

## **Large Housing Estates in Europe**

### **General Developments and Theoretical Backgrounds**

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# Large Housing Estates in Europe

General Developments and Theoretical Backgrounds

**RESTATE report 1**

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RESTATE  
Restructuring Large-scale Housing Estates in European Cities:  
Good Practices and New Visions for Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Cities

Utrecht 2003  
Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University



# RESTATE

RESTATE is an acronym of the international research project Restructuring Large-scale Housing Estates in European Cities: Good Practices and New Visions for Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Cities.

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# Preface

This report is the first one in a series. It contains the theoretical backgrounds and developments of a European Union project within the 5th Framework Programme: Restructuring Large-scale Housing Estates in European Cities: Good Practices and New Visions for Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Cities (RESTATE). RESTATE focuses on the developments and futures of large housing estates in ten European countries (France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom). It is carried out by 12 research institutions, and by more than 30 enthusiastic senior and junior researchers. The project started in November 2002 and will be finished in October 2005. During these three years a number of reports will be published on paper and on our website. They will all focus on the large housing estates in the cities and countries under review within this project.

We would like to thank Roger Andersson, Eva Öresjö, Ellen van Beckhoven and especially also Manuel Aalbers and Karien Dekker for their useful comments on an earlier draft of this report. Wanda Verwey helped with the last details. We hope that reading this report will stimulate the reader to take a look at our website (<http://www.restate.geog.uu.nl>) and the other RESTATE reports.

The authors,  
June 2003



## 1.1 RESTATE: a general overview

Cities and their regions are the dynamos of the European economy, enabling the European Union (and potential member states) to maintain a strong position in the global economy. When these cities contain large areas that are not faring well, it is important to find out how best to change them in order to remove the dysfunctional characteristics. Large-scale housing estates built in the three or four decades after the Second World War are often seen as problem areas in many cities all over Europe. Here, economic decline goes hand in hand with physical and social decline.

All over Europe massive numbers of people live in these post-WWII large-scale housing estates. The estates were carefully planned, but now often manifest a multitude of problems. They house large numbers of low-income households, the unemployment rates are above average and in some countries they have become concentration areas for ethnic minorities. Many estates are becoming increasingly associated with crime and social exclusion. The circumstances on the estates and policy initiatives associated with these are the focus of the RESTATE project. An important part of the project is the exchange of experiences and solutions between policymakers and scientists.

RESTATE is the acronym for 'Restructuring Large-scale Housing Estates in European Cities: Good Practices and New Visions for Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Cities'. All participants in this project share the basic underlying conviction: if the problems of these large-scale housing estates are not resolved, they will increasingly hinder the good economic functioning of the cities. The study draws on estates in ten European countries: France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The project has the following objectives:

- to identify and to clarify the social and economic changes which have occurred in large post-WWII estates and particularly to identify general and specific factors triggering and influencing the emergence of problems and patterns of decline in these areas;
- to develop a checklist of items that have proved to be important in successful and less successful policy responses with respect to these estates;
- to draw conclusions about the potential for cross-national transfer of knowledge and experience and for cooperation in strategic planning for these areas and in area and estate management;

- to produce a comprehensive and practical handbook in which forward-looking scenarios and new visions for large post-WWII estates in Europe are associated with examples of evidence-based best practice to achieve sustainable future development of these areas;
- to build for practitioners and researchers a user-friendly database containing details of the nature, successes and failures of present policies aimed at improving the position of large post-WWII estates and their inhabitants;
- to consider whether and how European level policy could contribute to more effective responses to problems associated with these estates.

The primary objective of RESTATE is to deliver evidence-based knowledge drawing on the experience in cities in all parts of Europe. The methods used in the research are literature research, statistical overviews, interviews, a survey and discussions with urban representatives. The proposed handbook that will be written at the end of the research period will set out best practices for future sustainable developments of these areas and for effective policy implementation. It is hoped that the results will be useful for policymakers seeking to find out the contexts in which measures have been, or can be expected to be, successful in improving large-scale housing estates in cities.

Case studies are the heart of the project. Each study:

- establishes general information about the estate: its characteristics, history, demographic, social, economic, and physical development and problems;
- identifies the philosophy and aims of the policies that are being promoted in the estates, how policies have matured over time, what the effects of the policies are and how all this can be evaluated.

It is important to know what we mean by a large-scale housing estate. Following Power (1997), we could define a large-scale housing estate as a group of buildings that is recognised as a distinct and discrete geographical area. We add one element to this definition: we see large-scale housing estates as developments planned by the State or with State support. With respect to size, we confine our attention to housing estates with at least 2,000 housing units. The focus on the project is on estates built in the second half of the 20th century. Taking these elements together, this project is concerned with large-scale housing estates built in the second half of the 20th century that can be defined as groups of at least 2,000 housing units that are recognised as distinct and geographical areas, planned by the State or with State support.

## 1.2 The contents of this report

This is the first report of a series in which we will focus on the past and future developments of large-scale housing estates, built in the period after the Second World War. In this report, we will focus on the existing knowledge with respect to these estates and their developments. The general question to be answered is:

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<sup>1</sup> In the rest of the report we will refer to these estates as *large housing estates*.

*What are the structural and other factors that explain the difference between the success and failure of large post-WWII housing estates?*<sup>21</sup>

To answer this question, we will first pay attention to the large housing estates themselves. In chapter 2 we will focus on the origin, the past and their present situation on the urban and regional housing markets. Chapter 3 is about the present problems in these housing estates. In chapter 4 we focus on the general theoretical notions and developments with respect to neighbourhood developments. We will end this report with a set of unresolved questions (chapter 5); many of them we hope to have answered at the end of the RESTATE project in 2005.



## 2

# Large housing estates: origin, past and present

Large housing estates were built throughout Europe on a massive scale after the Second World War. The production periods differ widely. Whereas their production as mass housing was stopped in most Western countries by the end of the 1970s, building large housing estates continued until after the political changes in Central and Eastern Europe in 1990. In this chapter, we will describe why and how the European large housing estates were built, what differences in meaning and urban design are prevalent and what developments the built environment went through over the four decades from the production to the present state.

### 2.1 Predecessors to post-WWII housing

The roots of the European large housing estates lie within the bad housing situation for the majority of the working classes in most of Europe around the turn from the 19th to the 20th century. Throughout the continent, the growing towns and cities with their high demand for manual and office labour provided a mix of residual homes from the pre-industrialist periods and tenement 'barracks', terraced houses or workers' estates near the factories of often poor quality. Despite a high production output on an almost unregulated market, the urban extension of the late 19th century did hardly reduce the gap between demand and homes on offer, as rural people massively immigrated looking for industrial jobs. Disease, a lack of fresh air and severe overcrowding were amongst the reasons for the housing question to be high on the agenda of politicians and social reformers from all sides of the political spectrum (Engels, 1872; Reulecke and Huck, 1981; Tarn-Lund, 1971). Increased political demands for improved housing and in some cases violent housing riots in Europe's industrial regions during the late 19th century added to the evidence that change in the quality and quantity of mass housing was necessary.

Four reform strands of housing emerged before 1914:

- Firstly, there were interventions and regulations to benefit public health through the regulation of water and sewerage systems and the establishment of measures to reduce the risk and spread of disease. Although this led some unhealthy housing to be condemned and demolished it was not a building programme.
- The second reform, related to the garden city movement, started to provide an 'anti-urban' model mostly for the (lower) middle and upper working classes.

- In a deliberate contrast to this development, the third reform involved an urban tradition of four to five floor blocks of flats. This was taken up by a wide range of builders from a philanthropic or a labour-movement related background, and converted to 'reform-blocks' in many of the urban agglomerations, especially in the countries under German/-Austrian influence. Usually not very different in their architectural form from the mass-building practice of the day, these blocks were built for the working classes and provided a layout with yards opening towards the streets, well designed and equipped flats and services for the residents. Often organized as housing-cooperatives, these blocks of flats from the beginning of the 20th century were meant to provide humane housing conditions in an urban environment for a population which communicated closely and was politically engaged.
- A fourth strand were quality housing estates, which were directly related to mining or factory complexes. With their decidedly hierarchic urban design, the continental 'Werksiedlungen' (Lepper, 1989) often provided a mix between a garden-city ambient and the reform blocks. Similar developments in the United Kingdom included well-designed urban villages such as that built at Bournville for workers at the Cadbury factory in Birmingham.

Whereas the architecture of reform housing was usually highly traditional, the production methods were increasingly influenced by industrial methods. The built provisions for the social life of the residents were often highly modern and directed at easing life in an industrial society, e.g. with food served in common dining-halls. However, none of these models, though highly important as learning fields for later generations of planners and builders, had much of a quantitative impact on the housing situation of inhabitants of towns and cities. Throughout the continent, at the beginning of the 20th century, the majority of the urban working classes still lived under the deplorable conditions of an unresolved housing question and in often neglected quarters.

The ideas on the reformers' shelves for the development of larger new housing estates could only be generally realized after the First World War, when the consequences of a lack of new investment during the war, the destruction of parts of the housing stock, and more so, the consequences of mass-migration into the industrialising towns and cities, had to be dealt with. Whereas formerly the State intervention in the housing market was limited and not backed by major subsidy programmes, a change of scale in the problem and fears of unrest or revolution induced the states to engage in the provision of housing.

On a smaller scale, but as widespread as the post-WWII estates, new building for a new form of society and everyday life started with the 1919 cultural revolutions sweeping through Europe. With the State and local authority, building and housing cooperatives and tenant-oriented political parties, new actors came on to the stage. In the Western democracies, the State supported production of decent and modern housing at the beginning 'for heroes of the war' was seen as a part of social provision for large parts of the population. War losses along the former frontlines had to be compensated, especially in countries like France and Belgium but the new building was by far more widespread. The situation was even more difficult in most of Central and Eastern Europe, where borders were shifted and social and political revolutions had taken place. Hungary, Austria and Poland, and the Eastern parts of Germany near the new Polish border had to accommodate millions of migrants in the already overcrowded towns and cities and sought to provide homes for emerging more democratic, or at least appeased societies. The same applied to the emerging USSR where a new generation of homes and new

towns, built directly from State funds and by State enterprises came into existence from the 1920s onwards.

Modern industrial methods of mass production were increasingly utilized within an urban concept of cautious land use, which should eventually have enabled large groups of the society to benefit from this heavily subsidized type of social housing. The scale of the 'settlements' and the blocks remained 'humane': there were often less than a few hundred flats on the estates. The buildings on average had three or four floors with staircases combining a maximum of 10-12 flats, which allowed for the intimate knowledge of the resident families. Only some urban 'flagships' exceeded six or seven storeys of specially designed homes with services for single persons and childless couples. The majority of all of the housing built under these programmes was rental and cooperative housing; but owner-occupied low-rise homes were often added, to achieve a social mix across class boundaries. Schools, shopping facilities and the doctor belonged to the estate, which was designed as a surveyable and integrating neighbourhood.

The new building philosophy, proclaimed amongst many others by the Bauhaus School and the Dutch Nieuwe Bouwen provided an important contribution to modernism in housing, while in the United Kingdom the Tudor Walters report and ideas from modern town planning were increasingly influential. All of these were of practical influence internationally. Principles of spatial organization of the neighbourhood, carefully designed flats, the open access to greenery and quality public space were professionally agreed upon and had a great influence on the later building, as many of the policy-makers, planners and architects active during this period reappeared as the builders of the large post-WWII estates. Their perspective ranged from a purely humanistic approach to a dominance of technocracy, and, on the other hand, to very radical notions of how architecture could and should shape the new society and mankind along the demands of industrial production, apparent in the writings of Le Corbusier, 1923. However, also some of the industrialist monotony emerged.

