



HOUSING NOTES

July 2008
Vol. 27, No. 1

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

I look forward to the ISA World Forum in Barcelona. Five RC43 sessions with the general theme of "Inclusive Housing and Communities" are scheduled for September 6-7. There will be a meeting of RC43 board members participating in the conference. Ken Gibb, Head of the Urban Studies Department at the University of Glasgow, Scotland, UK (www.glasgow.ac.uk/urbanstudies), will update us on the planning for the next RC43 conference, to be held in Glasgow 1-4 September, 2009. The theme will be: "Housing Assets, Housing People". More information will be forthcoming in the future. I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend.

Sincerely,

Dennis Keating
President

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

ISA RC43 International Housing Conference
Theme: Housing Assets, Housing People
Glasgow, 1-4 September 2009

The International Sociological Association and the Department of Urban Studies at the University of Glasgow are pleased to

invite participation in their international housing research conference to be held in Glasgow from 1-4 September 2009.

The conference theme is the turbulence in international housing credit and its human impacts on communities and inequalities at different spatial scales. Is housing just another globalized commodity or is it fundamentally local? The conference welcomes papers from all social sciences and from across the world for plenary, panel, doctoral and workshop sessions.

The conference venue is the historic Mitchell Library, and the event will include a full social programme and study trips that will bring delegates into direct contact with the city. Glasgow is an ideal laboratory to study housing and neighborhood change. The Department of Urban Studies' focus on housing research has an international reputation for rigor and policy relevance.

First Call for Participation

Abstracts are welcome on theoretical, empirical and applied housing research from a sociological or social sciences perspective (i.e. geography, political science, public or social policy, economics, finance, management & business, planning, anthropology, real estate and behavioral science). Deadlines for abstract submission and registration (both in the spring of 2009) will follow in future announcements.

Further Information

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International conference organized by the OTB Research Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility studies
Theme: Building on home ownership: housing policies and social strategies
Delft, the Netherlands, 13-14 November, 2008

In the last decade home ownership rates and housing markets have advanced rapidly in most developed societies. A driving force has been intensified economic globalization following market deregulation and advancements in mortgage finance.

Demographic shifts towards a more elderly population are also driving realignments in welfare policy. Under these conditions, many governments have looked to the increasing housing wealth of homeowners as a means to offset welfare and pension obligations.

There is also evidence that households themselves are looking to housing property investment as a means to enhance economic self-reliance and manage an environment of growing insecurity. Access to housing markets, for households, and facilitating entry into owner-occupation, for governments, have become social, economic and political priorities. At the same time, housing markets have been squeezed by pressures of affordability and credit availability. Recent downturns in the global credit market have revealed vulnerabilities derived from the previous era of house-price over-inflation, market deregulation and financial internationalization. The next period of housing market globalization will arguably be dominated by increasing government concern with the situation of homeowners and the further promotion of home ownership under unfavorable market conditions.

The restructuring of housing systems with the rapid growth of housing wealth and mortgage liabilities, and the dynamic restructuring of global finance are forging new relationship among individuals, the state and housing markets. Access to, and the affordability of, home ownership are issues at the heart of housing policies and social strategies across societies. The focus of the conference is the identification and explanation of these features and shifts in local and international contexts. The conference aims to bring together developing theories and new empirical research on home ownership and housing systems in various contexts. The plenary sessions will include presentations by leading researchers who will address these critical issues in housing and society. The parallel workshop sessions will provide a forum for current research and ideas on various aspects of home ownership. All sessions aim to facilitate dialogue between researchers, policy makers and others concerned with housing issues.

Conference Countdown

Submission of abstracts: 21 July 2008
Submission of full papers: 31 October 2008
Conference: 13-14 November 2008

For further information or questions, please contact:

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OTHER EVENTS

18-21 June 2008, Krakow, Poland **15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference**

Organized by: European Real Estate Society, ERES
<http://www.symposium.pl/eres2008/>.

3-4 July 2008, St. Petersburg, Russia

International Conference: Public Space and Social Cohesion in the City: Present and Future

Organized and funded by INTAS and coordinated by the South-West University 'Neofit Rilsky' (Bulgaria), with the participation of Manchester Metropolitan University (UK), the Institute for Independent Studies, St. Petersburg (Russia) and the State University 'Ivan Franko', Lviv (Ukraine), and the Center for Intercultural Studies at the Hogeschool voor de Kunsten, Utrecht (The Netherlands).
Contact: Professor Svetlana Hristova at sv.hristova@aix.swu.bg.

