and north-east regions. In contrast, those with the brightest future are structurally sound blocks located in high demand areas, especially in London and the south-east.

If public sector high-rise is to have a future, then negative attitudes must be challenged by positive examples of effective refurbishment. However, there is still no state-sponsored programme to regenerate high-rise blocks and estates, and despite the launch of an informal ‘National Sustainable Tower Blocks Initiative’, no central government co-ordination of good practice experience

(Church & Gale, 2000). State intervention is increasingly determined by problems of 'social exclusion', irrespective of the housing type in the area concerned. This still leaves ad hoc refurbishment as the most likely approach, with the initiative to retain, refurbish or dispose of blocks in the hands of their mainly public sector owners. Transfers from municipal housing authorities to housing associations offer the best opportunity for decades to achieve the comprehensive refurbishment of blocks and estates; but the future for the majority of Britain's high-rise housing now hangs precariously in the balance.

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12 Germany

Common legacy from a divided past

Thomas Knorr-Siedow

12.1 Introduction

Any consideration of the present state and future prospects of large-scale and high-rise housing estates in Germany must take account of their origins in two separate states, the old 'western' Federal Republic and the 'eastern' German Democratic Republic (GDR), which vanished from the European map in 1990. Whereas the social and cultural meaning of this housing stock used to differ widely between east and west, increasingly it shares a common direction as one of the most vulnerable sectors of the housing market. A debate about large-scale demolition and a search for new concepts of mass housing has developed as vacancies have risen to over one million empty flats in the east – although by no means all high-rise.

Although high-rise housing (defined as 6 storeys or above) and especially large homogenous estates have proved vulnerable to changing aspirations, a closer analysis of the varying types and qualities leads to a differentiated picture. A key question is: what makes the difference between estates and blocks which have been integrated into the housing market without substantial problems, and those which became and remain problematic? A further question is whether the current policies of the 'Soziale Stadt', of a new form of socio-economic and culturally oriented neighbourhood management and of 'Stadtumbau' are able to counter the spiral of decline that threatens this type of housing? 'Soziale Stadt' ('Socially Integrated City') is a programme integrating improvements in the urban environment with social, cultural and economic activities, initiated in 1998 by the Federal Government and the German states in co-operation with the local authorities. 'Stadtumbau' ('Urban Reconstruction') is a federal and state funded programme introduced in 2000 to assist the East-German cities in a process of controlled 'shrinkage' to achieve a sustainable size and improve urban quality. In Figure 12.1 all large housing estates in Germany are shown, as defined as areas with at least 2.500 dwellings. Compared to other countries, these are substantial housing estates.

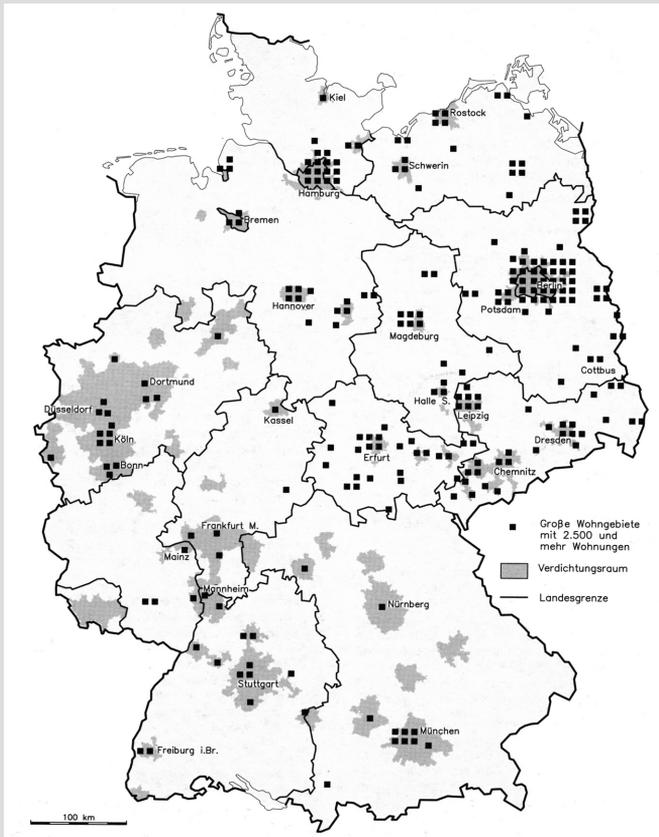


Population	83,251,851
Population density	232/km ²
Capital	Berlin
GDP per capita	€18,942
Housing stock	37.1 million

12.2 Large housing estates: a previous history

The roots of large housing estates in Germany lie with the poor quality of working class housing in the 19th century. By the beginning of the 20th centu-

Figure 12.1 Large housing estates ('Grossiedlungen') in Germany



Source: Bundesministerium, 1994

ry the majority of the urban lower classes were poorly housed in neglected 19th century quarters and in the 'sea of stone' of massive tenement blocks from the 'Gründerzeit' foundation period between 1871 and 1914 (Hegemann, 1923). Overcrowding, health and social problems led to a permanent housing crisis, which often erupted in violent conflict (Geist & Kürvers, 1989). As a consequence, a change in housing policies and ideology emerged at the turn from the 19th to the 20th century, with two distinct strands apparent. Before 1914, the garden city movement began to provide an 'anti-urban' model mostly for the (lower) middle and upper working classes. In contrast to this development,

the German tradition of four to five floor urban blocks of flats was taken up by a wide range of builders. 'Reform housing' emerged with a relation to the philanthropic or the labour movement. Often organised as housing-cooperatives, these new and large blocks of flats from the early 20th century were meant to provide humane housing conditions in an urban environment.

At the end of the First World War in 1918, new urban concepts and the architecture of modernism appeared as the Weimar Republic engaged in impressive mass-building programmes from eastern Silesia to the Rhine. These estates are understood to be the direct predecessors of the later large housing estates and high-rise housing in Germany. Built with great political and economic effort between the early 1920s and 1933, these estates were intended to provide fresh air, light and access to nature, and through heavy subsidy were intended to offer access to large sections of society. The new building philosophy, proclaimed by the Bauhaus School provided an important German contribution to Modernism in housing and was of influence internationally. Many of the projects built between the 1920s and the very early 1960s, have proved highly successful and sustainable and stand as contrasting examples to later and more problematic estates.

The pre-war 'modernist' and early post-war estates benefited from their functional integration into cities. The relatively moderate sizes of the projects allowed for 'neighbourhoods' to build up, and the detailed and differentiated designs helped to establish a feeling of local identity. In addition, the careful selection of their residents, only possible when there is strong demand, contributed to community development. Although the last four decades have led to changes in their social composition, a stable core-population has often helped to maintain active neighbourhoods in the face of post-war modernisation. Especially in the east, and despite a wide-spread rejection of the system's dictatorial faults, the pioneering spirit of some model projects has left traces of a neighbourhood intimacy which has assisted the management of their future.

However, the tip of a problematic iceberg is now becoming visible for these early estates as their residents are ageing dramatically. Research by the Schader Foundation (1998) in estates in Frankfurt am Main – mainly the 'North-Western Town' – has identified a dependency on outside care as a paradoxical consequence of the earlier binding together of residents. Large groups of tenants will grow old before younger residents can replace them. Innovative concepts for 'ageing at home' will be necessary, as professional help can hardly meet demand. However, this might be a temporary problem, as these estates are easily adapted to the demands of a younger generation for larger and better equipped flats. Their long term marketability and social sustainability is hardly ever in question. The greatest technological challenge is that of energy conservation whilst preserving of their historic features.

12.3 The West-German case: between rejection and acceptance

The large estates period

The first 'large' estates, built in the late 1950s and 1960s on inner-city bomb sites comprised a few hundred comparatively small flats in three or four storey blocks with some shops and social infrastructure. Building technologies remained traditional, and although the estates were perceived as 'modern', they were of a style familiar to social renters who felt privileged moving in. They were a valued alternative to overcrowded, neglected and often war-damaged homes. At the same time, population was increasing due to high birth rates and the movement of refugees – 7 million Germans from lost areas in the east and then from the GDR. The foreign labourers of the 1960s had no opportunity to move into estates until the late 1970s, as social housing was only provided for people with a permanent home in Germany. The popular belief was that the *Ausländer* (foreigners) would leave 'for home' after a few years of earning in Germany.

Table 12.1 The 20 largest housing estates in former West-Germany and East-Germany, 2004

West-Germany			East-Germany			
City	Estate	Dwellings	City	Estate	Dwellings	
1	Munich	Neu-Perlach	20,100	Berlin	Marzahn	58,200
2	Berlin	Gropiusstadt	18,600	Berlin	Hellersdorf	42,200
3	Berlin	Märkisches Viertel	16,900	Halle	Neustadt	40,600
4	Nuremberg	Langwasser	13,000	Rostock	Nordwest	39,400
5	Berlin	Falkenhagerner Feld	11,600	Leipzig	Grünau	38,500
6	Brunswick	Weststadt	10,900	Chemnitz	Fritz-Heckert	31,300
7	Bremen	Neue Vahr	10,000	Berlin	Hohenschönhausen	29,000
8	Erkrath	Hochdahl	8,800	Halle	Südstadt/Silberhöhe	25,900
9	Munich	Fürstenried	8,200	Berlin	Friedrichsf.Süd	22,500
10	Cologne	Chorweiler	8,100	Berlin	Karl-Marx-Allee	21,200
11	Kiel	Mettenhof	7,900	Schwerin	Grosser Dresch	20,100
12	Frankfurt	Nord-West-Stadt	7,600	Magdeburg	Olvenstadt	18,900
13	Munich	HasenbergI	7,400	Hoyerswerda	Neustadt	18,700
14	Ratingen	West	7,400	Gera	Lusan	17,600
15	Hamburg	Mümmelmannsberg	7,300	Magdeburg	Neustadt	17,100
16	Berlin	Heerstrasse Nord	7,200	Berlin	Fennpfuhl (O.)	17,000
17	Hamburg	Grosslohe	7,100	Eisenhüttenstadt	WK I – VII	17,000
18	Bielefeld	Sennestadt	7,000	Erfurt	Südost	14,200
19	Hannover	Laatzen-Mitte	6,700	Dresden	Gorbitz	14,200
20	Hamburg	Steilshoop	6,400	Rostock	Dielow/Toitenwinkel	14,100
Total		198,200	Total	517,700		

Source: BBR/IRS

The good image of these estates remained throughout the 1960s, and was strongly reinforced by a wide coalition of politicians, the building industry and social housing providers. As the inner cities ‘filled up’, the search for land moved outwards. With the use of industrially prefabricated parts and assembly technology, estates grew larger and larger. The usual location was on former agricultural land in ‘satellite towns’ on the outskirts of major cities and, although rare in western Germany, in independent ‘new towns’ such as Wulfen and Sennestadt in Lower Saxony. 70% of all western large estates were located in areas of high industrial and population growth, or close to old central cities with their vast stocks of old and high density tenements, for example in Hamburg, Munich, Nuremberg, Cologne and Frankfurt, where large housing estates reached over 10% of total stock. The remaining 30% of large estates enabled expansion from the overcrowded inner cities, per capita space grew from app. 17 sq.m. per head in the early 1960s to almost 30 by the end of the 1980s.

In Table 12.1 the twenty largest estates in both former West- and East-Germany are presented. An average estate in the former GDR is much larger than its counterpart in the former BRD. The twenty estates together in the East

Table 12.2 Dwellings in large housing estates ('Grossiedlungen') in former West-Germany, 1995

Total housing stock	1,000-2,500 units	>2,500 units	Total: >1,000 units
28.4 million	328,400	505,700	834,100
As % of total housing stock	1.1%	1.7%	2.8%
As % of total rented stock	2.1%	3.1%	5.2%

Source: BBR

include over two and a half times as many dwellings as the top-20 in the West. The largest western estate, Neu-Perlach in Munich, would not even be in the East-German top-10. Only the three largest West-German estates (Neu-Perlach, Gropiusstadt and Märkisches Viertel) would be within the overall German top-20. This table illustrates that although East-Germany was by far the smaller country of the two, it was dominant in terms large housing estates.

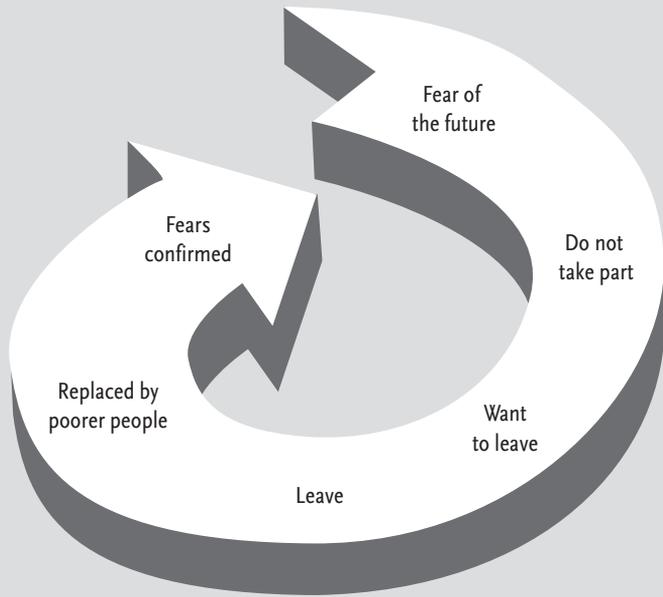
During the 1960s and 1970s, a total of around 800,000 flats housing over 2 million people were built in large estates of more than 2,500 units – the figure on which all statistics about large estates in the west are based. However, they still only amounted to 3% of the total housing stock and 5.2% of the rental market (Table 12.2). Types of blocks varied as widely as the size of estates. For estates of up to 7,500 flats, an average of 4-5 storey blocks with up to four staircases was typical, but in the larger estates, heights of 20 storeys or more could be reached as in Cologne-Chorweiler or Berlin's Märkisches Viertel. Thus, in contrast with earlier estates, they often became mono-functional and quasi-urban entities to serve working people as dormitories, alien from the rest of the city and only serving their inhabitants.

Despite having an important impact on major western towns and cities, the large estates never became a decisive model for West-German urban development. Although in the 1960s, many towns and cities tried to build a super-block as a landmark or monument to the housing politicians of the day, high-rise blocks never became a dominant element of the housing supply.

Reacting to change – policies for improvement

Beginning in the 1970s, and alarmingly, a majority of estates and large high-rise estates in West-Germany went through periods of crisis or entered a permanent crisis, which aroused special attention and repeated policy efforts at local, state and federal levels. Often, problems began with the loss of their social and economic security due to changing industrial conditions in the region. Many estates built for the 'modern' worker and his family had failed to develop the social networks which might have moderated the effects of socio-economical change. They also did not offer the social infrastructure necessary to organise for a new type of post-industrial community. Services to kick-start education and training and to adapt the area to the changing economic and social environment were almost unheard of until the 1990s. As a consequence of high vacancies, rising rent arrears and the impossibility of

Figure 12.2 Psychology of decline



Source: Hellersdorf Community Planning, 1995

raising rents due to falling demand, the economic situation of the public housing companies became more and more difficult. In turn, this reduced their room for manoeuvre to improve condition and a vicious circle developed that local actors have found almost impossible break from without state support (Figure 12.2).

In order to prevent an overall crisis in the large estates and a loss of market value – a multi-million DM programme was introduced less than a decade after the last

dwelling had gone on the market. Based on a research programme (EXWOST)¹, the 'mending of the estates' (Nachbesserung) was launched in 1983 by the states and the federal government. Very large estates were the target areas, which included Hamburg (Steilshoop and Mümmelmannsberg) Cologne (Chorweiler), Bremen (Neue Vahr), Berlin (Märkisches Viertel and Gropiusstadt) and Munich (Hasenberg) as well as some smaller estates (see Table 12.1).

Despite their clearly interconnected socio-economic and technical deficiencies, the priority was focussed on technical change to estates. The general neglect of the buildings was dealt with, dreary colours were painted over and the public space was improved. Conservative governmental policies were focussed on boosting the economy through investment as a remedy for social problems and the social-housing companies still hoped that the crisis of acceptance would vanish in a secure demand-driven market. Social and community organisation or self-help, boosting the local economy and providing jobs on the estates were still rare. A few model projects, for example, employing women in catering for the neighbourhood or residents' self-repair schemes and job integration centres in Hamburg-Steilshoop and Cologne-Chorweiler became the nuclei for future programmes which combined building, economic and social initiatives during the late 1980s.

¹ Experimental housing and urban development, a practice oriented research programme by the federal government and the states dealing with different aspects of building from land use to energy efficiency, from housing to shopping malls in order to provide solutions for market application and politics.

Although the economic conditions of many housing companies improved for a time after the mid 1980s, the social conditions of many estates were characterised by an increasing polarisation. Whereas some estates 'calmed down' to the 'normality' of decent lower-class quarters, others remained highly problematic and in some cases, the

situation got worse. Based on the models mentioned above, the first integrated political programmes for 'urban recreation' were developed in the state of North-Rhine-Westfalia during the second half of the 1990s. Housing and urban policies, youth and education strategies as well as training and local economy programmes were all linked locally to achieve economic restructuring. These initiatives were partly based on French and British policies, where the division between the different courses of action had been abandoned much earlier.

Evaluating the experience up to 1990 – differentiation and contradicting policies

Generally, the level of acceptance of the improvement programme has been high, and it has increasingly shifted from generally successful technical repairs to better and less bureaucratic management, and to work for and with disadvantaged groups. However, there is a direct relation between the manageability of the large estates and the overall socio-economic situation. The social effects of poverty remained a burden and regional effects such as the breakdown of the steel industry along the Ruhr and the Saar could not be overcome by new greenery and shiny facades.

Another external factor was the contradiction governing the policies of the conservative federal government. On the one hand, federal and local governments pumped millions into improvements to large estates, and policies began to be developed to achieve more social inclusion. On the other, the housing policy of the 1980s and '90s favoured home building by providing tax relief in order "to support those, who were willing to act on their behalves ... and the building industry"². Effectively, whilst the government tried to counter the downturn of the estates it also contributed to it. The negative consequences of this contradictory policy were clearly understood by urban researchers such as Becker & Keim (1994), Dangschat (1991), Herlyn (1986), Herlyn et al. (1987) and Häussermann and Siebel (2001).



In Berlin a quartet play is published about 'Plattenbauten', the prefab large housing estates.

Source: Metadesign, Spielkartenfabrik Altenburg

² Quote from the last governmental declaration on housing by the CDU/FDP government.

Monheim, Berliner Viertel.
Often small things lead to a new image: residents' gardens changed the immigrants' attitude towards the estate.



However, the crisis of the large estates was not experienced everywhere. There were and are a considerable number, estimated at about one quarter by Gibbins (1988), of successful estates and high-rise blocks. These were easily integrated into regional housing markets from the very beginning or after relatively small, and mostly technical and environmental interventions. Typically, smaller estates in positively valued urban locations made better progress, they were easily reached, comfortable and provided a type of environment which attracted and 'bound' parts of the original target groups over a long period.

Another precondition of the successful estate was the regional economic context, especially where income generation through work remained normal. In such circumstances, residents who moved to 'better' premises were not just replaced by those in social and economic distress. In the wealthier towns and cities, some single or estate-integrated super-blocks fulfilled special functions to the full satisfaction of their residents, managers and investors. They were often located near urban centres, large hospitals or universities and provided homes for single professionals or couples who ironically matched the pioneering planners' vision of the modern urban dweller.

12.4 The East-German case: mass housing for a classless society

The building programme

In contrast to West-Germany, where the estates were and are only one sector of the housing stock, the GDR submitted totally to prefabricated panel construction as the dominant building method and to the large estate as the dominant urban model (Table 12.3). Hardly anything can be learnt from these forty years of production other than betting on one solution is a risky strategy in a changing environment. However, the panel-estates are amongst the lasting legacies of the former state, which the united Germany has to address in managing the future of housing and regional development. There are also in

Table 12.3 Dwellings in large high-rise housing estates in former East-Germany, 1995

Total housing stock	1,000-2,500 units	>2,500 units	Total: >1,000 units
7.1 million	345,400	1,198,700	1,704,400
As % of total housing stock	4.8%	16.2%	21.0%
As % of total rented stock	6.9%	23.5%	30.4%

Source: BBR

East-Germany, different ‘panel environments’ with different potential futures.

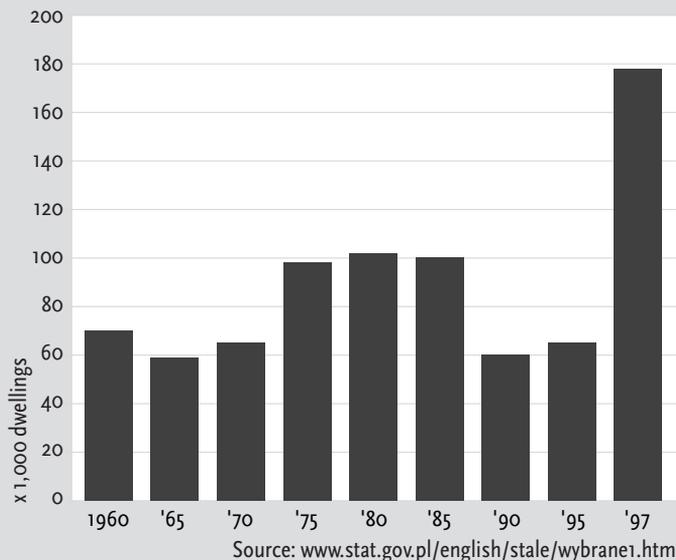
In East-Germany, panel buildings of between 3 and over 20 storeys virtually ‘made’ the country’s towns’ and cities’ visual appearance. By 1989, the year that ‘The Wall’ came down, the country was covered with standardised panel-blocks produced according to strict and centrally imposed regulations about the use of building material, a strangled architecture and an urban design dominated by the limited reach of the eastern cranes used to assemble the panels. Panel buildings are to be found from the traditionally industrialised southern hilly regions (in Saxony and Thuringia) to the Baltic coast. Even in the rural regions, forlorn large panel buildings for farm workers and large estates for the military became a common feature. ‘The panel’ was a direct consequence of the Stalinist period’s overtaking of the economy. Following Khrushchev’s directives to abandon the ‘Studebaker Style’, a short period of modernism followed. The architecture and urban design of early 1960s estates and some inner city high-rise areas followed the concept of the ‘international-moderne’ and quarters along Eisenhüttenstadt’s Leninallee³ and city-rim locations in Halle and Leipzig could bear comparison with the best of London, Stockholm or Lublin. However, the limited output of this period, which had been favourably accepted, proved too expensive. Under the slogan, build faster, better and cheaper, this ambitious architecture was abandoned for the industrial mass production of a standardised set of buildings and parts used to produce low and high-housing, schools, homes for the elderly, offices and even for social and cultural buildings.

The enormous state investment in panel-factories reduced the room for manoeuvre for architectural, planning and housing policies. While factories for pre-cast concrete panels were imported from France, Sweden and only later from the USSR, traditional technologies and the formerly flexible structure of small and medium building firms were all but abandoned. The consequences were severe. By betting on the ‘concrete-solution’, the state bureaucracy not only dominated the design of new homes but also doomed the older housing stock to a future without maintenance or repair until the 1980s.

However, the figures for the building boom which followed the state-social-

³ Eisenhüttenstadt on the Oder, the steel-city called Stalinstadt until 1961 is probably the most outstanding architectural museum of the GDR: a town centre of high-quality blocks and social infrastructure buildings from the period of socialist-realism (1949-56) were followed by some ‘internationalist’ modern extensions until, from 1967 onwards, the panels ruled and housing complexes almost all of the same appearance were built.

Figure 12.3 Housing production in East-Germany, 1960-1997



ist decision to 'solve the housing question by 1990' (8th party convention in 1973) seemed highly persuasive (Figure 12.3). For the first time in the GDR's history, the gap between the number of households and the flats available diminished and a 'newly built flat' in one of the estates became a realistic possibility for young families. Figure 12.3 also shows that real high housing productions were realised only after

the unification of the Germany's. The rise in 1997 is due to tax reductions and personal stimuli. This led to a boost in both owner occupied housing production and rental housing production.

From the 1970s onwards, building on greenfield sites was easier and more economical, especially as land was freely available through expropriation. The 'socialist' state took no consideration of existing urban links or infrastructure, and building changed to the production of new housing estates on the urban perimeter. A majority of these estates incorporated a minimum of 2,500 flats, and in larger cities like Rostock, Leipzig and Berlin, urban extensions provided well over 100,000 dwellings. A traveller through the 15 km linking the capital's new estates in Berlin-Marzahn, Hellersdorf, Hohenschönhausen and parts of Lichtenberg would have experienced only one functional urban and high-rise environment dominated by 'the panel', home to over half a million people in a city of 1.3 million. These estates were planned as independent entities in deliberate contrast to the historic 'chaos' of market-oriented building. In some cases, as with Halle and Halle-Neustadt, a type of double city was created, often typified by a conflict between the 'old town' – incorporating bourgeois 'remnants', the urban poor and clandestine groups – and the 'new estate' representative of modernity and conformity with the system. A third type of 'socialist new town' was rare in the GDR compared with late urbanising countries such as the USSR or Romania, but the limited number of new socialist towns such as Schwedt and Hoyerswerda on the eastern border became icons of the new world. In Table 12.1 the largest estates in both East- and West-Germany are shown.

During the GDR period, public criticism of the large estates was almost unheard of. Most of the residents accepted the state's 'offer' of a new and well equipped flat in the high-rise quarter, as no alternatives ever came within their reach. Even though new homes were always in short supply, every-

body could envisage moving to a 'new estate' as every week, happy young couples were shown on television 'receiving the keys to their new homes from comrade ...'

The myths of equality and social inclusion

One of the dominant myths of the GDR's housing situation was that of social integration, but when examined in detail, this was only true for larger city estates. In Berlin, Leipzig or Rostock, only the technical intelligentsia and state employees moved to estates and high-rise flats, and there, the professor might live next to a secretary and the factory worker near his director. In smaller cities with a large proportion of pre-war dwellings, the situation was quite different. In Eberswalde's 'Brandenburg Quarter', workers for the industrial pig-production 'Kombinat', which included a huge slaughterhouse, were 'bribed' to undertake this unattractive work through the provision of new flats. But the estate, housing over 7,000 families was always known as the 'pig-producers', and not one of the higher professionals of the factory ever lived there.

There was also a curious difference between privileged estates and others which received only minimal attention and funds. Often, the reason was one of accessibility – 'not seen and not cared for' – as in the case of Halle-Silberhöhe which up to this day is one of the most problematic estates. Political and personal relations to the 'centrale' were of great importance, estates housing the workforce of prominent industrial complexes enjoyed political protection from 'above' and became 'show-cases' of the GDR's housing policy including to western visitors, like Halle Neustadt.

Looking back at their social situation, many remember the good relations between tenants and have forgotten the political control which was the other side of neighbourhood activities. Indeed, many residents felt a high degree of responsibility for the estate's maintenance, partly because 'the state' failed and partly because self-help was necessary to keep the country running. Housing was cheap at less than 10% of average family income, too cheap to maintain the buildings properly, but people cherished their homes as 'peoples-property' and as Marcuse (1991) has argued, tenancy in the GDR meant something like a 'quasi-ownership'.

Well founded, but futile: housing critique in a bureaucratic dictatorship

Muted criticism was aired on cultural and professional grounds but it never had a chance of influencing the almighty planning bureaucracy. During the 1960s and early 1970s, the new housing world was viewed critically by fiction writers. Brigitte Reimann in her novel *Franziska Linkerhand* about a young architect trying to improve and minimise the stupidity of plans and bureaucracy, and filmmakers like Heiner Carow, in *The Legend of Paul and Paula* portrayed the new estates as monotonous and dreary environments.

Probably the most devastating critique for the GDR's housing policies came from the official building academy (ISA) itself. During the early 1980s, a working-group began evaluating the panel estates 'off the record'. The group proved that panel construction was not the cheap solution it was claimed to be. With rising energy costs, 'baking' the panels ate up most of the savings from industrial production and generally, the energy balance of the panel estates was disastrous. 'We heated through the walls and the roofs, so that spring would come earlier'. The extensive infrastructure of the high-rise blocks was estimated to be more expensive than lower scale urban housing. Until the end of the system, nobody knew how expensive housing was as most of the cost came from state revenues subtracted from incomes as an effective but unaccountable quasi-tax.

