

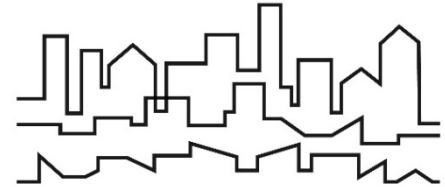
Assessment Report

Lessons learnt from European Informality

B-RE-U-COM
Building **Resilient** Urban Communities

Symposium held on October 23 - 24, 2019, including site visit on August 30, 2019 at Danube University Krems (DUK)

This event was held within the framework of the project “Building Resilient Urban Communities” (BReUCom), funded under the “Capacity Building in Higher Education” program of EU Erasmus+.



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Introduction

The symposium „ Lessons learnt from European Informality“ took place at Danube University Krems (DUK) on October 23 - 24, 2019. A site visit to a consolidated, former informal neighborhood in Vienna took place on October 25.

This event was held within the framework of the project “Building Resilient Urban Communities” (BReUCom), funded under the “Capacity Building in Higher Education” program of EU Erasmus+.

Project team members from four Indian Higher Education Institutions and two Indian Non-Governmental Organizations as well as from two European Universities participated in the event, listening to and discussing with European experts in the field of informal and precarious housing.

This assessment reports sums up the participants’ main take aways and the most prominent points of discussion during the event.

The symposium tested a rather unconventional format/ schedule in which each lecturer was given space to elaborate on her/ his specific topic in more detail than would be usual in conventional scientific conference settings. After each lecture, a significant amount of time was dedicated to discussion between lecturer and participants who would also actively draw comparisons between Indian and European situations.

After the symposium, participants gave the following general feedbacks and comments:

- It was a great learning experience working with participants from different Countries and inter-disciplinary programs and understanding the potentials, challenges and boundaries of informal housing.
- Learnt about the informal housing in EU, poverty indicators, distribution of wealth in terms of housing, informal housing policy status in EU countries.
- The understanding of informality in Europe is much different from India. People and governments are more sensitive to informal migrations. The impact of migration on social integration was discussed.
- Engaging community to deal with informal society and the role of Community and government participation for the up-liftment of the informal society was learnt.

Nexus of housing and migration

Lecture held by Sybille Münch, Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany

Abstract

The development of the modern European city would be inconceivable without migration - whether from the countryside or from other countries. In urban research, the city is therefore also regarded as a place where strangers live together (Siebel/Häußermann 2001: 68). As early as 1908, Simmel formulated this statement and later definitions of what actually constitutes a city aimed in a similar direction. According to Hartmut Häußermann, the image of the city as a machine of integration into industrial society, was characterized by the rapidly growing mass of unqualified wage earners who formed a new class in the social fabric of the cities. The enormous achievement of the cities in the course of the 20th century consisted in the integration and assimilation of this class, which at first appeared to the bourgeoisie only as a rebellious uncivilized mass. Indeed, since the 1920s, urban development and housing policy have been guided by the idea of a "modern" city, in which class differences are levelled out and the reality of life is shaped by a unified modern lifestyle of the "broad strata of the German people", as it was called in the German Housing Promotion Act. Urban and housing policy has played a central role in shaping the conditions for job and population growth and in developing urban infrastructure, which should lead to a higher quality of life and more equal opportunities. On the other hand, European cities always knew segregation in terms of income and social status that following the arrival of so-called foreign „guestworkers“ and in other European countries citizens from (former) colonies in other European countries following wwii turned into ethnic segregation, often with a lower quality of housing. My presentation will try to recapitulate the history of immigrant housing since the 1950s in European comparison and is going to introduce the audience to the history and structure of North-European housing markets along the way. Housing has been called „the wobbly pillar of the welfare state“ that is characterised by many path dependencies. States not only differ in whether they promote homeownership or whether housing is characterised by high shares of rental housing and social housing in particular. Newly arrivals, such as low-skilled labour migrants and later on refugees often found themselves at the bottom of the housing ladder, living not necessarily in informal but nevertheless precarious housing. With housing markets being under a lot of pressure nowadays, finding affordable housing seems to be an even bigger challenge to recent generations of refugees or mobile EU citizens.

Topics and questions raised in discussion following the lecture

Social housing policy

Social housing means different things in different European countries: in some countries, social housing is accessible for middle-income groups, in others it only functions as last resort for poor segments

In Germany: “social housing” refers to how the construction of a building was subsidized in a certain way; for ideological reasons construction and running of social housing was left to private association – they receive funding, but social housing status of a flat only lasts for a couple of decades. Nowadays the social housing stock is shrinking, lot of funding for social housing in the 1970ies, but stopped appertaining to the social housing stock since then. The social housing sector in consequence diminished considerable in absolute number due to this and has therefore become some kind of “last resort” for poorest segments of the population.

Nowadays again, policy makers realize that there is a need for more affordable housing in Germany. Lot of investment in new construction these days;

Demographic profile of residents of social housing in Germany/ criterion for access to social housing

Social housing policy in Germany still operate under the idea that there should be social and ethnic mix; obligations are put in place for real estate developers to provide a certain share of affordable units when building in attractive inner city locations.

Disposable income is most important criterion for access to social housing; up to the 1980ies, social housing was provided only to Germans;

High shares of immigrants, single parent families etc.