6-9 July 2008, Dublin, Ireland **ENHR (European Network for Housing Research) Conference 2008: Shrinking Cities, Sprawling Suburbs, Changing Countrysides**

Organized by: UCD (University College, Dublin) School of Applied Social Science & The Centre for Housing Research.
<http://www.enhr2008.com/>

14-15 July 2008, Beijing, China **China Urban Housing Congress**

<http://chinaplanningnetwork.org/english/CPN3rdAnnual.htm>.

11-13 September 2008, Barcelona, Spain **N-AERUS 2008 Conference,** **Securing positive change in International Urban Poverty Reduction Policies: Is international action changing urban poverty on the ground or not?**

Organized by: Network Association of European Researchers on Urbanization in the South (NAERUS)
<http://www.n-aerus.net/web/index.htm>

21-23 September 2008, Hanasaari, Espoo, Finland **Nordic Urban and Housing Research Seminar (NSBB): Towards Sustainability in Urban Transformation, Governance Cultures and Housing Policies**

Organized by: YTK (Centre for Urban and Regional Studies/Helsinki University of Technology)
<http://www.tkk.fi/Units/Separate/YTK/research/NSBB/index.html>.

22-23 September 2008, Rotterdam, the Netherlands

Cities of Opportunity: The Urban Promise of Upward Mobility
Organized by: European Urban Knowledge Network EUKN
Inquiries: Bart Nijhof <bart.nijhof@nicis.nl>

25-28 September 2008, Milan, Italy **Learning Cities in a Knowledge-based Global Society**

Organized by: European Urban Research Association (EURA)
<http://www.eura.org/pdf/milan2008.pdf>

6-7 October 2008, Budapest, Hungary **Workshop on Social Housing: Options and Perspectives of Social Rental Housing in the Central and East European Regions**

Organized by: Metropolitan Research Institute, Budapest in cooperation with the Council of Europe.

11-15 October 2008, Klosterhotel, Vadstena, Sweden **ESF-LiU Conference: The Right to the City: New Challenges, New Issues**

Organized by: European Sciences Foundation and Lindköping University
<http://www.esf.org/activities/esfconferences/details/confdetail264.html?conf=264>.

29-31 October 2008, Copenhagen, Denmark
Home & Urbanity: Cultural Perspectives on Housing and Every Day Life

Organized by: Center for Housing and Welfare, Copenhagen University
<http://www.bovelconference.dk>

3-7 November 2008, Nanjing, China.
Fourth session of the World Urban Forum
<http://www.wuf4.com/>

13-14 November 2008, Delft, the Netherlands
Building on Home Ownership: Housing Policies and Social Strategies

Organized by: OTB Research Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility Studies, Delft University of Technology, Delft.
Contact: E.M.Vogels@TUDelft.nl

17-20 December 2008, Tokyo, Japan
Landscapes of Global Urbanism: Power, Marginality, and Creativity

Organized by: International Sociological Association's RC21
<http://www.shakti.uniurb.it/rc21/>

4-9 March 2009, Chicago, USA
39th Annual Meeting of the Urban Affairs Association
Contesting and Sustaining the City: Neighborhood, Region, or World
http://www.udel.edu/uaa/annual_meeting/index.html

11-13 March 2009, Örebro University, Sweden
Sustainable Cities and Regions: Enabling Vision or Empty Talk?

Organized by: Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CEReS), Örebro University and School of Business (EJI), Mälardalen University.
http://www.oru.se/templates/oruExtNormal_48864.aspx?pslanguage=EN.

7-8 May 2009, Berlin, Germany
International Conference: Empty Country and Lively Cities?
Spatial Differentiation in the Face of Demographic Change

Organized by: ARL, Leibniz Institut für Länderkunde, Leibniz Institut für Ökologische Raumentwicklung, IRS, and Technische Universität Dresden.
www.leeresland-buntestadt.de

4-6 June 2009, Madrid, Spain
EURA and UAA Joint 2009 Conference
City Futures in a Globalising World
http://www.udel.edu/uaa/pdfs/aura_madrid_flyer.pdf

24-27 June 2009, Stockholm, Sweden
Annual European Real Estate Society Conference

Organized by: ERES and the Department of Construction and Real Estate Economics, Royal Institute of Technology
www.eres2009.com

AWARDS

5th International Bauhaus Award 2008
Housing Shortages – The minimum subsistence level housing of today

With the 5th Bauhaus Award, the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation continued its research into “Updating Modernism”. In doing so, a central topic of the historical Bauhaus is taken up and put into the context of a contemporary discourse: solutions are sought for the subsistence level housing of today.