Many large housing estates were designed according to the principles of CIAM: often not only residential areas were separated from workplaces, also public transportation and car traffic were separated from pedestrians and bikes by the construction of elevated roads and subway lines.

Many of the estates of the 1920s and early 1930s have proved highly sustainable. After adjustments during the 1980s, they remain a considerable, attractive and well rentable stock of socially inclusive neighbourhoods even after about 80 years.

## **2.2 Building large housing estates**

After the devastation of the Second World War in Europe, massive building was needed to replace the properties destroyed or damaged in the war, to make up for the lack of investment in housing during the war years and to house the millions of 'displaced persons', who were needing accommodation. Almost all European states embarked on housing programmes, which had the production of estates as a central instrument before 1950. This policy for social housing culminated during the 1960s and 1970s in the construction of hundreds of tower blocks in UK cities, the Banlieue projects around Paris and massive national efforts like the Swedish 'One

Million Programme'. In 1972, the East German government proclaimed that by 1990, ironically one year after the later collapse of the State, the housing question would be solved.

Some early experimental projects, usually recreating heavily bombed places, were focussed on heavily destroyed regions, e.g. along the French Canal coast, the Western regions of the Netherlands, or the totally devastated city of Warsaw. These early projects, which are presently getting attention, are understood to have a sufficient core quality to make them easily sustainable for the future. To secure or regain social stability, a mix of refurbishment and limited restructuring in combination with some additional new types of housing-infill are suggested to allow to take in additional residents on locally cramped housing markets.

The early cases were soon followed across Europe by larger projects of often more than a thousand flats or houses to accommodate population growth caused by migration from other parts of the country and increasing birth rates, first especially in the regions characterized by an economy that relied on traditional heavy industries. These were the regions that needed an increasing number of workers. Estates were added to the edge of cities and urbanization increased. In Western Europe new estates and urbanized centres were sometimes built to contribute to restructuring the country and new town programmes were prominent in the UK, France and Sweden. Such new estates and towns were more common and massive in Eastern Europe and industrial towns like the 1950s foundations of Stalinstadt (today Eisenhüttenstadt) in Germany, Hungarian Sztalinváros (today Dunaujváros) or other 'socialist new towns' were deliberately – and often only on political grounds – placed in rural areas.

Most of the Western European projects were on a moderate scale and of a simple architecture. Modern elements, quite usual in the inter-war architecture, were only cautiously integrated (examples in France). Most of these estates still impress through their mix of decent housing quality and exceptional landscaping. The squeezed post-WWII economies produced a high quality, which proved too expensive in Central and Eastern European countries to pursue for the future.

The really large estates of a different architectural and urban design quality followed with UK towns building high-rise flats as part of slum clearance programmes near the centre of cities as well as on greenfield sites elsewhere. In Genoa, a wall of estates was built on top of the hills surrounding the old town and in southern Italy large social housing estates replaced some of post-WWII bidonvilles. But even though conflict often arose over the claimed land, the model seemed to work well during the first years. All over Europe, the new estates were understood to be a signal of better times, modern times to come. The well equipped homes were something like a gift by a good state.

### **2.3 Changes in patterns of space and use**

Over the period between 1960 and the mid 1970s, with a strong continuation until after 1990 in Central and Eastern Europe, over 45 million dwellings were built in European estates of over app. 2,500 flats, of which about 34 million are to be found in the states of Central and Eastern Europe. The period of mass housing in which high-rise and industrialized building methods were prominent were experienced across Europe in the 1960s and 1970s. The Western large post-WWII estates may have variable significance for local and regional housing markets,

which in some cases they dominate. However, in Central and Eastern European towns and cities, and also in some rural areas, this type of housing 'makes' the landscape.

For some time, the pictures resembled astonishingly across all Europe under the strong influence of the generation of the pre-war modernists, who had endowed a quasi general agreement over the urban form of modern housing. Comparing the works of Oskar Hansen in Poland, Le Corbusier in France and other Western and developing countries, Walter Gropius and Max Taut in Germany the estates show a level of conjunction that supersedes all political boundaries. Designed urban landscapes of 'internationalist modern' medium and high-rise buildings in carefully designed open space prevail. The civic and commercial centres were still rather withdrawn; the car with parking lots had not yet taken over urban design.

Only during the later 1960s and 1970s, the scale of the new estates outgrew the dimensions of individually recognizable neighbourhoods with often tens of thousands of flats. Size became the motto of the often mountainous estates that followed. An orientation on quantitative growth swept away the principles of earlier periods. Twenty or more stories and urban layouts, which often seemed designed more for the birds-eye than for the pedestrian dominated (the Bijlmermeer in Amsterdam is not the only example). Even though the majority of the Western estates and some Eastern estates incorporated smaller rim-developments, the visual dominance of high-rise housing prevailed.

'Major parts of the population', the legal term describing the aspirants to (west-) German social housing as well as Danish and other European practice, were to be placed in meta-structures that more and more were a derivative of industrial production methods. In relation to national wealth, room and flat sizes were standardized, and ever-stronger planning bureaucracies assisted the planners and architects to channel the users into a pre-described form of home-use. As part of the ideology of a division of urban and life-functions, the home was ascribed privacy in well-designed flats. But as social activities were externalised to the public sphere, not much thought was given to the relation between individuals and groups in the home or its direct vicinity.

In the 1970s, also the relation of the estates to the grown city changed. Whereas the 1960s estates usually were integral parts of extending towns and cities, many later estates became separate entities without much service and use relations to an existing urban tissue, from which they or the old town could benefit. Defined as separate neighbourhoods, the earlier estates, built near existing urban cores usually were designed to remedy deficits of the towns by providing homes and other amenities to the whole of the city. The later satellite-towns in contrast, as well as the independent new towns, were planned to be self-sufficient entities, which had to 'live' on their own without the softening touch of history and difference within a location or the interdependence and opportunities for evading the strong architectural and structural ties of the usually hardly flexible designs.

By the 1970s, many large housing estates had lost a lot of the early models' socio-political impetus and became reduced primarily to a strategy for the production of mass housing. The inflexibility and the mono-functionality of the new estates were conceived as negligible collateral damage to quantitative improvement (Bahrtdt, 1961; 1968), as the 'old-fashioned' urban ideas and the life practices of the old flexible town were rejected as outdated and 'pre-modern' by planners, architects and politicians alike. The majority 'believed' in the 'machbarkeit' (make-ability) of modern lives as a sort of a reflexively reproducing self-fulfilling prophecy. The estates were understood to provide for the possibilities of a consumerist and at the same time private

lifestyle, which was assumed to be the aspiration of the majority and thus would lead to an attractive self-picture of 'being modern'. This in consequence would drag the remaining 'pre-modernists' also to acquire the same demands in a society that had said goodbye to poverty and social exclusion.

During the 1960s and 1970s, politicians, sociologists and the housing industry argued that the new western affluence would be a self fulfilling prophecy of wealth and welfare, not to be questioned and the estates were their appropriate form of habitat. However, as early as in 1965, the psychoanalyst Alexander Mitscherlich's critique of the 'Inhospitable City' put a first question mark: he stated a double-sidedness of the relations between man and the built environment and deplored the monotony of the estates, which would reflect on the residents way of life becoming monotonous and estranged – and would also not be without consequence on the planners themselves.

Despite the many similarities between the estates, the large housing estates were perceived by the residents and the market as widely varying (Rietdorf and Liebmann, 2002). Some indeed produced the pictures of more silent urban landscapes, often at present perceived as 'green oasis' even in inner-urban locations. Others showed a more urban perspective, stressing closed space of street and square as important elements. Some even simulated the density of inner cities in a deliberately directed contrast to the opening towards the landscape (Berlin's largest housing estate, the Maerkische Viertel or Budapest's Drumul Taberei as examples). However, the different forms and types of the buildings can hardly be identified as the reasons for the success or failure of the individual estates. Many of a different form have made it, while others of the same appearance have been faced with severe problems. In the next chapter we will focus more on these problematic developments.

## **2.4 The eastern estates and transition processes**

The rapidly changing situation in the Central and Eastern European estates needs special attention. There, the amount of housing in large housing estates is dramatically higher than in the Western countries. Whereas within the EU, no country has an average of over 10 per cent living in large housing estates, even though regionally the proportion may be higher, the Central and Eastern European countries have between 20 and 35 per cent of the population living in this type of environment, with regional peaks at over 60 per cent. Whereas large housing estates in the West are an important part of the housing stock, they are the dominant form of urban housing in the East (EA/EU, 1998).

The change from a preferred and prestigious form of housing to problem status that has occurred in the Western estates over 30 years, has been experienced in the east over less than a decade. Many of the building details are in decay after decades of disinvestments and the danger exists that the technical dilapidation of over 30 million dwellings will develop faster than any presently imaginable rehabilitation. As the spending power of public and private investors is estimated to be too low to allow for the necessary pace of renewal, a huge financial and social trap could open. The effect on the social cohesion of the estates would be detrimental, and, at the same time a bad housing situation has a negative effect on the attraction of economic investors to the region. This would develop into a kind of vicious circle.

Distinct policies for the large housing estates are still difficult to evaluate in Central and Eastern Europe. The transition of the former state-dominated housing system to different forms of a market orientation – including a wide variety of types of ownership (single flat ownership, cooperatives, communal forms of quasi privatisation) – has put many brakes on housing repair. Consequently, the results of technical rehabilitation are only slowly emerging.

An additional problem is the regional variance. Whereas national centres like Prague and Budapest, and to a lesser extent other capitals, have some impressive examples to present, in many peripheral (and especially old industrialized) regions, millions of dwellings still have evaded attention by the State and the market.

## **2.5 Conclusions**

The large housing estates built in the post-WWII period have differences in origins, scale, design, ownership and other elements. However, within this category of housing there is a continuity of issues and problems. This applies most strongly to the estates built in the 1960s and 1970s and including high-rise and industrialized building as well as other dwellings. How this cohort of estates has matured is probably different between countries, and maybe even between cities within countries. The role it plays today involves also similarities and differences but in many cases the move from being seen as a source of high quality housing to a source of problems presents challenges for policy across European cities. Of course, we will pay attention to these similarities and differences in the course of the RESTATE project.



### 3

## Problems and perspectives of large housing estates: some examples

This chapter is concerned with the present problems on large housing estates built in the period after the Second World War. At this stage, and prior to the research work to be carried out under the RESTATE project, the intention is to review the kinds of problems which are referred to in the literature. We are not seeking to refer systematically to individual estates or to estates in different countries as this will emerge later in the RESTATE project, but rather to provide a framework with which the accounts of different estates in different countries can be connected. Because present knowledge comes especially from the United Kingdom and some Northern and Western European countries, this chapter has a certain bias towards these regions.

The view taken at the outset is that the problems and perspectives associated with large housing estates in European cities initially relate to differences in their location, their scale and their design. They relate also to differences in who they were built by and owned by and whom they housed at the outset. The current problems associated with these estates connect with the origins of the estates. Although, as is discussed below, in some cases estates may have been radically modified, the starting point is a legacy of buildings with specific characteristics in terms of design, the quality of the housing stock, environmental planning, the design and function of the neighbourhood and the locality. In some cases the current problems are linked to problems that were apparent at the outset of these estates but in other cases they reflect a change in the role or the status of these estates.