Housing of asylum seekers in the 2017/18 refugee crisis

Historically, Germany used to be tough on immigrants in 50ies, 60ies under the assumption that these would go back to their countries of origin anyway. In 2015, there was a lot of support for migrants in the German society. But many changes in discourse since then. Tendency to send migrants back as soon as possible; migrant influx effectuated substantial spending on the national government's side, causing an economic boom; crisis helped highlight general need in social infrastructure; a polarized discourse; Germany lacks skilled workers;

Neoliberal discourse: housing as a right vs. a commodity

In the 1990ies, the housing issues were regarded as "solved"; public intervention was mostly limited to support for homeownership; housing policy was essential "housing market policy" – trying to enable the market to provide for sufficient housing. Recently, there has been a change in this discourse as lack of affordable housing starts to not only affect the poor but also the middle income groups. House prices soared in many cities. "Right to the city" movements started about 5 years ago – advocate solving the housing crisis locally. By now, first changes in housing policy are observed, e.g. in rent caps in Berlin (which is actually criticized for not being effective),

Integration/ discrimination/ employment/ livelihoods –

Neighborhood based community development projects in disadvantaged areas in German run under the prominent "Social City" program (mixed funding on national and regional level, paramountcy evaluated); often implemented while welfare state retreats;

Site and service approaches in India: construction needs not to be done by the state, rather people were given the land and right to build by themselves incrementally;

In Germany, in the interwar period progressive policies provided land for community self-building;

Housing cooperatives: renters buy a share in the cooperative; cooperatives tend to be very conservative entities bereft with prejudice against foreigners, immigrants etc.

Rent control in India locked out a lot of housing; led to a lot of empty housing, people could not move it because owners were afraid of renting out; rent control had to be repealed;

Ethnic segregation problematized as withdrawal

When governments realized that, there is a need for integration of "guest workers", discourse shifted to blaming the victim: immigrants withdraw to their own communities in segregated residential areas, labeled as "parallel societies" or "parallel lives".

Migration to rural areas, which become cities of the future

Agriculture and activities beyond urban centers?

Many seasonal workers, originally from Eastern Europe before these countries became part of EU; employers try to undermine minimal wages; nowadays-seasonal worker come from Ukraine, often as “interns”;

German asylum seekers are not free to choose their location but are dispersed evenly all over the country; currently, there is substantial research interest into whether integration could be easier in smaller, rural communities;

Participants’ take away

This presentation was on the evolution of social housing in the context of Europe with a focus on Germany. Her lecture helped understand migration in relation to the housing stock and affordability in Europe. Interestingly it also covered the history of social housing with industrial revolution, which could be related with India. The influence and effects of post-world war and its implications to housing. But more than the above what was striking was the issue of “Energy” which is as essential as water and sanitation and often gets missed out on. In cold regions such as Europe the issue of energy poverty is deep which was a learning for us. We discussed later about possibility of state subsidy for the most vulnerable communities towards reduced tariffs for energy.

Online Resources

- Video of lecture, incl. slides & ensuing discussion: [Link](#)

Migrants, refugees and the notion of poverty in an affluent society

Lecture held by Tania Berger, Danube University Krems, Austria

Abstract

Given the apparent wealth and welfare in most Western and Central European states, the notion of poverty or risk-of-poverty within local populations may require some clarification. Albeit many poverty affected low wage earners, pensioners, unemployed or single parents in this region may still seem rather well off as compared to global standards, their socio-economic situation has to be set in relation to the overall societal situation. And while the possession of certain material goods may not be regarded as absolutely essential for human survival, lack thereof can well exclude those affected by poverty from participating in society, from normal social interaction and lead to stigmatization.



According to Austrian Statistics Bureau, all persons whose equalized income is below a specified threshold (at-risk-of-poverty threshold = 60% of the median) are considered to be at risk of poverty. The calculation is based on the equivalent net household income. The amount for this threshold in 2017 is an equivalent household income of 1,238 EUR per month.

According to the EU definition, a persons is regarded to be substantially materially deprived if four or more of the following nine features apply:

1. There are arrears on rent, running costs or loans

and the following items are not financially affordable:

2. to go on holiday once a year,
3. to make unexpected expenses,
4. to keep the dwelling adequately warm,
5. to eat meat, fish or comparably nutritious vegetarian food every second day
6. car,
7. washing machine,
8. TV,
9. Telephone / mobile phone.

In Austria, low income households with migratory background face exclusions from rental housing markets. Access to social housing requires substantial down payments. Rents in social housing of "limited profit housing associations" are not affordable to many low income household (even though these rents

range below market prices). Housing subsidies are not available to third-country nationals in most Austrian provinces. Cheaper municipal housing in most cities is either not accessible to third-country nationals or tied to requirements of minimums prior duration of stay. Low income households with migratory background often live in urban areas of poor quality of life with

- poor constructional quality of buildings,
- relatively high per square meter rent costs in relation to quality of rented premises and high energy bills,
- comparatively unattractive urban location with high levels of pollution and noise emissions,
- lack of green and recreational spaces, public facilities and transport.

Low income households of migratory background tend to live in smaller flats in order to keep renting costs low. This results in increased density (elevated number of persons/ square meter of rented area). To compensate for overcrowded homes, kids and teens rely on (semi) public spaces in the neighborhood. In densely populated neighborhoods, public (green) spaces tend to be contested and overused, lacking maintenance and signaling residents neglect from local authorities. Kids and youngsters congregating in public parks and spaces often compete over space with other groups of users.