The same title was chosen for the second conference held by CIAM (or International Congress of Modern Architecture) in Frankfurt am Main in 1929. Here, new models and prototypes for small apartments were presented and discussed by, among others, the Bauhaus directors Walter Gropius and Hannes Meyer. Almost eight decades later, this historical Bauhaus theme is more pertinent than ever. Societies worldwide are confronted, in the social, ecological and cultural respect, with the problem of housing shortage.

The 5th International Bauhaus Award looked at modern standards in the field of housing and examined these in the light of the current parameters of housing shortage. Creative designs or concepts and models or scenarios for housing policy were sought for the social strata, which live on the subsistence minimum and are therefore unable to establish themselves on the housing market. The urban ways of life associated with poverty lead to existential housing shortages, which, given the ecological conditions of climate change, will only become more extreme. How is the ever-critical relationship between poverty and the housing shortage resolved?

Presentation of prizes

The Bauhaus Dessau Foundation conferred the 5th Bauhaus Award on 21st June. This year, solutions were sought on the theme of housing shortages for “Housing for the minimum subsistence level of today”.

The jury awarded not only a first, second and third prize, but also two commendations, in recognition of the wide range of entries tendered. The first prize is € 6,000, the second € 4,000, the third € 2,000, and winners of the certificates each received € 500.

Prizes:

1st Prize: Steps 'n Slabs, Ralf Pasel, Frederik Künzel

2nd Prize: Sayama Flat, Jo Nagasaka

3rd Prize: Portraits from above, Rufina Wu, Stefan Canham

Recognition:

Husly, Vigdis Haugtro, Johannes Franciscus de Gier
Nomads of the City, Katja & Steffi Hoffmann

For more details: <http://www.bauhaus-dessau.de/index.php?5th-International-Bauhaus-Award-2008>

NEWS

New Report Highlights the Gender Dimensions of Urbanization: Violence against women rampant in urban slums across the world

28 May 2008

Urbanization is not a gender neutral phenomenon. The gender dimension of urbanization involves and affects hundreds of millions of women in very particular ways, which must be urgently addressed in the battle against global poverty. These are some of the key findings of *Women, Slums and Urbanization: Examining the Causes and Consequences*, a new report by the Geneva-based Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE). The report also found that violence against women is rampant in urban slums across the world. The report is based on COHRE's research in six global cities (Accra, Buenos Aires, Colombo, Mumbai, Nairobi, and Sao Paulo) where COHRE interviewed women and girls living in over twenty slum communities.

The report confirms that, for women as well as for men, the city's primary attraction or 'pull' factor is the possibility of economic opportunities unavailable to them in other areas. COHRE's research also revealed significant 'push' factors, many of which are gender-specific. Many women migrate to cities as a way to escape from something which threatens to do them harm. These 'push' factors include domestic violence and harmful cultural practices, such as polygamy, and disinheritance. The research cites cases of widows in Ghana who had been disinherited of their land and property in the north, or those whose inheritance had caused a rift between them and their in-laws, who decided to move to Accra to start a new life.

Mayra Gomez, Coordinator of COHRE's Women's Housing Rights Programme (WHRP), said, "COHRE's research reveals that the triggers for women's migration to the cities are often related to patterns of gender-based discrimination and violence which serve to push women deeper into poverty, or which otherwise land women in crisis situations. For example, women whose economic situation suddenly worsens as a result of disinheritance, divorce, or domestic violence cannot be said to be moving to urban centers out of a 'gender neutral' desire to work."

According to *Women, Slums and Urbanization*, women often move into slums for a number of reasons which both propel them from the rural areas, and attract them to the city. For example, women who find themselves infected by HIV are sometimes convinced that relocation into the city would solve the glaring social stigma they suffer in their home communities and would also be beneficial in terms of being able to access health treatment and other services, which they would otherwise not get in their previous communities.