12.5 The present and future of high-rise housing estates

The situation at re-unification

Whilst West-Germany had achieved one of the highest housing standards in the world, with only limited problems in the older neglected areas and on large estates, the situation in East-Germany was dramatically worse. According to a former researcher in the GDR's building academy, the system was "... on fire at all ends: neglected historic centres like Quedlinburg's famous wood-frame architecture (housing) in ruins, the majority of the 19th and early 20th century buildings in deep neglect, grey and dreary. Even many newly built estates had come to an age, where after twenty years maintenance backlogs were threatening sustainability. In addition, the quality of the latest (1980s) buildings was the lowest and homes, hardly taken over by their residents, needed finish and repair" (unpublished interview, 1993).

Rapid improvements were meant to curb emigration to the west, but approximately 1.2 million moved there in the 1990s due to the collapsing economy and consequent high unemployment. As a result, for about one decade, unification led to a concentration of federal regional and development policies and the mostly western building industry on the new eastern states. Improvement was a necessity in order to prevent the eastern housing situation becoming an obstacle to the mental re-unification of the country. A physical and environmental shift was demanded in order to provide decent housing. Moreover, housing production played an important role in Chancellor Kohl's 'blossoming meadows' policy, promising that many would be better off in the united country. The hope was that as eastern industry broke down, construction would provide new jobs and wealth to ease the way to 'equal possibilities for life'.

Vast infrastructure projects provided physical links to a 'United Germany',



Berlin 'The Social-Palace'. Some very large buildings have always been problematic. Demolition could only be averted by intensive care for the building, the urban environment and the residents.

and three policy strands were pursued in housing:

- Increasing the low proportion of home-owners – which was about 25% in mostly rural areas – through public support for private housing production. As this mostly resulted in low-rise and detached houses, residential sprawl around highly compact 'socialist towns' has appeared. The 'single-family home' opportunity meant an end to the low level of East-German socio-spatial segregation. The social downturn that had already happened in the west now came to the east. Those who beforehand had never thought of alternatives to their inner-city or panel-estate home seized the opportunity to move and left the economically less secure in their old area.
- The second strand involved repairing older urban areas using western experience to develop large-scale programmes of 'careful urban repair'. This helped to reintegrate tens of thousands of derelict and/or vacant properties into the housing market. Attractive inner city homes formed new alternatives to compete with flats in large estates.
- The third strand was, 'further developing the large estates' to complete housing programmes and/or estate infrastructure.

The estates after unification

The impact of unification on the West-German estates was almost negligible. The majority of estates continued to develop along the lines established before 1990, and private building was boosted through the 'unification boom'. Every 60th resident in West-Germany lived in a large estate or high-rise block in the early 1990s (Bundesministerium, 1994). The situation was drastically different in the east where almost one out of four persons lived in a large panel estate.

Immediately after unification, a highly ideological debate took place. A western critique was developed by architects, planners and, above all, by the building industry which criticised the panel estates as inhuman and of poor quality, it recommended that they should be demolished and replaced by small-scale and individual housing as soon as possible. In contrast, a group of former East-German experts, including Hunger, the sociologist/planner and

**Marzahn in
East-Berlin, the
largest high-
rise area in
Germany**

Photo: Dirk
Dubbeling



Eisentraut, the architect/planner of one of the largest estates, Berlin-Marzahn, re-stated their environmental and urban qualities. They assumed that the socially inclusive qualities of the estates, and the 'privilege' of renting a 'full-comfort' flat, had created a particular attachment to this type of housing in the 'easterner' which now only needed 'updating'. In a wide debate, both protagonists had to learn. Supported by a federally financed project for the East-German estates (ExWoSt), and flanked by in-depth technological research on panel housing, one fact became clear, the large estates needed some improvement but they were safe for some decades (Specht, 1992; Kalleja & Flämich, 1999). Despite any deficiencies, they are in the medium term 'an indispensable part of the housing stock', and for quantitative and economic reasons, any short-term replacement is impossible.

As a result of the ExWoSt programme, three strategic alternatives were envisaged (Rietdorf and Liebmann, 1999):

- Finishing the GDR plans as they were originally conceived, including infrastructure and environmental improvements, on the basis that the East-Germans would stick with this form of 'compact' housing⁴, or,
- Finishing the GDR plans, but modifying them according to 1980s western experience. In addition to the above mentioned measures, this strategy included a larger amount of commercial infrastructure and a reorganisation of the spatial relationship to obtain more individual neighbourhood quarters, starting with giving 'complexes' place names instead of numbers, or,
- Rehabilitating the blocks, which would include some demolition and introduce 'other types of places' for example, small-scale in-fills of low-rise housing and single-family homes.

All three strategies were applied, the first in more conservative towns and

⁴ Claimed by many authors like Hunger, Rietdorf, Breuer and in the final BMBau report (1990).

cities, the second, where ‘westernisation’ was understood to be an unavoidable fact and competition from other market sectors was expected to influence the estates, and the third, where enough courage was present to imagine that new opportunities could be extracted from the existing stock and with residents present. Overall, the physical rehabilitation was impressively successful – but very costly. Between 1993 and the end of the decade, over €3 billion from public funds were invested in the public space in estates and over €15 billion in the buildings. Over 50% – that is 3,200,000 flats are now ‘fully refurbished’ – including new facades, kitchens, bathrooms, staircases and lifts and often changes to the floor plan – and many of the rest, 30%, have seen partial improvements. Only 20% have been left structurally untouched.

From the perspective of building statistics, post unification seems to be a success story. However, many things went badly wrong with large estates contributing to approximately 40% or 1,200,000 empty dwellings across the country. The main problems at present are:

- the poor image of large estates – shared by the majority of tenants – and in many ways, a repetition of the west’s experience of the 1970s and 1980s;
- high and sustained unemployment rates which have combined with sudden and dramatic social change to create problems of adaptation for a large minority;
- a loss of demand due to a sharp decline in the population and an increase in competition from housing built in refurbished inner cities and on undeveloped outer urban locations;
- loss of income, due to high unemployment rates and low rent rises tied to lower eastern wages; and,
- the often poor quality of governance and management of housing estates.

These factors have led to a polarisation in the situation of large East-German estates. Some of the centrally situated blocks in the ‘better-off regions’ of Berlin, central Saxony and cities with a comparatively strong economy have gained enormously from the investments made, and have become accepted ‘lower middle class’ housing, if only for the present. Stability is indicated by the number of ‘settled’ residents, who are usually older single people and couples, comfortably accommodated in flats which were designed for families. In some larger cities, like Leipzig, Dresden and Berlin, some ‘hot-spot-estates’ have been able to attract younger urban professionals who are looking for a central, low maintenance and anonymous form of housing. This is very close to the original intentions of the estate’s designers – ‘off to work in the morning, home in the evening, a flat to sleep in comfortably’.

Other former East-German estates have become housing crisis zones with 40% of flats empty, abandoned buildings and housing a marginalized ‘residual population’. These obsolete, unsafe and sad estates are excluded from housing markets and the wider society. Experts like Hunger describe them as not

Social integration projects in Cottbus, Sachsenhof-Madlow



Cottbus Sachsenhof-Madlow. In Brandenburg's largest housing estate, more than a third have left due to the lack of jobs. Since 1999, some blocks were demolished, while others were upgraded. Urban villas were built from the deconstructed parts of old high-rises and introduced new housing opportunities.

In Cottbus, a southern Brandenburgian town, Sachsenhof-Madlow was chosen as one of 16 model-projects which received special research and logistic support. The estate, which had seen over one quarter of its residents leave and was among the worst unemployment hot-spots in Brandenburg, had already seen some physical upgrading. A poor image and social conflict and distance between residents were the most apparent phenomena. Inclusive neighbourhood management was established to achieve the programme's aim, to 'reinforce civic participation' and has led to close collaboration between residents, the administration and the local housing provider. Arising from public debate on the need for social action, a neighbourhood centre was built in an obsolete kindergarten and a network of all voluntary and community and initiatives – from women groups to literacy courses – was established to ensure their work reached a wider public. Youth employment schemes enabled better maintenance and the conversion of unused ground into neighbourhood parks.

However, the project also demonstrated the limitations to integration policies. It was difficult to get those responsible for the area, housing some 14,000 people to engage directly in improving the situation. For too many, this involved overstepping their own mental barriers, they had often been the first to leave the estate after unification. However, a more sophisticated and professional management of day-to-day affairs in the district has now been developed.

Unfortunately, it proved impossible to improve unemployment and create more vacancies; job creation had hardly any effect. The loss of residents to the new suburbia (8,000 people between 1990 and 2000) and to the west could not be stopped, even though attractive new urban villas were developed using old panels. Possibly the most important outcome has been the re-emergence of civic activity in a formerly deeply frustrated population, the social centre has become a focus for local action in many fields.

In general, the project's aims of achieving the 'socially integrated city' have been evaluated as valid, even though it is clear that a long period of neglect can only be countered by a long period of assistance to the neighbourhood. The obstacles lie mostly with a lack of experience in networking across departmental boundaries and a continued division of interests – in both east and west. Civil society as a player in changing the locale may be weaker in the east, where 'state-ist' beliefs and 'old thinking' still play an important role. But also in the west, the German practice of rules and orders in planning have led to a division between players which is difficult to bridge. After three years, the 'Socially Integrated City' has provided a trigger to empower local partnerships leading to a new understanding of the possibilities of local change.

However, politicians' original claim that personal and logistical help, combined with some investment in the community infrastructure, would lead to a measurable improvement within two years – mainly less unemployment – has been proved wrong. Even though an improved climate for social action is a precondition for effective change, it is difficult to calculate.

yet catastrophic, but this is due more to their recent socialisation in disaster rather than to any inherent capacity to stave off problems. The former chief of planning of the city of Halle, reflecting on the estate Silberhöhe warns about the consequences of residents spending a larger part of their lives in 'half-vacant' estates, which everybody would like to abandon, but where the imagination and the means for change are missing, a hitherto unknown type of East-German place.

Countering peripheralisation and new policy approaches in Germany

There is a growing social and economic polarisation and regional differentiation in German society in which the wealthy contrast with the 15% poor and excluded. The dynamic is one of spatial, economic and social peripheralisation which can strike in older working class quarters as well as in any large estate. Issues of building quality are irrelevant in the face of global, national or regional economic problems (Friedmann, 2001). The worst examples are the polarised 'socialist new towns', for example Schwed. Here, over 20% of the population have already left and despite a good record of rehabilitating the panel buildings, hardly any relationship can be found between the quality of the built environment and the material circumstances of life.

Following the massive investment in the physical infrastructure of estates over the past decade, it is now realised that the root cause of problems is more socio-economic than technical. Consequently, it was logical to include the most problematic large eastern and western estates in the first national policy programme for countering spatially bound social integration. The federal programme 'Die Soziale Stadt' (The Socially Integrative City)⁵ is designed to pool resources from policies in the fields of employment, economy, ecology, social affairs, youth, culture, urban development to foster cooperation between all players, and to mobilize the residents of a neighbourhood. The programme was established 'to counteract the growing socio-spatial disintegration in German cities and is based on concepts of urban 'social integration' and a new 'civic society'". Two types of urban districts with particular development deficiencies were especially targeted: the densely populated housing estates built from the 1960s to the 80s, and late-19th-century residential areas mainly on the fringes of the inner city. The approach consists of non sectoral policies ranging from alliances for employment to tax reform, from the revamping of the welfare state to administrative reform, from Local Agenda 21 processes to crime prevention councils and the Healthy Cities Network' (Becker et al., 2002).

The German state's nomination of a total of 249 districts in 184 municipalities all over the country makes it clear how far socio-economic peripheralisa-

⁵ More in English: http://www.soziale-stadt.de/programm/grundlagen/polarisierung_engl.shtml.

Märkisches Viertel: refurbishment and market change

As one of the largest West-German estates with 17,000 flats and 40,000 people, Märkisches Viertel was built in a peripheral location to the north of Berlin between 1960 and 1975. The area is dominated by buildings almost one km long and high-rise blocks of between 6 and 20 storeys. Built on poor quality land, the new district was meant to offer homes for West-German immigrants to Berlin's labour-hunting economy after the Wall was built in 1961, and for the inhabitants of older and neglected urban quarters. In the early years, moving to the 'MV' was seen as a great opportunity to join a modern way of life. Living in the new flats reflected a high social standing, and therefore the estate housed a 'well to do' section of the 'normal German working population', consisting mainly of families with young children in their 'expansion phase', or middle aged earning couples. This co-habitation of mutually happy consumers began to lose its attraction as early as the 1970s when more and more poorer people 'expelled' by inner urban redevelopment had to be provided with new homes. Many large families in economically unstable situations, unemployed single people and those accustomed to living in a deteriorating environment found it hard or impossible to adapt to living in high-rise blocks. In 1974, frustration over bad public transport links and rent and service cost rises cumulated in a first series of tenants' actions. The protests helped: costs were lowered and some extra services were provided. These events marked the beginning of the first 'image and acceptance crisis' for the new estates which eventually led to a change in West-German urban policy away from scrapping the old to build large new estates and towards the 1980s policy of 'careful rehabilitation'.

On the back of its worsening image in the previous decade, a second crisis struck the MV during the mid-1980s. Demand fell as unemployment in Berlin rose; as attractively refurbished and rent-controlled inner-city housing was channelled into the market and as technical deficiencies such as concrete-corrosion, leaking roofs and derelict installations worsened housing conditions and the image problem. After a period of 'talking down' problems, the continuing downward spiral of the MV induced the public housing company GESOBAU to initiate a campaign targeted at technical upgrading and improving the outdoor environment in order to 'turn the image back to positive'.

What eventually turned the tide in the Märkisches Viertel and many other West-German estates between 1985 and the late 1990s is difficult to determine. Over €25 million of taxpayers' money spent on repairs,

tion affects all parts of the country and all areas from those experiencing hard-core transformation to the south-western growth regions.

Regenerating towns and cities in Germany: which way now?

Radical responses will have to be developed in the housing sector in Germany, as 1.2 million dwellings are currently vacant in the east. These have been caused by a combination of emigration to western growth and employment areas, and the refurbishment and production of more than one million dwellings. As a result, some 350,000 dwellings will have to be demolished (the Urban Regeneration Programme), mostly in large housing estates. As a result, Leipzig is in danger of becoming 'core-less' as over 60,000 flats in the inner city and the largely renewed panel district of Grünau are removed. Many other eastern towns and cities are facing similar vacancy levels of between 15 and 40%. But this may only be the beginning. As low birth-rates and the mass construction of single-family homes continue, a similar 'market overhang' will almost certainly emerge in less dynamic parts in the west over the next decades.

The joint task of the state, economy and civil society is to develop a com-



Berlin's Märkisches Viertel in former West-Berlin. Refurbishment of the buildings, details of art and greenery have contributed to the process of accommodation, which has led to a 'normalization' in many of the large estates.

restructuring buildings and the external environment improved the quality of the MV greatly. Exchanging dreary entrance-holes for an inviting architectural gesture, a new service orientation and a socially inclusive management meant a lot to the tenants and proved a good investment in contrast to the high cost of vacancies. Another major factor was the urbanisation of the centre of the estate through the provision of a wider variety of shops and services.

However, the impact of external factors should not be underestimated. During the late 1980s a dramatic change took place in the overall housing scene, the demand problem reversed as over 230,000 migrants moved to Germany each year, first from Eastern Europe and later from the GDR. As many looked for homes in the most eastern city of the West-German, Berlin, the

MV benefited from new market demands. This improved the housing company's economic situation and allowed for more investment in improvements – including some concierge and special service housing models and cable TV. After the near-by wall fell in 1989 and the MV's centre became a widely acknowledged centre for Berlin's north, many of the previous prejudices fell. About 1999, despite some renewed economic pressure due to decreasing demand and in contrast with many other large high-rise districts, the MV 'seemed to have made it'. The population has now settled and is characterised by a typical Berlin 'lower average mix.'

prehensive vision for the towns and cities, taking a shrinking population and regional contexts into account. Until now, the federal programme for urban regeneration, 'Stadtumbau', seems have failed to grasp the complexity of the problem. On the one hand, €3 billion are earmarked for demolition and the essential second step of upgrading those urban areas most affected by the mismatch between demand and housing. On the other, the lessons of the sometimes highly successful attempts to create the 'Socially Integrative City' seem to have been laid aside, as the programme concentrates narrowly on investment in the built environment and securing the financial viability of communal housing companies. Instead, a mix of 'integrated projects' taking social, economic and cultural development into account is required to restructure the cities.

The danger is that the mistakes of the 1980s in the west and of the 1990s in the east are being perpetuated. Whilst inner cities are being upgraded and 'the carpet' of single-family homes is continually extended, the large estates are once again in danger of being sidelined. This clearly disregards the reality that some estates are highly accepted and competitive in the market. At the same time, hardly any serious evaluation of the alternatives to the compact

type of mass-housing exists. Who can tell whether the sprawl of post-housing estate family homes is easier to manage in the long run, when social services are needed for their ageing populations or whether the ecological consequences of excessive green land use and low densities can be sustained?

In conclusion, there is no 'single future' for the German estates overall, in east or west. In 12-15 years, and despite a planned immigration of 230,000 per year, population decline may result in many more than the programmed 750,000 flats having to be 'taken off the market'. The most important question is, what could be done to rehabilitate the rest, so that the remaining estates may be able to provide 'post-modern' and flexible housing. The experience of the last decade has established that an individual assessment of each neighbourhood will be necessary to decide which will be habitats of the past and which will have a future.

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13 Poland

A future for the 'blokowisko'?

Andrzej Kiciński

13.1 Introduction

Since the late 1960s, the skyline of almost every large city in Poland has been dominated by estates of 10-storey flats. Blocks first appeared on the outskirts of towns; then in imitation of the communist slogan 'The people will enter the city', they appeared in urban centres. Whilst they were better equipped than previous housing, such blocks have a mostly negative image and are considered unsuitable for the many families who inhabit them. High-rise estates are viewed increasingly as monotonous and anonymous, and are experiencing growing social problems, including crime.

Low building standards and the need for improvement and repair; poor insulation and high energy costs; the rising cost of maintenance – all are having a serious impact on personal, city and state budgets. Often synonymous with the communist model of 'a space to live in', the term 'blokowisko' – or 'a pile of blocks', sums up the popular contempt for the high-rise housing estate. Unfortunately, for most people, there is no alternative to living in them.

The idea of the housing estate originated in the late 1920s and 1930s with the concept of the 'social estate' intended to house low income households. The leaders of this movement, Helena and Szymon Syrkus, Barbara and Stanislaw Brukalski and Roman Piotrowski were all left-wing architects. After 1945, they found themselves well placed to influence new policies for housing and construction. In the context of massive war-time destruction, the radical pre-war idea of the 'social estate' was translated into 'workers' estates' of 'minimum existence housing'. For some years, they were the main achievement of post-war reconstruction, and the principal response to mass migration from the countryside to the cities.

The first high-rise housing schemes (of 5 storeys and above) had appeared in Warsaw in the late 19th century, and in the 1920s and 1930s, tall buildings incorporating apartments had been built extensively in the centre of large cities. The best example, 'Prudential House', designed by Marcin Weinfeld, was built in Warsaw in 1935. The first post-war high-rise housing appeared in 1945-47 in studies made by 'The Capital Reconstruction Office' (BOS) for the Northern Housing Quarter of Warsaw.

The main periods of political change and housing estate development

Of a stock of 7,584,000 flats in cities in 1992, 4,300,000 were built after 1945 during a period when centrally-planned housing policies were closely related



Population	38,625,478
Population density	124/km ²
Capital	Warsaw
GDP per capita	€6,487
Housing stock	11.7 million

to changing government goals or slogans. Prior to 1990, all statistics were prepared with political motives in mind, and the height of blocks was of no concern. Sometimes it was more important to show the number of houses built – when they exceeded the number of flats – or vice versa. It was better not to collect data on floor area as this exposed only too clearly a real dimension of housing development! Below are the main periods of housing provision in the context of changing political events.

1945-1949: The period of reconstruction

Following the traumatic events of the Second World War, Poland was placed in the Soviet Union sphere of influence in 1945. Apart from rebuilding, new housing estates were started on open areas and on war-damaged sites, such as the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto which provided a three metre high embankment on which the Muranów estate was constructed. The pre-war concept of the ‘social estate’ was revived and large courtyards like the Viennese ‘hof’ were provided as places for social interaction. The ‘colony’ settlement of 100-300 flats in three to four storey blocks was the basic component. For reasons of economy, lifts were not provided and a five storey maximum was retained under the building code. Housing co-operatives and social housing authorities were the main providers.

Housing co-operatives have a long history in Poland and first appeared in the 1920s as small groups of one or two multi-family or terraced houses inhabited by middle class households. As they owned and could sell their flats, they were known as ‘co-operatives of owners’. A second type of co-operative was associated with the concepts of the ‘social estate’ and ‘minimum existence housing’. The Warsaw Housing Co-operative (WSM) was an example of a ‘co-operative of tenants’ in which shares were smaller and the co-operative owned the flat. Co-operatives of tenants were usually larger than co-operatives of owners, and in conformity with the concept of the ‘social estate’, their activities extended to such provision as kindergartens and laundry etc. Both types of co-operatives were active during the reconstruction period until 1949.

1950-1956: The ‘socialism’ period in architecture and planning

1949 marked the end of relatively liberal post-war reconstruction policies and their replacement by a new political aim, that the ‘People will enter into the city centre’. Previous policies of building on the periphery were replaced by the creation of ‘socialist centres’, with housing as the main component of classically-based compositions. Blocks were mostly 6 to 8 storeys and were located in existing squares and streets. High-rise towers, sometimes in imitation of historical examples, appeared at dominant points, or were integrated into the existing city scape. However, the overall rate of high-rise construction was relatively low, and was limited to the larger cities.

Even at the worst times, Polish housing policy differed from that applied elsewhere in the Soviet Union, for example, 'collective flats' housing more than one family were not built in Poland. From 1950, severely limited space standards were implemented in co-operative and private housing providing only maximum of 7 sq.m. living space per person. The largest private apartments permitted were 110 sq.m., and excess space could be rented to others by 'communal housing maintenance departments'. This 'Apartment Law' applied to co-operative housing until 1956, and conditions determining maximum apartment space (improved in 1982 up to 220 sq.m.) and preventing possession of more than one apartment by one family were in force until 1991. This last condition had the effect of preventing the development of a private rented sector and drastically limited housing supply.

1956-1964: *The revival of co-operative housing*

In 1956, the initially more liberal economic policies of Wladyslaw Gomułka were progressively replaced by 'turning the screw' or 'salami tactics'. The effect was a rapid reduction in political and economical liberties which reached a critical point by 1965.

Housing co-operatives were revived, although for ideological reasons, the communist government preferred co-operatives of tenants. They continued to grow in significance during this period as they reduced the need for state subsidies. The late 1950s also witnessed revivals of the 'social estate', the 'colony' and the 'courtyard' in housing design. Architectural, planning and social principles were drawn mainly from Scandinavian and English examples, especially from the new towns and cities of Vallingby, Tapiola and Harlow. Estate plans were based around the pre-war concept of a 'colony' of two to three blocks around a courtyard, with 'clusters' of 'colonies' forming a 'neighbourhood unit'.

High-rise blocks first appeared in Warsaw after 1956, and were clearly influenced by Swedish experience. The first was the 14-storey Wiejska tower designed by Markiewicz, and completed in 1959. 10-storey towers with one staircase began to appear on estates including Rakowiec, designed by Malicki and completed in 1960, and Sady, designed by Skibniewska and constructed between 1962 and 1964. High-rise blocks appeared on co-operative estates from the early 1960s, and were also influenced by Scandinavian examples. They were mainly single staircase 'point' or 'tower' blocks, equipped with one or two lifts and providing flats at 11 m² per person. Constructed as show pieces or in groups, the new and slim towers averaged 10 or 11 storeys.

1965-1970: *A period of drastic shortages*

The state budget crisis of the 'late Gomułka period' coincided with a growing demand for housing. Standards and models were centrally determined and prefabrication was seen as the solution to providing the quantity of flats

required. The most successful projects were repeated but this led to a uniformity of design and stagnation in the design process.

For reasons of economy, so-called 'economical plans' were adopted for constructing wide blocks with minimal facades, providing narrow rooms and kitchens without windows. These broad blocks were also long, and a corridor system using the minimum number of staircases and lifts was widely used. This system of giving access to flats on both sides created poor ventilation and a sense of near total anonymity. Also for reasons of economy, only two heights were used; five storey blocks without a lift, and 11 storeys to the limit of fire access. Large numbers of long wide eleven storey blocks with smelly corridors, dark kitchens and two meter wide bedrooms are an unfortunate legacy of this period.

1971-1980: 'Building the Second Poland'

Social revolt against stagnation and decay broke out in December 1970, and the Gomułka government collapsed. A new governing team was formed under Edward Gierek with its slogan: 'We are building the Second Poland'. By 1976, the collapse of this programme was evident with riots in Radom and Ursus.

The 1970s was a dynamic period of housing development using a high degree of prefabrication. More than 180 prefabrication plants or 'house factories' were built, a practice of Russian origin. Such large slab technology was preferred by the authorities as it enabled them to respond more easily to local demands for housing. For example, if the local need was for 50,000 flats, the party secretary could simply promise, "We'll solve our housing problems in the course of five years by building a 'house factory'".

Although housing problems were not solved in this way, large areas of cities were covered with huge estates of prefabricated blocks. Some large estates, mainly in the bigger cities, were totally high-rise, whilst others combined 5- and 11-storey blocks as in the Ursynów estate. After 1975, there was a tendency for lower or even low-rise housing, for reasons of preference and economy. Floor space, internal plans and sanitary equipment improved in this period and more green space was provided. Some of those estates are still good addresses.

1981-1989: The emergence of new small co-operatives

The Gierek government collapsed in 1980 to be replaced by the optimism of the 'Solidarity' movement, the abandonment of central planning and economic control and the achievement of local democratic government. Martial law was introduced on December 13th 1981 and destroyed these hopes, but there was no return to pre-1980 policies.

The search for more domestic privacy, and for a closer relationship between provider and user resulted in the decline of the large, centralised co-operative

system. New co-operatives demanded smaller groups of lower rise, more comfortable and less expensive flats. Many large co-operatives had failed to meet obligations dating back to the 1970s, and members who had paid deposits had still not received their flats. A credit shortage and a lack of sites for new housing also contributed to a decrease in flat construction.

By the late 1980s, planning and construction were responding to the real needs of future users, the level of satisfaction was higher than before and a number of social rented flats in municipally owned and co-operative blocks were bought by their inhabitants.

1990 to the present: Flats as a free market product

The communist period was brought to an end in 1990, and an increasingly free market approach was developed throughout society. The new capitalism has created a harsh market for housing. Interest rates of over 45%; very expensive plots; a lack of sites with the necessary infrastructure; the absence of physical planning and the growth of social and economic stratification all contributed to a drastic decline in housing construction. Private investment companies are buying up plots, building blocks and selling their flats on the free market. The large old co-operatives have been building 6- to 10-storey blocks on vacant sites and within existing estates. Without access to credit, co-operatives are now required to cover the full cost of building and are gradually changing into investment companies.

The new housing market demands good quality but inexpensive flats. In order to achieve the lowest cost per square metre, developers have been constructing the tallest blocks permissible without lifts. Since 1 April 1995, blocks without lifts are not intended to exceed 4 storeys, but in reality most reach 5 storeys or even 6. In Warsaw and the largest cities, a dramatic increase in the price of land and a shortage of serviced sites has also led to a revival in tall blocks. Development companies are constructing small estates of blocks of between 10 and 20 storeys in height. In the social sector, a new investment and management agency, the Public Building Construction Society (TBS) was created in 1994/95 to build non-profit housing for low-income households using credits from the National Housing Fund.

The current position

The current stock of high-rise housing in Poland is highly differentiated, and consists of a number of categories distinguished by quality:

The worst quality are the technically deficient and ugly blocks of small flats built in the late 1960s. The Bródno Estate is probably the most unpopular in Warsaw, its small flats are of only 45-50 sq.m.; interiors are sub-standard and the blocks were constructed of inferior materials.