In the remainder of this chapter we have organized the discussion under a number of different headings. Initially a distinction is made between estates which are regarded as problematic and have always been regarded as problematic and those where the emphasis in discussion of current problems is on change. Taking the theme of change we then refer to different kinds of changes affecting estates. These are referred to in turn as changes in the wider environment and as changes within housing estates. Under this latter heading we refer to demographic changes and to physical obsolescence. Finally, reference is made to policy interventions. This refers both to policies which have affected estates and those designed to respond to problems emerging in estates. Within this latter group reference is made to good practice approaches.

### 3.1 Continuity and change

The large housing estates built after 1945 by public and not-for-profit bodies do not have the same origins and have not played the same role throughout Europe. While some countries embarked upon major house building programmes immediately after 1945, in other cases the priority given to economic reconstruction delayed housing investment (Turner et al., 1992). Although at first sight many large housing estates in Europe may look the same, in general the housing estates we are considering were not built to a uniform design – although in some countries in Central and Eastern Europe the adoption of industrialized building methods resulted in greater uniformity of design than elsewhere. Even in these cases, housing associated with particular phases of construction or with particular locations have different qualities and reputations.

Some large housing estates were always problematic: for example, in the United Kingdom there is a literature which identifies the different levels of subsidy associated with different phases of policy as generating estates in which houses had different specifications. Smaller and less well-designed properties were associated with periods in the 1950s and later when policy targeted slum clearance rather than building for general needs. These estates were perceived as less desirable both because they were built to lower standards and because they were perceived as housing less respectable people from the poorest slum neighbourhoods rather than the respectable, affluent working class. This stigmatisation of estates was apparent in the slum clearance estates built in the 1930s (Herbert, 1979) but also emerged in their post-WWII equivalents (see e.g. English et al., 1976; Merrett, 1979; Whitham, 1982). These slum clearance estates have continued to play a particular role in local housing markets.

Other literature (again referring to the British case) emphasizes the effect of different dwelling sizes and types. Much of the high-rise housing built in the United Kingdom was of one and two bedrooms – and not let to families with children. The characteristics of the population and their length of residence reflect this aspect of design. In other cases streets with a high proportion of three and four bedroom dwellings are associated with large families and a high density of children and with accompanying problems (Gill, 1977; Page, 1994; Power, 1997). Estates built to house a particular population which, in many cases, was characterized by low-income and lack of employment, became estates which were only attractive to a population with these same kinds of characteristics or as a point of entry for newcomers to the city. Such estates have always been associated with a relatively high turnover of population and the characteristics associated with newcomers to the city – perhaps migrants from elsewhere within the country or from overseas. In many cases these more transient areas have been associated with high levels of ethnic minority population or with newcomers with lower incomes and a greater dependency on benefits.

These estates had a spoiled reputation from an early stage. They were seen as areas that housed problematic households and the stigma associated with these estates has been perpetuated and has affected the decisions by households with choice not to live in the area. The bureaucratic processes affecting lettings and the management of estates have also tended to reinforce stereotypes of areas and, at least in the British research evidence these processes operate to systematically sort the population between estates according to their perceived desirability (see e.g. Henderson and Karn, 1987; Phillips, 1985). These different processes – of choice and management – have generated estates which were disproportionately occupied by

households with the least choice and this has usually meant the lowest incomes and greatest benefit dependency. The opposite side of this coin is estates which have consistently been regarded as high quality or have consistently been near to key facilities, perhaps places of work or transport links. To this extent the literature identifies a continuity in reputation and role over time. Housing estates that are problematic now were often problematic in the past and estates that have a particular role or cater for a particular section of the population had this kind of role in the past. In the British case these continuities are associated with differences in bargaining power and a degree of choice which enables some households to wait for better housing and enables transfers to other properties. Although these may not have been so fully researched elsewhere it appears that there has been a consistent tendency within decommodified systems for households with certain attributes (income, occupation, party membership) to graduate to the best estates and dwellings.

While these continuities exist there is a greater emphasis in the literature on change. The literature emphasizes different dimensions of change. There is discussion, for example, of the modernization of estates, of devalorization and revalorization, of gentrification, of revisualization, of modernization, narratives of decline and downward spirals of change. Much of this literature tends to privilege different elements in the process of change. In some cases the emphasis is placed on policy changes, or the failure of policy to respond to changes initiated elsewhere. The perspectives emerging from this literature can be organized under a number of different headings.

### **3.2 Changes in the wider environment**

Initially it is valuable to distinguish between macro-level changes associated with trends which impact locally but originate elsewhere (see also chapter 4) and those changes which essentially occur within the estate. The origins of change may be in the wider society or in developments outside the estate, but the effect is to change the relative attractiveness, function or position of the estate. The kinds of changes which occur externally may relate to developments in the regional or sub-regional economy which alters the extent to which estates are located near to places of work or to transport links or to the key centres for different activities. For example, the decline of manufacturing industry and the restructuring of economies which alters the location of key employment activities may impact significantly on estates. Estates which were located close to the major manufacturing employers and which served a role in housing workers in particular sectors of the economy will be affected by changes which result in the closure of factories or the decline in a specific sector of the economy (Webster, 1998). From being convenient places for people in work and from housing occupational communities, these estates may move to being poorly located in relation to places of work and the solidarity associated with occupational communities is lost (see e.g. Bennett et al., 2000).

### 3.3 Housing stratification, status and the residualization of the social rented sector

A major theme in housing studies has been the residualization of the social rented sector and of the estates with a lot of dwellings in this sector. This may have occurred because of a conscious encouragement or privileging of homeownership through financial or other means. As homeownership has become more attractive so it has drawn middle and higher income groups away from the social rented sector. The reputation and social and demographic characteristics of the estate then changes, not because of any change to the estate itself but because it has changed its position in the hierarchy of choice and in terms of the aspirations of households.

The term residualization first appeared in the literature concerned with the social rented sector in England in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It largely grew out of examination of national data related to the changing social profile of different tenures and referred to the narrowing social profile of the tenure and more targeted nature of policy (Murie, 1983; Hamnett, 1984; Bentham, 1986; Prescott-Clarke et al., 1988; 1994; Forrest and Murie, 1983; 1990; Malpass, 1990). Residualization was represented variously as the unplanned consequence of the decline of private renting and privileging of owner occupation and an incremental process associated with differential cohort responses to the changed structure of the housing market (Murie, 1983; Forrest and Murie, 1983; 1990); as the direct result of national level housing finance and other policies which treated council housing as residual and designed for those unable to buy (Malpass, 1990); and as the decline in the relative quality of housing in the sector as a result of the construction of high-rise housing and the lack of investment in new housing and in maintenance and improvement (e.g. Dunleavy, 1981; Malpass, 1990). These accounts argued that the environment in which council housing was operating had changed. For lower income groups there were fewer alternatives as private renting declined in size and council housing was attractive to a narrower section of the community; as the advantages of owner occupation drew away demand from the higher income and social class groups among younger households.

During the 1980s the debate about residualization of social housing in the United Kingdom continued with increased emphasis being placed on both policy issues and on the interaction between housing and economic change. Higher unemployment and the growth in the numbers of households with below average incomes increased the numbers of low-income households seeking rented housing (Forrest and Murie, 1983). At the same time policy changes speeded the process of residualization. These included the introduction of the Right to Buy in 1980, policies to increase rents in real terms and to reduce object subsidies for council housing and place more emphasis on subject subsidies. These changes speeded the departure of more affluent tenants from council housing. In a de-industrialising society such as in the UK where public sector housing has been deliberately downgraded and attributed a secondary status, the sector very frequently accommodates what Byrne and Parson called a 'stagnant reserve army' (1983, p. 144). This stagnant reserve army is frequently concentrated in particular geographical areas often in what they term 'system-built rubbish'. The physical form of the accommodation symbolizes and reinforces economic marginalization – as Byrne and Parson state: 'the township makes a splendid ghetto – it even looks like a jail' (1983, p. 144).

More recent contributions referring to different European countries have begun to identify a trend towards residualization beyond the United Kingdom. The high standing of social rented housing has been challenged throughout North and West Europe. In Sweden, Elander (1994) argues that the challenges to the social rented housing success story included the end of the privileged position of social rented housing, conversion to cooperatives, rising rent levels, lowering housing standards and social polarization. Increasing social polarization is found between social renting and other tenures but also within the social rented stock. Elander states:

*'On the one hand, especially in places with high unemployment, the worst part of the rental housing stock runs the risk of being deserted. It may become housing of last resort for people with social problems or turn into barracks for immigrants. (...) On the other hand, rental housing at central locations in more prosperous areas is attracting high-income people with a modern, footloose lifestyle who have no desire to have a garden of their own.'* (Elander, 1994, p. III)

These observations emphasize the importance of location as well as tenure and design. At the same time they emphasize the importance of different needs of individuals and households.

There is a growing body of evidence which indicates that the social role of public and not-for-profit housing is skewed towards the lower income groups and the trend towards a residual social rented sector is no longer peculiar to the United Kingdom. For example Van der Heijden (2002) presents data for six Western European countries in the 1990s (the Netherlands, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Belgium and Sweden) and refers to income distributions within tenures. His data show that within Belgium, Germany and France there are similar proportions of households in different income deciles in the social rented sector. In France the lowest two income deciles are less likely to be in social rented housing than the two deciles above them and there is a limited decline in the probability of being in the social rented sector as among higher income groups.

Van der Heijden also presents data showing changes (over the 1980s and 1990s) in the distribution of households in the social rented sector according to income. While the United Kingdom shows the strongest association between income and social renting throughout this period, all of the countries considered (except Belgium with its very small social rented sector) show the same trend over time. The most rapid changes are apparent in Germany and Sweden where the percentage of low-income tenants in social rented housing rose most markedly and the proportion in the higher income groups fell. All of this suggests some significant catching up with the United Kingdom pattern – albeit with a considerable gap remaining. Van der Heijden is careful to account for the changes both in terms of changes in rents, subsidies and other housing policies and in wider economic and social policy developments and argues against any automatic assumption of convergence towards a residual model.

The residualization theme has been taken up in a series of papers referring solely to the Netherlands. These generally emphasize the different tenure and housing market structure between the major cities and the rest of the Netherlands and comment on how far new planned housing developments (VINEX locations) will affect this pattern. Schutjens et al. (2002) emphasize the increased association between income and social renting but otherwise highlight factors which are not associated with residualization in the United Kingdom context. They refer to the importance of minority ethnic groups in the social rented sector and demonstrate that the age structure of the population in the social rented sector has not

polarized in the way that it has done in the UK. This is no doubt largely because the United Kingdom pattern has been significantly affected by the 'departure' of middle age groups through the Right to Buy.

Dieleman and Hooimeijer (forthcoming) also identify different elements in changing patterns of stratification in the Netherlands. They refer to the particular demographic history since 1945 with a large cohort of people reaching old age in the first two decades of the 21st century and a large migrant population living in the large cities and reaching the stage where families are formed by the second generation. They also refer to the strong growth of the Dutch economy with its implications for affluence and the demand for owner occupied housing and emphasize the shifting balance between the preference for owner occupation and social renting induced by changing policy attitudes, low interest rates and growing affluence. Dieleman and Hooimeijer (forthcoming) refer to data showing an oversupply of rental housing units and particularly of multi-family units (flats) in outer urban areas. This suggests some shift in preferences and in the assumption that there is an overwhelming demand for social housing.