Gomez said, "Other factors impacting urbanization include HIV/AIDS, disaster and forced eviction, all of which have gender-specific dimensions. The impact of HIV/AIDS is plainly evident in Kenya, where HIV and AIDS emerged as key factors relating to the migration of poor women to the slums of Nairobi. In Kenya, many women whose husbands have died of

AIDS-related diseases were presumed by their communities to also be infected. Many such women are driven away from their communities on accusation that they will infect more people and spread the disease to the entire community."

Once in the slums, women also face formidable challenges to daily survival. Jean du Plessis, COHRE's Deputy Director, said, "Our research demonstrates that while women's experiences are not uniform, there are similarities in the reasons why they migrate to cities, and women face similar challenges to their daily survival in slums across the world. While inadequate living conditions in the slums affect all residents, female or male, women and girls suffer disproportionately those burdens which fall on their shoulders because of their gender. Violence, inadequate provision of services, housing insecurity, lack of privacy, employment discrimination, and unequal remuneration are all common experiences with profound gendered dimensions."

The most critical cross-cutting theme to emerge from the COHRE study is that violence against women, including domestic violence and rape, is rampant in urban slums across the world. Gomez said, "Violence against women and women's insecurity in slums emerged as principal and recurrent issues. Governments have a duty to address fundamental violations of human rights – in this case, of women's human rights – which, at times underlie migration in the first place and which similarly prohibit women from realizing the full range of their human rights within the urban context."

COHRE's report identifies ten concrete recommendations, which, if implemented, would go far in addressing the problems experienced by women living in urban slums across the world. The recommendations are:

- Provide security of tenure, as a matter of priority, to women and their families living in slums;
- Combat violence against women in all its forms, and provide effective legal and other remedies to victims of gender-based violence;
- Invest in slum upgrading programmes and housing development programmes for the poor, ensuring women's effective participation;
- Ensure joint ownership of and control over housing, land, and property, as well as equal rights between men and women in marriage;
- Strengthen national legal protections for women's housing rights on the basis of non-discrimination and equality;
- Enforce women's inheritance rights and equal rights to marital property;
- Improve access to basic services, such as water and sanitation, and provide safer environments for women living in the slums;
- Fight against women's poverty and provide economic empowerment opportunities to poor and disadvantaged women;

- Improve the collection of data on the impacts of urbanization, with particular emphasis on collecting gender-disaggregated statistic; and
- Raise awareness about women's human rights, including women's housing rights, at community and institutional levels.

For additional information, contact:

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NEW BOOKS

The Ideology of Home Ownership: Homeowner Societies and the Role of Housing
By Richard Ronald

Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan
30 May 2008, 296 Pages, £50.00

There has been a phenomenal growth in owner-occupied housing and rapid increases in house prices across societies in recent decades. Many countries have been overwhelmed by the demand for home ownership, by the aggregate wealth built up in housing property, as well as by the debt bound up in mortgage markets. This book considers how and why home ownership became so significant in various international contexts. A central concept is 'home ownership ideology', which implies that housing practices are not benign but support particular alignments of social-power relations. A complementary concept is that of 'homeowner society', which suggests that social relations in some societies are specifically orientated towards owner-occupied housing systems, which play a role in development pathways. While there has been a growing demand for owner-occupied housing and a substantial augmentation in property values, there has not been a parallel awareness of the wider social impact. The objective in this book is to develop understanding of the role of housing systems, ideologies and practices in emerging social structures.

BOOK REVIEW

Merilee S. Grindle 2007 *Going Local: Decentralization, Democratization, and the Promise of Good Governance*
Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

This book analyzes how local governments in Mexico were coping with new responsibilities and resources in the wake of decentralization policies that began in the 1980s. The focus is on smaller municipalities - those that are not state or national capitals, for example. The author concludes that there are wide differences between government performances in different municipalities. The main thesis of this book is that governmental performance is the consequence of a combination of different factors, *inter alia*, new opportunities and resources, the impact of leadership motivation and choices, the influence of civic history, and the effect of institutions that constrain and facilitate innovation.

The author advances four hypotheses to explain why local governments might respond differently to new opportunities. 1)

Municipalities with competitive elections are more likely to have better governmental performance. 2) What is adopted as a public initiative is the result of the motivations of specific individuals in the city government, and the extent to which those who are reform-minded select appropriate strategies to move ahead with their ideas. 3) Governance performance is likely to reflect inputs for capacity building, organizational re-engineering, and restructuring how public services are delivered, regardless of electoral calendars and partisan identities of incumbents. 4) The extent to which local citizens are mobilized to participate and demand accountability can explain variations in the performance of local government.