Better quality flats can be found in the huge and often technically deficient blocks dating from the 1970s. However, many large estates are dominated by

Table 13.1 Dwelling stock in cities, according to number of dwellings per building, in Poland, 1970-1988

	1970		1978		1988	
	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%
Single-family dwellings	634,000	14.2	781,000	13.8	1,006,000	14.4
2-4 dwellings per building	805,000	18.1	707,000	12.5	626,000	8.9
5-19 dwellings per building	1,683,000	37.7	1,517,000	26.7	1,358,000	19.5
20 dwellings and more	1,343,000	30.0	2,665,000	47.0	3,996,000	57.2
(of which 50 and more)	-	-	1,559	27.5	2,407	34.5
Total urban dwelling stock	4,465,000	100	5,670,000	100	6,986,000	100

Table 13.2 Dwelling stock in cities, according to number of storeys, in Poland, 1970-1988

	1970		1978		1988	
	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%
Ground floor + 1st storey	1,967,000	44.1	1,917,000	33.8	1,971,000	28.2
2-4 storeys	2,189,000	49.0	3,007,000	53.0	3,756,000	53.8
5-9 storeys	163,000	3.6	167,000	2.9	358,000	5.1
10 and more storeys	146,000	3.3	579,000	10.3	901,000	12.9
Total urban dwelling stock	4,465,000	100	5,670,000	100	6,986,000	100

tower blocks of poor internal and external standards, and there are major problems with thermal insulation.

More acceptable housing dates from the 1980s, and consists of large and well-planned flats on well-equipped estates with a good transport system. Estates built in the 1990s were smaller but built at a higher density than in the 1970s. The most popular estates in Warsaw are located to the south of the city and consist of three to eight storey blocks of large and well-planned flats in attractive landscaped environments close to the metro line.

The 'blokowisko' as inevitable part of the urban housing market

Large housing estates continue to form an extremely important part of the total housing stock in Poland. High-rise estates were built as 'dormitory' estates on the outskirts of cities, and often lack employment, commercial and service facilities. As a result, they are highly dependent on public transport which is often deficient. Ursynów-Natolin in Warsaw is the largest housing estate complex with a total 150,000 inhabitants. It was completed in April 1995 after more than fifteen years of construction and a further ten years of planning. The 'new city' Jastrzębie Zdrój constructed in the 1970s is effectively one huge estate of 11-storey blocks housing 104,000 people.

The latest available data about Polish 'blokowisko' date from 1988. By that

time, there were about 10,8 million dwellings, of which almost 7 million within cities of over 50,000 inhabitants. Table 13.1 shows the increase of the large housing estates. In 1970 30% of the urban housing stock was in buildings with at least 20 dwellings, a share that rose to over 57% by the end of the 1980s. Of the total urban stock of almost seven million dwellings in 1988, 18% (1,258,000) were high-rise (of 5 or more storeys) and 12.9% had more than 10 storeys (Table 13.2). The amount of high-rise flats has grown significantly, especially the share of the highest blocks. By 1988, three quarters of all high-rise was built since 1970.

13.2 The inhabitants of high-rise housing estates

It is difficult to identify any direct relationship between types of high-rise block and the households living in them. Until the late 1970s, the official policy of 'heterogeneous settlement' resulted in a social mix of households on all estates. If any generalisation is possible, it is that the majority of lower income and socially disadvantaged households live in the cities in older, low standard and communally-owned pre-war social housing and in housing estates dating from the 1960s. Such homes, including high-rise flats, are smaller, less well-equipped and cheaper to rent. More than 20% of flats dating from the 1960s and 1970s stock are rented by younger couples, but most of the original inhabitants have remained and are now in their fifties or sixties. The number of retired households and growing unemployment both contribute to the low income profile of some estates. Low income non-Polish nationalities, mainly from the former Soviet Union, Vietnam and to a lesser extent Romania, can be also found renting low-cost flats in high-rise blocks from the 1960s or early 1970s.

Higher income families are more often located in older apartment housing of a higher standard, and in housing estates dating from the 1970s and 1980s. Over 50% of residents in flats from this period are aged between 35 and 50. There is still a shortage of housing in Poland, and only a very small number of vacancies. Limited mobility within the housing stock is tending to fix established social patterns, although in the late 1990s, a slight increase in mobility has been observed, mainly in the larger cities.

Patterns of satisfaction vary according to the period of construction of flats, and can be generalised by decade. There is general dissatisfaction with the 1960s stock, and particularly with estates whose infrastructure is inadequate. Estates dating from the 1970s are badly landscaped, of too high a density and consist largely of poorly-planned and badly-built flats. Satisfaction is limited to estates in good locations, consisting of flats, blocks and environments of a high standard. For the 1980s stock, satisfaction tends to be higher, but this is

'Żelazną Bramą' estate, Warsaw

A classic example of a large high-rise development in the city centre, the estate was the result of a 1961 competition won by architects Jerzy Czyż, Jan Furman and Andrzej Skopiński. Nineteen 16-storey blocks formed this new district, each block consisting of 15 storeys of 28 flats and providing 420 flats for about 800 inhabitants. The total estate population was planned to be over 15,000 inhabitants. Built between 1965 and 1969, the estate was a prestigious address in the 1960s and early 1970s. It changed drastically in the 1980s when the more economically active and better-off families moved out. Now, the majority of its inhabitants are the elderly, with a small percentage of young couples renting studio flats and lower income immigrants renting from owners. Some blocks are dilapidated, especially the common areas. The estate was built for one huge co-operative but is now divided among several smaller ones. Limited technical improvements have been including providing additional thermal insulation, and by one co-operative, improving living standards by changing facades and adding verandahs. Unfortunately, such initiatives have not been extended.

An international competition was launched in 1986 entitled 'From the estate to the city centre. Remodelling the western area of Ossaska in Warsaw', and several teams were invited to humanise the western part of 'Żelazną Bramą'. Divided into two city districts and shared between several small co-operatives, implementation was held up by a lack of funds for master planning. Smaller and local co-operative initiatives, such as the technical improvements described above have been the only successful intervention. By March 1996, improvements to this huge estate were limited to additional thermal insulation, the provision of additional door entry systems and, for safety reasons, providing secure entrances to corridors.

In 1995, a new office and retail development, the 'Atrium Centre' was opened in the middle of the estate on a site intended for residents' parking. Two office towers are currently under construction in the eastern part of the estate, and the final stage of the project 'Atrium South' includes a 20-storey hotel and a 30-storey office tower. No parking spaces have been provided for residents who have been obliged to fence in courtyards to prevent their use by office workers. These were formerly playgrounds and, as the weakest participants, children are now excluded from them. Such an outcome is symptomatic of the continued degradation of this estate.



Facade renovation of the Żelazną Bramą estate in Warsaw. Additional thermal insulation is the only improvement undertaken.

also related to location and quality.

According to a survey of real estate agents undertaken in Warsaw in 1993 (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1994), the following factors improve the market position of flats:

- in the vicinity of the city centre;
- in a quiet location but close to a busy street;
- with good transport access;
- located on the ground floor, then either the first or second; or with a lift provided, the third or fourth floor;
- in a block built before 1960, or after 1980;
- in a block built of bricks;
- in good technical condition;
- the flat improved;
- a telephone provided;
- a domestic intercom network provided with a system which closes the entrance door.

13.3 Problems in the high-rise housing stock and measures introduced

Problems

Five types of serious problems can be identified in the Polish high-rise stock: construction problems, management and financial problems. Social problems, security problems and vacancies.

Technical problems are now very serious in Poland, although until recently, attention has been limited to the poor thermal insulation of blocks. Since the Gdańsk disaster of 16th April 1995, when an 11-storey house was destroyed by a gas explosion and many injured, the Space Management and Construction Ministry has established Institutes of Construction Technology and Housing Management. The block which had to be demolished in Gdańsk was considered stronger and more solid than those constructed using large slab technology, and it is worth recalling that of the 89,000 blocks of 5 or more storeys in Poland, 57,000 blocks and 2,300,000 flats are of large slab construction.

The costs of management are growing constantly. In 1988, a programme to repair 'technical faults', mainly by providing additional thermal insulation, was funded by the state, and in 1993, a second initiative was financed jointly by housing co-operatives and the state. In 1996, 56,300 communal (social) flats were privatised, and their owners became responsible for all management, maintenance and repair costs. The likelihood of them meeting their obligations is slim as many co-operative and social housing tenants are already in arrears with management payments, a situation which has continued to worsen.

'Ursynów Północny' estate, Warsaw

This was a model estate intended for 39,000 inhabitants and is located on the southern outskirts of Warsaw. As a result of a 1971 competition, a large, young project team was formed under the leadership of Marek Budzyński (see Budzyński, several years). Between 1972 and 1977, a uniquely multi-disciplinary team was formed including sociologists, psychologists, educationists and business specialists.

The estate was completed in stages, and now houses over 32,000 people. All the housing was completed between 1971 and 1979, but only 20% of the employment and educational programme. Although approximately 50% of the stock is over 5 storeys, the estate consists of 4 to 11-storey blocks forming small streets and squares in within large open spaces. By the standards of the 1970s and early 1980s, the estate was a great success, the flats were of a high standard; the climate was healthy and unpolluted and extensive green areas and beautiful landscaping were provided. As a result, the estate achieved the highest standing in the city, and it still remains fashionable to live in Ursynów. The proportion of better educated and higher social status households was well above the average, and in the early 1980s, most consisted of couples aged 30-40 with one or at most two children. Indicative of the level of satisfaction with flats and the neighbourhood, most families have remained there. A slight preference for living on the lower storeys, or on the first or second floors is evident.

There have been several attempts to complete the social, educational and commercial facilities intended for the estate. Plans for the central areas dating from 1983 and 1987 were successfully completed in stages between 1989 and 1991. Between 1981 and 1987, a church centre was completed followed by 3 to 4-storey housing with shops, services, small offices and workshops on the ground floors. Following the opening of the metro line to the city centre in April 1995, flats in these blocks are among the most desirable in Warsaw. Other projects were not successful, including an attempt to increase the number of flats by adding roofs with attic penthouses, mainly because of disagreements with existing inhabitants. However, individual improvements and additions have been widely made. Development has continued throughout the 1990s, providing high quality 3 to 4-storey flats of varying sizes. The new parts of 'Ursynów Północny' are undoubtedly among the most popular housing estates in Warsaw.

Anonymity, a lack of neighbourly relations and overcrowded blocks are growing problems on different estates. Generally, the worse the technical condition and social standing of estates, the more serious are their social problems. The ugliest 1960s suburban blocks are the most socially neglected and a devastated environment is characteristic of the worst estates.

Security problems have increased rapidly over the past ten years. Crime and gang warfare in high-rise housing developed in 1994 and 1995, and since early 1995 there have been four explosions in blocks in Warsaw alone, probably acts of terror or revenge attacks by gangs. The growing crime rate is associated with overcrowded blocks and the social anonymity associated with it. Of particular concern is the growing crime rate amongst the young, including involvement in murders on housing estates.

There is still a serious shortage of flats in Poland, so even in the worst stock, vacancies are not a problem. Whilst the number of uninhabited flats in the cities increased from 89,000 in 1970 (1.9% of all dwellings) to 95,000 in 1988 (1.3%), this represented a fall in relative terms.

Measures and their effectiveness

Several measures have been launched in recent years: demolition, refurbishment and renovation, privatisation and social measures.



New housing clusters fenced off the old areas at the Ursynów Północny in Warsaw.

Until 16th April 1995, this option was not taken seriously, but following the Gdańsk explosion, government institutions considered the demolition of large-slab blocks for safety reasons. However, there are still no methods of determining the precise degree of risk from corrosion of the joints between panels, and the immense scale of the problem is paralysing the search for radical solutions.

Extensive refurbishment of rented flats has been undertaken by their inhabitants, including the demolition of partition walls to enhance the layout or increase space and improvements to bathrooms and kitchens. Efforts are also made to enlarge flats by annexing such common space as the end of corridors, and by transforming balconies into closed verandas and winter gardens. In Warsaw, about 90% of corridor ends in high-rise blocks have been incorporated into flats, and almost 50% of balconies have been glazed in. The popularity of such activity is evidenced by the growing number of 'home improvement' shops. Although prohibited by land-use law, enlargements to ground floor flats may be achieved by incorporating small gardens into living space.

Formal plans for privatisation and restitution have been prepared by the Government, but not yet implemented. A privatisation law was approved by Parliament in March 2001 but vetoed by the President. Privatisation has been



Providing loggias to individualise the environment and provide more space, usually with the permission of the co-operative and using an architect.

voluntary and applied only to flats rather than blocks. Prices have been moderate and if met in one payment, a 50% bonus brought the cost down to one quarter to one third of the market rate. Given the size of the discount, quite a number of flats have been sold, although mainly in older houses. Between 1992 and 1997, 537,000 co-operative flats (20.7% of the 1988 stock) were sold, usually to tenants, and between 1990 and 1997, 36,000 communally owned flats (1.8% of the 1988 stock). The same percentage of flats was returned to their previous owners by communal institutions. A law introduced on 24 April 2001 gave tenants in co-operatively-owned stock the option of buying their flat for 3% of its value. However, the need to make management and repair payments has made living in these flats unattractive, and there are cases of elderly inhabitants wanting to give their flats back to the community. The process of privatising the communal stock has been even slower. The price per square metre is still attractive, but it is quite high compared with monthly income levels, and the prospect of meeting future payments, mainly for repairs, is unclear. In older houses, owners who have bought their flats and existing tenants have to live as neighbours, which has made housing management very complicated. According to the 1995 Housing Act, if the new owners constitute a majority of flats within a house, they can form a 'Housing Commonwealth' to decide on such maintenance problems as repairs, cleaning etc. However, the rest of the inhabitants – as tenants of communally owned stock – still have to submit to the Communal Housing Management body.

Social measures have been implemented by the state in the form of a special housing fund to provide low-income households with support towards management payments. Other non-financial measures of social and self-help are available in large housing estates such as the provision of kindergarten, hospices for the elderly and facilities for the disabled.

13.4 The future of high-rise housing estates in Poland

The IGM prognosis

IGM is the leading housing research institute in Poland undertaking social, technical, architectural and planning studies on behalf of the government. Research undertaken by Prof. Zaniewska and Alina Plachcińska of IGM (1995) has identified the importance of residents taking responsibility for maintenance and repair, although families' lack of financial resources are a major obstacle to such a change. Their prognosis is that the future of high-rise estates is dependent on:

- humanising the housing environment;
- improving the aesthetics of blocks and standard of flats through architectural solutions;
- improving the technical and ecological value of blocks.

In particular, they suggest the need for:

- smaller-scale solutions providing more individual shapes to blocks and estates;
- better management and separation of private, semi-public and public space;
- the development of social service, education and culture centres within estates;
- solving traffic and parking problems;
- improved standards for flats and blocks, by adding rooms or other spaces;
- enlarging entrances;
- changing the outer shapes of blocks;
- refurbishment at ground floor level by enlarging rooms or adding verandas, terraces;
- more separate entrances.

The large panel modernisation programme

In 1998, following negative media coverage, a new initiative was announced concerning the improvement of large slab estates. Following a seminar held in Warsaw involving agencies from the city and from Berlin, a pilot programme was announced by the municipality. Its aim was to improve the social, technical and architectural condition of large slab estates in the city which housed

Table 13.3 The future for high-rise estates in Poland, constructed in the 1960s

Estate type	Optimistic scenario	Pessimistic scenario
Low standard and low image in suburban locations	Partial demolition to reduce density, or total renewal.	Lack of funding results in a decline into slum accommodation housing the lowest income and poorest elderly, characterised by crime and deprivation. This is quite probable over the next 10 years.
Large slab technology estates	Demolition.	Lack of finance and the growing need for massive repairs leads to the risk of total disaster. A subsidised repair programme will be needed to avoid this.
Smaller housing estates of good quality	Refurbishment and modernisation, retaining the stock as studio and other small flats. 1960's estates are returning to popularity, the best examples are to be protected as part of Poland's national heritage.	Physical decay and a decline in social standing.
City centre housing estates	Refurbishment to create blocks of studio flats, student accommodation or blocks of offices with possible mixed use.	Decay and decline lead to the creation of midtown 'islands' of crime and deprivation.

over 600,000 people. Their future, as represented in the press, can be summed up by the comment: 'In a few decades these blocks will collapse'.

The Programme is closely linked to experience drawn from Berlin, and required the identification of one estate of one to two thousand residents which captured all the problems of large slab estates in Warsaw. The three main elements of the Programme are:

- dealing with problems of the cityscape, including parking, traffic access and the provision of green space;
- dealing with architectural problems, including improvement to staircases and lifts;
- dealing with technical problems, including thermal insulation and failed windows, and eventually adding another floor.

Housing co-operatives and communes were given until May 1999 to apply for a two year programme starting in the first quarter of 2000. In the meantime, municipalities would undertake a full inventory of the condition of all large slab estates and of the work required. This element is funded by city sources, with European Union funding anticipated for the modernisation programme. This Programme is one of the more positive signs which can be identified at present, and which include:

- a slight easing of housing finance due to new credit possibilities provided by the National Housing Fund and generally lower rates of interest;
- new forms of investment in the construction and maintenance of housing are also available, including the Public Building Society (PBS) for the low income sector of the housing market;
- developers building for sale and for rent;
- the condominium as a new legal category of ownership under the 1995 legislation.

Table 13.4 The future for high-rise estates in Poland, constructed in the 1970s

Estate type	Optimistic scenario	Pessimistic scenario
Low standard, low image and high density stock in suburban locations	Partial demolition or massive refurbishment are more probable in larger, dynamically developing cities.	A lack of finance and the growing need for massive repairs leads to the risk of total disaster, at a slightly slower rate than for comparable 1960s estates. This is more likely in smaller estates, especially with poor communal facilities and a co-operative budget.
Large slab technology estates	Demolition of the worst estates; massive repair and refurbishment of estates with a high social standing.	A lack of finance and the growing need for massive repairs leads to the risk of total disaster.
High standard estates in good locations	In order to retain their good reputation, internal and external refurbishment and modernisation are undertaken according to local and individual initiative. Improvements over the next decade are likely to be limited to technical matters.	A lack of finance and problems with management lead to a progressive decay and a decline in reputation.
City centre estates - on a smaller scale than 1960s central estates	Smaller flats are converted into offices, studios and larger flats with internal and external refurbishment.	A slow and continuing decline if sufficient finance and good management are not provided.

In terms of the future for high-rise estates, the stock can be considered by both main periods of construction, the 1960s and 1970s, and by type and quality. In each case, an optimistic and a pessimistic scenario has been provided. There are no problems with stock constructed in the 1980s which is likely to be retained for its original function.

The future for 1960's estates is mixed. Some blocks in the centre of large cities may be demolished to create plots for new development. Others will probably house young tenants, but the 'crime option' is not to be excluded where unemployment reached 15% in 2001.

The problems affecting large slab technology estates are increasing, and a lack of resources for improvement and repair is contributing to their decay. Most estates consist of 1970's factory-built stock which is experiencing such technical faults as steel reinforcement corrosion and inadequate thermal insulation. A pilot improvement programme was initiated in Warsaw in 1999 but had still not been implemented in 2002.

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14 Ukraine

Inheritance of centralised planning

*Volodymyr Durmanov and
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14.1 Introduction

There is a substantial difference between housing in the post-Soviet countries and Western European nations. Housing policy in the former Soviet Union resulted in huge amounts of high-rise housing of dubious quality, partly due to government decisions to use the cheapest forms of construction. Housing production in Ukraine cannot be seen separately from the former Soviet Union housing policy, so information from before 1991, when Ukraine proclaimed itself independent, plays a relevant role in understanding the present-day situation.

Ukraine was the second most important republic in the former Soviet Union and, with an area of 603.700 km², is now the biggest country in Europe after Russia. The Ukrainian economy has suffered severe blows in its short post-communist existence, with enormous inflation, the ending of exports to former Soviet republics and communist countries and the import of oil and gas from Russia minimised due to high prices and payment difficulties. Ukraine has fertile soils and rich mineral resources but the infrastructure is insufficient to fully exploit them.

The prices of many products and services have been brought to market levels, but most families cannot afford them. Many people have emigrated, life expectancy is low at 68.1 years and the population has fallen from 51.1 million in 1996 to an estimated 48.4 million in 2001, 66% of whom live in cities. By the end of 1989 there were an estimated 18.4 million housing units.

The Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme, based on life expectancy, education and public purchasing power considers the Ukraine 80th out of 112 countries. The Czech Republic, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Hungary occupy places 33 to 37, Belarussia holds the 56th place, Russia the 60th, Georgia the 81st. Tadzjikistan is 112th and last. In 2000, the Ukrainian economy grew for the first time since 1991 by 5.3%.

Finally, the political situation in Ukraine is still unstable. There are strong communist sympathies in the country whilst part of society is oriented to western economic ideas. In 1994 the European Union and Ukraine closed a partner treaty on economic aid, but integration into the European Union is still far away. Market reforms still have to be made and widespread corruption in every layer of society blocks the social, economic and political progression the country so badly needs.



Population	48,369,470
Population density	80/km ²
Capital	Kiev
GDP per capita	€2,692
Housing stock	18.4 million

14.2 A centrally planned approach

Until its independence in August 1991, housing production in Ukraine depended on decisions made by the Ministry of Construction in Moscow. The cities and major planning districts received orders for the implementation of housing projects and every five years the principal state planning body (GOSPLAN) produced a general economic development plan. Most cities had a spatial masterplan (General Plan) with a horizon of twenty years, prepared in accordance with the Building Code of the Government City Planning Institutions (SNIP). After formal agreement by the Ministry these masterplans functioned as spatial development laws. The planning basis of housing development was introduced in 1935 with the Moscow Master Plan which resulted in neighbourhoods of lengthy 4 and 8-storey blocks near or alongside the main city streets, together with public buildings.

Since 1945, hardly any statistical information about housing production has been available. Many researchers involved in the last pre-World War II census were arrested and working with statistical information about housing and population became hazardous. Although after the Stalin era several censuses were held, the last one in 1991, none of the information gathered is complete and accurate and most of it has never been published. The present-day Ukraine still lacks good statistical information about its housing production and housing stock although the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine published some data in 2002. Differentiation between types of buildings, including high-rise, is hardly documented. However, in 2001 37-48% of the housing stock (6.8-8.8 million dwellings) were estimated to be single-family houses; 52-63% (9.6-11.6 million dwellings) were flats and 22-28% of the total stock (4-5.2 million dwellings) were flats in blocks of 6 or more storeys, defined as 'high-rise'.

The use of industrial construction for high-rise housing was initiated at the Great Conference of the Soviet Constructors at the end of 1954. Laws concerning industrialisation, the improvement of quality and reduction of costs in construction were published in 1955. This was the first step in a housing revolution. Slogans like 'Typical housing is better housing' and 'For each family a separate apartment' were introduced. Huge building enterprises focused on the production of high-rise blocks using large prefabricated and pre-cut concrete components. From 1956 to 1960, and compared with the previous five years, housing production in the Soviet Union doubled and in 1958, new building and planning guidelines were established which recognised neighbourhoods as the structural components of the city.

Newly built apartments were distributed by a special commission of the Regional District Council. High-rise apartments were intended for single-family households only and were distributed according to the number of household members, irrespective of income and social position. The government



High-rise in the city of Lviv in the west part of the country, constructed in the 1990s, the era of transition to market economy. Designed and projected before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

norm permitted a two-room apartment for families with three and four members, and the three-room apartment was intended for either young families with three children or families with six persons from three generations.

Official statistics still refer to square metres of living space per person. At the end of the 1960s, the average living space per person was 7-10 sq.m. which, by 1970, had risen to 12 sq.m. Other sources record an increase from 9 to 16 sq.m. between 1980 and 1990, although there were great variations throughout the country.

14.3 Stages in high-rise production

In the years immediately after the Second World War, the large scale production of 2 and 3-storey wood and brick houses took place, blocks of more than 5 storeys were rare. The first steel frame housing in 4-storey buildings with pre-fabricated concrete walls was constructed in Moscow in 1947. At the end of the 1940s the first 5-storey brick and concrete housing blocks were introduced in other big cities, and in the early 1950s, the first blocks with 7 and 8 storeys were built. The adoption of new technology soon permitted the construction of 7 to 10 and even 14-storey housing. New types of economically-built apartments were constructed in 1958 and more comfortable types in 5 and 9-storey blocks between 1963 and 1966. The series for big cities consisted of buildings with 12 and 16 storeys. Also, many experimental buildings with 12 and 25 storeys were constructed. In 1963 only 2% of housing construction had 6 or more storeys, but in 1973 25% had between 6 and 9 storeys. The cheaper 4 and 5-storey buildings were built more frequently than higher buildings as they did not require a costly lift. From 1965 to 1973 the share of

Everyday life in high-rise in Lviv



Wala, a widow in her sixties, lives in Lviv, a city of about 750,000 people, just east of the Polish border. She and one of her two adult sons live in a two-room apartment, which also contains a separate kitchen of 2.50 x 2.50 sq.m., a bathroom with a bath tub and a separate toilet. Since the early 1980s, running water is only available from 6 till 9 in the morning and from 6 till 9 in the evening. The apartment was once owned by her employer, a large compa-

ny producing television tubes, where she held an administrative job. In 1994 the company closed down and she became unemployed. Her son, an engineer, also lost his job with the same company. Uncertain times arose: who was now the owner of their apartment? Would it be sold? Would the rent go up? Maintenance had already stopped.

The cost of living had increased dramatically since 1991. Inflation ate at the family savings which were spent in no time at all. Now, more than twelve years after independence, everything is available in street markets and shops but only the rich can afford to buy what they want. Prices are high, especially considering the very low incomes of millions of Ukrainians.

Her youngest son, a computer programmer in his early thirties, could not find work in his own country or did not get paid for it and decided to start a new life in Canada. Recently, the family put all its money together to buy the apartment and their offer was accepted. The price was very moderate and at least their housing is now secured. They have even renovated their kitchen themselves.

large-panel buildings in state-constructed and co-operatively constructed housing increased from 29% to 44%, which, considering all housing production was an increase from 19% to 31%. By 1975, about forty types of large-panel buildings had been developed, including internal corridor type hostels and hotels for permanent residence, and boarding houses for students. At the end of the 1970s the famous 5 and 12-storey series using pre-fabricated construction were introduced.. The present high-rise type dominant in the Ukraine is the so-called multi-section building with 5 or more sections of 5 or 9-storeys. Each section of this type has a communal staircase leading to ten or eighteen apartments.

14.4 Meeting housing shortage

The authorities always acknowledged the existence of a housing shortage, but were never able to match production to demand. Each Soviet president introduced different housing types, based not on quality and family needs,

but mostly influenced by economic and political factors. The official shortage of dwellings in the urban parts of Ukraine was estimated to be about 10%, but real demand was much higher. In most of the big cities the situation was much worse, for example, in Kazan the shortage of dwellings was 32%. A family could only be registered for a state housing unit when its present housing conditions were less than 5-7 sq.m. per person. Some families had to wait for an apartment of their own for more than 10-15 years, living in the meantime with their parents, in working dormitories or in improvised housing such as disused barracks.

In the mid-1980s, the mass construction of single-family housing was still prohibited in most former Soviet cities, because it was 20-25% more expensive than 5-storey blocks. For single-family housing with pre-fabricated concrete walls 2-2.5 times more energy was needed for heating than for 5 to 10-storey housing blocks. Despite this, the Committee of Architecture and Building created a programme for low-rise housing and the construction of single-family houses in Ukraine increased in the 1990s. In 1990 about 15% of urban construction consisted of 1 to 4-storey housing; 34% of 5-storey housing and 30% of 9 to 10-storey housing. The remaining 21% consisted of blocks of more than 10 storeys, owner-occupied housing and individual farmhouses. Planning for 2000 envisaged the construction of 40% 1 to 4-storey housing, 18% 5-storey housing, 35% 9 to 10-storey housing and 7% housing blocks of more than 10-storey housing (see Table 14.1).

14.5 Planning versus financing

There was a strong relationship between a city's size and the height of high-rise blocks, their floor space and the number of rooms per apartment. 5 to 9-storey apartment buildings were mainly constructed in cities with between 250,000 and 500,000 inhabitants and became the prevalent high-rise type. Only in the big cities high-rise blocks of 9 storeys or more were constructed. In the mid-1970s, it was proposed that by 1985, 45% of the housing production would be high-rise in cities of 450,000 people and for cities with more than 1.5 million people, the figure was 75%. These percentages were set to increase further to 80 and 90% by 2000 (see Table 14.2).