In a similar way, Kristensen (2002) describes the attractiveness of owner occupied housing to Danes from the 1970s onwards and explains the changing social composition of social housing in terms of this competition and self-reinforcing processes associated with it. Kristensen states that up to 1970, social housing was chosen by skilled workers but after 1970 the picture changed as owner occupation became economically so attractive for everyone holding a job that a massive move from social housing has happened since then. The process has also proved self reinforcing – as discussed later in this paper. Borgegård and Dawidson (2000) referring to Sweden describe the decline of some of the million housing areas of municipal housing into distressed areas before the major policy changes of the 1990s. Differentiation of location and type of property (multi-family housing) and increasing income inequality appear to have affected the hierarchy of preference and distinguished between areas and properties in a way that the finance system did not. Changes in housing policy in the 1990s have particularly impacted on low-income households in Sweden (Turner and Whitehead, 2002).

Although the debate about residualization is mainly associated with the changing attractiveness of different tenures, there is a wider issue about changes in the comparative advantages associated with different estates. This could be seen to also relate to the development of new estates which have a better location or are more attractive in some other respects. It is also argued that as estates get older they come under different kinds of competition and are likely to see some change in their comparative advantage.

### **3.4 Demography, maturation and conflict**

Some of the problems associated with large housing estates relate to changing demographic structures. The first residents in many estates were young households and newly formed families with younger children. However, as time has passed the demographic structure of the estates has changed. In some cases there may have been a very high population turnover. However, in most cases the large housing estates are also associated with an ageing cohort of residents. The lack of opportunity (or desire) to move may mean that estates move through a series of 'life cycle' stages: an initial phase with younger families; a phase with greater overcrowding and adult households; and a phase of declining population and economic

activity. In some cases (especially in Central and Eastern Europe, maybe also in the Southern countries of Europe) later phases may be associated with sharing of accommodation as sons and daughters find it difficult to obtain independent accommodation.

Some of the conflicts on estates appear to be associated with tension between older and longer-established residents and newcomers to the estate – especially if newcomers are disproportionately younger people. Some of the literature refers directly to tensions between different generations or to the problems associated with larger families and high child density in estates which otherwise have a high proportion of older residents (Page, 1993; 1994).

Population changes on estates may also introduce a greater degree of ethnic diversity or diversity in terms of household lifestyles. While these developments are not inevitably a cause of conflict, much of the literature on problems in estates refers to conflicts between tenants, anti-social behaviour and managing households with problems. The increasing concentration of deprived households in these estates means that the intensity of problems has also increased and the difficulties of managing these effectively is greater. A number of influential contributions have produced plausible accounts of the housing dimensions associated with disadvantaged estates by referring to cycles of disempowerment and a downward spiral associated with spatial inequalities (Stewart and Taylor, 1995; Taylor, 1995; 2000; Page, 1993; 1994; Power and Tunstall, 1995; Power and Mumford, 1999; Young and Lemos, 1997). In these discussions the ability of households to move is a crucial element. The spiral of decline may be increased because more stable and affluent households move away (Andersson and Brämă, 2002), or may be increased because there are no opportunities for deprived households to move away. The danger with these kinds of accounts is that they imply an inevitability to processes of decline and give too little attention to human agency, individual and collective action designed to improve estates or to address particular problems. In some cases these are then accounts of effective social action leading to policy initiatives and changes on estates. Although these movements are rarely referred to as urban social movements they could easily be classified as such.

### **3.5 Design, maturation and physical obsolescence**

There are a final series of changes which are referred to in the literature as processes of physical obsolescence of properties or the decline of materials. This theme is more relevant as estates mature and the materials used deteriorate – and this is likely to coincide with maturation in demographic terms. In some cases physical obsolescence is associated with social obsolescence. The properties on estates are no longer what people want and no longer serve the social needs of households but they are also deteriorating physically and have problems of dampness, of infestation, and structural defects which relate to their age and their construction type. Again, these problems may be exacerbated by poor construction or design at the outset or a lack of effective maintenance and repair policies. In some cases they are associated with the ageing of properties and the process of physical obsolescence which would not be prevented from occurring by maintenance and repair activity. Häußermann (1994) refers to the situation in East Germany where housing construction had been consistently industrialized and the size structure of the building industry meant that there were no small local builders who could be engaged for repair, renewal or modernization. Many buildings are in a very bad condition,

even many newly-constructed ones and the dwellings showed the highest waste of energy of anywhere in Europe. Most of the dwellings built after 1948 already need renovation and reconstruction.

Alice Coleman's (1985) work in the United Kingdom adopts the arguments started with Oscar Newman's assertions concerning the relationships between housing design and criminal or anti-social behaviour (Newman, 1972). Alice Coleman suggested that high-rise public sector housing is responsible for generating a wide range of social problems. She argued that much of the high-rise industrialized public sector housing built in the UK in the 1960s is directly associated with high levels of graffiti, vandalism, litter and excrement. She sees the design of this housing as itself having a strong direct contribution effect on these problems. There have been a number of critiques of Coleman's position (see Dickens, 1994; Van Kempen, 1994). These critiques have particularly emphasized the extent to which the concentration of deprived households in these estates is important.

In the United Kingdom the Department of the Environment's first major investigation in this area was published in 1980. This investigation of difficult-to-let housing involved 30 unpopular estates. Most of the estates were characterized by high levels of vandalism, low morale of residents, a high proportion of families with social problems and a high turnover in tenancies. The estates included both pre-WWII and post-WWII estates and included estates comprising largely houses with gardens as well as those which conform to the image of mass high-rise, monolithic estates. The implication of the study was that while certain factors may pre-dispose estates to become difficult-to-let it is the combination of factors and the reputation of the area which is most crucial.

Some of the literature is particularly concerned with the undesirable nature of high-rise housing. Lawrence (1994) argues that there are continual management and maintenance problems related to this kind of housing and there are continuing effects on the health and well-being of residents. Van Kempen (1994, p. 161) refers to several case studies of high-rise estates in the Netherlands showing that both the social climate and the satisfaction of the inhabitants with their living conditions vary considerably even between nearly identical blocks. Identical design does not imply identical problems. She refers to studies comparing high-rise blocks in the non-profit rented sector with only minor differences in design features like the number of storeys and the number of dwellings per block. These blocks were categorized as 'good', 'depressed' or 'bad' according to their 'performance in terms of vacancy and turnover rate and satisfaction of tenants with their living environment'. Comparison of the three categories in terms of design, management and occupancy

*'... proved that neither design nor management could explain the social problems in the bad and depressed blocks, nor the satisfactory performance of the good blocks. Only the characteristics of the occupants differ considerably. The good blocks have a homogeneous population, mainly consisting of older families with the same ethnic background. In contrast, the bad blocks have a young, mobile and relatively poor population. Even in a notorious problem estate like the Bijlmermeer, the differences in turnover rate, vacancy, rent arrears, and number of evictions between almost identical blocks are large. Perhaps not surprisingly, these differences are closely related to the affluence of the tenants ...'* (Van Kempen, 1994, pp. 162/163).

From this she identifies a link between the characteristics of the occupants and the incidence of social problems in high-rise blocks and argues that these studies challenge Coleman's environmental deterministic position. It remains true that high-rise estates are more likely to have a poor population than other post-WWII housing projects and that high-rise blocks are over-represented among problem blocks. But the existence of trouble-free high-rise blocks at least shows that the relation between high-rise design and the incidence of social problems is a contingent one (Van Kempen, 1994; p. 162).

Van Kempen (1994) goes on to suggest that high-rise blocks are more likely to be associated with problems because of a mixture of factors including the operation of the allocation system for rented housing, the location of blocks, the buoyancy of the local housing market and the labelling process affecting estates. In general these processes are likely to work adversely for large post-WWII estates and in particular those with high-rise blocks, but they will not always do so. Once an estate has a bad reputation, it is argued that tenants and managers unintentionally work together with the local authority to reinforce the stigma of the estate. Tenants who are able to leave move out and applicants who are able to wait refuse to move in. Managers react by neglecting the upkeep of the estate or just the opposite, taking discrete measures to improve the situation. Often these measures prove to be counter-productive because they stigmatise the estate still further. Even local authorities adapt their allocation rules, either formally by giving the estates a low appraisal, or informally by assigning the houses on the estate only to applicants who are perceived as willing to accept. This becomes another version of the spiral of decline although it emphasizes different processes. It emphasizes reputation as the starting point and it emphasizes the actions by a range of managers as maintaining the spiral.

### **3.6 Difficult to manage estates**

Following on from the literature about spirals of decline there is a considerable body of research which refers to problems of management on estates.

The most substantial recent contribution of this type is by Power (1997) and it is relevant to refer to different estates and countries in her account of estates. Especially in France urban unrest and urban riots have been associated with large post-WWII housing estates. The image of Les Minguettes in Lyons was associated with crime, stolen cars and joy riders, confrontations between young people and the police and the boarding up of tower blocks in the worst affected areas (Power, 1997, p. 147). The growth in low cost homeownership had fuelled the exodus of French families from the estate which had become heavily stigmatised. Against this background landlords began letting to newcomers from North Africa with large families in an attempt to keep the number of empty units down. The overrepresentation of minority communities in Les Minguettes caused a collective stigmatisation of neighbourhoods and problems of cohabitation between different populations (Peillon quoted in Power, 1997, p. 150). The level of empty flats rose and white flight became more dramatic. Power's account of this process states

*'... from 1979 the exodus from the estate quickened, partly because of the reforms in housing subsidy which favoured single family owner-occupation in the outer, semi-rural areas, partly because the estate itself had become so troubled, vacant units rose to 2,400 – fully one-third of all the rented flats'.*

The population had almost halved and unemployment had risen. The problem was particularly acute among second generation minorities – over half of all young North Africans were without work. Many believed the problems to be irreversible. The policy responses in Les Minguettes included the demolition of significant parts of the estate, renovation work in other parts and a series of social initiatives and management changes. The social initiatives were designed to provide greater access to work and to support the creation of local services and enterprise. Management changes involved changes to staffing, to lettings procedure, the appointment of caretakers and increased consultation with tenants.

In Germany, the Ministry of Housing had identified estates which were developing a ghetto character. In Germany, Power (1997) refers to the estate of Kölnberg outside Koln. The problems associated with this estate again show a variety of factors: an unfortunate building form in which high-rise blocks dominated and hindered social contact and communication between residents, problems of prostitution, drugs, street crime and property damage and vandalism (which affected the image of the estate), second generation foreign youth, disoriented and without focus and stigmatisation and discrimination against the inhabitants leading to higher turnover and rising empty units. Increasing stigmatisation of the estate accelerated its social decline (Power, 1997, p. 169). Lack of provision for the large, densely crowded child population, serious tensions among the inhabitants and the instability and inconsistencies of management were also identified as important (p. 177). In Kölnberg the option of demolition was ruled out by laws governing multiple ownership. Instead, the management of the estate was taken over by a new private sector company which embarked upon a series of high profile interventions to demonstrate that the estate was being changed. Empty units were let and there were important changes made to care taking and security, cleaning and refuse, and the repair service. Again, social and commercial facilities were developed and tenant involvement in the management of the estate was increased.

Similar issues were identified by Power in relation to the Broadwater Farm estate in London. Its monolithic design and its size had contributed to its unpopularity. Issues of robbery and violence had become serious with disaffected youth a common problem and conflict between the police and between black tenants and management a constant issue. In Denmark, again the problems associated with estates relate to their reputation and stigmatisation (Power, 1997, p. 219).