Topics and questions raised in discussion following the lecture

Residential Density

Space crunch in urban India appr. 9 m²/ person, high population density in India, Floor space index was heavily restricted in the 90ies

Limited profit housing associations:

About 200 such associations exist in Austria, many of them had been founded in the first half of the 20th century; they are non-governmental associations, mostly with some kind of political affiliation, eg. with unions or chambers etc.

Limited profit housing associations in Austria are not only able to sustain themselves on the revenues collected from rental housing, they also have to generate profit which they then are obliged to reinvest into new constructions.

Social outcomes of physical housing improvements for energy poor residents

Energy poverty: the poor already use so little energy that you really don't improve their situation in terms of savings if you improve their buildings. But what are the spin off effects of being healthier? CURE measures such effects by checking e.g.: if children go to school regularly and are not sleeping during school, are learning better etc., Looking at social outcomes of such improvements would be very valuable!

In the Indian context, "Energy poverty" is often referred to as "poverty penalty" – as the poor have to pay much more to get basic services.

In Austria, most utility companies charge basic flat rates regardless of actual consumption which negatively affects the poor who consume less than the equivalent of this basic consumption but still have to pay the flat rate.

Renter vs. landlord dilemma

In India, there are renters who are not permitted to improve their housing. Landlords' primary goal is to get rent and profit, they would want to make only minimal investment in housing upgrades. If CURE encourages people to have their toilet at home, renters are the last ones to opt for that. One possible solution: portable toilets – if you leave your rented house and shift to another home you just take it with you.

In Austria, ovens constitute a similar challenge: if you quit renting a particular flat in which you had installed an oven, you have to negotiate over this oven's price with your successor.

Rental housing by governments in India is mostly provided in form of long-term lease with maintenance up to beneficiaries. This leads to many difficulties: units are sublet, left or not maintained. Recently, there is a government initiative to build rental housing which will also be maintained by government.

Normally, in the context of middle income groups in India, with residents' welfare associations in place, it is the responsibility of residents to maintain their housing.

Poverty parameters

Adaptation of the poverty parameters presented in this lecture would be good in the Indian context (can this be done in the framework of BReUCom?): Income in the Indian context is something, which people do not report.

We should evolve this matrix on poverty for the Indian context, eg: Which are aspirational indicators in an Indian context?

Participants' take away

This session helped learn lessons on fresh concepts of various spectra of poverty indices. The issue of privileged vs foreign born in the context of Austria, the importance of 'object' vs 'subject' was new to us. In the context of climate change and again looking at energy poverty and issue of heating of homes in Austria confirmed that this was a serious issue and that citizens and governments need to work on this together.

Online Resources

- Video of lecture, incl. slides & ensuing discussion:

Housing and Minority Ethnic Groups in Europe

Lecture held by Gideon Bolt, University of Utrecht, the Netherlands

Abstract

There are several explanations for ethnic differences in housing quality. The human capital perspective tends to explain the gap in housing quality in terms of differences in resources. Resources enable households to surmount barriers to act on different submarkets and to interact with housing institutions. Once these are controlled, the ethnic variations in attained housing and neighbourhood quality should largely vanish. Resources can take various forms. Financial resources refer to income, security of income, and capital assets. The income gap between minority



ethnic groups and the native majority is seen as one of the main factors in explaining differences in housing conditions. The role of wealth is an important additional factor. Furthermore, knowledge of the housing market can be seen as a very important cognitive resource. Additionally, social networks may function as social resources, or social capital. Network members may provide knowledge about housing options or even (temporary) accommodation for recent immigrants

As the degree to which households convert their (financial) resources into residential quality has been found to differ between ethnic groups, other explanations may also apply. The stratification perspective focuses on the role of discrimination on the housing market which limits the options to move into desirable dwellings and neighbourhoods, at least for those groups that are stigmatised. The cultural perspective, on the contrary, stresses that there may be cultural differences with regard to dwelling and neighbourhood preferences. An orientation of immigrants to their country of origin might imply that they are likely to be content with low-quality housing. Many guest workers, for instance, have been inspired by the 'myth of return'. Consequently, they did not want to live in expensive dwellings as money had to be saved for the return. In addition, financial obligations to family members are expected to encourage the desire to minimise housing expenditures. Another consequence of mother country orientation is that immigrant groups accept lower-quality dwellings, not only because of the lower housing costs, but also because the standard of housing is lower in their mother country than in the host country.

In my presentation, I discuss the merits of each of the three perspectives and I will argue that they are not mutually exclusive. The explanatory power of each perspective may differ between ethnic groups and/or change in the course of time. I will also show some figures on ethnic differences in housing attainment in the Netherlands.

Topics and questions raised in discussion following the lecture

Increase of Irregular migrants/ rejected asylum seekers gone underground to avoid deportation: they try to move to other countries; “Dublin treaty” in EU demands for asylum to be sought in the country of first entry to the union; however, after certain duration (presumably 1 or 2 years) this rule is not applicable any more. Therefore, some asylum seekers “disappear” for this period of time and then claim asylum in country they want to stay in.

Municipalities’ stance on irregular migration: see e.g. “Sanctuary Movement” in the US. National governments are normally much tougher (than local authorities) on irregular migration as elections can be won by doing so. There is no political will to find housing solutions for irregular migrants as legalizing them is mostly unpopular – there is widespread fear that this would attract still more irregular migrants. The frequent political approach therefore is to ignore the presence of irregular migrants.

On local scale, practical solutions are necessary. Local governments can not deport migrants as this falls within the responsibility of national institutions. “Bed-Bath-Bred-solutions” (very basic housing and shelter) are offered in bigger cities in the Netherlands as basic support infrastructure for irregular migrants.