Districts of 5-storey housing without lifts could be built economically, and had a relatively low household density. The construction costs of 9-storey standard housing blocks were 6-8% higher than those of 5-storey housing blocks, but they resulted in 30% more living area per hectare. For the construction of 12

Table 14.1 Proposals for the construction of apartments in high-rise housing estates according to plans made before independence, in Ukraine, in 1991

Number of storeys	1990	2000
Low-rise (1-4 storeys)	15%	40%
Flats (max. 5 storeys)	34%	18%
High-rise (9-10 storeys)	30%	35%
High-rise (>10 storeys)	21%	7%
Total	100%	100%

Table 14.2 Planning high-rise housing estates in Soviet cities in the mid-1970s (% of total construction)

Number of inhabitants	70,000	240,000	400,000	450,000	900,000	1,500,000
1985	-	5%	13%	45%	59%	75%
2000	-	15%	-	80%	85%	90%

and 24-storey high-rise in high densities in the big cities, more expensive equipment was needed.

Between 1960 and 1972 state investment in the housing sector decreased from 22.5% to 15.5% and city administrations decided to build more 5 and 9-storey housing. For economic reasons, 9-storey housing in the Soviet Republic of Ukraine was planned in cities with 250,000-500,000 inhabitants and construction of 12 and 16-storey housing was permitted in Kiev only. In smaller cities, high-rise housing was allowed only on a small scale in the centre and other selected areas. Over the last 30 years, therefore, 5 and 9-storey housing has dominated housing construction in Ukraine.

14.6 Housing production and privatisation in the post Soviet era

Recent housing production

In 1990, the government and Trade Union of Ukraine proposed the privatisation of housing and the creation of a housing market, a land property law was passed in 1992. A new policy for house construction was established in the same year to the following basic principles:

- a decrease in high-rise building production and the development of a variety of both high-rise and low-rise housing;
- formation of districts with mixed housing types;
- differentiation in housing quality: low quality apartments for low-income families and high quality apartments for high-income families instead of standard apartments for all inhabitants, and,
- breaking the monopoly of big panel-prefabrication enterprises and the support of enterprises offering different methods of housing production.

The question of which kind of housing should be built by the state and which by private companies was still open. It is clear that the government still does not support the idea of the private sector taking full responsibility for housing production, and for a major part of the population cheap but adequate housing is still not available.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 caused a major fall in housing production in most of the former republics. According to the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine the total number of apartments built fell dramatically from 279,000 in 1990 to 64,000 in 2001 (see Table 14.3). State housing production by national government institutions, enterprises and organisations and the production of communal and collective housing fell from 179,000 to a mere 9,000. The production of private housing also decreased, from 59,000 in

Table 14.3 Number of apartments built in Ukraine, 1990-2001

Year	State housing production ¹	%	Communal housing production ²	%	Collective housing production ³	%	Private housing production ⁴	%	Internat. housing production ⁵	%	Total housing production	%
1990	179,000	64	-	-	41,000	14,5	59,000	21	-	-	279,000	100
1995	32,000	27	17,000	14	29,000	25	40,000	34	1,200	1	118,000	100
1998	12,000	17	6,000	9	21,000	30	31,000	44	200	0	70,000	100
2001	9,000	14	7,000	11	16,000	25	31,000	48	400	0	64,000	100

Table 14.4 Average living space in square meters, in apartments in Ukraine, 1990-2001

Year	State housing production ¹	Communal housing production ²	Collective housing production ³	Private housing production ⁴	International housing production ⁵	Total housing production
1990	56,7	-	61,6	75,1	-	61,3
1995	60,4	60,9	61,0	96,3	61,2	72,9
1998	63,6	64,7	65,9	106,4	74,0	83,5
2001	75,4	67,7	72,1	112,1	59,0	91,3

1) State housing production: dwellings owned by national government institutions, enterprises and organisations.

2) Communal housing production: dwellings owned by territorial communities of villages, towns, town or city districts.

3) Collective housing production: dwellings owned by non-governmental bodies such as collective businesses, rental businesses, economic partnerships, associations of non-state-run businesses (associations, corporations, consortia and concerns), religious establishments, political parties and public associations.

4) Private housing production: residential buildings and privatised apartments, owned by individuals.

5) International housing production: housing production owned by foreign countries and companies.

Source: Ukraine in figures in 2001. Short statistical abstract (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, 2002)

1990 to 31,000 in 2001. However, between 1990 and 2000, production of private housing was responsible for almost 50% of total housing production (see Table 14.3). For instance, in 2001 83% of the housing production in the Lviv region was financed by private resources.

At the same time, the quality of new housing improved, at least in terms of average living space which increased from 61.3 sq.m. in 1990 to 91.3 sq.m. in 2001 (see Table 14.4). This was not due solely to private sector production, state housing production also produced significantly bigger units.

Privatisation

Progress with privatisation has been slow and faltering. In 1992, the Ukrainian parliament allowed the privatisation of state housing and the real estate market entered a new phase. In 1989, private ownership in urban areas of Ukraine (32%) was higher than the average in the former Soviet Union (21%) because many small village houses have remained in private hands and parts



The quality of public space in high-rise districts leaves much to be desired for.

of the housing stock in the cities have always been owner-occupied. For privatisation, the average square metre norm per occupant was 21 and if a family had less than this the apartment might be transferred for free. By 1994, the private housing stock in the urban areas had increased by 12% to 44%, but in the next two years, only another 5% of state housing units was privatised, mostly for free. In 2001, 227,000 apartments and single-family houses (3.2%) were privatised, 86% at nil cost, and by this time, 52% of all dwellings in urban areas had been privatised.

The privatisation process has been frustrated for several reasons. Firstly, huge parts of the housing stock are in poor condition, sometimes to the extent that they cannot be sold or given away. Secondly, a considerable number of people have no trust in the government's housing policy and are afraid of increasing maintenance costs and taxes. Thirdly, there is no legislation covering the mixed ownership of apartments in blocks. Fourthly, relatively low rents in state-owned housing is still an attractive alternaty for many occupants.

14.7 Consumer experiences in high-rise housing estates

Living conditions

Between 1977 and 1982 the Central Housing Institute in Moscow undertook research into mass housing in twelve major cities. According to these data, between 18 and 44% of all households surveyed were satisfied with their living conditions, and between 30 and 60% thought their housing was unsuitable. Most (50%) were dissatisfied with the small rooms and their layout, 33% with poor quality staircases, the lack of cellars and attics for storage. Some 40-80% of people preferred not to live in the suburbs.

Young people and small young families preferred to live in high-rise buildings more often than families with five persons or three-generation families with 2 or 3 children and grandparents. Most households (70%) preferred not to live in apartments on the ground floor because of parked cars next to the buildings, but preferred to live on the second and third floors. Higher floors were not preferred because the lifts were often out of order and the water supply was poor. Only 14% liked to live on the sixth floor or higher. In the Soviet era, and later on, many occupants tried to make the best of their apartment. Although this was officially forbidden, residents glazed their balconies and loggias and transformed them into storerooms, workshops or studios. Public halls, parks, gardens, garrets and cellars were often illegally annexed as private space.

A shortage of services

Many new housing districts lacked the necessary social infrastructure of schools, kindergarten, hospitals and markets. The provision of social services could not keep pace with the rate of construction of high-rise neighbourhoods. Another general problem in high-rise areas is the lack of garages. In the Soviet era there was a lack of car repair and maintenance services, and people depended on the technical skills of friends and relatives. Only in recent years, with privatisation, have private car parks and multi-storey garages began to be constructed.

Health problems

The health problems associated with living in tall 16 and 24-storey blocks were studied over twenty years ago, when construction problems were common. Problems identified included windstorms around high-rise blocks, noise pollution from the street and lift shafts and staircases acting as conduits for epidemics of respiratory illness. Crowded high-rise housing was associated with physical problems such as heart disease and the restricted physical development of children and psychological problems such as anxiety and depression. Family conflicts may arise where there is overcrowding, for example when a second child is added to the family.

14.8 A future for high-rise housing estates in Ukraine?

There is no doubt that there is a current and future market for high-rise apartments, and due to climatic extremes in winter, singly-family houses are not always as popular as might be expected. However, high-rise housing is faced by two problems, the condition of the existing stock and the low rate of new dwelling construction. Ukraine inherited an ageing and inadequate



9-storey high-rise, the prevalent type in the bigger cities of Ukraine.

housing stock that meets neither the needs nor the demands of the community. The existing housing stock, not only high-rise but also housing in older districts, needs urgent and dramatic improvement. In high-rise blocks, energy loss due to worn-out central heating systems and inadequate insulation calls for swift action. Wiring, plumbing and heating systems are in a neglected state. Many blocks are in such bad condition that renovation far exceeds the cost of new housing, but large-scale and costly renovation cannot be postponed if high-rise blocks are to be prevented from entering a downward spiral of decline. On a more everyday level, housing managers in high-rise blocks were expected to uphold minimum standards of cleanliness and service, but now they demand bribes for routine service and maintenance.

Apartments are often overcrowded and housing shortage persists. Since independence in 1991, overall housing production has fallen dramatically, and in 2001 state housing production was a mere 9,000 units. Housing production will have to increase substantially to meet growing needs and demand yet must remain financially within reach of the majority of households who are dependent on low incomes.

Private companies produce single-family housing and apartments to West European standards, but these dwellings are far too expensive for most Ukrainian families. Mass housing production involving former state building enterprises is now organised by local authorities. Mostly 3 and 5-storey buildings are produced with hardly any improvements compared with the stock built in the Soviet years apart from extra staircases and lifts. The design and layout of the small number of apartments now being built are not based on any serious market research, many people would prefer different layouts and new services, such as 24 hour security and lifts to and from underground car parks. The areas around high-rise blocks need to be rethought to provide private garages, gardens and open spaces. Small collective or community services might enable the quality of the local area to be managed to a higher standard.

A leading role for the government is essential in accelerating the process of land privatisation both to meet housing shortage and to satisfy different needs and demand. Its role so far has been tentative, for example a land property law permitting plots for sale was passed in the early 1990s but was withdrawn soon afterwards. Planning powers and legislation are still inadequate to develop the private provision of new housing and Ukraine has currently neither the money, the institutions nor the political strength to establish these conditions. Housing provision in Ukraine remains in the grip of centrally planned but inadequate housing policies.

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15 Slovakia

A continuing role for high-rise housing estates

Boris Divinský

15.1 Introduction

To a large extent, high-rise housing in Slovakia is a result of the industrial urbanisation of the country after 1945. In 1940, over 50% of economically active inhabitants were employed in agriculture, and less than 20% in industry. By 1980 this ratio had almost reversed. In 1950, the extent of urbanisation was 25%, a figure which had reached almost 60% by 1990 (Bašovský and Divinský, 1991). Such a major economic transformation resulted in a high rate of urbanisation added to which the country's population has increased by two million since 1950. The effect of these major structural transformations has been a tremendous demand for new housing, especially in the cities.

The simplest answer seemed to be the erection of mass housing estates. Once the appropriate technologies had been mastered, these estates were built on a vast scale and incorporated tall blocks. In this way, blocks, quarters, neighbourhoods and residential zones of high-rise housing were created and became a typical feature of Slovak settlements. About 36% of all Slovak inhabitants live in high-rise blocks, which is about three quarters of all those living in flats. Irrespective of their large-scale character, uniformity, monotony, poor aesthetic quality and inadequate infrastructure, these high-rise estates will be a feature of housing in Slovakia for a long time to come.

Any analysis of housing in Slovakia requires an understanding of the relevant terminology. The term 'family house' denotes a detached or semi-detached house, originally designated for one family, but which may be divided into flats and occupied by several families, usually related. The term 'residential house' is the closest translation to a block containing purpose-built multi-storey or high-rise flats, and for this reason, we will use the term 'block' throughout. Flats in 'family houses' were usually owner-occupied and flats in blocks ('residential houses') were rented.

15.2 The development of housing policy after the Second World War

In 1945, the housing situation in Slovakia was extremely problematic. The relatively poor standard of living before the war – worsened by the economic crisis of the 1930s – had resulted in an inadequate stock of houses and flats. The situation worsened during the Second World War when around 17% of



Population	5,42,366
Population density	111/km ² (2002)
Capital	Bratislava
GDP per capita	€8,277
Housing stock	1.7 million



Uniformity in high-rise blocks, even in small towns.

the total dwelling stock were destroyed (Zeman, Jankovich & Lichner, 1990). By 1945, the remaining stock was largely obsolete, of inferior quality and met only minimum hygienic and technical standards. Only a few dwellings, mainly located in the larger towns, were attached to a central water supply and sewerage system.

Housing began to be renewed immediately after the Second World War, but mainly by the population themselves. From 1948, the housing problem became one of the State's main political targets (Voženilek, 1958). The principle of 'a dwelling for every family' was articulated at the highest level of the new communist regime, irrespective of the ability of individual countries to deliver it. Governmental Planning Commissions determined, typically for five year periods, the precise number of dwellings to be built, their standard and floor area. The latter, which grew at an average rate of two to four per cent in each of the five years, was divided into six size categories (Jankovich, 1987).

In such a centrally planned economy, dwellings were allocated on an egalitarian basis and the term 'social dwelling' did not exist. Purpose-built blocks with different apartment categories, and in different localities, could be inhabited by a range of people of different social status and incomes. An applicant had little control over the choice of the dwelling; its position; the height of the block or the block itself. As a result, high-rise buildings in Slovakia do not serve only a certain social stratum, and over 90% of them house all classes of population (Musil et al., 1985).

Finance for new housing construction was initially provided by the State, but other bodies, including housing co-operatives, large enterprises, municipalities and other State institutions were subsequently involved. Due to social egalitarianism, these providers were unable to influence the social profile of their tenants, the only differentiation occurred in the construction or ownership of single-family houses by the wealthier classes in the cities.

Table 15.1 Housing construction in Slovakia, 1946-1999

Period	Apartments in blocks (‘residential houses’)			%	Family houses*	%	Total
	council	co-operative	employer				
1946-1950	26,254	-	-	55.0	21,480	45.0	47,734
1951-1955	44,617	-	-	55.2	36,249	44.8	80,866
1956-1960	48,239	2,827	945	39.4	80,035	60.6	132,046
1961-1965	43,246	32,552	6,520	50.7	80,028	49.3	162,346
1966-1970	23,619	55,949	10,206	56.2	69,918	43.8	159,692
1971-1975	44,670	49,011	44,861	66.2	70,602	33.8	209,144
1976-1980	53,690	76,896	34,628	70.9	67,754	29.1	232,968
1981-1985	34,013	90,100	4,397	69.9	55,437	30.1	183,947
1986-1991	35,483	80,395	2,213	68.1	55,282	31.9	173,373
1992-1999	11,854	15,832	1,278	42.1	45,327	57.9	74,291
Total	365,685	403,562	105,048	60.0	582,112	40.0	1,456,407

*Single-family houses or two dwellings on top of each other.

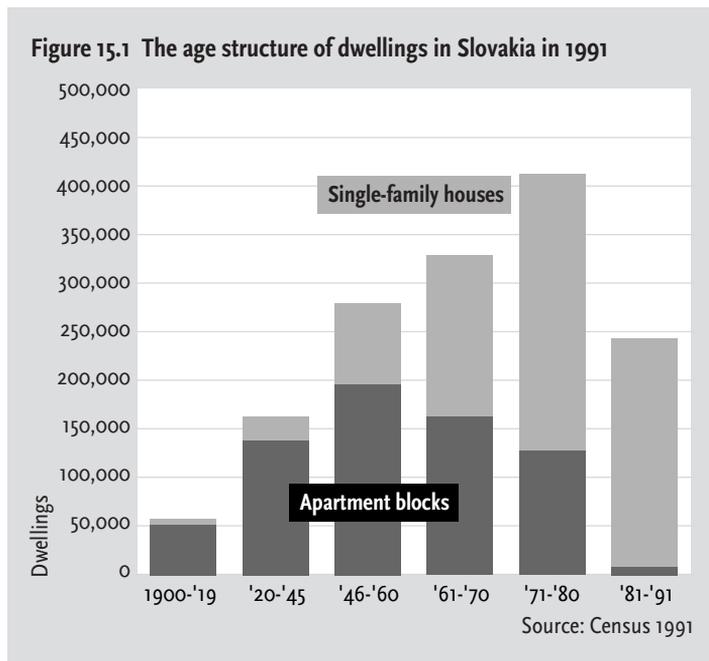
Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Slovak Republic, 1993-2000;
Dwellings in the Slovak Republic, 1997-1999; Time Series, 1992a

As already indicated, housing construction grew rapidly in the post war years due to intensive industrialisation and subsequent urbanisation. However, the level of output has varied as indicated in Table 15.1 for the period 1946-1999. Almost 1.5 million homes were constructed in the period 1946-1988, 60% of which were flats and the remainder single-family houses. According to the most recent census undertaken in 1991, uninhabited dwellings amounted to 12.5% of the total house stock. Such high vacancy levels can be accounted for by the unsuitability of many dwellings; by their use for recreational purposes; by ownership change and due to reconstruction and modernisation.

Regional vacancy levels depend mainly on the extent of urbanisation and on levels of income and unemployment. Slovakia has the paradoxical situation of abundant good quality housing in the countryside and a significant shortage of apartments in the cities (Gajdož, 1995). The proportion of uninhabited houses may reach 30% in the smallest rural settlements, and is either dilapidating or represents a recreational resource.

The situation concerning vacancy levels in flats is generally more straightforward, and demonstrates their greater significance in the overall dwelling stock. The age structure and size of the apartment stock, whether purpose-built or located in ‘family houses’, is summarised in Figure 15.1 for the period to 1991.

In less than sixty years to 1991, the number of dwellings increased over 2.5 times, to reach a total stock of 1,618,000 housing over five million people. About half the stock is in flats, (806,400 units or 49.8%), the other half is in family houses (811,400 or 50.2%). Between 1972 and 1980, between 40,000 and 48,000 dwellings were constructed annually, and reached 23% of the total



dwelling stock. At this time, Slovakia had one of the most intensive house building programmes in Europe.

Of the 1.4 million dwellings built between 1945 and 1991, about 40% were built in the private sector and mainly for owner occupation. Of the remainder:

- 25% were rented from the State or a municipality;
- 28% were co-operative flats, and,
- 7% were rented from an employer.

As regards the ownership of the dwellings, at the last census in 1991:

- 28% were rented from other owners including the State and municipalities;
- 22% were owned by co-operatives, and,
- 50% were privately owned.

Since the 1991 Census, there has been a crisis in the Slovak housing market, particularly in the construction of new dwellings. For example, in 1992 only 16,372 new dwellings were completed, falling to 6,709 in 1994 and 6,257 in 1996. There was a small increase to 10,745 in 1999, but this still constitutes only two dwellings per 1,000 inhabitants. Symptomatic of the near total collapse in public sector house building, as many as 75% of dwellings were built in the private sector.

15.3 Characteristics of high-rise housing estates

Slovakian statistics do not contain separate information on high-rise housing. However, we can make estimates by focusing on the number of blocks containing flats located at a fifth floor and above, where a lift should be pro-

Table 15.2 Increase in the number of high-rise blocks by number of storeys, in Slovakia, 1970-1991

Number of storeys	1970		1980		1991	
	Number of blocks	% of blocks	Number of blocks	% of blocks	Number of blocks	% of blocks
5	2,143	38.5	4,623	26.9	11,714	29.4
6	963	17.3	9,844	57.3	22,315	56.0
7-11	1,943	34.9	1,881	10.9	4,264	10.7
12+	521	9.3	847	4.9	1,561	3.9
Total	5,570	100	17,195	100	39,854	100

Source: Očovský, 1989; Census 1991

Table 15.3 Increase of dwellings by number of storeys, in Slovakia, 1970-1991

Number of storeys	1970		1980		1991	
	Abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%
1-4	1,092,650*	95.0	1,242,311	87.9	1,314,628	81.3
5 and up	57,500*	5.0	171,621	12.1	303,200	18.7
Total dwelling stock	1,150,150	100	1,413,932	100	1,617,828	100

* Estimation.

Source: Zeman, Jankovich and Lichner, 1990; Census 1991

vided. In 1950, there were an estimated 650 blocks of this type, a number which increased to over 5,500 by 1970 and reached almost 40,000 by 1991. Building high-rise housing began towards the end of the 1950s, and once new building technologies and especially prefabrication had been developed, accelerated throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Očovský, 1989).

Table 15.2 provides a breakdown of multi-storey blocks by height, and shows that over the twenty years between 1970 and 1991, the share of lower rise blocks has increased significantly. The proportion of taller blocks fell throughout the period, especially those of 12 or more storeys. This last trend can be explained by the application of town planning regulations which determined the maximum number of inhabitants per hectare, and by technical-economic considerations which led to the production of standardised lower rise housing. Consequently, blocks of 20 or more storeys do not constitute a significant proportion of the stock of flats in Slovakia.

Using the three past three censuses, we can identify that the proportion of apartments situated on the 5th storey and above has risen dramatically to reach almost one fifth of all dwellings. By 1991, there were 303,200 dwellings

Table 15.4 Characteristics of the high-rise housing stock, in Slovakia, 1991

Type of flat	Number of flats		Number of occupants		Number of households	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Cooperative	162,574	53.6	510,336	53.9	168,060	52.9
Non-cooperative	140,626	46.4	437,281	46.1	149,350	47.1
Total	303,200	100	947,617	100	317,410	100

Source: Census 1991

situated on the fifth storey and above, but a total figure for all flats in high-rise blocks is not available. However, we know that of a total of 806,388 flats in 1991, 503,188 are on the ground floor up to the fourth floor, either in low-rise flat blocks, or the lower floors in a high-rise block. From Table 15.3 we also can conclude that over 245,000, or 81% of all high-rise was built during the 1970s and the 1980s.

As a result of settlement policies applied since the 1960s, there are no variations in the distribution of high-rise blocks between the urbanised regions (Zemko et al., 1984). On the basis that they were a danger to the government, and also in the interests of 'egalitarianism', local as well as regional differences were deliberately eradicated. However, there are huge differences between smaller, medium-sized or large towns. For instance, in Bratislava, the largest city in Slovakia, more than 40% of flats are situated on the fifth storey or above, a proportion several times greater than in small towns.

The post-war construction of purpose-built flats provided a considerable improvement in standards and amenities (Horký, 1984), but with little difference between high-rise and other flats. Since the collapse of the totalitarian regimes in the Central and Eastern European countries, restitution has seen nationalised property returned to its original owners, usually for the same purpose. This has had major consequences for those blocks which were formerly privately owned and not least for their tenants. However, few high-rise apartments date back to the era prior to 1948 and consequently, high-rise blocks rarely fall within the current restitution process.

15.4 Inhabitants of high-rise housing estates

In 1991, of the Slovak population of 5,274,335, some 948,000 or 18% of the total lived in flats situated at the fifth storey or above, a proportion which almost doubles when including all storeys in the same blocks (Slovak Statistical Office, 1992b). This means more than one out of three inhabitants live in a high-rise block. Table 15.4 indicates that 54% of high-rise flats and residents were concentrated in the co-operative sector.

A range of surveys and investigations, principally drawn from sociology and town planning, have identified that the population of high-rise blocks and neighbourhoods is slightly younger than the average. This can largely be

Petržalka, Bratislava

Petržalka is situated on the right bank of the river Danube in an area of former rural settlements, gardens and forests. Between 1975 and 1990, 41,000 municipal and cooperative dwellings were erected at speed, creating the largest housing estate in Slovakia. 130,000 people live there at an average density of 185 per ha of



built-up area, even reaching 350 persons per ha in many places. The original intention was to create a good quality residential area for 60,000 people, but the enormous demand for housing combined with its proximity to the city centre resulted in a change of priorities. The outcome was the construction of this giant, mono-functional, ugly and overpopulated neighbourhood with an inadequate infrastructure and few labour opportunities (Lizon, 1997).

Construction was achieved using mainly prefabricated panels in monotonous blocks of 4, 8 or 12 storeys. About 1,100 high-rise blocks of 5 or more storeys represent more than 90% of all dwellings. Whilst the flats are generally more modern and better designed than in most other high-rise estates in Bratislava, these are their only positive attributes. The structures are very 'compressed'; public green space is limited and overused, and the environment is impaired by a dense transport network. There is a lack of parking spaces and the shopping, service, cultural and sports infrastructures are incomplete. Schools are mostly overcrowded, and the number and type of health facilities are inadequate. Only 15 labour opportunities exist per 100 residents, and most employed people are compelled to use congested bus links to cross the Danube to work. Petržalka is the biggest dormitory estate in the country and is poorly regarded by its population. As a result, a process of gradual social selection is apparent.

The designers failed to adopt a simple linear ground plan for Petržalka, and it has a complicated, chaotic and disconnected feeling. This macro-neighbourhood is a focus for such phenomena as apathy; psychosis; alcoholism; drug addiction; vandalism and criminality. It has the highest divorce and suicide rates in Slovakia and the highest unemployment in Bratislava. Unfortunately, the younger generation is increasingly affected, reflected in such conditions as mental disorders; psycho-neurological diseases; a high morbidity rate and a high incidence of allergic or respiratory problems – which affect every fourth child.

As a negative example, the neighbourhood of Petržalka in Bratislava has been much criticised by planners, decision-makers, researchers and by its own residents. As the largest residential area in Slovakia almost exclusively consisting of high-rise housing, Petržalka has a negative effect on the structure and life of the city. It represents an isolated settlement whose many serious social and economic problems will take decades to resolve.

accounted for by the fact that these developments are newer and the dwellings in them were allocated to younger families with children.

In contrast with West-European countries, there remains a high degree of social heterogeneity in high-rise blocks and neighbourhoods (Schmeidler,

The 'New Ružinov' Housing Estate in Bratislava

It is hard to identify a positive example of a high-rise housing estate in the Slovak Republic, but one of the few is the 'new Ružinov' Housing Estate, also in Bratislava.

This neighbourhood of 50,000 inhabitants and nearly 15,000 apartments arose as an experiment to test a new technology for housing construction, and was the result of successful co-operation between planners, architects and civil engineers. The vast majority of flats are located in 4 to 8-storey blocks whose construction was completed in several stages throughout the 1960s. From a town planning perspective, the estate is composed of four relatively autonomous, but spatially well-connected units. Their total area is over 4 km², and the contemporary population has fallen to less than 40,000, at an average of under 10,000 inhabitants per square kilometre. A gradual ageing of the population has brought about a decrease in the estate's population.

The Ružinov neighbourhood was built on former agricultural land, and possibly due to this, it has retained a variety of green spaces. This feature has been further developed by including parks, lawns and flowerbeds. The estate is not far from the city centre and does not have the isolated character typical of many Slovak suburbs. Its proximity to transport links enables access to the city's superior amenities and has allowed them to be partially absent from the estate itself.

The town planning concept was chosen carefully so the visitor enters the area without realising its boundaries. Nevertheless, the neighbourhood's distinctive architecture; its pattern of amenities and high environmental quality help to maintain a strong sense of identity. After thirty years' existence, the Ružinov neighbourhood provides an example of how architecture can positively enhance a high-rise neighbourhood and the quality of life of its residents.

1998). This is a consequence of the egalitarian social and housing policies applied until recently. However, whilst we may be able to identify people from all social classes in one high-rise block, those with the highest status and incomes have always tended to select single-family houses whenever possible.

There is no ethnic segregation in high-rise housing in the western sense of Hungarian, Czech, Ukrainian, Polish, German or other minority groups being associated with any block or blocks. However, some local authorities have pursued policies of concentrating Romanies in designated dwellings. There is considerable intermingling of the ownership of blocks with co-operative, municipal and employer housing standing side by side in the same area. In contrast, the smaller housing estates are usually more socially homogeneous.

Other than specific problems concerned with the maintenance of blocks and reliability of lifts, there is no evidence that people make a distinction between living in high-rise or low-rise housing. Satisfaction has always been dependent more on the planning, reputation, position, quality and character of housing estates, and on such social conditions as neighbour relations, the standard of facilities and convenience for commuting.

This pattern is clearly reflected in the low levels of mobility of high-rise residents. The shortage of flats in Slovakia has considerably restrained residential mobility (Pašiak, 1990). Owing to insufficient choice, people were often forced to accept an apartment far from their place of work, resulting in lengthy commuting times. In 1991, 37% of all economically active people were commuting beyond their place of permanent residence. However, compared with housing difficulties, this was only a minor problem, and it is not surprising that polls have revealed that 60 to 90% of the population have no interest



90% of all high-rise contains occupants of all social strata, due to the allocation process under communism.

in moving (e.g. Matyáš, 1994). At present, the main reasons for changing one's dwelling are, in order of importance: obtaining a better standard of apartment, financial problems, exchange of housing between generations, a better neighbourhood infrastructure or healthier environment, and easier commuting (ibid.).