This literature on the management problems on estates involves more estate based studies in contrast to the more macro, cross sector studies referred to in discussions of the importance of design and other factors. The critical view of this literature is that, perhaps because it is often based on individual estates, it tends to be 'inward' looking and to overstate the significance of management and understate the other factors (referred to above) which make estates difficult to let and unattractive. The tendency to overstate the importance of management issues does not mean that it is unimportant – merely that the emphasis needs to be better judged.

### 3.7 Policy changes

Many of the accounts of the problems on estates tend to look inwards to changes on estates rather than to refer to wider influences on the attractiveness of estates. The literature which looks inwards may identify changes in estates associated particularly with policy or the failure of policy. Although the problems on estates often began with their loss of attractiveness and consequently a shift of population from the affluent working classes to poorer and socio-economically more unstable inhabitants, most of the early attempts during the 1980s to find remedies were of a purely technical nature, as the politicians and builders tried to avoid facing the changed reality of the estates losing their modern context and image. Socio-economic and cultural problems on the estates were only tackled later as it became clear that leaving the vicious circle would only be possible by embarking on strategies integrating change in the built environment, social and economic initiatives and improving the internal and external image of the estates as 'normal' habitats.

Accordingly, after 1990 and with considerable time lags in some countries due to their neo-liberal market orientation in housing, a second policy type was introduced. The 'Socially Integrative City' in Germany, for example, followed the United Kingdom and French examples of tailor-made and targeted policies. In general, however, the divisions of responsibility between agencies – housing, social, labour and employment, the economy – and policies for the improvement of the built environment have only partly been overcome.

Some of the obstacles to the implementation and success of these policies were easily identified: traditional egotisms of institutions as well as legal and constitutional barriers prevented the easy formation of multi-actor and multi-level networks. This seems to be especially the case where a constant provider-driven market or institutional arrangements with deep rifts between the different interest groups inhibit effective joint working between the different actors.

Some changes on estates have been a direct response to problems referred to above – responses through changes in management and maintenance programmes – although as the problems associated with some estates have increased, the resources available for improvements have often been limited. As the housing stock gets older it may benefit from major maintenance and repair programmes or it may result in neglect. The literature has highlighted the tendency for large housing estates, especially in Eastern Europe, to have relatively limited maintenance budgets or plans and this has become a serious source of problems in more recent years.

Other policy interventions which have an important impact include those which are explicitly concerned with the regeneration or restructuring of estates. Some of the major policy initiatives developed in relation to large housing estates have involved elements of demolition and re-building, introducing tenure mix or changing the layout and scale of estates. In some cases changes to the physical stock of housing are accompanied by changes in ownership or management or are accompanied by regeneration activities designed to increase employment or provide additional opportunities for local residents. Where the problems of large housing estates are particularly associated with a lack of economic opportunity and high levels of deprivation, the policy responses are more likely to seek to address these issues rather than simply be property-led initiatives. It is one of the aims of the RESTATE project to evaluate a large number of policy initiatives with respect to large housing estates.

While most of the literature does emphasize problems on estates and discusses obsolescence and decline and an ageing and increasingly impoverished tenant population, these are not the only accounts that are possible. There are a series of accounts of policy success and good practice and successful policy interventions to increase the attractiveness of estates in different countries (Emms, 1990; Power, 1997). As has been mentioned earlier, these initiatives are generally not just ones which address physical problems on estates or management problems, but may address wider issues about regeneration and form part of local economic development strategies designed to increase the employment and training opportunities of residents.

One of the issues which these kinds of strategies raise, however, is the extent to which residents whose incomes rise and employability increases are more likely to leave estates and move to more aspirational housing elsewhere. There is a strong theme in the research literature referred to throughout this chapter that in different countries deprived or stigmatised estates continue to be stigmatised and their social characteristics do not change even after very considerable investments in regeneration activity. While this could be because the regeneration activity has no impact on anyone, it could also be because where it is successful in increasing the income of particular households, these households will move away. Because of the low reputation of the estate the newcomers moving in to replace upwardly mobile out migrants are likely to be households with limited choice and high levels of deprivation – thus reinforcing the social profile that regeneration activity sought to modify. The population has changed but the characteristics of the estate do not appear to have done so. In this situation the function of the estate is very clearly one of catering for those with least choice and the strategies to change the profile of the population cannot be just employment or educational strategies, they would also have to make the estate more attractive relative to others so that households with improved incomes would still choose to live in the estate and the characteristics of the estate would then change.

### **3.8 Conclusions**

There is a substantial literature which addresses issues which are crucial to the debates about large post-WWII housing estates. Much of this literature, rather than referring specifically to estates of that vintage or to individual estates, refers to processes affecting particular tenures or to issues around particular housing design types which are common within large housing estates. The studies which refer to individual estates also refer to different kinds of data and focus on particular hypotheses – about the importance of design (Coleman, 1985) or management (Power, 1997). As Van Kempen (1994) has shown, however, neither housing design nor management characteristics are sufficient to explain social problems in housing estates with high-rise buildings. She argues that the characteristics of the resident population should be studied in detail and that underlying housing allocation policies are of key importance. In the final chapter we will try to make clear the implications for research.

The discussion in this chapter has suggested that the current problems associated with large housing estates built by the public and not-for-profit sector are associated with different processes. Some estates were stigmatised when they were built and changing their reputation is difficult. Other estates have been affected by a variety of changes. Estates mature from being the new ‘State of the Art’ estates to being worn and dilapidated and competing with new ‘State

of the Art' estates more in tune with current tenure and design aspirations. Particular reference has been made to changes in aspirations and preferences in relation to tenure dwelling type and location. These changes are associated with wider social and economic changes – with changes in the welfare state and increasing inequality, with increasing affluence and ability to take advantage of home ownership and exercise choice in the housing system. Changes in demography are associated with the ageing of the resident population and new residents' characteristics will reflect changes in the wider society with different patterns of migration and household structures. Some of these factors are discussed more fully in the literature than others. Yet other factors have received little attention at the level of debate about changes at an estate level. These include the impacts of wider political changes (especially in Eastern Europe).



# 4

## Explaining the developments of housing estates

The aim of this chapter is to review some of the factors, developments and theoretical notions that help us to understand the development of large housing estates in Europe. The items mentioned in this chapter have not been developed solely for large housing estates, but are derived from the literature that treats neighbourhood<sup>2</sup> developments in general.<sup>3</sup> This chapter will therefore have a more general and more theoretical character than the previous ones.

It will be shown in this chapter that there has always been a clear tendency to look at neighbourhood developments one-sidedly, with attention given to only some explanatory factors, while explicitly or implicitly omitting other variables. Only recently have more or less integrated explanations become popular. They give attention to human agency (or human actions), institutional arrangements and macro-level developments. In our view, integrated views are necessary for explaining neighbourhood developments in general and developments of large housing estates in particular.

We start the chapter with a brief and general overview of some older approaches (section 2.2). This overview will be followed with sections that focus on the role of preferences of individuals and households (section 2.3), the importance of resources of households (section 2.4) and the role of governments and urban managers (section 2.5). Section 2.6 will go somewhat deeper into the theme of urban governance, because we believe that this is one of the possible key aspects of changes in neighbourhoods in general and in large housing estates in particular. Section 2.7 focuses on a more integrated approach of neighbourhood change: here we will elaborate on the work of William Grigsby.

The search for these more integrated explanations has probably also to do with new developments in society, like the transformation of the Eastern European political and economic systems, the decline of the welfare states in Western European countries, the changing patterns of international migration, and, often debated, but still going strong, the continuing influence of various forms of globalisation on locality. How do these changes affect society in general and neighbourhood developments in particular? We will give a description of these trends in section 2.8. We will end with a brief conclusion.

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2 When we use the term neighbourhood in this study, we refer to a statistically defined area within a city. This means that we do not automatically attach any feelings of solidarity or shared identities to such an area. It may well be the case that a neighbourhood is inhabited by people who have nothing to do with each other.

3 Many articles and books have been written on the topic of neighbourhood developments. The present chapter is for a large part based on two relatively recent articles (Van Kempen and Özüekren, 1998; Van Kempen, 2002).

## 4.1 Explanations of urban change: the early formulations

Explanations of urban change emphasize different factors and processes. When explaining urban divisions and the position of urban areas, a brief review of the different approaches is helpful. In general, human ecology, social area analysis, and factorial ecology are seen as the more traditional approaches. Good descriptions of these approaches have already been made (see e.g. Bassett and Short, 1980; Sarre et al., 1989). Here we will summarize the basic ideas of these approaches and the main criticisms (drawn heavily from Van Kempen and Özüekren, 1998 and Van Kempen, 2002).

### *The human ecology approach*

The enormous influence of the Chicago School with its human ecology approach is well known. The structural analysis of neighbourhood change started with the human ecology tradition associated with the Chicago School (see e.g. McKenzie, 1925/1974; Burgess, 1925/1974; Park, 1925/1974). At the same time, the ideas for the large housing estates were generated. The city developed through a competition for space to produce concentric zones (Burgess, 1925/1974), specific sectors (Hoyt, 1939) or multiple nuclei (Harris and Ullman, 1945), housing households with different resources and other characteristics. The final residential mosaic (see Timms, 1971) was seen by these researchers as a 'natural' equilibrium. It was a consequence of various processes: invasion, dominance and succession.

Human ecologists generally analysed the city as a separate entity and were less concerned with the city as a reflection and manifestation of the wider society (Bassett and Short, 1980), which also applies to Burgess. In *The Growth of the City* the role of the State or governments is mentioned nowhere. We have to keep in mind, however, that Burgess's theory and diagrams should be seen as a model or an ideal type.

However, Park and Burgess were not the only representatives of the Chicago School. Homer Hoyt's (1939) sectoral approach takes into account the location of industry along river valleys, waterways, and railroad lines; and takes the urban region outside the city into account. In this way he modified the CBD-centred position of the 'old' Chicago School. Harris and Ullman (1945) largely abandoned the idea of a unitary city form, and speak of multiple employment centres as forming the nuclei of multiple residential patterns.

It is argued that the human ecologists paid too little attention to how neighbourhood change actually occurred. The classical formulation of human ecology was criticized for being derived from a biological model, rather than being based on cultural and social processes (Wirth, 1944; Firey, 1947; Jones, 1960). Moreover, their explanations were insufficiently informed by empirical research referring to choice, preference and social action (e.g., Hollingshead, 1947) and they ignore that decisions are made under particular historical circumstances (Feagin and Parker, 1990, p. 12). Also, their neglect of the influence of institutional and political factors, including the national and local state and urban planning, rendered their account unsatisfactory, even for cities where State intervention through planning and housing provision was limited (Bassett and Short, 1989). The explanatory concepts used by the classical ecologists are not suited to present-day analysis (see Denton and Massey, 1991). In particular, they neither apply to cities in West European welfare states or cities affected by the transformation from a heavily planned society towards a new model – whether this converges with other European cities or forms a distinctive Central or Eastern European development strand.

### *Social area analysis and factorial ecology*

The human ecology approach was followed by positivistic-empirical approaches like deductive social area analysis (e.g. Shevky and Williams, 1949; Bell, 1953; Shevky and Bell, 1955) and inductive factorial ecology (e.g. Murdie, 1969; Robson, 1969; Berry and Kasarda, 1977). Factorial ecology uncovered the socio-spatial layout of many cities in the world, though without focusing on causality. Census variables were selected and 'run through the statistical mill of principal components analysis or factor analysis' (Bassett and Short, 1980). Many analyses revealed sectoral and zonal patterns. Differences between urban neighbourhoods could often (but not always; see Robson, 1969) be summarized by three sets of variables: socio-economic status, family status and ethnicity (Bell, 1968).