Safety and security concerns with regards to migrants

Migration within cities – in India, often migrants/ minorities are denied access to certain districts based on their religion, community etc. The idea of security and safety is seen as related to homogeneous neighborhoods. In the US, minorities such as Latinos tend to feel safer within their own community, as they fear harsh policing in other neighborhoods where they would stand out.

Social Housing and inclusivity

Social Housing does not seem to be the way forward for building inclusive cities - What could be an alternative approach? In the Netherlands, there is a longstanding tradition in social housing with once half of the building stock falling under this category. Residents are diverse in terms of income and ethnic group. Nowadays this stock is decreasing as the “housing crisis” was regarded as being solved. Residualisation of the social housing sector is taking place – social housing is more and more becoming a last resort for the poor only.

Redlining and discrimination in real estate

Thought to be typically American, but can also be found in Europe. Still very low levels of income segregation in Europe as compared to the US, but it is rising here as well. However, no ghettos do not exist in Europe, polarization is not as extreme here as in the US.

Graded set of rights for migrants?

Land tenure solutions in India: providing slum residents with land deeds which do not entitle them to full tenure but allow for the provision of basic infrastructure.

General stance in most of Western Europe is not to open up any kind of grey zones. Providing subsidies to NGOs which render services for irregular migrants is thus the furthest authorities can go.

Participants’ take away

was instrumental in understanding the difficulties and concerns of the migrant communities in Europe especially in the context of ‘The Netherlands’ especially scenarios in Amsterdam. It explained how

politics, ethnicity and religion can become influential in migrant communities and their access to housing. This is a similar context in India where Religion and Caste both become barriers for access to housing within societal frameworks.

Online Resources

- Video of lecture, incl. slides & ensuing discussion: [Link](#)

Informal Housing in Eastern Europe

Lecture held by Wolfgang Amann, Institute for Real Estate Construction and Housing Ltd., Vienna, Austria

Abstract

Rationale for systematic intervention

Montenegro has signed the Vienna Declaration on Informal Settlements in South Eastern Europe (2004) with an obligation to resolve the issue until 2015. The Strategy on Informal Settlements (2010) outlined major policy measures for effective implementation. The rationale for comprehensive intervention was driven by attempts to: i) address public safety and earthquake vulnerability; ii) improve conditions for tourism in the coastal region and ecologically sound development; iii) introduce efficient legal framework for property development and functioning real estate markets; iv) improve living conditions of residents through access to communal services (technical and social infrastructure). Regularisation of informal settlements, home to about a third of Montenegro's population, is a key measure for European integration. Regularisation on such a scale, however, requires comprehensive intervention and effective collaboration of central and local governments, international institutions, NGOs and local communities. Success is conditional upon changes in the planning and fiscal framework for regularisation bringing together a set of regulatory, financial and fiscal measures. In terms of implementation, it requires a new type of planning that is action-oriented and builds consensus among affected owners, businesses and the municipality to ensure that plans for regularisation are actually implemented with minimum costs for public sector and with the active support of local residents and businesses.



SWOT analysis and constraints for regularisation

A SWOT analysis of the two pilot settlements Pobrdje / Rutke and Canj II in the Municipality of Bar highlighted the following main characteristics:

- Large historically established settlements since the 1970s, with a boom of informal construction in the last two decades;
- Different manifestations of informality: in most of the cases land ownership titles and in place without building permit, in some cases buildings are registered in the cadastre, but illegally expanded; and finally in some cases squatting on public or private land in areas prone to natural disasters (landslides, high seismic risk) or forests;
- Mix of land uses and intensity of use: predominantly residential development with a fair number of small family hotels and retail businesses without building/occupancy permit; mix of high and low quality buildings;

- Deficiencies in infrastructure: road access to the settlements (which was improved in 2018 with a new tunnel below the railroad track), parking, sewerage and waste disposal; many (private) roads are very narrow and steep, often provided by the residents; public service companies (electricity, water, telephone) have provided infrastructure over time with some financial contribution by residents.

Difficulties in regularisation are mostly associated with the legacy of tolerance for informal development. Over several decades the land has been parcelled, sold and registered in the cadastre, even though it was agricultural land not dedicated for urban development. Without Detailed Urban Plans (DUP), which do not exist for more than 40% of the urban land in Montenegro, no building permits could be issued. Such constraints were ineffective in a very dynamic real estate market, particularly in the coastal areas and Podgorica, where housing and business pressure has wiped off rule of law. There was no effective action against informal construction until recently. Non-action of public authorities against construction in informal settlements, as well as the provision of essential technical infrastructure, has de facto implied some form of legalisation – a customary right in opposition to the rule of law. Regularisation is hampered for several reasons: i) cadastre maps are imprecise and incomplete; ii) planning standards do not comply with the requirements of existing settlements that have evolved organically; iii) the content of DUPs does not allow effective implementation, flexibility at the local planning level and retroactive building permits; iv) there are no incentives to change the status quo, even in cases with approved DUP residents are reluctant to legalise (e.g. pay communal fees, property taxes, etc.); v) without a DUP no registration of buildings is possible. Regularisation must overcome this vicious circle. Having analysed regularisation strategies in many European countries, including Greece, Serbia, Croatia and Albania, it is concluded that a new strategic approach is required to be pilot tested in the two areas in the Municipality of Bar.