A form of 'pseudo-mobility' exists for more than 30% of the urban population who have their own cottages or other facilities in the countryside, and who regularly spend their free time in them. Only thirty years ago, most of the population of Slovakia lived in the countryside and consequently, many people still have links with family and friends there. The phenomenon of 'weekend and holiday escapes' is especially common among the residents of large high-rise housing estates.

15.5 Selected problems and attempted solutions

Problems

It is possible to consider the problems associated with high-rise housing from several perspectives, the first three of which form a general context for housing in Slovakia.

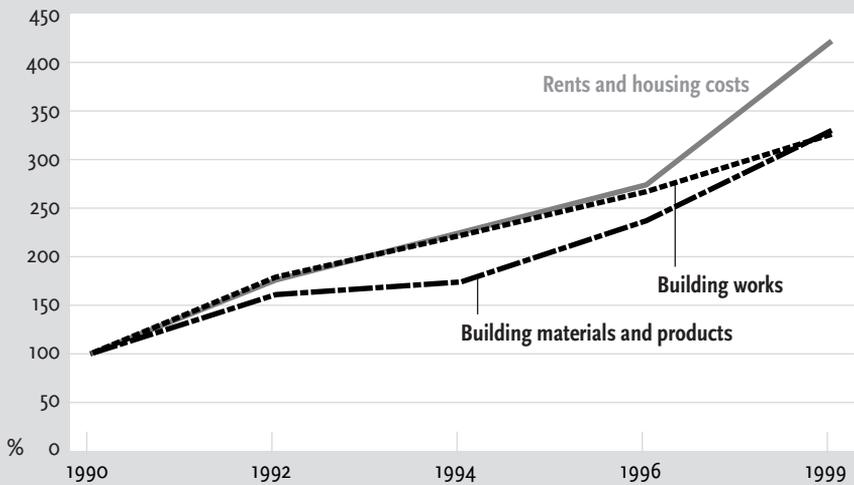
The recent collapse in house building

The first problem is a near collapse in house building in Slovakia. The ending of State finance for housing; a shift in responsibility to municipalities; legislative changes; rent rises; increases in rent arrears; a lack of building land or its high price have all combined to depress the housing market and the rate of new completions. Most new apartments are targeted at the luxury end of the market, building social dwellings is not so attractive for investors.

Financial difficulties

A growing social polarisation after 1989, and the emergence of such previously unknown phenomena as unemployment, poverty and deprivation have resulted in people being unable to pay their rent or maintain their owner-

Figure 15.2 Increase of prices of building materials and products, of building works and of rents and housing costs, in Slovakia, 1990-1999



Sources: Price Indices of Building Works, Materials and Products, 1999-2000; Structure, Revenues and Expenditures of Households, 1994-2000; Statistical Report on the Basic Developmental Trends, 1998-1999; Statistical Yearbook of the Slovak Republic, 1993-2000

occupied flat or house. Simultaneously, rents, other housing costs and the cost of building new homes, have all risen dramatically as indicated in Figure 15.2. The most marked price rises took place during the second half of 1999, when rents rose by 70% and electricity, gas and heating prices by 35-50%. Whether or not State or municipally-owned apartments are privatised, these trends are set to continue.

Rigidity in housing mobility

The development of the housing market in Slovakia has resulted in excessive immobility if not inertia. Whilst economic restructuring requires population mobility, the privatisation of the housing stock has resulted in increased residential stability and a reluctance to move. For example, in 1993, only one third of households expressed a willingness to move to find a new home or job (Matyáš, 1993). The egalitarian way of thinking, old attitudes and an associated inflexibility have not been fully challenged. Whilst the housing and labour markets are not functioning well together, this may have the unintended but beneficial consequence of stabilising populations in high-rise neighbourhoods.

Criticism from experts (Andrle & Dupal, 1996; Government Resolution 1026/1999) and inhabitants has centred on a range of problems associated with high-rise blocks as follows:

- their high energy demands cause financial problems for tenants and for the country. Providing heating for flats accounts for as much as one third of the country's total energy consumption;
- their maintenance requirements result in higher operational costs than for lower rise housing;
- large spaces within blocks result in anonymity, a lack of neighbourliness,

insufficient surveillance, lower security and higher rates of burglary and vandalism;

- a high concentration of high-rise blocks creates problems of parking, damage to public green space and problems of access and noise;
- an inadequate infrastructure is common, including a lack of shopping, service, cultural, leisure and sport facilities;
- aesthetic and psychological difficulties arise from the height of blocks and the enormous density of estates, reaching more than 20,000 persons per square kilometre in some locations;
- the standards of flats may be deficient including the inadequate provision of storage space, balconies and galleries.

Attempted solutions

Despite all these problems, the housing market in Slovakia, including that for high-rise housing is by no means stagnant, and the privatisation of municipal flats continues at prices below their market level. Housing law is being reformed to approximate to west European models and new mechanisms for the construction, sale, administration, maintenance and repair of dwellings have been implemented (Ministry for Building and Regional Development, 1999). Although city councils and individuals are both looking for effective ways to invest in housing, the renovation and modernisation of the stock is proceeding only slowly, and business units are more likely to be the outcome of refurbishment than dwellings (Uhrinová, 1997). In urban centres this process can have major social consequences, leading to fewer apartments, depopulation and a loss of local identity.

The situation is improving in five main areas, although all these transformations have implications for the cost of flats:

- the humanisation of the housing environment through the reconstruction, renewal or modernisation of high-rise blocks (the architectural appearance of existing blocks is improved by changing flat roofs into attic spaces; facades are improved and internal spaces made safer and more comfortable);
- the design and construction of atypical blocks is being improved resulting in larger and higher quality flats with a better standard of amenities;
- more durable materials are being produced through technological advances and which reduce the cost of maintenance and repair;
- energy savings can be achieved by controlling the consumption of heat and warm water; double glazing windows, replacing panel seals and by insulating facades (during 1992-1993, an experiment was carried out to test the effectiveness of such arrangements and an energy saving of 20 to 40% was achieved with the cost of investment regained within ten to fifteen years);
- the location of high-rise blocks in more appropriate settings and creating environments which are more accessible, more suitable and of better aesthetic quality.

It is hard for people to build up positive identity to their high-rise block.



15.6 Prospects for high-rise housing estates in Slovakia

In order to catch up with housing standards in Western Europe, Slovakia would need to erect or renovate some half a million dwellings. However, since 1989, housing provision has been subject to market principles, and the rapid growth in the cost of land, energy and materials has caused a dramatic fall in new construction. To stabilise the situation at 1991 levels, State institutions had planned to add about 100,000 apartments by the year 2000 (Ministry for Building and Public Works, 1995). This has not been achieved, and a combination of the loss of 0.5-0.65% of flats per year, especially in structurally impaired high-rise estates; the slow rate of refurbishment; the depression in new building and a population increase of some 125,000 have all combined to aggravate the problem.

As the State has become less involved in house building, more responsibility has passed to individuals and municipalities. Whilst nobody doubts the principle of privatising housing, several difficulties have emerged with the process (Labaj, 1993; Ministry for Building and Regional Development, 1999). For mainly financial reasons, there has been less willingness to buy flats than expected. According to information from the Ministry for Building and Public Works, an estimated 200,000 council flats and 60,000 co-operative flats had been privatised by April 1999, almost one third of the purpose-built stock. The intention was to privatise all the flatted stock with the exception of 27% designated for social renting (Ministry for Building and Public Works, 1995).

The main problem in Slovakia at present is a shortage of capital for the production of housing. While State intervention is constrained by the availability of finance, it can contribute to stimulating house building by institutional, legal, financial and economic measures. According to the government resolutions (1026/1999 and 355/2000), these measures include:

- gradual rent deregulation;



Slovakia had one of the most intensive high-rise building programmes in Europe.

- introducing housing-favourable tax policies;
- stimulating the legal environment;
- activating a State Fund for Housing Development;
- financial support for the private rental sector;
- providing loans for housing construction;
- encouraging savings;
- introducing mortgages, and providing housing contributions or allowances to households with the lowest incomes, and,
- monitoring housing needs at the national and regional levels.

How will the changed situation in Slovakia since 1989 affect the provision of new high-rise housing? Our view is that the construction of such flats will continue, although at a lesser rate than for other forms of multi-storey housing. Three factors are likely to contribute to their continued construction:

- the obvious housing shortage in the country, especially in the cities;
- the lower cost of construction per dwelling when compared with single-family houses;
- the shortage of building land, which is likely to lead to additional development in older neighbourhoods and on newer estates.

Pragmatic reasons for the construction of high-rise blocks have coincided with the promotion of architectural and town planning principles which emphasise their role in city-making (Aulická, 1995). High-rise neighbourhoods should not exceed 200 persons per hectare, and underground parking or garage facilities are a necessity. Service and commercial facilities can be offered on the first two storeys of multi-functional blocks, and flats need to be equipped with, for example, balconies and winter gardens. New ideas accentuate the need for differentiation in the position of apartments in blocks, with medium to large apartments for families placed on the first to eight floor and smaller ones for couples and single people from the ninth

floor upwards. Greater emphasis is being placed on the provision of small flats for single people, young families and for the elderly drawn from the lower and middle social strata. As a result, high-rise housing will continue to play an important role in the Slovak housing system.

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16 Hungary

From socialist ideology to market reality

Zoltán Kovács and Michael Douglas

16.1 Introduction

In Hungary, within a total population of little more than ten million, about 200,000 families have no secure or permanent accommodation (i.e. they live with relatives or are subletting), whilst a further two million live in conditions euphemistically described as of 'minimum comfort'. For decades, the problem of finding suitable accommodation has been one of the main causes of social tension in Hungary. In order to alleviate housing shortage, the state began in the 1960s to construct mass housing estates of nearly uniform dwellings. In attempting to deal with the problem in the quickest way possible, very low quality criteria were adopted in terms of size of flats; building materials; provision of communal facilities, etc. This is Hungary's mass housing legacy.

According to the micro-census of the Hungarian Statistical Office (1996) approximately 786,000 flats are located in high-rise housing estates in Hungary, around 20% of a total stock of four million dwellings. It is important to emphasise that the situation of these estates is less serious than for other Eastern European countries. From an early stage, Hungary deviated from such extreme Stalinist approaches as 'bulldozer urban renewal'. From 1956, and especially after the 'New Economic Mechanism' of 1968, Hungary started to develop its own 'third way', often referred to as 'Goulash Communism'. As far as housing was concerned, private or co-operative housing was allowed (and later encouraged), whilst the state permitted the development of quasi-market mechanisms such as exchanges and 'sales' of public rented dwellings. Consequently, public dwellings and high-rise housing estates have never dominated the market. However, various social and physical problems are increasingly associated with large housing estates, especially those located in declining industrial areas. The situation in the declining 'socialist towns' is now at crisis point.

Market research has highlighted the intricacies and inequalities of the Hungarian housing system. Whilst many early 'western' researchers praised its accomplishments (Compton, 1979), Hungarian researchers were critical of its inequalities (Szelényi & Konrád, 1969; Szelényi, 1983). During the 1980s, researchers began to explore further the relationship between state and market (Hegedüs & Tosics, 1983; Hegedüs, 1987) and the impact of privatisation (Tosics, 1987). However, it is important to note that with the exception of a few internal reports (Planning Institute of Budapest, 1985) and the work of Szelényi, no real research was conducted on housing estates during this peri-



Population	10,175,034
Population density	108/km ²
Capital	Budapest
GDP per capita	€8,456
Housing stock	4.0 million

od or later. The majority of post-1989 work has focused on privatisation and rehabilitation issues (Hegedüs & Tosics, 1992, 1994; Kovács, 1992; Douglas, 1996) or inner city commercialisation (Kovács, 1994). High-rise housing estates have only come into focus only as their social problems have increased (Berey, 1997; Enyedi, 1998; Egedy, 2000).

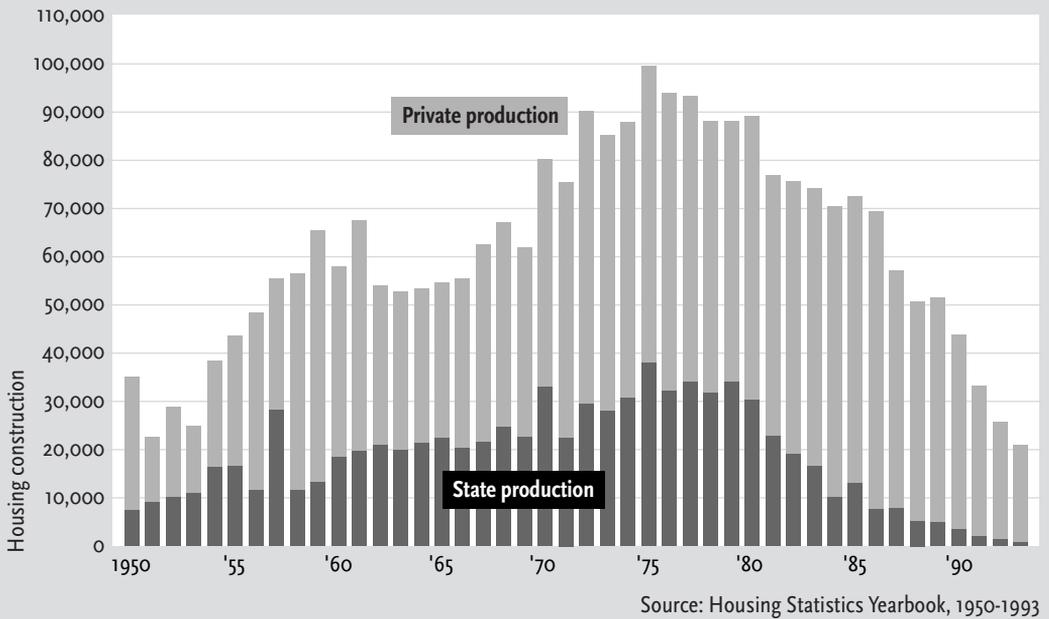
16.2 Housing policy in Hungary after the Second World War

Despite the gradual increase in house construction during the 1920s and 1930s, the quality of most of the stock remained low. At the time of the 1949 Census, more than 70% of dwellings consisted of only one room; only 10% had a fixed bath, and only 17% were supplied with running water. Due to state investment, subsequent decades witnessed a rapid increase in the quantity and quality of housing. By 1990, the ratio of single room dwellings had fallen to below 17%, 81% of dwellings had a fixed bath and 83% were supplied with running water.

The growth of the housing stock was fairly uneven during the 45 years of state socialism. Immediately following the Second World War, the capitalist production and distribution of housing – blamed for previous inequalities – was abolished and replaced by a state socialist housing policy. Under the economic plans of the late 1940s and early 1950s, the emphasis was placed on developing heavy industry and housing received very low priority. Consequently, house construction fell below inter-war levels and was outstripped by population growth. Housing shortage became acute, especially in Budapest and other urban areas. In 1949, from a national shortage of around 265,000 dwellings, the capital's share was estimated at 63,000 (24% of the total) and for other urban areas 61,000 dwellings, or 23% of the total. By 1960, the national shortage had grown to around 345,000 units, Budapest's share had increased to 120,000 (35% of the total) and the urban share to 135,000 (39%) (Sillince, 1985).

Most housing construction in the 1950s was concentrated in the newly established socialist towns, and in the traditional working class areas of bigger cities including Budapest, Miskolc (see frame), Pecs, etc. Efforts at political consolidation after the 1956 revolution had an important impact on housing policy, which in the context of the new regime's 'living standards policy', gained in overall significance. A new housing policy announced in the 1960 'Fifteen Year Housing Development Plan' was intended to satisfy housing need in full, and aimed to add 1 million new dwellings to the then total of 2.7 million.

The late 1960s and the 1970s were the 'golden age' of Hungarian housing policy, when 80-90,000 dwellings were completed annually (see Figure 16.1). The 1960 target was eventually achieved, although only by tolerating a 50%

Figure 16.1 Housing production in Hungary, 1950-1993

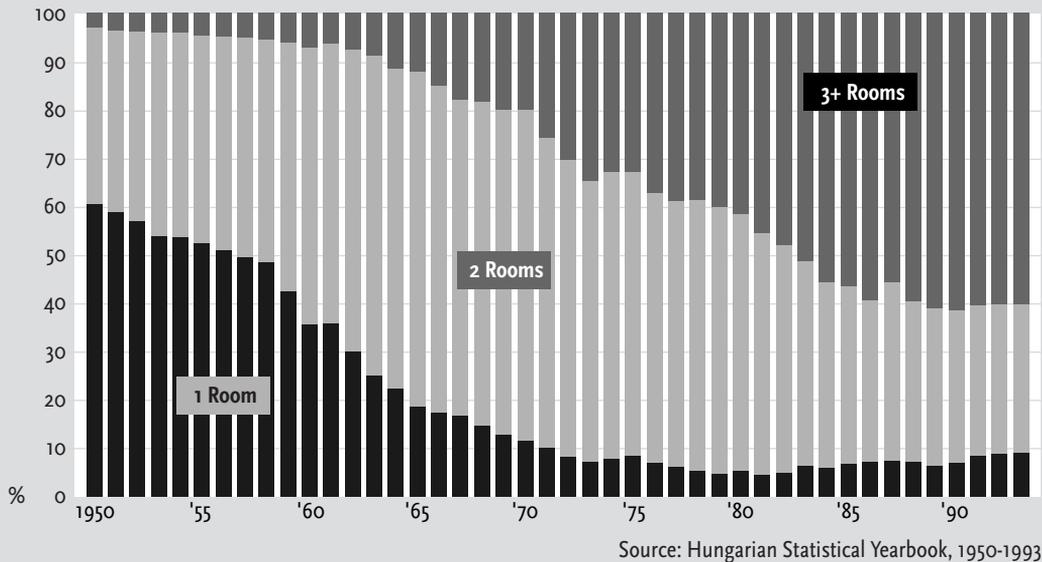
overshoot in newly-permitted private construction (Kenedi, 1981). The urban population could now access a private dwelling rather than wait six to ten years for state accommodation. However, such an option was not available to the rural population which was expected to solve its own housing problem.

Another optimistic 15-year plan was adopted in 1975, specifying a target of 1.2 million new dwellings by 1990. However, by the late 1970s, it was apparent that the economy could not sustain such a target. In 1983, the government was forced to make radical changes by abolishing the extensive subsidies previously provided for state housing in preference for private sector support. The large-scale withdrawal of the state from the housing market resulted in rapidly expanding inequalities during the last decade of state socialism. Upper status households were able to take advantage of state-subsidised loans to build high-quality single-family homes and multi-family condominiums, whilst lower status and lower income households were denied such opportunities. Whilst 35-40% of new dwellings had been constructed by the state during the 1970s, this figure fell to around 10% in the 1980s. Following the collapse of communism, the role of the state became negligible, and in 1993 for example, provided only 2% of new dwellings.

16.3 The growing role of high-rise estates in the housing market

The history of housing estates in Hungary can be divided into four stages according to the size of the estate, the building materials used, the technology applied and their design.

Figure 16.2 Housing production by number of rooms, in Hungary, 1950-1993



1950s: socialist-realist architectural design

The first generation of estates, built in the 1950s, provided mostly one or two-room dwellings for between 1,000 and 2,000 inhabitants. They were built close to the centre of towns and made use of existing transport and other infrastructure links. In typically socialist-realist or 'Stalin baroque' style, they became symbols of the new political system. The blocks were individually designed, of a relatively high quality, and were considered a step forward in standard of comfort for the average household, for example in the provision of bathrooms and in the number of persons per room. By the end of the 1950s, however, the provision of such socialist-realist architecture declined and more uniform designs began to dominate.

Early 1960s: Mass construction with traditional materials

The first large scale high-rise housing estates were produced in the early 1960s, the prototype being the József Attila-estate in Budapest and named after a communist poet of the inter-war period (see frame). Built on the site of a worker's slum, this estate consisted of 8,200 dwellings and housed more than 20,000 residents. Although estates of this period were located further away from the city centre, they were still linked by the existing infrastructure. These early examples of 'mass' construction incorporated blocks varying in height from 4 to 9 storeys, they had conventional layouts and were built using traditional materials and methods (bricks rather than concrete). Consisting of two or two and a half rooms (where half a room had less than 12 sq.m. of floor space), the flats provided increased privacy at the expense of smaller rooms (Figure 16.2).

Late 1960s and the 1970s: golden age of panel construction

From the late 1960s and 1970s, and as in other socialist countries, the state

Csapó utca, Debrecen



This high-rise housing estate was created in the early 1970s as part of the redevelopment of Csapó utca. The older inner-city was replaced by high-rise housing creating an unusually central location for such estates. The majority of the older area was simply bulldozed and replaced with 10-storey blocks, which fit neither the existing urban structure nor the street network of this former agricultural and trading centre. A large proportion of the new residents of the estate was

recruited from older people who had lived in the small single-family houses demolished during redevelopment. The remainder were mostly younger families with two or more children. This represented an interesting social mix when compared with other estates dominated by younger residents.

As Debrecen was never as industrialised as Miskolc, and has a strong service sector, the economic downturn after 1989 has not been felt so strongly. Unemployment and out-migration have been lower and there is more demand for housing in this small-scale and inner-city location.

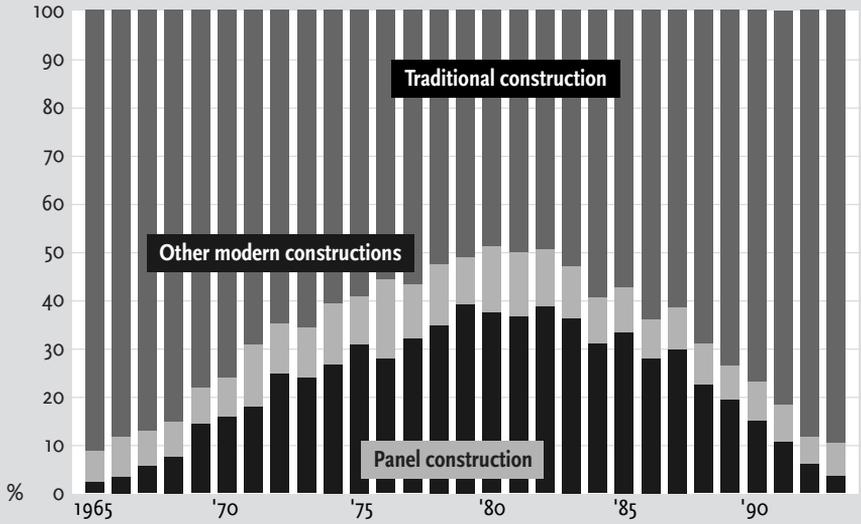
housing industry relied increasingly on prefabricated technology and the establishment of gigantic 'housing factories'. These factories were able to build extremely high density and high-rise estates of 12-15,000 dwellings housing 40-50,000 people. Due to site constraints, these estates were constructed on undeveloped 'greenfield' sites in peripheral locations. Most estates were poorly served by transport and other facilities and the organic link with the city was broken.

Most blocks were of concrete panel construction and each consisted of 10 storeys with staircases with five to ten entrances. They were uniform in design and massive in scale, and in the face of the drive for efficiency, there was little scope for alternative designs, creativity or aesthetic improvement. The 'golden age' of panel construction peaked in 1979 when nearly forty per cent of dwellings were built using this technology (see Figure 16.3).

With the emphasis on alleviating quantitative housing shortage and getting the most dwellings for the finance available, qualitative factors were often disregarded, and such planned facilities as parks, schools, stores, etc. were only partially completed or not at all. Such omissions created inhospitable environments and accompanied by poor quality construction, these estates were unpopular from their opening (Planning Institute of Budapest, 1985). It is no surprise that those estates in which physical and social problems coincide are in the most critical condition.

By 1980, when most mass housing was completed, the first (and last) statis-

Figure 16.3 Housing production by building method, in Hungary, 1965-1993



Source: Housing Statistics Yearbook, 1965-1993

Table 16.1 Tenure and size of housing estate dwellings in Hungary, 1980

	Budapest %	Other towns %	Hungary %
O w n e r s h i p			
Private	41.9	49.8	47.1
Public	58.1	100	50.2
Total	100	52.9	100
R o o m s			
1 Room	14.6	9.8	11.5
2 Rooms	55.2	66.8	63.0
3+ Rooms	30.2	23.4	25.5
Total	100	100	100
S i z e			
<39 m ²	19.7	12.9	15.1
40-49 m ²	25.5	19,0	21.2
50-59 m ²	33.8	49.3	44.1
60-79 m ²	20.2	17,0	18.1
+80 m ²	0.8	1.8	1.5
Total	100	100	100

Source: Hungarian Statistical Yearbook, 1982

tical data on housing estates were published (see Table 16.1). These data provide a snapshot of the situation at the apex of the golden age of housing estates construction when they constituted 520,000 dwellings, or 15% of the housing stock. As no major changes have taken place since that time, it is worth examining these data in detail.

In 1980, more than half of all housing estate dwellings were publicly owned, with a higher proportion in Budapest than in the countryside. The remaining estate dwellings had been financed by the National Savings Bank (OTP) and were privately owned, or were co-operative dwellings (Hegedüs, 1987). The typical flat consisted of 50-60 sq.m. divided between two rooms. There was greater variation in size in Budapest, with more smaller dwellings (of less than 40 sq.m.) and more larger ones (over 60 sq.m.).

1980s: a sales market production

During the economic crisis of the 1980s, as state investment in the private sector grew, more dwellings were built for sale rather than for public renting. Estates were built in better

quality locations closer to the city centre. They became smaller and more varied in design, combining blocks of from 4 to 10 storeys in height. Blocks incor-

porated new architectural and design features including attics, painted facades etc. as well as incorporating purpose-built private commercial facilities on the ground floor or in the basement. The size of dwellings increased, with 2.5 and 3.5 rooms common, and over four rooms possible. Environmental quality improved to include more parks, recreational facilities, and other green spaces. These are the now the 'star' housing estates which have retained their value and popularity in the chaotic real estate market which has developed in Hungary since 1989.

16.4 Allocation and access to housing estates

According to the early socialist ideology espoused in Hungary, housing was not to be a market commodity and rents would not be strictly related to housing quality. Families should have a natural right to healthy, modern, self-contained housing and they should receive it as distribution in kind, independent of their ability to pay the rent (Szelényi, 1983). As explained by Compton regarding Budapest (1979, p. 480): "Public sector housing is allocated by local authorities in principle on the basis of need determined by wealth, income, and other family circumstances", but he also stated that: "...certain elite groups within society, such as leading civil servants or enterprise managers, are favoured, however, in being accorded special provision ...those in the poorest conditions are not necessarily rehoused in the bright new estates". Cities needed educated and skilled young workers and providing dwellings for them was seen as in the interest of the whole city (Hegedüs, 1987).

These contradictions in Hungarian housing policy were first detailed by Szelényi & Konrád (1969) and later by Szelényi (1983). They revealed that the ideology of equality in housing allocation was far from true, that bureaucrats and intellectuals were over-represented in the state-built housing estates whilst lower-stratum groups had to enter the self-built housing sector to satisfy their needs. Called *Kaláka* in Hungarian, this sector is dependent on the reciprocal labour of family and friends, often building homes over a period of several years (Sik, 1988). Homes built in this way were traditionally of lower-quality and built in infrastructure-poor peripheral areas (Hegedüs & Tosics, 1992).

Szelényi (1983, p. 34) argued that "...housing allocations do not go to correct other inequalities, they tend to reinforce them". Hegedüs (1987) has argued that whilst this inequality in allocation might have been the case in the 1960s, all social groups had more or less similar chances in their subsequent access to state housing. Although disputed by Szelényi (1987), Tosics (1987) has claimed that the strengthening of state intervention during the 1970s, along with the construction of large numbers of high-rise estates, was followed by a reduction in housing inequalities. Following changes in housing

policy after 1971, more resources were targeted at the lower strata (Kovács, 1990), and more welfare elements appeared in the allocation process, such as separate waiting lists for different income groups (Hegedüs, 1987). As they had better access to housing, poor families and semi-skilled workers were now over-represented in the new high-rise housing estates (Enyedi & Szirmai, 1992; Planning Institute of Budapest, 1985). By giving greater preference to poorer and larger families, the percentage of Romanies living in these estates began to increase dramatically (Ladányi, 1993).