Critics of social area analysis and factorial ecology pointed at its descriptive character, based on very meagre theoretical notions (Hawley and Duncan, 1957; Kesteloot, 1980; Bassett and Short, 1989; Yeates, 1989). Again, the possible role of the State was hardly ever mentioned. Other critics pointed out that since most of the research had been done in the United States, the results should not be applied automatically to the European situation (see O'Loughlin, 1987). Finally, to the extent that this approach has a theoretical base, it is that the subject is a homo economicus: a fully informed individual with a perfect ability to act in an economically rational way (see Bolt and Van Kempen, 1997).

These 'traditional' approaches are now generally considered as outdated, because their attention for a number of factors and developments was lacking. However, they did provide the starting point for more elaborate approaches of neighbourhood developments.

## **4.2 The role of individual preferences**

While individual preferences are now commonly part of the explanation of neighbourhood developments, it should be emphasized that this was not the case in the earlier, more traditional approaches. In behavioural approaches, individuals and households are seen as central actors. Their preferences and decisions influence the population composition of neighbourhoods. Household characteristics are major determinants of housing and locational preferences (Adams and Gilder, 1976; Clark et al., 1986). Establishing a durable relationship, starting a family (children are born), contraction of the family (children leave home), and the death of a partner, these are all situations that influence the household's size and its preferred type of dwelling (Rossi, 1955; Speare et al., 1975; Stapleton, 1980). Preferences are often expressed in terms of floor space and/or the number of rooms in the dwelling. Large and growing households generally want larger dwellings than small and declining households. This means that some neighbourhoods are more attractive than others.

Different groups, even different households and different individuals, have divergent ideas of what constitutes the most desirable housing situation. In fact, each household has its own 'subjective hierarchy'. The peak of the housing career for one household might be to live in a single-family house with a garden in a suburban environment. Another household might do everything to find an apartment in the middle of a lively capital, such as Amsterdam, Berlin or London. For still another household, the type of dwelling might not be important at all. Instead, the distance to work or school might be the crucial dimension of quality.

The behavioural approach has been criticized for its emphasis on demand and the lack of attention given to constraints (see e.g. Murie, Niner and Watson, 1976; Hamnett and Randolph, 1988): not everybody will have the chance to live exactly as he or she wants. Income and other resources, as well as the available supply of dwellings will be important in defining the opportunities for people. In fact, maybe only few people, the (very) rich, may be able to live exactly as they want and especially during the post-WWII period of planned housing markets all over Europe and in the Central and Eastern European countries with their overall planned economy until 1990, choice was a factor, which could influence housing decisions only to a limited degree with however interesting socio-cultural side effects.

More recent studies of housing preference and choice recognize that the housing market is not in equilibrium and is affected by shortages and institutional differences. They clearly recognized that: 'The reality of all choices is that they are made under conditions of constraint' (Cross, 1992, p. 91). People internalise their possibilities and the overall context when defining their preferences. In other words: when mentioning their preferences people have already limited their choice set to a manageable number of alternatives in the housing market. A low-income household may therefore be very satisfied with a housing situation that for others is understood to be below standard. Seen from the perspective of a large housing estate, many people living there may say that they are satisfied and do not want to move to another place.

Innumerable large and small research projects of the behavioural type have been carried out in the field of housing demand, residential mobility, locational preference, and satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the dwelling and the neighbourhood. In any effort to come to grips with the position of a neighbourhood, we believe that the opinion of the inhabitants themselves is an essential ingredient. For us it is important to find out how the position of inhabitants of large housing estates can be characterized. Do they live there, because it is their first choice or because they have no alternatives at all?

### 4.3 Introducing the resources

The attention for resources of households and individuals were introduced in the neo-Weberian approach in housing research. Rex and Moore's *Race, Community and Conflict* (1967) can be seen as the beginning of this approach. Their thoughts are grounded in the idea that housing, and especially desirable housing, is a scarce resource and that different groups are differentially placed with regard to access to these dwellings. Rex and Moore's work put competition and conflict related to different housing tenures at the centre of the analysis. Housing choice was explained by the 'strength' of individuals or individual households: those with the best position are able to occupy the best housing and the best locations. But this position is not only determined by financial resources, especially not in a situation where not all housing has commodity status and is provided through the market (see also Rex, 1968; Siksiö and Borgegård, 1990). For the large housing estates that are central in this project the decommodified status and the changing resources needed to access housing are crucial. Below we will present a brief elaboration of the various forms of resources that can be important in obtaining a home (see Van Kempen and Özüekren, 1998).

*Financial resources* – People with a weak labour market position generally have a lower income than those with a strong position. Therefore, those with insecure jobs and those with low-income jobs have a disadvantaged position in the housing market (Rex and Tomlinson, 1979). Spatially, this means that lower-income households will have only a small number of options available to them. Some of these households also have low bargaining power in accessing decommodified housing. Therefore, it might be expected that some groups among low-income households will be concentrated in public or social rented housing or in other areas that offer the opportunity for low-cost living. In general these areas will not belong to the best ones in the city or region. In many European cities the large housing estates increasingly fall into the unattractive category.

*Cognitive resources* – Knowledge of the local housing market is an important cognitive resource. It might enable one to reach a desired housing situation on the housing market or restrict access. For example, people who are not proficient in the local mainstream language or the legal and financial systems may not understand allocation rules. Others can deal with the rules and apply them to their own benefit (Van Kempen and Özüekren, 1998; Knorr-Siedow, 1995). Smith (1977), for example, concluded that many Asian immigrants in the UK did not know that council housing existed, even after living in the country for 12 years. On the other side of the spectrum, income poverty, matched with context knowledge, can lead to high-quality housing, as shown in the examples of squatter movements. Also, in the case of the successful foundation of cooperative housing in Central and Eastern Europe, the importance of knowledge in providing access to quality became apparent (Knorr-Siedow, 1995). Thus, the factors of institutional and local knowledge are important and this can be increased by providing information (see Huff, 1986).

*Political resources* – Political resources reflect the possibility of attaining and defending formal rights in society. Formal rights may hinder people or enable them in their efforts to achieve important aims in life. In the case of immigrants, discrimination may have a direct effect on political resources. Not having the formal right to participate in society and not having access to certain positions in the labour market and the housing market can strongly affect the individuals' and households' ultimate housing conditions. Discrimination in the housing market has been demonstrated in many different ways in many places (see e.g. Farley (1995) on the rented sector in the St. Louis area). Of course, discrimination might have a very direct influence on the developments and position of neighbourhoods. The existence of discrimination may on the one hand mean that certain areas are blocked for certain groups, for example immigrants. On the other hand this means that the members belonging to the same group are forced to concentrate in other areas (see e.g. Andersson and Molina, 2003).

*Social resources* – The concept of social resources, or social capital, refers to the direct or indirect accessibility of 'important' persons or groups and the membership of social networks (Wippler, 1990; Putnam, 2000). These social networks can have important functions in social integration, in society as a whole, or within subgroups (see also Friedrichs, 1998). They can also help people to find solutions in significant areas of life, to achieve important aims, and to attain positions in the labour market and the housing market. The role of information is crucial in this respect. Dahya's research in Bradford has demonstrated that the concentration

of Pakistani in certain neighbourhoods can largely be explained with reference to networks of fellow countrymen (Dahya, 1974) which provide information and knowledge that translates into easier management of daily life.

It will be clear that these different kinds of resources should be an integral part of the analysis of large housing estates. It can be expected that different housing estates in different urban and national contexts will be populated by individuals and households with different resources. The important question that follows is if this has influenced the developments of the estate and, even more importantly, how this influences the future of the estate.

#### **4.4 Governments and urban managers**

Preferences and resources of individuals and households cannot explain neighbourhood developments totally on their own. Especially in the Western European welfare states and in the former planned societies of Central and Eastern Europe, the State has an obvious effect. The defining characteristic of a welfare state is its establishment of social rights, in addition to political and civil rights. The rhetoric of different welfare state systems is well-known and emphasized its redistributive nature: every member of a society contributes to a common stock of resources according to set rules, for example by paying taxes. The resources are then distributed according to agreed rules (Musterd et al., 1999). For a long time in Europe, the smoothing effects on income distributions were hardly put into question. National governments have adopted a range of programmes aimed at providing households with a decent income, irrespective of their position in the labour market. These have included minimum wages, protection against the financial effects of sickness, disability and unemployment, benefits for the disabled and the elderly. Of course, differences between countries can be significant. In general, the welfare states of the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands are regarded as the most generous in Europe.

Governments across Western Europe increased their intervention in the housing market after the Second World War, establishing a wide range of social measures, maintaining rent control and providing a huge variety of subsidies (Lundqvist, 1992). Many countries also created a substantive public or social rented sector. Especially in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Sweden, the number of social rented dwellings has been very important in the supply of housing. By providing social rented dwellings, the State ensured that households had the opportunity to live in decent housing. In some countries – for example, the United Kingdom – the public sector has declined very rapidly and changed its role (Forrest and Murie, 1983; Murie, 1997; Meusen and Van Kempen, 1995; Murie and Musterd, 1996); in others it has has never been very large (as in Belgium; see Kesteloot et al., 1997; Kesteloot and Cortie, 1998). In most West European countries, since the second half of the 1980s, as part of a welfare state retreating due to a set of different assumptions at the macro-economic level, the number of affordable rented dwellings has been in decline, especially in the newly built stock (Özüekren and Van Kempen, 1997).

The quantitative and qualitative supply of housing can be a direct effect of political decisions at State level. In the UK, for example, the promotion of home ownership under the Right to Buy led to the heavily subsidized sell-off of council housing. In other countries,

local government, or housing associations, might decide to allocate dwellings in a certain neighbourhood exclusively to non-immigrants. Housing associations can subtly refuse to register immigrant families by saying that no large dwellings are currently vacant or by asking high registration fees (Van Kempen and Van Weesep, 1991).

However, housing associations and other institutions are not actors in the strict sense of the word. All institutions are manned by people. The crucial role of these and other 'managers' is stressed in the managerialist approach of Pahl (1975; 1977) and the work by Lipsky (1980). These authors examine the role of the housing officer in the allocation of resources. Pahl suggests that social gatekeepers (like housing officers) can allocate resources according to their own implicit goals, values, assumptions and ideologies. This means that stereotypes and racism might influence their decisions (Tomlins, 1997). Rules are subject to interpretation by officers who are responsible for the allocation of housing or money. These officers may find themselves torn between all kinds of ideas and pressures that originate from the management board, the housing consumers, colleagues, and, of course, from their own preferences (see e.g. Karn, 1983; Tomlins, 1997). Exclusionary policies of local authorities and private landlords may force specified groups into owner-occupation (because they have no right to live in social rented housing) or in social rented housing (because they are not wanted by private landlords or by owner-occupiers in their neighbourhoods). Some neighbourhoods may thereby become virtually closed to them, forcing them into areas where accessible housing is available (e.g. Ward and Sims, 1981; Van Hoorn and Van Ginkel, 1986).