Upgrading and regularisation strategy in pilot areas

A regularisation strategy and action plan is based on the following objectives:

1. Provide a DUP for regularisation that is realistic and pragmatic with measurable and well defined objectives;
2. Ensure that minimum requirements for public access, safety and security are met;
3. Improve the living conditions of residents in the area by ensuring security of tenure and access to essential technical infrastructure;
4. Regularise with minimum displacement and demolition;
5. Raise communal fees with a procedure that is universally applied, fair, transparent and legally sound;
6. Complete regularisation within a defined and manageable period of time and provide opportunities for incremental upgrading in the future.

A strategy for regularisation needs to be developed in a participatory manner effectively engaging residents, business owners and municipal officials in defining priorities as well as in implementing them. It needs to incorporate the following elements:

- a) Analysis and evidence-based documentation (survey) of the existing status quo in the neighbourhood (plot boundaries, buildings & their use, existing roads, infrastructure, etc.);

- b) Land use plan, zoning, building and lot coverage, infrastructure servicing grandfathering existing developments that do not compromise public safety;
- c) Investment plan for implementation with timelines and responsibilities;
- d) Financial, fiscal and regulatory measures and guidelines for plan implementation.

This new approach emphasises the following:

- a) Supporting the existing strengths of the settlements: high level of self-organisation, social integration, mix of uses, less traffic, system of footpaths, relatively good quality construction;
- b) Addressing the weaknesses of the procedure for regularisation through a two-tiered process: first settlement upgrade, followed by building legalisation through retroactive occupancy permits;
- c) Minimizing public sector costs and displacement through DUP with alternative planning standards, followed by communal fee levy from every owner on the basis of the real use of buildings regardless of registration or building permit;
- d) Implementing an effective scheme of communal fee levy, coupled with municipal investment in major public infrastructure (e.g. access roads, tunnel, sewer) to kick-start the process;

In terms of alternative planning standards for the two pilot areas, it is recommended to establish road infrastructure with limited changes in the existing settlement structure, as large scale expropriation is neither financially feasible nor accepted by the residents. Single lane-roads, designated public parking for lease (to meet parking requirements off-site for small hotels), and right-of-way for infrastructure connections need to be negotiated, as well as land swaps in order to provide functional road and infrastructure servicing. These alternative planning standards require legal reform mainly in the Law on Spatial Development and Construction of Buildings and in the Rulebook (2010).

Two tiered approach to legalisation

The survey documentation will be the basis for registration of rights of way and estimates for communal fees. It is expected that less than 3% of the existing buildings have to be removed for reasons of overriding public interest (infrastructure corridors) or because of critical location (e.g. in forests or plots vulnerable for landslides). Following the approval of such a DUP, communal fees may be charged. As neither registration of the building nor a building permit is required, payment may be enforced for every owner. The municipality will guarantee to reinvest 90% of all fees within the settlement. Communal fees for an average single family house are estimated at € 5,000-10,000, with some discount for lump sum payment and primary residence use. Settlement upgrade has to be in line with social targeting. Low income households will be protected from hardship with instalment payment schemes, extension of payments, the introduction of an allowance scheme, subsidies for building upgrade and supply of affordable multi-apartment housing. Extended payments and allowances shall be registered as liens with an obligation of repayment in the case of sale or inheritance. The municipality can administer instalment payment schemes that allow monthly payments of below € 100 per household for 10 years. Legalisation of individual buildings shall be executed with retroactive occupancy permits. The occupancy permits will be issued following streamlined administrative procedures on the basis of: i) compliance with the DUP; ii) access to the parcel (or right-of-way); iii) structural safety and seismic stability; iv) access to technical infrastructure; v) maximum density and parking; and vi) finishing of construction works. Legalisation of

buildings shall proceed voluntarily, but promoted with efficient disincentives for non-action, (tax penalties, exclusion from subsidies, etc.).

Public investments recommended

Settlement upgrades for the pilot area Pobrdje / Rutke include public investments in access to the settlement (a new tunnel opposite of the bus terminal, safe pedestrian access to the train station, realized in 2018), an upgrade of existing roads to infrastructure corridors (with built-in technical infrastructure), realisation of additional corridors to provide closed traffic circuits to allow for a consistent one-way system, fee-based public parking, definition of a system of narrow roads and footpaths (mostly on private land, secured with registered right-of-way) to access parcels, renewal of the existing technical infrastructure in close cooperation with the service providers (electricity and water company), provision of a sewerage system with access points along the infrastructure corridors and the obligation to connect within 10 years. Further, elements of social infrastructure and enhanced public transport in the summer season are recommended as well as affordable multi-apartment housing for relocated households in cases of demolition. This new approach of informal settlement upgrade seems financially, social and politically feasible. Implementation is possible within a few years. It is recommended to proceed with the pilot areas in the Municipality of Bar to test implementation, before extending the procedure to whole Montenegro. The Government of Montenegro and the Municipality of Bar are following the strategy drafted in this study since then.

Topics and questions raised in discussion following the lecture

Formalization of informal settlements may exclude the poorest. Criminalization of informality: assessment of socio-economic status of affected residents would be necessary to understand possible impacts of legalization on livelihoods of the poor. Informality is often seen as a threat to development – this narrative needs to be inverted: informality contributes to urban growth as well. “**informalizing the formal**” can serve as a change in discourse as opposed to “**Formalizing the informal**”

Rental housing can play an important role in housing solutions for the poorest, including housing allowances.

Energy efficiency through regularization: improvements can be proposed in the course of regularization, these improvements need to be cheap so as to be affordable for the residents; when it comes to summer shading, a lot can be done by means of vegetation, installing the AC on the shady Northern side of buildings, shading of windows, etc.