The book is based on data collected from a stratified random sample of 30 medium-sized municipalities - five from each of the six regions in Mexico. The first chapter introduces the book with the central arguments, hypotheses, selection of cases etc. The second chapter explores the history of decentralization initiatives in Mexico, describes the different levels of the government at the time of the study, and sets the context for understanding decentralization as it was experienced at the local level. This chapter also presents an interesting ethnography of what goes on in the city hall. Chapter 3 to 6 explores the four hypotheses described above that the book sets to test. In chapter 7, the issue of innovation in local governance is addressed to assess conditions under which positive change is possible. The final chapter argues that the four hypotheses do not stand in isolation from each other but are in fact closely interconnected. It also offers policy recommendations to make the possibilities that decentralization promises more likely.

Exploring the first hypotheses in the context of the thirty research municipalities indicated that there is indeed a relationship between competitive elections and governmental performance, but it is not a direct one. Democratization of elections does not necessarily lead to less conflictive politics, easier decision making, or better functioning governments but they do lead to the emergence of new actors in the political life.

Chapter 4 confirms the second hypotheses that mayors and other elected and appointed officials are the most important source of change in local governments. Mayors were almost always the primary movers and shakers of local government. The commitments, personality, persistence, and political networks that mayors brought to the office were important factors in determining how much was done during a three year period. But the lack of institutional constraints that helped mayors to exercise their discretion also systematically undermined the sustainability of change as successors reversed policies when they came to office.

Chapter 5 observes that the public sector modernization was much in evidence and was having a positive impact on the governance in the communities researched as expected based on the third hypotheses. Appointment of professionals in public offices and computerization were important aspects of public sector modernization in many municipalities. Yet the research indicated that the municipalities introduced modernization when their leaders promoted it, not simply because it was on offer from other levels of government or required from above by administrative fiat. In other words, capacity-building initiatives were a tool of effective leadership, not an independent source of

change for municipalities. Therefore the hypothesis that improvements in capacity drive changes in local performance was not a stand-alone hypothesis.

The fourth hypotheses - that when citizens and citizen groups are organized to demand good performance from the government they are more likely to get it - was also found to be generally true in the research municipalities. Petitioning for allocation of public resources was the most common objective of citizen action. There were hardly any evidence for citizen action to enhance accountability and participation in decision-making. There were some initiatives to increase the extent to which citizens and citizen groups were involved in local decision making. However, these were far more likely to be initiated by government than by citizens.

Overall, the impact of decentralization was tangible in the research communities and, although its impact was not always positive, it held out some promise for better governance in the future. The book suggests policies to redress governance shortfalls in decentralized settings by lessening dependence for resources and capacity from higher levels of government, promoting accountability, institutionalizing change, and opening up opportunities for local economic development. Although the site of the research is Mexico, but the findings and policy recommendations can very well apply to other countries that have decentralized decision-making to the local level.

The author is explicit in her research design and the operationalization of the relevant variables. But her rigor of sample selection is not matched by the way the index is constructed. The list of items that are measured are mostly inputs and are not the measurement of outcomes that determine government performance. Municipalities are awarded one point for each of the seventeen indicators without weighting each of those items in the construction of the index. In addition, innovations outside the government were not studied. The state is presented as the only agent of change to bring the promise of good governance through democratic decentralization. Having said this, the value of the study needs to be seen in not its rigor and methodology but in its depth of local information it presents.

This book is highly recommended to anyone interested in institutional reforms and decentralization of the local state. It is easy to read with very appropriate use of tables, graphs, and figures. The length of the book (about 200 pages) and clear and brief policy recommendations make it a useful read for public policy makers grappling with issues of decentralization. But students and scholars interested in planning and municipal governance will also find this book of interest especially the rich ethnographic description of what goes on in the city halls from such a wide range of small and medium sized municipalities about which there is very little literature available.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Allen, C. 2008 'Gentrification 'research' and the academic nobility: A different class?' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32(1): 180-185.

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- Chen, J.** 2008 'The effects of housing allowance benefit levels on recipient duration: Evidence from the Swedish 1997 reform', *Urban Studies* 45(2): 347-366.
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This issue of **Housing Notes** was prepared with support from the College of Architecture and Planning at the University of Colorado.

Deadline for items for the next issue is **November 30, 2008**.