#### **4.5 The role of urban governance**

Related to the widespread retreat of the welfare state in Western countries, the central state has changed how it relates to key policy areas. Central governments have devolved many of their duties to other levels of government (provinces, regions and cities). Some cities have shown further decentralization tendencies within their territories by giving (some) power to city districts or even neighbourhoods. Often tasks of the central states and the local governments were in due course privatised. In relation to all these deregulation, decentralization and privatisation processes, some decisions concerning urban developments, neighbourhood policies, and neighbourhood regeneration or reconstruction are in many cases not made by (local) government alone, but by a mix of many different organizations and individuals. According to Elander and Blanc (2000), governments have faced a development towards fragmentation and more differentiated forms of governance: government has become governance. In a local setting, local governments no longer play an exclusive role as the leading policy-makers. They are more than ever before merely one of the many actors in the governance arena (Elander and Blanc, 2000; Healey et al., 1995).

Strongly related to this development, the innovation that seems to have become commonplace all over Europe lately is the creation of 'partnerships'. Partnership has been defined as a coalition of interests drawn from more than one sector in order to prepare and oversee an agreed strategy for the regeneration of a defined area (Bailey et al., 1995, cited in Elander and Blanc, 2000).

The theme of governance, and the related theme of partnerships, now shows up in many texts about urban developments in general and about neighbourhood regeneration policies

specifically (see Bailey et al., 1995; Hastings, 1996; Walzer and Jacobs, 1998; Friedrichs, 2000; Jacquier, 2000; Kristensen, 2000). Coalitions between parties and stakeholders are formed differently in different cities and the results, in terms of neighbourhood developments, may come out significantly different from each other and from results of, for example, a decade ago. The emerging pattern of governance is in some cases more fragmented with competition in service delivery. The emerging structure may be more difficult to engage with and to understand and, in spite of the emphasis placed on partnership and inclusion of residents in running local affairs, may further exclude those who are peripheralized by language, knowledge and other factors.

Attention for the practice of urban governance and its effects is important in the case of the large housing estates. We may discover that in cases of successful urban governance the population and the areas fare better than in cases where aspects of urban governance are absent. For the moment, this is only hypothetical, but we will have to find out in the RESTATE project if this hypothesis can be confirmed or not.

#### **4.6 Neighbourhood dynamics**

In explaining neighbourhood developments, it has become clear that numerous factors, developments and variables have to be taken into account, but at the same time every single author or school seems to focus on only a relatively small set of explaining factors. Only a few researchers and theorists have been able and willing to focus on many different variables and developments at different spatial scales at the same time. William Grigsby is one of them. He also explicitly rejected the idea that any single theory could explain the development of neighbourhoods. A few years ago, Megbolugbe et al. (1996) wrote an interesting overview on Grigsby's work. We agree with them that Grigsby's ideas are probably most clearly expressed in 'The Dynamics of Neighbourhood Change and Decline' (Grigsby et al., 1987).

Grigsby wants to explain neighbourhood succession, which he sees as the most important indicator of neighbourhood decline. His basic idea is that a change in social and economic variables, acting through a system of housing suppliers and intermediaries, causes households to make different maintenance and moving decisions, which then alters the characteristics of residential structures and their neighbourhoods. Examples of social and economic variables are: the number of households, household size and composition, income, societal values and attitudes, location and type of business investment, and public-sector policies. The intermediaries are homeowners, developers, brokers, but also public agencies and neighbourhood groups. These changes may then feed back on one or more of the social and economic variables with which the whole process started, or on the intermediate variables, or on the household decisions (Grigsby et al., 1987). Especially the influx of low-income households is seen as a negative factor.

From this summary it becomes clear that Grigsby et al. do pay attention to a lot of variables and developments. But their approach also has its limits, which can already be found in their starting points. While the idea that the age of buildings can be stretched almost eternally, for example by renovation and restructuring, is not so problematic, their basic premise that neighbourhoods change because of a loss of demand for the dwellings in the area, and the idea that low-incomes are the main cause of neighbourhood decline is at least a major point

of discussion. Moreover, while there are some hints on the role of public policy and the role of public agencies, their influence is considered to be limited. Of course this is the result of the fact that the theory has developed in the United States. Generalising Grigsby's ideas with respect to European cities and housing markets can only be done very carefully and by fully incorporating different tenures into the approach.

Grigsby et al. (1987) present a scheme in which macro-level developments and actions of persons, households and organizations are linked to the development of neighbourhoods. Although we can partially connect the work in this project to these ideas, we will move beyond these slightly mechanical views into providing a more precise understanding of the different factors contributing to decline and the effectiveness of policy and other interventions in this. Two items will stand out in our own analysis: one is the specific attention given to the role of politics and policy responses to the problems and developments in large housing estates, including an understanding of the coalitions which are formed, their philosophies and their goals. Secondly, we will employ a contextual approach, in which we will consequently look at the development of the housing estates within their urban, regional and national context. In other words: the importance of place is clearly recognized in this project.

#### **4.7 Macro-level developments as influential factors**

Individual behaviour is influenced by variables on a higher level. Because these variables generally affect many individuals, the compound individual changes affect developments in society. Many sociologists and geographers now agree that urban patterns change as a consequence of individual household decisions in response to the complex interaction of a variety of structures and developments on different spatial levels. General processes – like economic restructuring on a global level – have their impact on choice patterns of households (Clark et al., 1997, p. 18) and on local situations and neighbourhood developments (Sassen, 1990).

Households operate within the societal, demographic, economic and political context of their countries, regions and cities. The competition between households and individuals in the housing market (as well as in other markets) may result from changing ideas on the part of an individual or household. Those changes, in turn, may be caused by changes in local structures. But they may even be related to changes at a national or trans-national level. In order to explain (spatial) changes on the local level, such as the development of neighbourhoods, we have to incorporate structures and developments at other spatial levels (see also Sarre et al., 1989; Karn et al., 1985; Phillips and Karn, 1992; Clark and Dieleman, 1996; Van Kempen and Özüekren, 1998):

*'... urban problems, including those relating to race and housing, should not be treated in isolation from society at large but are best understood as results of a complex interrelationship between many processes'* (Sarre et al., 1989, p. 1).

How and when neighbourhoods become less or more popular is not only determined by internal developments. International economic developments may lead to migration to particular countries, cities and neighbourhoods. Consequently some very specific

neighbourhoods may show increases of certain kinds of immigrants. The reconstruction of other neighbourhoods or the development of new living environments elsewhere in the city or region may also influence the way existing neighbourhoods develop.

The importance of demographic, economic, socio-cultural and political developments on neighbourhood developments has already been described in other studies (see e.g. Van Kempen and Marcuse, 1997; Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000; Van Kempen, 2002). Based on the works mentioned we briefly list some of what we regard as the most important macro-developments in the following paragraphs.

*Economic developments* – The global restructuring of the economy and the consequent transfer of manufacturing to newly industrializing nations leads to higher unemployment among manual and increasingly among office-workers in West European countries. The post-industrial transformation of the economy in the late 20th century has affected the economic backbone of the cities: the traditional goods-processing industries, commerce, trade and services related to these industries. They in particular provided entry-level employment opportunities for the lesser skilled (Kasarda, 1993). Many traditional production tasks in manufacturing have been mechanized, automated and computerized, making production more capital-intensive and less dependent on manual labour. Other tasks have been shifted to other parts of the world, where labour is less expensive. Because of the transformation, employment opportunities in these industries have been decimated. The increase in the numbers of so-called flexible jobs gives an increasing number of people the opportunity to find work, but these people are not necessarily the same as those who were made redundant (see also Harvey, 1989; Badcock, 2000). As a result, the household incomes of those affected tend to decline, which limits their possibilities of housing and neighbourhood choice (Van Kempen and Özüekren, 1998).

Although these economic processes obviously have a broad impact, there are important questions concerning the specifically intra-city spatial effects of this process. Economic developments cannot automatically be translated into spatial patterns. Other factors, including other macro-developments (see below), institutional arrangements and human agency can lead to very different spatial developments in different cities.

*Demographic developments* – The number of households looking for a home is an important variable when explaining the position of a neighbourhood or housing estate. Massive growth in the number of households within a relatively brief period may cause shortages if all those households are looking for the same kind of dwelling in the same area. Not only the number of households but also their composition should be taken into account, since some household types have specific preferences. For example, a rise in the number of extended families could boost the demand for large dwellings, while a growth in the number of low-income households is likely to result in pressures on the inexpensive housing stock. Low demand, on the other hand, can result in vacancies and even deserted areas.

All over Europe, changes in lifestyles have led to changing household structures and age compositions of the populations. Increasingly, single persons have been competing for housing while at the same time the populations are ageing. Short-term scenarios still imply that the demand for housing in most European societies will remain high, due to the expected income rises and the increasing number of – smaller – households. For some parts of Europe, however,

a lower fertility will lead to drastically diminished populations and reduced housing demand, despite envisaged immigration (IRS, 2002).

Specific attention should be paid to migration processes. People often seek to improve their position by moving. Emigration to areas where a better life can be expected is a process as old as the world. In more recent times, migration to Western Europe from Southern Europe and other countries around the Mediterranean as well as further a field is an example of a large migration flow principally motivated by perceptions of work opportunities (see e.g. Özüekren and Van Kempen, 1997). Political oppression and wars in many countries have pressed people to emigrate. In some cases this has occurred where colonies have become independent, with migration to the former colonial country both before and after independence. Illegal migration flows add to the number of 'official' immigrants in many countries, often having a disproportionate effect in specific cities and neighbourhoods because of chain migration (Burgers, 1998).

Immigrants and their descendants have increased the demand for housing, often resulting in fiercer competition between households. In many cases this competition is with other low-income households, leading to over-crowding in receiving neighbourhoods and to long waiting lists. Conflicts among groups, between those who had already lived in the neighbourhood for decades and newcomers from other countries are still manifold in all kinds of urban areas (Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000). Increasingly, in many countries, the large housing estates house more and more households with different cultural heritages and from minority ethnic groups.

*Changing patterns of choice* – In many Western societies, the standard life course of people and households has changed in the last two or three decades. Emancipation and individualism can be seen as the driving forces behind an increasing importance of individual choice in all aspects of life, including the life course, the house, and the area in which to live. Especially in an economy where flexible jobs are on the increase, individuals are more or less forced to be flexible with regard to work places and living arrangements. Connected with this there are neighbourhoods that show high turnover of (especially young) people. These areas have a specific function for starters in the housing market. Generally they are not the best areas in town, but they are important for many in this phase of flexibility, who do not object to living temporarily in a neighbourhood with significant perceived environmental or social drawbacks (Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000). It remains to be seen if some of the large housing estates in our research project can also be characterized as the temporary home for those who see the present dwelling only as a stepping stone in their housing career.

Increases in choice are not available to everyone. In Western societies expanded choice has mainly to do with a growing and changing economy; in Eastern Europe growing opportunities have also arisen from political changes. In both cases the opportunities that have been created are very unevenly distributed. Those with low and very low-incomes and low education may face declining labour market opportunities (as a consequence of the changing economic structure), declining redistribution through the welfare state (which specifically results in the declining supply of affordable housing), and benefit least from new political structures (Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000). The choices made by those with higher incomes may influence the housing market position of those with lower incomes directly. For example: if higher income households take a fancy to living in previously unattractive, older

neighbourhoods close to the city centre, gentrification may result, forcing those with lower incomes to look for a home somewhere else, possibly in the less attractive large housing estates.

*Political developments* – Political developments affect rights and legislation. They may refer to gaining entry to a country (migration laws) or they may concern rights to residence, work, social rights, and political rights at the destination. In many countries, conflicts about these topics emerge for various reasons, because different groups and political parties may have very divergent ideas.