Changes of lifestyle due to regularization & increased accessibility; Participation with and information of residents from authorities’ side: **Residents often oppose regularization**, as it will increase their housing expenses. Therefore, regularization needs to be made economically attractive and incentivized by rendering informality more expensive. Additional support is necessary for economically weak households to make quick transition to legalization feasible.

Footpaths work very well in terms of accessibility. By assessment of existing footpath via satellite imagery, these paths can be “formalized” in such a way that they are accepted as giving right to way even on private properties.

Provision of basic services: in India, provision of basic services may be detached from formal tenure (according to constitution).

Participants' take away

Focused on the informal housing scenario in the context of Montenegro whose geographic terrain is interesting because of the hills and poses a challenge where illegal housing is built not for reasons of “poverty” but for the reasons of Land capture especially on lands with scenic vistas, This session helped understand the practices of “Spatial Urbanistic Plan” and Detail Urban Plan. The issue of illegality of housing structures and regulatory frameworks that govern such informal housing. The detail plan to lay infrastructure like Road was also presented which is similar in case of India and could be related.

Online Resources

- Video of lecture, incl. slides & ensuing discussion: [Link](#)

Working in Roma settlements in Bulgaria

Lecture held by Ilko Jordanov, Open Society Institute, Sofia, Bulgaria

Abstract

At the end of socialist era the social housing stock in Bulgaria has reached 16.2% of all inhabited dwellings. Its dramatic decrease to about 2 percent in the next two decades symbolises the effect of minimal state. The state was so minimal that it simply disappeared.

The ethnic minorities are among the first social groups affected by the absent state. And the most marginalised group in Bulgaria was the Roma – the largest European minority. The share of Roma in Bulgaria is the biggest throughout the whole Europe. The issue of access to decent houses, social infrastructure, and living conditions and the sword of Damocles of the forced evictions for a large part of Roma raises the question again: are really the Roma in Bulgaria settled?



The need of shelter belongs to the foundations of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the deprivation of secure housing reinforced unequal positioning of Roma in education, labour market and health which in turn has diminished their chances of getting out from poverty cycle, social marginalisation and geography of exclusion.

Although in the beginning the consequences for the rest of society were not obvious they have been unavoidable.

In my presentation I will present a snapshot of “precarious settlements” and review the root causes of the informality in the segregated Roma neighbourhoods in its relations to communist legacy and transition to democracy while addresses the following issues, too:

- What are the lessons learnt for the paths of return of the absent state in housing?
- How the cycle of state absenteeism in housing and illegal and precarious settlements and multidimensional poverty can be broken? Are the internal community or national resources enough?
- What is the impact of prejudices, discrimination, hate speech and populist discourses?
- Are their good or innovative practices of work in Roma settlements that could be scaled up in effective social housing policy in Bulgaria?

Literature

Boyan Zahariev and Ilko Jordanov, *Geography of Exclusion, Space for Inclusion Non-payment of Electricity Bills in Roma Neighborhoods in Bulgaria*, in *Who Decides? Development, Planning, Services, and Vulnerable Groups Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative* Edited by Katalin Pallai, http://www.pallai.hu/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/2009_Pallai_who_decides.pdf

Zahariev B., Giteva D., Yordanov I., *TENLAW: Tenancy Law and Housing Policy in Multi-level Europe, National Report for Bulgaria*, Grant Agreement No.: 290694, Lead Beneficiary: Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Peer reviewers: Thomas Knorr-Siedow, Thomas Konistis, Tommi Ralli, <https://www.uni-bremen.de/jura/tenlaw-tenancy-law-and-housing-policy-in-multi-level-europe/reports/reports/>
Lyubomir Lazarov, Dimitar Dimitrov, Orhan Tahir, Boyan Zahariev, Ilko Yordanov, Tzanko Mihaylov, Vania Grigorova, Open Society Institute – SOFIA, *STOCKTAKING OF GOOD PRACTICES WITH ROMA INCLUSION INTERVENTIONS REPORT*, Sofia 2012, http://www.osf.bg/cyeds/downloads/Report_good_practices_eng_Final_ISBN.pdf

Online Resources

- Video of lecture, incl. slides & ensuing discussion: [Link](#)

Participants emulating average passenger density of 12 persons per sqm in Mumbai subway trains



Informal Housing and socio-spatial segregation in Hungary

Lecture held by Tünde Virág and András Vigvari, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary

Abstract

In our presentation we seek to overview the various forms of informal and precarious housing in Hungary. Firstly, we attempt to define the concept of informal housing in the Central Eastern European context and delineate the different forms of informal dwellings in Hungary and those social groups which are concerned in it. Parallel to the changing role of the national and local state, informal resources such as self-constructions and the usage of household's social capital have increasingly played an important role to cover the housing needs of the precarious social classes' housing in the Hungarian context. In our paper we attempt to show how informal practices are linked to various housing crises and how policies deal with these practises. Although informal practices have always been presented throughout the development of Hungarian housing system it has produced different spaces in different historical periods. In our presentation we reveal current examples of informal housing focusing on the social factors and spatial consequence of this process. Secondly, in our presentation we illustrate how informal housing influences (and often reproduces) socio-spatial inequalities and we demonstrate the most visible patterns of informal housing.