After 1983, with the introduction of a housing policy providing increased financial support for the private sector, access to housing became inextricably linked with the ability to pay (Hegedüs, 1987). The construction of housing estates and of homes for public renting declined, and in a major shift from socialist ideology, much new 'state' housing was for sale.

The social composition of housing estates differed according to the date of construction and the allocation policy in place at the time. In the 1950s, estates were built mostly for demonstration purposes in working class areas. Although the poor and Romanies were excluded, allocations were more equitable with a high proportion of blue-collar skilled labour (the so-called 'deserving') gaining access. In the 1960s, bureaucrats and intellectuals were able to use their power and connections to gain access to the new estates, and as loyal servants of the system they were over-represented in their populations (Szelényi, 1983). Although considered 'elitist', these estates were still socially mixed.

In the 1970s, as housing policy became more equitable, estates regained a lower status profile and included more young and large families. However, the more monotonous high-density and high-rise estates were already losing popularity, and in the 1980s, the middle-class, with support from the state for private housing, began to leave them. New housing estates became smaller and were dominated by the private sector. Few if any public dwellings were built on them, and access was determined by financial rather than social criteria. The social profile of these new and more desirable estates was more homogeneous, dominated by young professional families with children. As many aspired to a single-family house, a flat on an estate was increasingly considered as the first step in the housing chain.

16.5 High-rise estates in the housing market

Estimates of high-rise housing estates

Although the term 'housing estate' is not normally used in Hungarian statistics, three measures of their size are available. The first consists of buildings categorised by construction method, in this case by panel and concrete construction. By this measure, there were 772,300 panel and concrete construc-

Köbánya/Újhegy, Budapest

Köbánya, the 10th district of Budapest, is a traditional industrial area with a mixture of light and heavy industry. The area was industrialised at the turn of the century and has always been the domain of the lower-status working class. Today's predominantly negative image stems from the area's polluted environment, its low provision of amenities and high criminality. It is one of the more undesirable places to live in Budapest.

The high-rise housing estate of Köbánya/Újhegy was developed in the 1970s as part of a general redevelopment of derelict industrial land, and was exceptional in not being located at the periphery of the city. Built primarily for unskilled and semi-skilled workers, the estate reflects the area's high concentration of gypsies and is characterised by high density, monotony and an inhospitable environment.

Due to the negative image of the estate and the lower social status of its' residents, levels of privatisation have been very low. Although renovation of the blocks and estate are needed, residents' lower income and the inability of the local authority to assist mean that it is unlikely that much will be done. Köbánya/Újhegy is an example of a high-rise housing estate facing continued decline which will become the source of serious concern in the near future.



The Köbánya Újhegy housing estate in Budapest. The waste dump in the foreground raises many environmental questions.



Little variation in building design creates the unpopular monotony of the Köbánya Újhegy housing estate in Budapest.

tion units in Hungary in 1990, 20% of the total stock. However, this is a wide category and includes individual panel buildings in areas of single-family houses. The second measure is drawn from data on the number of units per block, in this case by the number of dwellings in blocks of over 21 units, the largest category. This option gives us 608,887 units (15.8% of the total) in 1990. This is similar to the first and last 1980 data on housing estates which gave a figure of 15.2% of the total dwelling stock. The third option is to use data on the height of blocks, selecting the 'high-rise' category of 5 storeys or above. In 1990, 443,534 units or 11.5% of the total stock housed 1,169,732 people or 11.3% of Hungary's population of 10,381,959.

The latest comprehensive survey of housing estates was carried out in Hungary in the census of 1980. At that time, there were 469 housing estates in the country officially classified as 'housing estates', 93 of them located in Budapest, 315 in towns and 61 in villages. Taking into account the housing

Peripheral estate of the 1970s in Veszprém. Note the farmland and traditional village in the background.



estates built in the 1980s and 1990s, the current number of housing estates in Hungary is about 600. According to the latest micro-census (2%) the number of flats located in housing estates is 786,000, which makes up about 20% of the total dwelling stock (Egedy, 2000). These figures hide substantial regional variations. In the late 1990s in Budapest, approximately 32% of dwellings were in 'high-rise' estates; in other large towns the figure was 12% and in villages only 0.01%.

The populations of high-rise housing estates

Since housing estates do not constitute a specifically separate classification in Hungarian statistics, it is difficult to obtain national data on the inhabitants of these 'concrete societies'. According to Egedy (2000) the number of population living in housing estates is about 2,2 million, i.e. 22% of the total population. However, it is possible to use statistical data at the urban planning (census) unit level for Budapest to identify trends in the social and demographic composition of housing estates.

For the purposes of this analysis, the authors selected those housing estates in Budapest identified in the 1970 and 1990 Census as being in one 'urban planning unit'. Combined 'comfort amenities' and social indicators have been used to compare the situation in these estates with that in Budapest as a whole for the period 1970-1990 (see Table 16.2). In 1970, the new housing estates were in a clearly favourable position in relation to such amenities as the provision of a gas supply and a bathroom. By 1990 this advantage had declined thanks to the construction of better-equipped private sector single-family homes. In 1970, a total of 102,844 people were housed in 31,799 dwellings in the selected estates, approximately 5% of Budapest's population. The number of residents had decreased by more than 28,000 (27.9%) by 1990, a reflection of the general trend in these areas and in Budapest in particular. The ratio of elderly residents (60 years or older) had risen from 11% to over 31%, whereas the ratio of children had decreased from 17.9% to 9.8%. This pattern is in direct contrast with the general situation in the city, within which the proportion of children has risen.

The inactive population (retired or non-employed) had reached 41% by

Table 16.2 Some data for selected high-rise housing estates in Budapest, Hungary, 1970-1990

		1970	1990
Population	Budapest	2,001,083	2,016,774
	Estates	102,844	74,163
Dwellings	Budapest	633,452	794,022
	Estates	31,799	33,165
Children 0-13 years (%)	Budapest	14,2	17,4
	Estates	17,9	9,8
Elderly +60 years (%)	Budapest	18,7	21,6
	Estates	11,0	31,2
Inactive population (%)	Budapest	18,1	28,4
	Estates	12,3	41,7
Physical workers (%)	Budapest	57,2	46,1
	Estates	47,3	46,5
Dwellings with gas (%)	Budapest	61,5	82,6
	Estates	95,7	96,1
Dwellings with bath (%)	Budapest	57,2	88,7
	Estates	94,5	97,2
Dwellings per building (abs.)	Budapest	3,9	4,7
	Estates	21,5	22,6
Population density (ha.)	Budapest	38,1	38,4
	Estates	312,2	225,2

Source: Hungarian Census, 1970 and 1990

1990, compared with a Budapest average of 28.4%. These trends indicated that estates built for families with children are becoming enclaves of the elderly. Original facilities such as playgrounds and kindergarten no longer meet the needs of the majority population, raising the need to review the estates' infrastructure. Compared with a sharp decline in the city as a whole, the proportion of manual workers on the estates remained remarkably stable over the twenty years to 1990. If this trend continues, the elderly and younger manual workers will become the majority populations on the estates in the current decade.

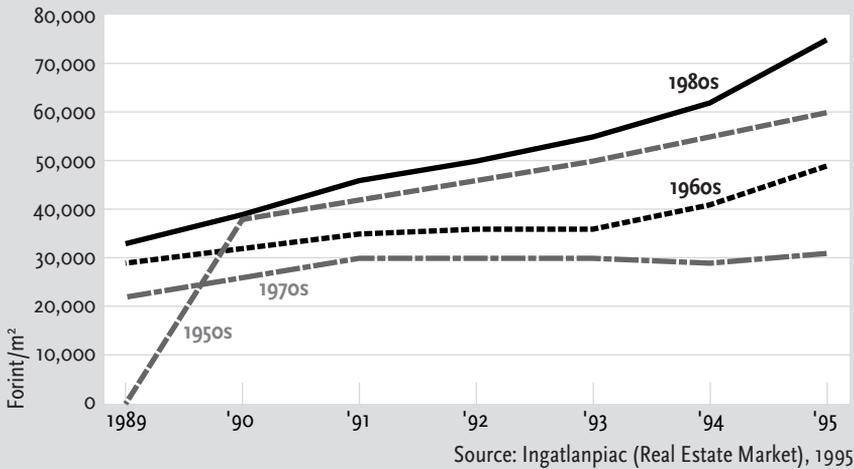
The changing social and demographic composition of estates have consequences for their position in the housing market. Certain housing estates and parts of the housing market are likely to be labelled as 'for the elderly', 'for the poor', etc. with consequent falls in their popularity and value. A predominance of low income elderly households may also act as an obstacle to resident-funded renovation.

Changing market value

Whilst the average price of flats on the selected estates rose by 39% between 1990 and 1994, their real value halved. This was due to a combination of inflation and a market correction of prices, which had been overvalued before 1989 when property was the only form of investment. There is now a growing divergence between different types of housing, especially in larger urban areas, with single-family homes retaining their value whilst other types are declining.

Different housing estates are assessed differently by the market, with location, physical structure and social image influencing demand and determining price, either singly or in combination. High-rise estates built in extreme peripheral or environmentally negative locations and occupied by lower status households have a lesser market value, whilst non high-rise estates, built

Figure 16.4 Nominal prices in selected Budapest estates, according to year of construction, 1989-1995



in better locations and occupied by upper status households have a higher value. In the last ten years, the price of estate dwellings in Budapest and elsewhere has deviated greatly from their earlier coincidence (see Figure 16.4; prices are in Forint; 1000 Forint = €6.6). The best housing estates, mostly dating from the 1980s, have been able to retain their value, whilst others are losing it at varying rates. Whilst the smaller estates of the 1950s and early 1960s (primarily non high-rise) have also been able to preserve some value, the high density and high-rise estates of the late 1960s and 1970s are in the most perilous position. With no real demand for dwellings in mass estates in peripheral or environmentally negative locations especially when they are inhabited by lower social status households, including Romanies, and where they have a negative social image, such dwellings have become a 'cul-de-sac' in the housing market.

Price divergence can also impede social mobility. In smaller scale 1980s estates, which are part of a functioning housing market, there is a healthy movement of households. 1950s and early 1960s non high-rise estates are mostly desirable places to live, and also experience population turnover. However, once a household is resident in one of the high-rise estates of the late 1960s and 1970s, it is unlikely that they will leave. With declining market values, and consequent low mobility, these high-rise estates are becoming 'islands' whose populations are increasingly segregated by age, class and culture.

16.6 Current problems

Technical deficiencies

Many problems on high-rise estates in Hungary, and especially those dating from the late 1960s and 1970s revolve around technical deficiencies. A major problem centres on the inflexibility of designs used throughout the country.

Individual flats are difficult to re-configure; they lack privacy and are often small, averaging around 53 sq.m. There are additional problems with blocks themselves, most are not energy efficient; they have major technical defects such as leaking roofs and unreliable lifts, and given the rigidity of their construction, they are expensive to modernise.

High-rise estates suffer from greater design deficiencies than their lower rise equivalents, with major consequences for the social environment. Many high-rise estates feel devoid of community and are empty of the facilities which might assist its development. Social and commercial facilities were never built, and the existence of vast expanses of open space, the so-called 'waste territories', do not lend themselves to the development of community. Poor transport links only exacerbate their predicament.

A coincidence of design and technical flaws serves to decrease satisfaction and results in an accelerated outward migration. The better-off households move first, often using their purchasing power to build higher value single-family homes with increased floor-space and improved facilities (Hegedüs & Tosics, 1992). Meanwhile, the less well off with little opportunity are left behind. Such 'social decline' causes values to fall and contributes to a vicious circle which is hard to break (Kovács, 1990; Vajda-Babarczy, 1994).

Generally, prefabricated high-rise buildings have a long life, although internal features such as lifts, pipes, insulation, etc. will need replacing after about thirty years. As a result, a huge number of dwellings were due to be refurbished by the year 2000, although hardly any work has been completed yet. The prospects are even worse as the number of flats needing to be renovated will increase dramatically by 2010. The problem is finding the money to pay for it. Data provided by Hegedüs and Tosics (1992) indicate that whilst operating costs can be met by residents, even though they have increased over 300% in five years, the cost of maintenance could be a problem for many. Meanwhile, the cost of more substantial rehabilitation and modernisation could be even more prohibitive, often exceeding a household's annual income.

Refurbishment programmes

So far, there have been no national or city-wide renovation programmes for high-rise estates – or for any other housing for that matter! This is usually explained in terms of a lack of funding, but legal complexities can also cause problems. For example in 1994, the Hungarian government received a credit of DM 1 billion (about €0.5 billion) from Germany for a variety of projects. Of this amount, DM 100-200 million (€50-100 million) was intended to renovate prefabricated buildings, enough to improve an estimated 40,000 dwellings. The funding was to go to a variety of banks, from which households could then obtain loans. In implementing this programme, a major constraint was the law regarding condominiums, now the legal status of most multi-family residential property. All renovation projects must be approved by a majority of

Diósgyőr, Miskolc



Diósgyőr was a separate village until 1945 when it was incorporated into Miskolc. Although not a socialist town, this centre of the Borsod industrial region experienced the full impact of intensive socialist development. The steel industry, which had operated in the area since the late 18th century, was the focus of this development, and with industrialisation came rapid population growth and the building of housing estates. More than half the 90,000

dwellings in Miskolc are located in such estates, a significant proportion of which are high-rise. The high-rise housing estate of Diósgyőr was developed in the 1970s primarily for industrial workers, and provided 2,500 dwellings, mostly in the state rental sector. Like many housing estates, it lacks local facilities such as shops and schools necessitating regular trips to the centre of Miskolc some 7-8 kilometres away (30 minutes by tram). In contrast with the majority of housing estates in Miskolc, Diósgyőr is located in a uniquely pleasant area at the foot of the Bükk karst mountains.

Due to the recession in heavy industry, unemployment in the area is high, out-migration has increased and the demand for dwellings has fallen. From a peak of 212,000 residents in the mid-1980s, the population of Miskolc had declined to 182,000 by 1995, and its position as Hungary's second largest city was overtaken by Debrecen. Mainly due to its location and environmental quality, and despite the inadequate provision of local facilities, Diósgyőr has fared better than other estates in Miskolc.

members, but the position of households who do not wish to participate and who do not apply for a loan is legally unclear. The decision-making process is further hampered in mixed tenure blocks, especially on high-rise estates.

In implementing the renovation programme, no consideration was given to the elderly or to the unemployed who would not qualify for funding due to their low incomes. Many households cannot even afford the monthly service charge for water, heating etc., and certainly not the cost of renovation. Higher-status households, living in newer and better-quality buildings that require less renovation, are more willing and able to obtain loans to cover their renovation costs. The worst quality high-rise blocks that require most renovation, and are occupied by households less willing or able to obtain funding, are least likely to be renovated. This predicament serves only to increase the negative status of these high-rise estates.

As illustrated, even where funding is available for renovation, its achievement has been disrupted by the complexities of condominium law; by the mixed tenure status of many blocks and by the general poverty of many households. Where high-rise estates are under the ownership of municipali-

ties, their willingness or ability to allocate money to their renovation remains uncertain.

Compared with the limited extent of renovation to blocks, there has been a high level of improvement to individual flats. In surveys conducted by the authors in Budapest between 1989 and 1995, nearly 70% of high-rise and other estate residents had undertaken some internal renovation, although the proportion fell for the elderly and those on low incomes. In contrast, less than 50% of the residents of older and poorer quality inner-city tenements had undertaken such work.

16.7 Future prospects for high-rise housing estates in Hungary

Few problems have occurred with the non high-rise and mostly private estates of the 1980s, and even though it is not so urgently required, the extent of renovation of dwellings and buildings is high. For the future, the renovation of high-rise estates is dependent on the workings of condominium law; on the availability of long-term and low-interest finance (Douglas, 1996) and on the continued impact of privatisation. Separate problems arise from the privatisation of land and buildings, where its achievement on housing estates is dependent on their location, age, construction type and social composition.

Due to their better environmental condition and more stable resident population, the mainly low-rise estates of the 1950s and early 1960s have high rates of privatisation. Although less attention has been paid to the renovation of blocks, improvements to dwellings are common, and the reputation and market position of these estates continue to improve.

Privatisation of high-rise estates dating from the late 1960s and 1970s has been limited. This cannot be explained by the cost of buying flats (available at 15% of market value) or by residents' limited incomes; it is more a consequence of the reputation of estates as monotonous and inhuman environments. Although a significant level of internal improvement has taken place, there has been little renovation of blocks. This segment of the housing market is the most problematic, especially in declining socialist new towns where it has reached crisis point.

However, it is important to acknowledge that living conditions in many housing estates, even in the worst high-rise estates, are still better than those prevailing in inner-city neighbourhoods dominated by turn of the century tenement housing. Along with continuing housing shortage, this is one reason why there are no radical proposals to demolish high-rise estates. Housing and neighbourhood satisfaction remain higher in housing estates than for older inner-city neighbourhoods, and such housing will continue to serve a role as a 'stopping off point' for younger households. For example in

József Attila housing estate, Budapest



The József Attila housing estate is considered to be the laboratory for high-rise housing construction in Budapest. The 90 ha. estate consists of 8,200 dwellings divided between 4 storey blocks and 24 9-storey blocks. Their average size is 48 sq.m. The buildings in the foreground are from the 1960s, whilst the denser 1970s buildings are in the background. Originally, the public sector owned 85% of dwellings, with the remainder being co-operatively owned. For a variety of reasons,

most of József Attila estate has been privatised. With fewer high-rise blocks and more natural features such as mature trees and open areas, it has a more human environment and with metro stops close by, a trip to the centre of the city takes only a few minutes. Due to the construction methods employed and the presence of a minority of high-rise blocks, renovation concerns are less here than in many estates. Whilst not the best place to live, it is by no means a 'bad address' in Budapest.

Budapest, our data indicated that whilst 80-82% of those living in housing estates were generally satisfied, this figure declined to 30-35% for those in inner-city neighbourhoods.

As a final point, and despite the points made above, we would re-emphasise our concern over the future for high-rise housing estates. With growing social and income differentiation, and related increases in segregation, there is the potential for some estates to become 'ghettos' for a post-socialist underclass or hotbeds of ethnic Romany strife. With few prospects for improvement, the prospects for these estates remain poor.

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17 Slovenia

Effects of privatisation

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Barbara Cernic Mali*

17.1 Introduction

Despite major achievements in output since the Second World War, a housing shortage still exists in Slovenia. As a constituent part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, housing policies were used to achieve a balance between renting and home ownership, and between the main forms of provision. The 'socially organised sector' built housing (mostly flats) for Communes (municipalities) to rent at cost or at subsidised rates ('social' housing), or for employer organisations to rent to their employees. Home ownership could be achieved by self-building, by having a home erected by a builder or by purchasing flats or houses from construction companies operating in the 'socially organised' sector.

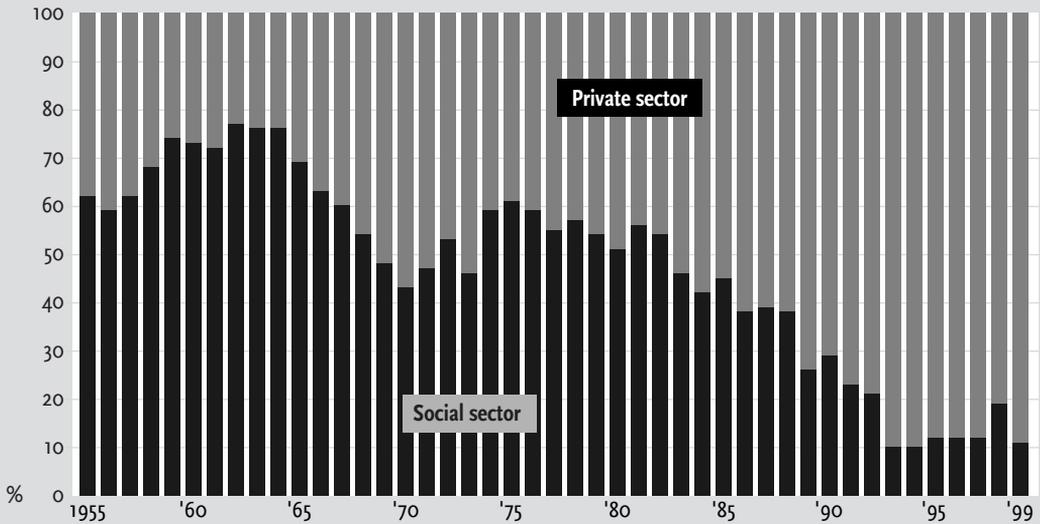
About three-quarters of the total housing stock has been built since 1946, most of it dating from the late 1970s and early 1980s. By that time, the housing shortage, as a ratio of households to dwellings, had been greatly reduced. In 1961, there were 1.17 household per dwelling; in 1971 1.09 and by 1981 1.02. The early 1960s and late 1970s were the golden age of social housing provision, with the construction of high-rise estates continuing throughout the 1970s and 1980s, when most Western European countries were beginning to address their regeneration. By 1986, the economic problems of the former Yugoslavia led to a decline in the construction of socially organised, and especially high-rise housing. As a result, the proportions of social to private sector construction have reversed from 77% social sector housing in 1962 to 77% private sector housing in 1991. During the 1990s, almost all building was in the private sector (see Figure 17.1).

Due to privatisation since 1991, the level of owner-occupation is one of the highest in Europe, reaching 89% overall, and 80% for high-rise housing. However, Slovenian space standards are among the lowest in Europe, with floor areas averaging 68 sq.m. for 2-3 bedroom units and 55 sq.m. for high-rise flats. To meet the needs of two million people, Slovenia has a total of 706,000 dwellings; about 8% of which are in high-rise blocks of 5 or more storeys, a figure which rises to 17% for the post-1960 stock. This chapter presents a brief historical survey of post-war policies and provision in Slovenia, with an emphasis on high-rise housing. It provides an overview of the main characteristics of high-rise estates, and uses two case studies to identify emerging problems and future prospects.



Population	1,932,917
Population density	95/km ²
Capital	Ljubljana
GDP per capita	€11,754
Housing stock	0.7 million

Figure 17.1 The relation between social sector and private sector housing construction, in Slovenia, 1955-1999



Source: Statistical Yearbooks of Slovenia, 1955-1999

17.2 Post-war development of housing policy and provision

Post-war housing provision needs to be understood in terms of its social, economic and political context. During the initial period when Slovenia formed part of Yugoslavia, provision was driven by federal policies geared to a central 'command' economy and realised through a series of 'plan' periods. The subsequent decentralisation of economic control transferred power to the 'regions' including the Slovene Republic. This decentralisation of decision making was accompanied by the development of the construction industry and by a strengthening of personal saving through banks, which provided further finance for construction. Five phases can be identified in the development of housing policy and provision, and which correspond with periods of economic reform.

1945-1955: The administrative period

This first period lasted from 1945 to 1955 during which time an intensive expropriation and nationalisation of housing stock and development land was initiated and which lasted until 1958. Until 1947, the reconstruction of the older housing stock was the main task, much of which was carried out by voluntary labour. Until the Second World War, farming had been the main economic activity in Slovenia, but after 1945, industrialisation resulted in a major migration from rural areas to the towns. Investment was directed at the industrial sector, and the growing need for housing and social facilities was not adequately addressed. Most new housing consisted of simple blocks of flats up to 2-3 storeys, erected in regimented open layouts with most finance provided by Federal and Republican sources.

1956-1965: The 'Housing Fund' period

From 1956 to 1965, decision making was decentralised from Federal and Republic to Commune (local authority) level. All citizens had to pay taxes into local 'housing funds' set up by the Communes, and out of these funds, credits were provided to enterprises and private individuals. Although the purpose of this reform was to stimulate private investment in housing, people still preferred a publicly owned 'social' dwelling because rents were kept very low. Regional differences developed according to the potential of each Commune to supply housing (Dimitrovska, 1988).

During this period, architects assumed an important role in the planning and provision of apartments and achieved improvements in design quality. The products of this period were innovative and pioneering and a wide range of high quality architecture was developed, including varieties of apartment buildings in high-rise and slab blocks; terraced and semi-detached houses etc. It is characteristic of this period that housing design was heavily influenced by Scandinavian architecture. Between 1962 and 1965, 14% of new housing was high-rise, of which two-thirds was 5-6 storey construction and one-third was 7-8 storey construction.

1965-1972: Market-oriented housing construction

The economic reforms of 1965 to 1972 created a period of market-oriented housing construction. The demand created by employer organisations and private individuals was met by large construction companies who dictated the cost of new housing. The funds held by Communes were re-allocated to banks and decision-making was decentralised to Basic Organisations of Associated Labour (BOAL). Housing was proclaimed a 'consumer good', and could be obtained through individual purchase or self-construction. Almost no rental housing was built, and because of rising prices, people were encouraged to purchase.

Between 1965 and 1972, numerous large estates of 3-5,000 inhabitants were begun or completed in the suburbs of larger towns. Programmes for private housing were also launched, and developments of detached single-family houses flourished. Work organisations encouraged this type of construction by offering loans, and by using such methods as self-build and stage-by-stage construction, provided the cheapest form of housing. Over this period, 18% of new housing construction was high-rise, of which 40% consisted of 7-8 storey blocks, 28% of 5-6 storey blocks, 26% of 9-13 storey block and the remaining 6% were of 14 or more storey blocks.

1972-1991: Socially directed housing construction

A major reform of the housing sector in 1972, and the constitutional reforms of 1974 introduced new principles of 'socially directed housing construction'. Housing policy was now to be directed through self-managing Housing Inter-

Two high-rise housing estates in Ljubljana

Until 1995, the city of Ljubljana was divided into five communes, which covered a total area of approximately 90 hectares. This case focuses on the experience of the new high-rise neighbourhoods of 'Fuzine' and 'Stepanjsko naselje' in Moste Polje Commune, and which contain a total population of 20,600. Located to the north-east of the city, Moste Polje extends over 15 ha, half of which is agricultural land. A significant number of Ljubljana's industrial estates are located there, together with 21% of its dwelling stock and 22% of its population.

As social dwellings were allocated mostly to young families and the majority of owner-occupiers were buying their first home, the estates have a generally younger age structure. Compared with the average for Ljubljana, the greatest difference is in the proportion of those below the age of 14. This has ominous significance for the future, with an imminent increase in the number of those seeking employment.

Generally speaking, fluctuations and general population mobility are relatively low in Slovenia. A 'low' fluctuation level is considered to be an indicator of the quality of life of a neighbourhood. The study showed that fluctuations in the estates were higher than for comparable neighbourhoods, for both owner-occupiers and those exchanging their social sector apartments. Real estate prices for comparable dwellings were approximately 20% lower than in other areas.

When the scheme was completed, approximately 70% of dwellings were in social ownership, but most have now been sold under the 'right to buy'. Unfortunately, the relatively low social and economic status of households means that owners may be unable to maintain either dwellings or blocks in the future. The study confirmed the hypothesis that the situation in both high-rise neighbourhoods is becoming critical, especially from a socio-economic perspective, and that quality of life may deteriorate further.



Fuzine, a recently built high-rise neighbourhood in Ljubljana. In both the social sector and the owner-occupied sector the mobility is higher and the social status is lower than in comparable neighbourhoods.

est Communities which introduced new ways of financing social sector housing provision. Resources were distributed according to the housing development policies contained in their medium-term 'Community Plans'. Housing Interest Communities were intended to represent 'social investors' and to raise funds through a combination of rents from publicly owned 'social' housing; from a regular 'tax' on the consumers and producers of new housing and from a general 'solidarity programme' tax at 1.65% of gross income.

New 'social sector' housing included flats for rental and private ownership

and single-family houses mostly for private ownership. However, all housing was built according to the following principles:

- housing standards were determined according to socially agreed norms;
- dwellings were built on sites for which building plans had been accepted and publicly confirmed;
- prices were determined according to a social contract between the participants in the construction process and the future owners;
- socially agreed financial measures were available, including bank loans and discounts for materials used in the co-operative construction of single-family houses;
- dwellings could vary by size and spatial organisation, but had to conform to minimum standards concerning infrastructure and level of technical equipment, and,
- location should be determined according to minimum standards of accessibility to such social services as kindergarten, schools, recreation facilities etc. (Sarec et al., 1976).