A development with a certain effect on housing demand and the role of the large housing estates will be the oncoming extension of the European Union, which will allow for greater inner-European movement of people in due course. Although only small numbers of Eastern Europeans are presently certain to want to move, a self-propelling development of spatial polarization and peripherization is expected with the further strengthening of central economic regions (EA/EU, 1998).

## 4.8 Conclusions

How does this all come down to the large housing estates that are central in this research project? We will be brief here and save the most important conclusions for the last chapter of this report. It should be clear for the moment that if we want to give good explanations of the development of large housing estates, we should at least pay attention to the following factors and developments:

*Preferences* – From the behavioural approach we have learned that preferences can differ between different individuals and households. Each has its own subjective hierarchy. Many preferences can be explained by age, household composition, income, education and ethnicity. It remains to be seen if a concept like lifestyle might add something here.

*Resources* – Some have more possibilities to put their preferences in reality than others. Different forms of capital (financial, social, cultural and political) can be influential here. Choices of 'stronger' households (i.e. households with more capital), can influence the housing choices of 'weaker' households.

*The role of public policy* – In a welfare state in which subsidies are manifold, for example for housing and welfare, the 'weaker' households will have more possibilities than in a state in which subsidies are small. In general, however, the restructuring of the welfare states lead to a situation in which the market is becoming more and more important. Weaker households will be more and more relegated to the most unattractive areas of the urban housing market.

*The role of urban governance* – Urban governance implies strong collaborations between all kinds of organizations, groups and individuals, often including inhabitants of a neighbourhood to which policy is targeted. The possible influence of these inhabitants on the developments of an area is a factor that can become more and more important in the future.

*The role of macro-developments* – Developments in large housing estates are influenced by economic, demographic, socio-cultural and political developments on the urban, the regional, the national, the European and even the global scale. Every estate is located in (or close to) a city, within a region, within a country and thus is influenced by a particular combination of these macro-developments. In the country reports that will follow this report attention will be given to these specific combinations that may cause certain estates to flourish, while others will continue to decline.

In earlier chapters, we have emphasized that some factors that have to do more directly with the estates themselves should also be taken into account when we want explain the development of a large housing estate. These include:

- the initial quality of the estate;
- the internal developments in the estate;
- the location of the estate;
- the size of the estate;
- the housing tenures on the estate, the access to housing and its status compared with other tenures and areas.

It seems logical to assume that a good explanation of the development of neighbourhoods should pay attention to all these factors. In our project we will try to do that as much as possible.



The RESTATE project aims to formulate good practices and new visions for sustainable neighbourhoods and cities. The focus of the programme is on the large housing estates built in the second half of the 20th century. In the period 2003-2005 we will produce a number of reports, books, articles and papers that will finally feed into a handbook for policy makers. In this handbook we will try to couple forward looking scenarios and new visions for large housing estates in Europe with examples of evidence based best practice to achieve sustainable future development of these areas. In the present report we have focused on the more general backgrounds of the development of large housing estates. The basic question was formulated as: *'What are the structural and other factors that explain the difference between the success and failure of large post-WWII housing estates?'*

One of the main conclusions should be that a good explanation of the development of large housing estates should include a large number of factors on different spatial levels, in different fields and in different time periods. Much of the literature, however, falls into the category of emphasising one particular element within post-WWII estates and in implying that this is the crucial causal variable, for example:

- that they are failing, because of their public sector ownership;
- that they are failing, because of their size, monolithic tenure structure or design;
- that they are failing, because of the dominance of high-rise and non-traditional design;
- that they are failing, because properties were poorly built and because of industrialized systems;
- that they are failing, because of inadequate (usually public sector) management of housing;
- that they are failing, because of the concentration of people with low incomes or with insufficient political, social and cultural capital living there;
- that they are failing, because of their declining social status.

One of the tests for all of these mono-causal explanations is the kind of observation raised by Van Kempen (1994) that not all of the estates with particular characteristics in terms of tenure or design or construction or deprivation or bad management are failing. As soon as it becomes apparent that such causal factors do not appear to have the same impact in all cases, questions about their causal nature can be raised.

Only one response to this is possible. We need to see the interaction between a variety of factors which increase the likelihood of failure but which individually are not sufficient. The interaction between these different factors can also be self-reinforcing and especially through processes such as labelling and reputation begin to be more convincing. Where certain

combinations of factors come together the likelihood of failure increases. The implications of this kind of conclusion for policy and for the regeneration and renewal of estates are important. It suggests that turning estates from failed estates to successful ones will not be easily done. There is not a single variation or a single lever that can be pulled that will turn estates around and the reputation and labelling and other factors which are products of the past may well hang over an estate even after considerable action has been taken. Indeed, some of the actions taken to remedy problems on the estate can be seen as confirming the nature of the estate as a failing estate.

It is even more difficult. Important factors do not only play on the level of the estate, but operate in the wider society too. In chapter 4 we have identified a number of economic, demographic, socio-cultural and political developments that could impact on the position of large housing estates in the housing market and influence their success or failure. The global restructuring of the economy leads to higher incomes for some and lower incomes, because of the disappearance of jobs, for others. Lower incomes might steer households to more unattractive places in the housing market, including some of the large housing estates. International migration may lead to increasing pressures on housing markets of European cities, again forcing people to accept relatively unattractive dwellings in maybe even less attractive places. Changing patterns of preference may cause people with higher incomes to look for homes in some older parts of the city, which have been areas for low-income households for decades (gentrification), thereby forcing the traditional population to move somewhere else.

Some more specific points that can be derived from the previous chapters which deserve attention in the RESTATE project are listed below:

- RESTATE will have to take account of the *policy opportunities* which are existing and which are becoming visible through the cross-national comparison. Special attention will have to be given to the often contradictory State policies in housing, which at the same time further the development of the estates by improvements and counter it by introducing alternative housing in the same urban region.
- In consequence of the *context dependency* of the large estates, which, at least, includes the elements of regional economic development, the image of this type of building, the housing market, and migration, any evaluation of the results of intervention is prone to misjudgement, if only the outcomes of planned actions are calculated and the context is neglected. Thus, positive results from rehabilitation on the estates might only be possible due to an overlap of national, regional and local processes. Understanding and interpreting the hybrid data deriving from the administered programmes will be only possible in a manner including the multitude of actors, which is reflected in the specific design of the RESTATE project.
- *Some of the Western estates have become problematic* on complex grounds of spatial, social, economic and cultural grounds. Leading them out of this situation has so far not been possible, despite sometimes two decades of repeated physical and socio-economic intervention. *Other estates have never been problematic* or it was possible to re-integrate them into a satisfying position on the housing markets anywhere between targeted 'hip' housing for modern earning urbanites and an average population of the lower middle classes. The same is clearly happening in Central and Eastern Europe: central estates are 'making it',

while others seem to be doomed to become regional poor-houses, excluded space and socially excluding in themselves. Within the RESTATE project, both need to be addressed, in order to distinguish probable futures as a basis for evaluating practice as good or failure. Attention needs to be given to normality as well as deviance.

- It is important to find out how the *position of inhabitants* of large housing estates can be characterized. Do they live there, because it is their first choice or because they have no alternatives at all?
- The estates are *inhabited by people with different financial, cognitive, political and social resources*. The question is how that influenced the development in the past and will influence the future of the estates.
- The *timing of housing production* can be seen as an influential factor. Areas being finished as the housing market changes from a situation of a lack of supply towards a situation of a lack of demand will find it difficult to attract new residents. Vacancies may be the result. In other cases the newly built areas may attract new residents, because the areas are attractive. In that case the risk exists that the areas where the household lived previously will be characterized by increasing vacancies.
- RESTATE will concentrate on the *institutional arrangements* and the roles that State and locality, management and civil society have in keeping up the esteem of successful estates and in turning the tide in more problematic cases. Which are enabling and which are action preventing roles of the different actors? How should participation of the inhabitants be arranged? What should be the role of the national and local State in order to provide for self-steering capacity and needed assistance?
- Especially with regard to the Central and Eastern European estates, but also the Western peripheral estates, forms of rehabilitation, which are *'below' high-cost solutions* will have to be analysed. New forms of owner-resident responsibility, participation and appropriate forms of governance will have to be searched for and evaluated, relating to the locally available knowledge and experience and deriving potentials.
- As important will be new or *neglected questions*, which might be hidden in the estates' everyday reality. An example of these long neglected developments is the demographic situation: as the 1970s estates are currently approaching the accumulation of aged residents due to a process enforced by an increasing emigration of younger residents, the general age problem of European housing users needs to be addressed. As the German example and demographic trends in many French, Italian and Spanish estates shows, the estates, due to their still often failing image, might also be among the first branches of the housing market, which could be affected by shrinking populations in certain European regions. Similar developments are emerging in Western and Eastern countries' peripheral regions.
- At present, the perspectives of the large estates *between normality, a passing syndrome or permanent problems* are not only varying widely; it seems that the instruments for the discovery of the factors within the built environment, management, the housing and the wider economy, forms of tenure and the cultural meaning of the estates, which make the difference have not really been found. Many central locations seem to have a chance to reclaim a status very similar to the once planned image of modern homes for individualists. A majority seems to have a chance of settling as lower middle-class quarters, however, often only with the extra care of special urban policies, and as certain seems the fact that in many shrinking as well as economically growing European regions there is a good chance that the

current process of demolition or slowly 'overgrowing' the estates with new forms of housing will probably accelerate. Whereas so-far it has become certain that any single issue policies are futile, clear and pro-active forms of planning and governance for an improvement of the opportunities for the estates and the residents need still to be learned.

- It would appear that *the literature leaves some issues relatively untouched*. Most of the literature that has been referred to in this report draws upon existing statistical data and measures of failure such as voids and rent arrears and crime rather than being based upon detailed ethnographic studies of particular estates. There are examples of such studies although they are often not based on post-WWII housing estates. They are more prevalent in older neighbourhoods. It may be that we do not have a good sociology or ethnography of post-WWII estates nor do we have many in-depth studies of the dynamics and processes of social relations on estates. There are a number of questions arising from this:
  - Do too many of the estate level studies presume that management factors are dominant?
  - Is too much of this literature Anglo-centric or from the United Kingdom or the Netherlands where large housing estates may be more stigmatised than elsewhere?
  - Is there a tendency to reify estates and to construct them around certain categories of variables which tells us relatively little about the different groups, interests and processes within them?

One of the risks with this kind of analysis is that the research community is part of the labelling process. These estates trigger certain stereotypes in the mind of researchers who look for certain kinds of variables and measures and when they find these it reinforces the way in which we classify and categorize estates. The challenge would be to construct different accounts and narratives of estates or at least to import different variables and understand different processes: for example, there appear to be very few studies which identify the role of the family and reciprocity within estates or the nature of networks; the extent to which households living on estates have an inward looking or an outward looking set of networks. This requires community studies from an inside perspective.

Some of the literature tends to assume that common characteristics of large post-WWII housing estates in different countries mean that the processes affecting them are very similar. Power (1997), for example, suggests that the processes are essentially the same in a number of different countries. Rather than arguing that every estate or every country will be different, the alternative to this view is that we would expect to identify a number of different types or families of estates. They might, for example, be associated with the political and welfare systems within which they are placed. They might, alternatively, be associated with the degree of polarization within cities. Where the gap between residents on estates and those in other parts of the city is very wide, the reputation of estates will be different. Similarly this might mean that an important question is about the position in the hierarchy of choice: are the estates seen as the worst housing? If there is an affirmative answer, the key issue is: how can this be changed? This is the main challenge of the RESTATE project.

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