We demonstrate how the lack of policy involvement has driven informal dwellers' strategies and how the local municipalities aim to control these spontaneous precarious housing developments through stigmatization and under developments. Thirdly, we show the different form and appearance of ethnicity in the informal settlements and how stigmatization and racialization of spaces reproduces the ethnic boundaries. The main driver of that phenomena is displacement of families living in precarious situation, many of them Roma as the most vulnerable and stigmatized social group in Hungary. One of the most important socio-spatial process in the last decades is the relocation of vulnerable social groups from the city centres and other attractive neighbourhoods, leading to their concentration in particular parts of the locality. This has led to the growing importance of informality in housing, and parallel with the racialization of spaces informal housing has become more and more frequent and constitutes a new spatial pattern of the Roma minority



Topics and questions raised in discussion following the lecture

Vertical vs. horizontal exclusion

Horizontal: exclusion on regional level; regional differences - spatial hierarchy between settlements in Hungary – bubble effect of Budapest & central Hungarian region which produces the highest proportion of the national GDP; additionally: east (poorer)/ west (wealthier) division of the country on national scale;

Vertical: exclusion on local level; within a settlement, hierarchy exist between formal (expensive) and informal (less expensive) areas.

Governmental stance on informal settlements in Hungary: as local authorities are responsible for social issues, their political will is decisive on how informal settlements are treated. Local authorities' budgets vary considerable between different regions. Some local bodies demonstrate very restrictive attitude towards marginalized settlements/ neglect these & don't service them, but the overall picture is heterogeneous. Legalization of informal allotment gardens is often rendered difficult by their physical conditions (narrow streets, no accessibility) and budget constraints of local governments. Local politicians fear that legalization would attract still more informal construction. No quantitative research on legalization projects. ,

Conviviality in mixed informal settlements:

Forced assimilation of Roma during socialist period; they were seen to be "just unskilled laborers", social status in these communities was defined by their work. Workers' colonies, comprising of Roma and Non Roma, functioned as a kind of melting pot then. mixed marriages were common. Starting with the transition period after socialism, Roma movement for self-government resurged.

Integration of displaced Roma starting to settle in existing allotment garden settlements: harsh conflicts, many rumors of Slovakian Roma being resettled to Hungary by the Slovakian states to take away jobs for the locals. Original settlers who used their gardens as second home left the colony. Conflicts over water arose: those paying for water tried to exclude those who don't.

Synonymy of Roma and poverty: not every poor neighborhood is a Roma community. When proportion of Roma living in a (poor) neighborhood exceeds certain thresholds, the settlement starts to be defined primarily as "Roma" by outsiders. Once this has happened even ethnical non-Roma residing in this neighborhood are seen as being Roma. So, the identification of someone as Roma is spatially attributed to the place this person is living in.

Allotment gardens as a Laissez-faire approach to low cost housing, organized by people themselves. Controversial policy approaches to this: while local governments may like to formalize, the national government won't as offering other housing options such as building new social housing or providing housing benefits would cost money. People are left to fend for housing and infrastructure provision themselves by both their own financial means and their own manpower.

Online Resources

- Video of lecture, incl. slides & ensuing discussion: [Link](#)

"Wild" Vienna - Looking back at a century of informal city development

Lecture & Site visit held by Friedrich Hauer and Andre Krammer, ¹ Department of Urban Design, Vienna University of Technology, Austria

Abstract

The development of Vienna in the 20th century was strongly influenced by informal settlements. On a structural level the traces of these formerly "wild" colonies or "Bretteldörfer" are still widely present in today's city fabric. 1918, after the end of WWI, a large part of Vienna's 2 million inhabitants was struck by severe famine, cold, disease and desperate housing conditions. In this precarious situation, several thousands - some sources speak of more than 100 thousand urbanites - were forced to



self-empowerment. Illegal forest clearings, vegetable gardens and squats with primitive houses and sheds were expanding in the Danube floodplain and the alpine foothills, in the fields and wastelands on the fringes of the city. Albeit reduced in scale, this form of informal colonization reoccurred during the world economic crisis of the Thirties and in the instable, precarious years after WWII (Hauer & Krammer 2018). While some minor areas were cleared by the authorities, from the 1950s to the 1990s most former illegal settlements were upgraded, connected to public water-, power- and traffic infrastructure and legalized. As a consequence, former "slums" began to transform into high value residential areas, dominated by posh single-family-houses in recent years – contributing to the current overheating of the city's real estate market. The paper will elaborate on this largely unknown history of Vienna, which is today one of the world's seemingly most formalized urban environments. It will give special attention to the role of flood menace, drinking water supply and the problem of wastewater disposal in shaping the patterns of illegal settlement and the processes of consolidation alike (Hauer et al. 2016).

References:

- Hauer, F., Krammer, A. (2018): Das wilde Wien. Rückblick auf ein Jahrhundert informeller Stadtentwicklung. In: *dérive. Zeitschrift für Stadtforschung*, No. 71, 8-19 <https://derive.at/zeitschrift/71/>
- Hauer, F., Spitzbart, C. & Hohensinner, S. (2016): How water and its use shaped Vienna's spatial development. *Water History* 8(3), 301-328 doi:10.1007/s12685-016-0169-7 .

Conclusion

As diverse as questions and discussions depicted in this assessment report may have been, there are several common themes they mostly adhere to. These are as follows:

Definitions and Status quo

When talking about informal and precarious housing in continents as distinctively different as India and Europe, understanding the actual status quo in each other's region of origin forms the first prerequisite for discussion and exchange. Thus, many questions and debates throughout this symposium evolved around what the current situation in terms of housing for low income groups is actually like in participants' home countries. This also includes understanding the terms used to describe certain entities, mechanisms and conditions in a particular place.