Not surprisingly, there was a revival in higher quality housing design during this period. Because of increasing economic problems, social sector housing construction began to decline from the early 1980s. There was a significant fall after 1986 due to high inflation, which rose from 30% in 1980 to 130% in 1987, whilst mortgage interest rates remained low at 4% and 10% respectively. During this period, renovation and reconstruction levels stagnated with only approximately 4,000 social housing units dealt with each year (Verlic Dekleva, 1994).

The proportion of new dwellings in high-rise blocks averaged 19% over the period 1973 to 1991, although it declined after 1981 in common with that for socially organised housing. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, blocks of 9-13 storeys were in the majority, but 5 to 6-storey blocks subsequently prevailed. Blocks of 14 or more storeys were always the smallest category, and accounted for 10% of new construction in only 1977, 1981 and 1982. However, such blocks were concentrated in some of the largest housing estates in Slovenia.

1991-2002: The new Slovenian National Housing Policy

Following independence and the emergence of a market economy, the Housing Act of October 1991 introduced a major reform of the housing sector. It was envisaged that the social housing stock would take one of three routes from public ownership:

- formerly privately-owned housing would be restituted to its original owners (denationalised), with partial compensation paid by the government (Hitij & Stanovnik, 1998);
- purpose-built rented 'social' housing would be sold to sitting tenants (the 'buy-off'), all tenants could exercise a general discount of 30% from the

value of a dwelling, and sale prices were set at 70% of book value and further discounts were offered dependent on the repayment period;

- rented 'social' housing which was not purchased by sitting tenants would be transferred to the non-profit rental sector.

As a result of the very favourable terms introduced by the 1991 Housing Act, 79% of social housing had been sold to sitting tenants by 1993. Taking into account all discounts and deductions, the average selling price has been about €100/sq.m., approximately 10% of its market value. There is no evidence that high-rise dwellings have been considered less favourably, or that the proportion of social housing sold in high-rise blocks has been lower than the average.

The 1991 Act established the National Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia, provided community (municipal) housing funds and created non-profit housing organisations. Housing Interest Communities were now abandoned. Based on new projections of demographic trends; a National Housing Programme planned housing construction for the period 1995 to 2000. The Programme anticipated the construction of 10,000 housing units per annum, of which 25% would be non-profit rental; 20% subsidised social housing rental; 50% for owner-occupation and 5% for commercial letting.

Despite these ambitions, construction has declined significantly in the last decade, and the private sector is now responsible for almost 90% of new housing. Building large estates (of more than 1,000 dwellings) is now limited to such locations as former barracks sites, for example Nove Poljane, Ljubljana; abandoned industrial sites in central locations or attractive sites close to recreational provision, for example Koseski Bajer, Ljubljana. Most new estates consist of 4-storey blocks, and the proportion of high-rise dwellings, which averaged around 12% in the late 1980s, fell to 1% by 1999.

The 1991 Act also introduced a new classification of tenure forms as follows:

- social housing owned by municipalities and reserved for low income groups;
- non-profit housing owned by housing associations;
- profit housing for which market rents can be charged, subject to limited rent control;
- corporate housing reserved for employees (Hitij & Stanovnik, 1994).

As a result of the 'right to buy', the structure of home ownership has changed radically. 89% of dwellings are owner-occupied; 8% belong to the social rented sector and only 3% are privately rented (Kuzmin & Stanovnik, 1994). Analysis of 1993 Household Income and Expenditure Survey data has identified that social rented dwellings are occupied by households with incomes less than two thirds of those who bought their apartments, and are usually smaller in

size and of poorer quality (*ibid.*, 1994). Despite the extent of change since 1991, the housing market in Slovenia is not fully developed and further reforms are needed to the system of housing finance; to rent policy and to encourage the development of the private rented sector.

17.3 A profile of high-rise housing estates

Housing provision

In 1999, Slovenia had a total stock of 706,000 dwellings, about three-quarters of which were built after 1946, and mostly in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Due to economic problems and consequent political changes, the rate of construction in the former Yugoslav republic began to decline in 1986. In 1999, 5,100 homes were completed. This is the lowest level since 1959, and compares with an annual output of 11,800 in the 1970s and 10,500 in the 1980s. In 1999, only 2.6 units were completed per 1,000 inhabitants, well below the National Housing Programme's minimum target and the European average of five dwellings per 1,000 inhabitants. Although there was a theoretical surplus of 17,091 dwellings in 1991 housing shortages persist in many areas for a number of reasons (*Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Slovenia, 1994*):

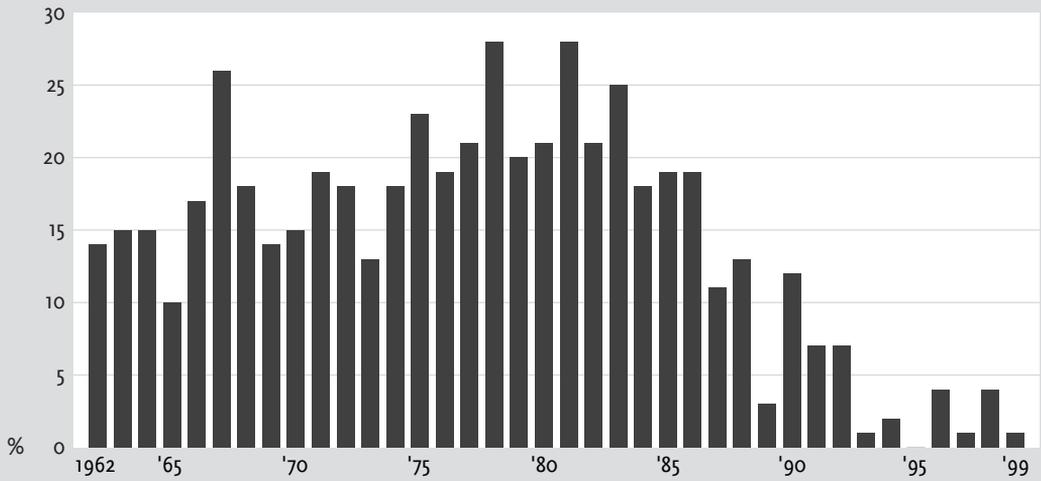
- there are regional disparities between the location of housing and pattern of social mobility, for example in 1991, there were 26,725 uninhabited housing units;
- official data ignore the distribution of units and households, including the possession of second homes and the occupancy of single dwellings by more than one household;
- official statistics do not reveal overcrowding, although a 1987 survey found that 43% of the Slovene population occupied housing at a density higher than one person per habitable room (*Mandic, 1991*);
- there are no records of the number of dwellings converted for business purposes. This has accelerated in the late 1990s, especially in inner-city areas.

Housing quality – characteristics of construction

Housing provided in Slovenia over the last three decades has been of two different forms: very low density single-family houses and high density flats, including high-rise blocks. Low density developments are characterised by the inefficient and inappropriate use of agricultural land, and by such infrastructure deficiencies as poor transport links and inadequate community facilities. High density developments are characterised by large and anonymous neighbourhoods, and are effectively 'dormitory areas' provided with basic facilities such as kindergartens, elementary schools and shops (*Šarec et al., 1976*).

High-rise blocks were usually erected with mid and low-rise buildings in barren locations on the outskirts of the towns, for example Siska SS/6 in

Figure 17.2 The proportion of dwellings in new buildings with five or more storeys, in Slovenia, 1962-1999



Source: Statistical Yearbooks of Slovenia, 1962-1999

Ljubljana. Alternatively, they were used to increase housing density in existing built areas, often to an inappropriate scale. There are very few examples of high-rise buildings constructed as symbols of technological progress or of local civic pride. The main characteristics of high-rise construction in Slovenia were as follows:

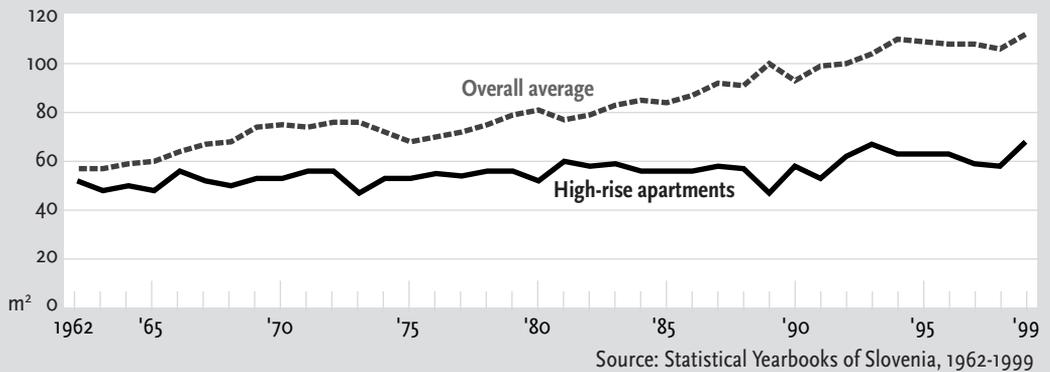
- urban design and planning principles were strongly influenced by the ideas of CIAM and Modern Movement theory;
- a failure to establish operational links between planners, designers, architects and developers;
- urban design dominated by frequently outdated building technologies;
- a bureaucratic preoccupation with prices and economic measures of success which served to exclude the views of users in the planning process, and resulted in a lack of flexibility and variety, and a neglect of aesthetic considerations;
- economies of scale and reductions in building costs which were achieved by the repetitive use of the same building types. The result was a uniformity and lack of identity in residential areas.

The 1980s were a decade of reaction against excessively large and uniform housing developments and housing developments began to be more varied. Active co-operation between participants in the housing, planning and construction processes was slowly re-established and the architect's role reaffirmed.

Housing types

According to data from the most recent (1991) Census, 37% of the housing stock in Slovenia consists of multi-storey housings (low and high-rise) and the remainder are single-family houses. Most dwellings built in the 1960s and 1970s were constructed in multi-storey blocks, for example, 59% of the total

Figure 17.3 The floor area of high-rise apartments, in Slovenia, compared with the national average, 1962-1999



in 1965 and 62% in 1975 (see Figure 17.2). In the mid-1980s, this share decreased, from 40% in 1984 and 34% in 1987 to 20% in the early 1990s to less than 3% in 1999.

Significant regional differences have always existed. In the Ljubljana central region, and in the predominantly industrial regions of Maribor, Celje, Gorenjska (Jesenice, Kranj) and Zasavska (Trbovlje-Zagorje), about 75% of the housing stock built in the 1970s consisted of multi-storey structures, of which 30% to 40% were high-rise. In contrast, in more rural regions such as Notranjska and Koroska, the maximum rate was only 3% (Sarec et al., 1976).

There are currently about 54,000 dwellings in high-rise housing estates, about 8% of which remain social rented. However, in such major and industrial cities as Ljubljana, Maribor, Koper, this percentage rises to 12%.

According to the 1991 Census, the average floor area for all dwelling types was 68 sq.m., an increase of 4 sq.m. since 1981. By contrast, the figures for high-rise apartments were 55 sq.m. and 52 sq.m. respectively. High-rise flats in urban areas were slightly smaller, at 65 sq.m. in 1991 and 61 sq.m. in 1981, compared with 73 sq.m. and 68 sq.m. in other areas. This gap is widening as the size of new private sector homes is increasing (Figure 17.3).

The residents

Who live in high-rise housing? Since 1945, demand has always exceeded supply and as a result, potential residents were presented with little choice. Combined with the absence of any official 'selection' filter for social housing, the effect was to create mixed social and ownership structures in each scheme. The construction of new high-rise estates continued on the same basis throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and as a result, there are little or no differences between the social structure of high-rise and other neighbourhoods (see Table 17.4).

The age structure in high-rise schemes is generally younger as most 'social' dwellings were allocated to young families. In surveying the education level of the inhabitants of high-rise and other multi-storey estates, Mandic (1994) identified that the proportion with degrees and/or high school diplomas was slightly above the average. However, there is a growing tendency for people

Table 17.1 Inhabitants of high-rise housing estates in Slovenia compared with national figures, 1994

	High-rise (%)	Total housing stock (%)
18-24 years	14	13
25-44 years	43	40
Over 65 years	15	18
Less than elementary school	7	13
Secondary school	26	28
University degree	15	11
Owner occupied	80	88
Tenants – social sector	7	17
Tenants – private sector	2	5
Satisfied with the quality of the dwelling	79	79
Satisfied with terms of privatisation	91	84

Source: Quality of Life Survey 1994, FDV IDV, Ljubljana

with a higher education to seek dwellings in lower structures or individual houses. The majority (84%) of those who bought their high-rise flats were satisfied in terms of price and payment, although the proportion of satisfied buyers for all housing (91%) was higher. There is almost no difference between rates of satisfaction with quality of dwellings, and differences between the inhabitants of blocks of different

heights were minimal.

The development of a market economy since 1991 has created a tendency towards the social polarisation of housing estates. However, research on real estate prices, and especially on factors influencing them, is still limited. A study (Cernic, 1991), comparing the asking price for apartments in different locations in Ljubljana identified that supply exceeded demand for the majority of larger high-rise neighbourhoods, although average prices were 20% lower than for other dwellings in the area. The main factors determining price were identified as:

- the size of the neighbourhood: 'smaller' estates were preferred to larger estates of 10,000 or more inhabitants;
- the density of estates: fewer dwellings per staircase and blocks of 4 storeys or less were preferred;
- the social and economic structure of estates;
- the 'image' that some neighbourhoods have gained recently and their growing unpopularity.

17.4 High-rise problems and remedial measures

Positive aspects

In Slovenia, many problems affecting high-rise estates are similar to those experienced in West-European countries including poor image; monotonous designs; lack of definition of external space and neglected environments. In contrast, problems with vacancies and high mobility are not yet significant in Slovenia, and the construction faults commonly identified in western countries are not so extensive. This is due to the effects of tighter legislative con-

trol, introduced after the 1963 Skopje earthquake, to ensure higher construction standards and stronger structural systems. Around 80% of high-rise blocks were built using more traditional methods, typically 'in-situ' concrete frame construction, although non-traditional methods such as 'heavy' pre-fabrication and semi-prefabrication were used in about 10% of schemes.

The impact of privatisation

Despite their good quality, some high-rise neighbourhoods, especially the larger ones, have acquired a poor reputation and are less popular among purchasers. In the 1970s, when these neighbourhoods were built, sociologists warned in vain that the proportion of socially owned dwellings was too large, and that it would lead to social homogeneity. In several neighbourhoods, the original proportion of socially-owned apartments, (over 70%), was relatively high. Rents were never economic and could not cover the costs of essential maintenance.

With privatisation, this situation has not improved. Probably the decline in maintenance and environmental quality will continue. Whilst the 1991 Housing Act placed legal obligations on new owners to maintain their blocks and to share the cost, no effective system has been developed for the management of blocks or their infrastructure, or for managing public and semi-public spaces in neighbourhoods.

The common belief over four decades that the state will take care of whatever is needed has resulted in a complete lack of awareness of maintenance responsibilities and their cost. Owners' associations or private companies are contracted to manage blocks, but due to a lack of ability and experience on both sides, such arrangements frequently do not work. Under privatisation, dwellings were sold to sitting tenants at very favourable prices, but the relatively low income of many households means that they are unable to maintain either buildings or their environment to an adequate standard. At present, there are no legal structures enabling owners' associations (or housing councils) to obtain loans or grants to finance investment in maintenance or undertake substantial repairs to roofs, facades etc.

No system for financing housing renewal has been established, and loans available through the National Housing Fund are restricted to improvements which increase the number of dwellings. Loans for major repairs can only be taken out by individual householders and not by owners' associations or similar organisations. Loans for general repair are only available for historically protected buildings.

Due to unresolved problems over the ownership of external space, the environment around blocks are frequently neglected. Green spaces, parks, children playgrounds and sport grounds are littered and lack maintenance; benches and other equipment have been vandalised; trees and bushes destroyed. In the past, these areas were common property, but their manage-

ment was never properly organised or financed. The most vulnerable areas in high-rise buildings are entrances, staircases, lifts, waste disposal areas and underground and/or multi-storey parking areas. The low number of parking places per household no longer corresponds to reality, and has led to access routes and green spaces becoming unofficial and random parking places.

Vandalism has developed to a greater extent in these types of neighbourhood, and as the case study indicates, there is evidence of younger children being threatened, blackmailed and generally terrorised by older teenagers. Places which were originally designated for the youngest population (playgrounds etc.) have become loitering places for older teenagers. Common rooms intended for use by all residents can be found in most buildings but have been 'occupied' by the same groups of older teenagers.

Management issues

A survey of housing estate management and renewal activity in Ljubljana (Dimitrovska-Andrews & Sendi, 1999) has revealed a fragmentation of management services among housing estates. It is important to note that the number of managers per housing estate is not dependent on the number of dwellings. The present structure of housing management appears to be the result of two major factors. Firstly, condominium residents are simply exercising their right (and obligation) under the 1991 Housing Act to select their housing manager. Every multi-family residential block on an estate has the freedom to choose any manager from the numerous offers made, regardless of which company manages the neighbouring block. Several cases have been reported by respondents of a single block with three entrances managed by three different housing managers. While such practices are legitimate and democratic, such practices may lead to confusion and inefficiency, especially in the organisation and execution of improvement and renewal work. The second reason for the fragmentation of housing management activity is that the Housing Act did not impose any restrictions on who may perform such work or the qualifications required. As a result, many housing management companies have sprung up in recent years, all trying to grab some of the income generated in the housing market. Apartment owners are bombarded with offers from quasi-specialists or quasi-experts in housing management, and it is unclear which criteria they are applying in the selection of a manager.

Other remedial measures

Measures introduced to tackle some of the more serious problems include:

- Urban design or spatial measures to improve the integration of high-rise neighbourhoods into the city or quarter. This can be achieved by introducing additional commercial and community uses, for example new offices, shopping centres, market places; by making improvements to traffic facili-

ties for example, multi-storey or underground car parking, and by other improvements to their image, (e.g. by revitalising public areas, parks and open spaces; by landscaping and adding public art etc.).

- Social management measures (mostly initiated by residents themselves) to improve public and semi-public open spaces. These include the appointment of professional businesses to maintain green spaces, access roads and footpaths and the appointment of caretakers to intensify supervision against crime and vandalism. Both initiatives are paid for by housing/apartment owners themselves.
- Legal measures. Clear and specific legal provisions concerning the ownership, use, and maintenance of external common areas such as green space and parking lots should be adopted. Housing managers should be allowed to carry out urgent renovation work where the physical condition of blocks may pose a danger to residents, and effective measures introduced to oblige apartment owners to accept the cost of such work. Regulations should be introduced specifying which parts of blocks require compulsory maintenance and/or renewal in order to ensure safety and quality of life.
- Structural measures to improve the technical and insulation qualities of blocks and dwellings. Structural and technical problems relate to the method of building construction and the materials used. One of the most frequent causes of structural problems is material fatigue and inadequate insulation of the construction system, which leads to dampness, mould, draught, noise, and concrete spalling. Renewal aims to assure the integrity of the building.

17.5 Prospects for high-rise housing estates in Slovenia

The relatively fortuitous 'ageing' of high-rise estates in Slovenia represents a considerable resource in securing their future, and is mainly attributable to:

- a cultural tradition of living in apartment blocks;
- the social mix of residents, such that owners and tenants live side by side, with little or no differences between the socio-economic status of high-rise and mid-rise estates;
- little or no differences in standards, especially floor space, technical equipment and infrastructure facilities, when compared with others type of 'social sector' housing;
- high standards of construction attributable to the greater use of traditional methods and the provision of strong structural systems to achieve earthquake protection;
- a lack of turnover and low mobility of residents.

The privatisation of the socially organised rented stock after 1991, the intro-

duction of a market economy in housing and an increase in socio-economic polarisation have combined to threaten the future of some high-rise estates, especially those in less attractive locations and with a poorer image. Ineffective maintenance and the need for improvement may well contribute to their decline. A revival in the general housing market would only accelerate the out-migration of more affluent households and result in the rapid 'ghetto-isation' of some high-rise estates. To stem their decline, a strategic approach to renewal and/or development is necessary, incorporating a number of stages:

- firstly, it is important to monitor changes in estates' physical and socio-economic structures in order to determine the appropriate measures at the right time; the sooner problems are identified, the simpler it will be to introduce the correct remedial measures;
- secondly, there is a need to develop strategies for different types of high-rise estate, with clear sets of objectives and actions incorporated in long-term spatial community plans (equivalent to 'Structure Plans' in town planning in England);
- thirdly, legislative and financial assistance needs to be provided at the republic and commune levels.

Proposals made to achieve spatial and ecological improvements and to generate local economic revival include:

- the improving the environment around blocks through self-help, and by establishing tenants' and/or owners' associations;
- the provision of organisational and financial support, including loans, to help maintain the estates and improve their image;
- the organisation of help and support to provide activities for the youngest residents;
- with the support of the city, the establishment of an information centre to provide information concerning employment and business opportunities; the availability of business premises and entrepreneurial courses etc.

The current physical condition of high-rise estates in Slovenia is relatively good in comparison with estates in other former socialist republics countries, and has not yet reached a stage that could be cause for alarm. However, this situation should not lead to complacency. The low-income households who became homeowners as a result of the privatisation bonanza took on responsibilities and obligations of which they were unaware, i.e. the requirement to manage, maintain and improve their own flats as well as the entire block. There are already indications that many new homeowners are having difficulty meeting their financial obligations, and the number may increase as social benefits are reduced to enable Slovenia to meet the budgetary requirements of European Union membership. When high-rise estates reach the age when major repairs are required, the inability of owners to pay for them is

likely to create an acute repairs problem. This stage may not be far away.

The large-scale demolition of high-rise estates is neither viable nor realistic in Slovenia. A combination of structural, social, urban design and financial measures should be introduced to regenerate and revitalise these areas. Such intervention would ensure that they remain desirable places in which to live, suitable for different types of household, and with a sustainable future as a valuable housing resource.

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18 Prospects for high-rise housing estates

*Frank Wassenberg, Richard Turkington and
Ronald van Kempen*

18.1 High-rise in Europe

High-rise is a unique housing phenomenon. The high-rise estates from the 1960s and the early 1970s, with which this book is concerned, are the most uniform, the most dominating, the most direct and the most visible result of post war urban planning across Europe. High-rise housing, both slab buildings and tower blocks, is the most uniform and international European housing type ever built.

We have considered three phases in the development of high-rise housing estates: the origins, the development phase until today and the future (see Figure 1.1). Chapter 1 dealt with what is now history: the origins, the birth and construction of high-rise and some general developments since their existence. Chapter 2 contained an inventory of factors that can influence the development and local market position of high-rise. This chapter continues with a state of the art summary of the present position of high-rise housing in Europe drawn from the country chapters and proceeds to examine policy options to achieve a positive future for high-rise housing in the European housing market.

Whilst formal definitions of high-rise vary between countries, we have adopted a working definition of those residential buildings which require an elevator to reach the upper floors. In general, this means that all buildings with five or six floors or more are defined as high-rise. This book has concentrated on the high-rise of the 1960s and the 1970s when most blocks and estates were built. This housing has had to cope with a history of judgements and prejudices associated with its management, use and the incidence of social problems on estates. It was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s that high-rise began to experience a minor revival – through refurbishment or new-build – in the context of urban redevelopment programmes.

New forms of high-rise associated with the late 1990s and later are quite different from those of the 1960s and 1970s. They provide a different quality of environment (better and more luxurious), different locations (closer to the city centre, the railway station, park or riverside), a different population (generally wealthier households without children) and, last but not least, a different image. This book recognises the place of these newer ‘apartment blocks’ in housing markets, but focuses on the older estates more associated with stigma and problems of location, use and management. However, it must be emphasised that blocks and estates exist within these older high-rise areas, which are functioning very well, which have a strong position in the housing market and which are popular places to live.

18.2 A current profile

High-rise as a dominant way of living

In chapter 1 of this book we identified seven motives behind the construction of the majority of high-rise housing estates during the 1960s and 1970s. These were: housing shortages, technological progress, modernistic philosophies, achieving reductions in land uses, new lifestyles, internal competition and government stimulus. Not all these motives were equally important in all European countries, but in most cases, most of them applied to a greater or lesser extent. Meeting housing shortage can be seen as a principal driver in all countries. Without the post-WWII housing shortage, the number of high-rise blocks would have been much less. This shortage took various forms: in many Western European countries, it was generated by war damage and increased family formation while in many Eastern and Southern European countries local or regional shortages emerged as a consequence of industrialisation and associated urbanisation.

After the high-rise peak, and from the mid-1970s, high-rise seemed to achieve a similar situation all over Europe: high-rise areas were typically comprised of (often a large number of) slab-blocks, most of the dwellings were in the social or public rented sector and they were located on the outskirts of towns and cities, and sometimes not even adjacent to them.

After more or less similar starting points, high-rise estates developed in different ways. In Central and Eastern European countries, the building of high-rise blocks continued until the 1990s, which has resulted in many more people living in high-rise estates in Eastern Europe than in Western Europe. In urban Southern Europe, living in flats is much more common and high-rise is also a dominant way of living.

Living in high-rise is mainly, built not only, an urban phenomenon associated with large cities. 35% of housing in the five main cities in both Italy and Slovenia is high-rise, and over 60% in Spain; half of all French high-rise is in the Paris region and one third in Hungary around Budapest. In Poland and Ukraine the skyline of every large city is dominated by ten storey flats. However, there are exceptions: in Slovakia and Belgium even small towns have high-rise blocks arising from the prestige associated with their construction.

High-rise in numbers

We are now in a position to profile the high-rise stock for all 15 countries dealt with in this book, the outcome of which is presented in Table 18.1. However, at first we need to make some remarks. Formal definitions differ between countries, but we have defined high-rise housing as those residential buildings that formally need an elevator to reach the upper floors. In general, this means that all buildings with five or six floors or more are defined as high-rise.

Table 18.1 Profile of the total housing stock and high-rise housing stock for 15 European countries

Country	Total housing stock (millions)	Year	Single-family houses (%)	All flats (%)	High-rise housing			Remarks
					Total no.	(as % of total stock)	(as % of all flats)	
Belgium	3.8	1991	79	21	305,000	8.1	38.0	a)
Britain	24.9	2002	80	20	323,000	1.3	6.5	b)
Denmark	2.5	1999	59	39	76,000	3.1	8.0	b)
Finland	2.5	2000	54	44	315,000	12.7	28.8	b)
France	28.7	1999	56	44	^{c)} 2,600,000	^{c)} 9.0	^{c)} 20.5	c)
Former West-Germany	29.7	1998	ⁱ⁾ 46	54	834,000	2.8	5.2	i)
Former East-Germany	7.4	1998	ⁱ⁾ 31	69	1,544,000	21.0	30.4	i)
Germany, total	37.0	1998	ⁱ⁾ 43	57	2,378,000	6.4	11.2	i)
Hungary	4.0	1996	61	39	786,000	19.6	51.0	a)
Italy	25.0	1995	46	54	3,970,000	15.9	29.3	b)
Netherlands	6.5	1999	71	29	422,000	6.6	21.7	a)
Poland	11.7	1998	^{e)} 14	^{e)} 86	^{e)} 1,258,000	^{e)} 18.0	^{e)} 21.0	a), e)
Slovakia	1.7	1998	50	50	303,200	^{d)} 18.7 ^{h)} 36	^{d)} 38.0 ^{h)} 75	d), h)
Slovenia	0.7	1997	63	37	54,000	7.8	21.0	a)
Spain	19.2	1998	38	62	5,200,000	30.4	48.0	a), g)
Sweden	4.3	1998	ⁱ⁾ 46	54	384,000	9.0	16.6	a)
Ukraine	18.4	2000	37 – 48	52 – 63	4,000,000 – 5,200,000	22 – 28	38 – 52	b), k)

a) Building of 5 storeys and up.

b) Building of 6 storeys and up.

c) Only social-housing sector.

d) Apartments situated on the fifth floor and up.

e) Only in cities of more than 50,000 inhabitants (circa 2/3 of total stock).

f) In housing estates.

g) Including large apartment blocks on the Spanish 'Costas'.

h) Population living in high-rise housing estates.

i) Large high-rise housing estates containing over 1,000 dwellings. When estates over 2,500 dwellings are considered, figures are about one-third less.