It should be noted in this context that in none of the European countries represented in this symposium, English functions as a mother tongue. However, legal and technical terms often used at the heart of housing related discourses are mostly very specific to the language they originate from. Thus, translating these terms in a way, which accurately transfers the true meaning and gives a clear picture of what it implies turns out to sometimes be a tricky task. Figuring out how mechanism, legal frameworks and different entities work and fit together in each other's place and what exactly is referred to when a specific term is used – this constituted a major part of this symposium's debates and learning outcomes.

In terms of informality in housing, a key distinction can be acknowledged in the fact that while in India, it is mostly the poor who see themselves forced to settle informally due to lack of other affordable solutions, in Europe, informality may also be a way of avoiding tax and other obligations in situations where the nation state is weak. In such a context, informal settlers may not always and necessarily be poor.

Policies

There was considerable interest to learn how policies with regards to housing are framed on national, regional and local level in different countries.

On one hand, this touches questions on whether funds are provided for construction and infrastructure provision as well as housing benefits for individual households – and if such funding are made available: how is access granted? Which are the criteria for it?

On the other hand, discussions centered on attitudes of authorities toward existing informal housing – would such kind of settlements be tolerated and upgraded or evicted and relocated?

Evidently, such attitudes not only differ between national, regional and local levels, depending on respective responsibilities and resources; Likewise, geographical discrepancies are detectable wherein some nation states shun the idea of informality as completely as possible while others navigate ways to live it.

Learning how housing related challenges are handled elsewhere offers options for comparison and informed selection of most suitable solutions for similar such challenges in other countries. Being able to point out that a particular funding approach or a specific regularization framework has already successfully been implemented somewhere lends substantial credit to demands for such approaches and frameworks in one's own place. It also allows to learn from difficulties encountered in this implementation.

(Public) Discourses

(Housing) policies do not operate in an empty space – they are in fact embedded and deeply enmeshed in strands of (public) discourse which determine what ends up being regarded as acceptable and what does not. Therefore, questions with regards to housing policies in a particular country often end up triggering further question on the underlying discourse. Which are the political considerations that motivate policy maker to take up certain measures? For instance, the way Europe viewed its “guest workers” has long influenced how housing issues of these groups were perceived and followed up upon. When, slowly, it transpired into public debate that these people would not simply “go home” after working in the European industry for decades dormitories and substandard housing stopped being a viable housing option.

Segregation

Clearly, most of Europe still aspires to some sort of residential mix in terms of social status and – more recently – ethnicity. In this understanding, segregated and socially fragmented cities are regarded as undesirable and stark racial differences in neighborhoods are understood as US American specificity, as contrasting with most of continental Europe’s realities on the ground. In this context, the emergence of clearly segregated districts and quarters – be they socially or ethnically set aside – rings alarm bells and instigates scientific research. However, similar to Indian contexts, poor neighborhoods tend to be seen as hindrance to development in Europe alike.

Mediating mutual understanding of definitions and status quo, housing policies and underlying public discourses thus represented the main fields exchange in the symposium. Learning what works and what doesn’t – and why! – thus constitutes a major output. Such learning provides an ample range of ideas and options for devising new and enhanced policy models.

Schedule



Symposium			Site visits
Time schedule for symposium & site visit	Wednesday October 23rd, 2019 Venue: SE 2.4	Thursday October 24th, 2019 Venue: SE 2.4	Friday October 25th, 2019 Venue: SE 2.4 & bus tour
10.00 am 11.00 am	Nexus pf housing and migration Sybille Münch	Roma Settlement in Hungary Tünde Virág & András Vigvári	10.00 am 11.00 am Bretteldörfer - historical informal housing in Vienna - excursion Bruckhausen Friedrich Hauer & Andre Krammer
11.00 am 11.30 am 11.30 am 12.00 pm	Discussion Coffee break	Discussion Coffee break	11.00 am 12.00 am Travel within Vienna
12.00 pm 1.00 pm	Migrants, refugees and the nation of poverty in an affluent society Tania Berger	Working in Roma Settlement in Bulgaria Ilko Yordanov	12.00 pm 1.30 pm Bretteldörfer - historical informal housing in Vienna - excursion Biberhausen Friedrich Hauer & Andre Krammer
1.00 pm 1.30 pm		Discussion	1.30 pm 2.30 pm Lunchbox
1.30 pm 2.30 pm	Lunch Cafeteria	Lunch Cafeteria	2.30 pm 3.00 pm Travel from Vienna to St. Pölten
2.30 pm 3.30 pm	Housing and Minority Ethnic Groups in Europe Gideon Bolt	Bretteldörfer - historical informal housing in Vienna Friedrich Hauer & Andre Krammer	3.30 pm 4.00 pm Homeless schelter St. Pölten
3.30 pm 4.00 pm 4.00 pm 4.30 pm	Discussion Coffee break	Discussion Coffee break	4.00 pm 5.30 pm Councelling persons in danger of homelessness Ingrid Neuhauser
4.30 pm 5.30 pm	Informal Housing in eastern Europe Wolfgang Amann	Summing up findings for assessment report BRUCom team	
5.30 pm 6.00 pm	Discussion		
6.00 pm		Movie "PUSH" (http://www.pushthefilm.com/) in cinema "Kino im Kesselhaus" on campus, public discussion	
7.30 pm	Joint dinner		

This programme might be subject to change.