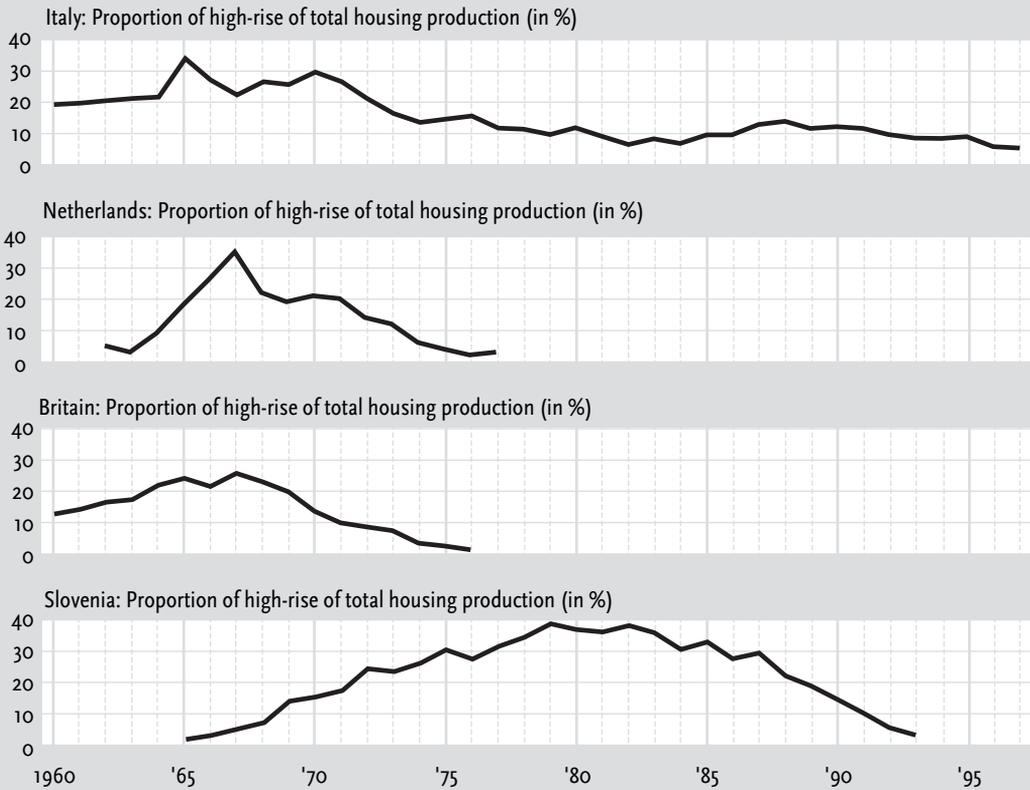
j) Single-family houses and two-family houses.

k) Only occupied dwellings, calculation by author.

Sources: the authors; European Commission, Housing Statistics 2000-2002, Tables 3.1-3.5; United Nations; ECE; Housing Statistics 2000

Another important remark is that in some countries figures do not exist. In France for example, no data for the height of blocks exist, in Poland, data are only available for cities, while in Ukraine, findings unwelcome to the government were eliminated. In some cases therefore, we have had to make our own calculations in consultation with the author(s) for the country con-

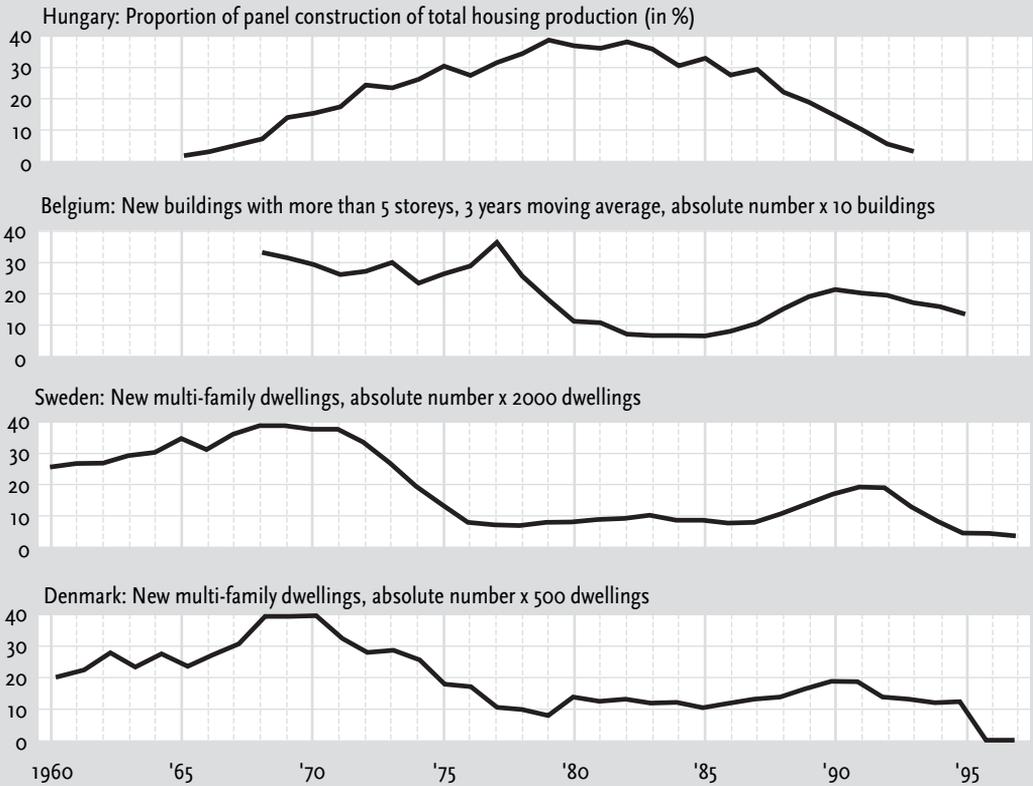
Figure 18.1 The pattern of high-rise production in some European countries



cerned. A further important qualification is that data for the total stock may differ, as in most southern countries vacant dwellings, holiday homes and seaside resorts are included, which may form over a quarter of the stock. Despite these remarks, the table gives a good overview to get at least some insight in the extent of the topic.

Table 18.1 confirms the extent to which flats in general and high-rise flats in particular vary as proportions of the dwelling stock for the countries considered. In absolute figures, there are a minimum of almost 25 million high-rise flats (24,752,000) in the 15 countries considered. Over half of them can be found in only three countries: Spain, Ukraine and Italy, and not, as some might think in Germany, Britain, France or any other Eastern European country. In absolute terms these three countries have the largest number of dwellings in high-rise complexes.

The proportion of high-rise stock is much greater in Southern and Eastern Europe than in the Northern and Western Eastern. Overall, 14.4%, or one in seven of all dwellings are found in high-rise. High-rise housing as a proportion of total stock varies from a low of 1.3% for Great Britain and 2.8% in Western Germany, to 30% in Spain and a maximum of 36% for Slovakia. High-rise housing as a proportion of flats varies from 5% in western Germany and



8% in Denmark to 75% in Slovakia and 20% in France. We can conclude that the highest numbers of dwellings in high-rise complexes as a percentage of the total stock can be found in Ukraine, Slovakia, former East-Germany and Spain.

While the largest numbers of dwellings in high-rise blocks can be found in East and South Europe, countries such as Britain, Denmark, former West-Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands with some of the lowest stocks of high-rise flats, have generated most discussion concerning their use and future. These same countries in Northern and Western Europe have undertaken the highest levels of activity in refurbishing or regenerating high-rise estates.

Building periods

Several country chapters have shown that most high-rise was built in one concentrated period. Such high-rise waves occurred in many countries, but didn't start at the same time, didn't last as long, didn't peak at the same moment and didn't stop at the same time (see Figure 18.1 for some examples). Sweden and Denmark were early with building high-rise in large numbers and served as an example for other countries such as Poland, Germany and Slovenia.

Great Britain was the first country to stop building high-rise after a major disaster in 1968, which explains the relative low amount of high-rise blocks in Britain. The British were shocked by the gas explosion in Ronan Point which devastated a whole block. It led to a nationwide halt to new high-rise development. The famous demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe estate in St. Louis in the USA in 1973 had an enormous negative impact as well. Both were more than just examples: they contributed to the emergence of a negative image for high-rise housing. Growing criticism of high-rise was associated with rising social problems (vandalism, pollution and lack of safety) and changing consumer wishes (more low-rise and single-family dwellings). In the Netherlands and Belgium, the high-rise wave stopped in the mid and late 1970s, but in Italy and Spain, where it peaked in the late 1960s and 1970s, building high-rise continued.

Technical possibilities to built large scale at high speed, only became available in the 1970s in Eastern European countries. Hungary and Slovenia had peaks in the 1980s. Building high-rise lasted until the political changes in the beginning of the 1990s in Poland and Slovakia. In Ukraine, building family houses in cities was prohibited until then.

In general we can state that high-rise building started earlier in Northern and Western European countries compared with those in the east. The high-rise wave was more pronounced in Northern and Western Europe, with a clear peak and a sharp rise and fall. Just as high-rise production was coming to an end in the west, it was accelerating in the east, whilst in the south, it continued throughout the whole period.

Current problems and future issues

High-rise estates represented the height of confidence in Modernism in housing and urban planning, but did not bring the promised new society. Soon after construction, high-rise began to be identified as a problematic housing type in many countries. Experiments with new large-scale building systems created technical problems on a large scale. The many semi-public spaces including entries, halls, corridors and lifts created non-defensible spaces, for which nobody felt responsible. These places could become insecure locations for graffiti, vandalism and pollution. Some chapters report the unsuitability of blocks for families with children although they were typically designed with them in mind.

The country chapters have identified a variety of problems which have emerged over the years. Technical problems and out-of-date layouts are mentioned in most Eastern European countries, and in Britain. At 30-40 years old, the age of most high-rise blocks means that they now require major repairs as in the Southern European countries and Belgium. A weak position in the local or regional housing market, urban, spatial design, environmental and social problems are mentioned in mostly western countries, Eastern Euro-

pean countries have more problems with legislation and finance, associated with the political reforms of their systems.

Problems may be defined at the local, national or European levels. For example, the widespread attention given to (the lack of) social cohesion in high-rise housing estates in Western European countries is at least partially attributable to the profile of this theme within the EU. As governments have placed this theme on their national agendas over the past ten years, it has trickled down to high-rise housing estates. The same may process holds for such themes as environmental pollution and sustainability.

Other issues are only problematic in relation to the functioning of particular residential areas. In countries including the Netherlands, Sweden and Great Britain, there is a fear that the high-rise housing estates are becoming less popular places to live. This is sometimes as a result of the degeneration of the estates themselves, but in other cases it is as a result of the creation of alternative housing opportunities. As attractive dwellings and areas become available elsewhere, older high-rise areas may slowly but steadily end up a lower position in the local housing market providing increasingly for those who cannot afford to move.

Situations can also vary within countries. In Britain for example, high-rise housing has an important role in the high demand markets of London and the south-east but may be stigmatised and abandoned in lower demand northern areas, a situation paralleled for the Helsinki region in Finland. Most striking is the present situation in Germany, where an exodus of people from east to west is creating contrasting situations for identical estates across the country. All countries report these regional differences, but in some countries, they are more obvious.

18.3 The careers of high-rise housing estates in Europe: patterns of convergence and divergence

Convergence

We began this book by emphasising the common origins of high-rise estates and have arrived at three contrasting destinations for the high-rise legacy of the 1960s and later:

- a general rejection,
- a general acceptance, or,
- a tolerance of this housing type.

What cannot be over-emphasised, for the liberal and democratic countries of north and west Europe, is the failure to gain general acceptance of a housing type which was imposed with the intention of achieving in reality and repre-

Table 18.2 Megatrends and their influence on the position of high-rise on the housing market

Trend	Keywords	Effect on the housing market	Threats to high-rise estates	Opportunities for high-rise estates
A. Technological trends: the world gets smaller				
Rapid growth of telecommunication	Technical developments Information technology The Information Society	People have less need to live close to their work A flexible layout of houses	Many apartments are considered too small	Creation of bigger apartments by joining them
Mobility increases	Transport growth Travel Parking problems Congestion problems	Preference for attractive locations	Estates may become less well located	Growing interest in well-located estates
B. Economical trends: globalisation				
European unification	The euro Free transport of goods and people Enlargement of European Community	Relocation to economically stronger regions	Estates in economically weaker areas may be subjected to habitation by East-European workforce after expansion of the European Union	Extra demand for estates in economically stronger regions Extra demand after expansion of the European Union
Prosperity increases	Increase of GDP	Greater demand for better quality housing Greater polarisation on the housing market	Poor quality estates	Execute technical improvements where they can be made, like joining smaller apartments
C. Political trends: the changing role of the state				
Declining role of the state	Declining welfare state Increasing market provision Increasing personal liability	Personal liability for housing More private sector activity More competition Less subsidies	Estates may experience increasing competition	State resources should be focused on 'problem estates'
Transformation in the Eastern Europe	Declining state intervention Increasing market provision Increasing personal choice and responsibility A less egalitarian society	More competition More private sector activity More differentiation between housing areas	Responsibility for maintaining and repairing remains unresolved Tradition of private sector management lacks Flight to other housing types and areas	The better quality estates and better located estates have the best changes to survive

senting symbolically the creation of a new social order. Despite the best intentions of politicians and social and urban planners, an equal or greater preference for high-rise flats of this type and generation over low-rise houses has not been established in these locations.

It is a central thesis of this book that Europe's mass high-rise housing shared similar origins in the following terms:

- the motives for construction, principally governments' attempts in the immediate post-war years to solve acute housing shortage and to create new societies through mass housing solutions;

Trend	Keywords	Effect on the housing market	Threats to high-rise estates	Opportunities for high-rise estates
D. Demographical trends: ageing and immigration				
Ageing	Growing share of retired and pensionable population	Increasing need for housing with care; more secure and more manageable homes required	Badly maintained and badly located estates are unsuitable for the elderly	Well maintained and well located estates are especially suitable for the elderly
Immigration	Economic, political and illegal immigration	Settlement in low cost areas; the experiences and aspirations of later generations may differ	Stigmatisation Transformation to ghettos Racial tensions increase where concentrations of immigrants occur	For estates which meet new housing needs Vacancies fall Creation and development of more socially balanced areas
E. Socio-cultural trends: towards greater choice and diversity				
Individualisation and emergence of new lifestyles	Changing norms and values Increasing diversity of choices	Decrease of household sizes Increasing diversity of needs and preferences	High-rise estates are seen as outmoded	Living in high-rise estates can suit individualised lifestyles
F. Crime and disorder trends: threats to safety and security				
Community safety	Perceived and actual rates of crime and deviance	Neighbourhood reputations change, a preference for safe areas	Vulnerability to crime and deviance	Safety measures in blocks and apartments may upgrade high-rise estates
G. Sustainability trends: environmental care and energy saving				
Greater concern with environmental and ecological factors	Global trends and local choices	Introduction of sustainable reuseable materials Awareness of energy consumption level	High energy use in blocks and apartments Asbestos pollution	Demolition nowadays seen as a waste Low energy use could attribute to remain in the housing market

- that this was primarily a public sector responsibility and activity;
- that development began around 1960, mass production commenced in the 1960s and 1970s and then was often concentrated in a single period;
- that high-rise construction programmes shared similar principles of design and layout and similar technologies and,
- that high-rise housing was built mostly with upper working class and middle class families in mind.

This is a powerful set of coincidences, for which there is no parallel in European housing history. The obvious question is to what extent have high-rise

estates which shared similar origins experienced similar ‘careers’ since construction? It is evident from the country chapters that the main similarities are that:

- most high-rise stock has been retained by each country;
- common technical problems have emerged across Europe, especially related to design and construction;
- living in high-rise has required a more ‘social’ way of life, and,
- most countries have undertaken measures, however limited, to tackle their problems.

Divergence

However, beyond these common features, the differences between countries have been greater than the similarities. The main difference between countries across Europe, and closely reflected in the volume of construction, is whether they view their high-rise stock as problematic or not. Here, a clear geographical distinction can be drawn. Northern and Western European countries have developed a negative critique of high-rise living and estates, compared with Southern Europe where such housing is experienced as conventional. In the Eastern European countries, high-rise is experienced as a ‘normal’ form of housing, but is increasingly problematic – especially in its technical quality. For these countries, the low level of housing construction since independence has provided little test of consumer preference for high-rise living, but this will surely come.

Once differences are recognised, a whole series of associated consequences become apparent – in terms of the location of high-rise estates in the public and/or private sectors; their position in the housing market; the extent of demolition, retention or refurbishment or the type of intervention on estates. Such countries as the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany have expended huge resources on diagnosing and remedying problems, while Spain and Italy would not recognise that a problem exists on any comparable scale.

18.4 The prospects for high-rise housing in Europe: the impact of megatrends

What will the future bring for the high-rise estates built in the 1960s and 1970s? We have indicated that external factors can be very decisive. It is our firm belief that developments in high-rise housing estates cannot be explained solely in terms of the design and architectural legacy, but need to be seen in a broader spatial, political and societal framework. All urban neighbourhoods, and high-rise estates are no exception, are part of an urban fabric, located in a regional and national context in which is in one way or another connected to European political and global economic systems. Tech-

nological developments lead to changes in communications and mobility patterns; economic developments are more and more influenced by decisions that are far beyond the control of individual people or policy makers, and in the local context, the changing role of the state affects the relative housing market positions of all kinds of dwellings and areas. In Table 18.2 we have tried to identify the wider threats or opportunities affecting the future of high-rise housing estates originating from these broader 'megatrends'.

The table shows that for all mega-trends we can identify both threats and opportunities, which might lead to the general conclusion that everything is possible. However, a closer examination of the last two columns shows that opportunities mainly exist for areas which have very positive characteristics, such as spacious dwellings, good location, better quality, etc. Threats mainly exist for those areas which are poor quality, for example, they are less well located and are less well maintained, etc. The problem is that estates in the countries examined in this book typically belong to the second category rather than to the first. Consequently, a generally negative conclusion can be formulated that if the internal quality of these estates doesn't improve, the external developments will overtake them resulting in many high-rise estates declining in status in national and local housing markets.

The enlargement of the EU in 2004 may pose a specific threat to Eastern European countries. Developments in a re-unified Germany during the last decade may well prove to be a precursor for Europe in the decade to come, if an exodus from eastern to western countries takes place. This may well lead to a decline in demand for all kinds of housing in the east, and especially for housing in high-rise estates. On the other hand, flows of public money in the reverse direction might offer greater security for high-rise estates. At the moment this does not appear likely as housing does not have priority in the EU. Investments in infrastructure (better roads, better public transport etc.) are more likely to take place, which may improve the relative position of at least some estates.

In general the greatest opportunities for high-rise are likely to be available to well located estates of secure, good quality and larger flats or to estates capable of improvement to achieve these qualities. The process of determining which estates fall into these categories can only be decided at country or regional levels.

The challenge is to translate threats, for example too many small units, poor quality structures or badly located schemes, into opportunities, by systematically assessing the potential of flats, blocks and estates. In such a situation, some action is required and this book closes with a summary of the lessons learned from experience across Europe in determining the future of high-rise as a housing resource.

18.5 The prospect for high-rise housing in Europe: choices and dilemmas

In this section, we have summarised the sequence of choices and dilemmas facing policy makers considering the future of high-rise estates across Europe, especially where the option to improve estates and secure their position in the housing market is being considered.

1. To retain or demolish?

The fundamental question is whether to retain or demolish estates. We have identified that some estates have already been demolished, the majority of demolitions having taken place in France, the Netherlands and Britain, with Germany planning potentially huge clearances. A number of contributors have referred to the 'critical age' of 30 years before modernisation, improvement or refurbishment are required. Most improvements have been fairly modest until now, with estates and blocks kept in the same product-market combination. In Italy, Belgium and most of the Eastern European countries, essential repairs are one of the most important issues for the future.

Why should flats be demolished? One reason might be that their quality has decreased so much that they have become impossible places to live in. In such cases demolition is almost inevitable. A low demand may be a second reason for demolition. Increasing numbers of vacancies lead to declining incomes for landlords and generally make the estate an unattractive and even unsafe place to live. However, while demolition would be a solution in cases like this, it may also be possible to make major improvements, such as combining dwellings to create more internal space, making dwellings more luxurious, for example by providing better insulation, balconies, central heating, etc. In other words, low demand does not necessarily have to lead to demolition.

A third reason for demolition might be the wish to change the population structure of an area. This intervention is used more in the Netherlands where the social mix of an area is changed by offering different kinds of dwellings. This generally means demolition of low-rent dwellings and rebuilding more expensive dwellings (often in the owner-occupied sector). It is a clear example of trying to solve social 'problems' with physical measures, but in our opinion, demolition for this reason is disputable. Firstly, it is often unclear what the problem is with the present population structure, and secondly, it is unclear what the effects of the intervention are. Problems may only be relocated as low-income households have to move elsewhere if they can find an affordable dwelling.

Overall, our opinion is that demolition is an ultimate solution only where other measures are not possible. There are millions of high-rise flats in Europe. Even if demolitions were to double or triple per country – which is not very likely – most high-rise would survive for at least one more genera-

tion. It is our view that most high-rise housing estates are here to stay for decades to come. In most cases, various form of improvement (management, physical, social etc.) will need to take place. What is clear from the country chapters is that problems can be turned round and spirals of decline can be reversed. There are both threats and opportunities, but the risk of waiting is that negative trends and developments will overwhelm the situation.

2. To focus on the estate or a wider area?

The second dilemma is deciding whether the focus should be placed on the estate itself or on a wider area, for example, the immediate neighbourhood beyond the estate, an administrative area or the local housing market. This question is associated with a consideration of the impact of the estate on the surrounding area and vice versa. The risk is that an estate may be retained but improved in isolation from factors which may affect its sustainability, for example changes taking place affecting the choice of housing in the area or to local employment patterns. Useful advances have been made in Britain and the Netherlands in understanding estates in the context of the operation of local housing markets. One fundamental issue is that often causes of decline are not local at all (see section 18.4), and have their origin in national or even international developments, a realisation that may lead to a form of decision paralysis.

3. To focus on the present or a future use?

The dilemma here is the time frame to be adopted in planning the future for housing estates. It may be there is a strong imperative to improve the quality of life of the current residents of an estate but they may be mainly older people who will be replaced by other populations within 10-15 years. Demographic change is one of the most important reasons for adopting a 10 or 20 year perspective, but changes may be planned to the transport infrastructure, educational, health or leisure provision, all of which will have an impact on the future use and status of an estate. Deferring action is not tenable when there are serious problems in the dwellings and complexes with, for example, draught, leakages, mould, etc. In all cases, residents should be involved in determining the options for the future of their homes.

4. To retain or change the market position?

A key question in considering the future of an estate is its current market position, both whether and how this might change. A relatively simple way of achieving this is to transfer the ownership of public sector flats to the private sector, but there are particular issues concerning the future upkeep of blocks and the estate environment.

Through privatisation in Eastern Europe, many flats have been sold or even given away to their tenants, but all the authors from these countries have

identified problems with organising and paying for the future maintenance of blocks and estates. The famous 'Right to Buy' policy was introduced in Britain for municipal tenants in the 1980s, but the cost of the maintenance of blocks have acted as a disincentive. In contrast, most high-rise housing in Spain and Italy has been owner occupied for decades, and shared responsibility for management and maintenance is regulated by law.

Another way of changing market position is to refurbish flats to a higher standard for wealthier consumers, either individually or as whole blocks. Several chapters have identified successful experience in both the rental and owner occupied sectors.

5. To leave alone or to make changes?

It may well be that no changes are necessary to ensure the effective functioning of an estate, but as almost all authors have indicated, measures are increasingly required to ensure their sustainability. A range of changes have been described or suggested to achieve this:

5a Making changes to the estate and its environment

One of the main problems of many high-rise areas is their monotony: by appearance (similar blocks); by function (only housing); by dwelling type (all flats); by tenure (often rented); by price (inexpensive); by population (certain groups dominate) and by use (short term). A wide range of approaches are available to bring more variety into high-rise neighbourhoods for example by refurbishing blocks to give them a distinctive identity, as in Britain; by introducing other types of dwellings, as in the Netherlands or by restructuring external space, as in Finland and Sweden. Spain and Slovenia are examples where in recent years attention has been paid to improving the amenities on estates, for example, by adding shops, leisure facilities, police stations and libraries. Although the location itself cannot change, its relative position can be affected by improving public transport or by (emphasising) the advantages of an uncongested outer urban location.

5b Making changes to the management of the estate

Management changes may achieve remarkable improvements in the fortunes of an estate, irrespective of any other intervention, for example, by matching the resources of the block to the housing requirements of specific groups, such as students, single or older people; improving security by the introduction of concierges and neighbourhood wardens and improving common areas by increasing the level of caretaking. Another change is to take firm management action against anti-social behaviour which undermines the intimate living environment of blocks and estates.

A high-rise block is more complex than a group of houses. Maintenance and repairs to the exterior and to common areas have to be agreed with all owners,

irrespective of whether they are directly affected by leaking roofs or broken down lifts. Some form of common ownership of shared parts of the block, for example the Swedish and Danish cooperatives or the condominium principle, is essential if blocks and estates are to be effectively managed and maintained.

5c Making changes to the image of the estate

An important issue is the local or wider image of an estate, and most authors have identified problematic high-rise estates with poor reputations. The image of an estate cannot be changed just by renaming it, such transitions have been achieved in Britain and the Netherlands but only by dedication to a lengthy, time consuming and resource intensive process. Changing an established negative image may take a very long time and requires tangible improvements to be made. Active image promotion aimed at residents and outsiders may be an important strategy but needs to be associated with physical improvements.

5d Making changes to the life chances of estate residents

If only technical or management measures are introduced on estates housing the socially disadvantaged or where social cohesion is an issue, they may end up living in attractive dwellings in nice surroundings but their life chances remain unchanged. Social and economic measures introduced in the context of estate refurbishment schemes are a developing theme across northern and western Europe, and include providing child care facilities, developing employment and training programmes or introducing crime prevention measures as introduced in Germany, Denmark, Sweden, France and the Netherlands.

5e Achieving change: the dilemma of adopting an integrated approach

Increasingly, experience with regenerating high-rise estates throughout Scandinavia, Britain, France, the Netherlands and Germany has led to the same conclusion, that the most effective means of achieving effective long term change is an integrated approach where this consists of:

- a holistic assessment of the potential of the estate and its residents;
- involving residents in a partnership with professionals to determine the options for change and the process of change, and,
- a review of all measures possible, and their likely impact on each other.

The dilemma of adopting this form of 'best practice' is that it is resource intensive and time consuming, and may involve years of study, preparation and planning without anything tangible being achieved. There is the risk that a 'best practice' approach may become overly complex when the priorities for local people are simple, for example, that the streets are kept clean, open spaces better managed, a 'lick of paint' is provided here and there, and anti-

social behaviour is dealt with. It is essential to find the right balance between short term 'quick wins' and more extensive, expensive and long-term structural change. The danger is that by the time these have been achieved, frustrated and disillusioned residents have grown tired of waiting and have simply left!

18.6 A final message

If there is one message which this book can offer, it is that there is no single future for high-rise housing estates across Europe. From common origins as a European housing form, country-specific cultures, histories and conventions have shaped patterns of use, identity and quality which will have the final say in determining whether this legacy will constitute a future resource or a liability. High-rise estates are also confronted by pan-European megatrends which offer more threats than opportunities. In this context of uncertainty, the danger for many countries is that nothing is done and the opportunity of intervention is lost. Then the threats will become a reality. What is clear from policies with respect to restructuring high-rise estates, is that there seems to be a general idea that negative developments can be counteracted. Policies and strategies can be carried out to displace spirals of decline by positive policy actions. Doing nothing can be an appropriate policy, though not very often. The complexity of high-rise housing requires that all actors, from residents to landlords, from municipal authorities to national governments, must work together to identify a sustainable future for blocks and estates. This legacy of 25 million flats is too valuable a housing asset to squander in any of the 15 countries we have considered.

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North and south, east and west, similar dreams were shared in different political cultures, high-rise was as an expression of the new Europe. A generation later, products which shared similar starting points have reached very different positions. This book attempts to tell the story of high-rise housing in 15 European countries, from first thoughts to current realities and finally to future prospects.

What is clear is that, irrespective of its status and quality, high-rise housing is here to stay. No country is in a position to ignore this legacy of the post-war and mass housing period. We have to be equipped to assess the contribution of high-rise housing and to determine its future – this book is a major contribution to developing this perspective.



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