Emerging themes across Europe: A revival in social housing?

Kath Scanlon, LSE
London, 4 December 2008

The one-minute expert

- Size: from 4% in Hungary to 35% in the Netherlands (London 26%)
- Eligibility: <20% to universal
- Demographics: young, old, single parents

well, maybe two minutes

- Incomes: low – but doesn’t always house the very poorest
- Ethnicity: often high concentrations of ethnic minorities

Pressures

- immigration
- demographic trends
- European regulation
- financial constraints
- increased aspirations
- rise of owner-occupation

What lies behind our assumptions

**History**
- housing for all (Scandinavia) or for the deserving working class (most other countries)

**Economics**
- to address market failure or to ‘lead’ the private rented sector

**Law**
- duties vs rights
- command vs negotiation
- solidarity vs efficiency
Urban regeneration...

Providers involved in all countries
- social housing as target of regeneration (everywhere)
- providers as stakeholders and decision-makers (everywhere)
- providers as funders (Netherlands)

...and social mix
- Within social housing, or
- Using social housing:
  - Privatisation
  - Replacement with mixed-tenure buildings and estates
  - Insertion of social housing into areas that had none
- Mix on what scale?

...and social control

Social housing providers addressing problems such as
- Unemployment
- Insufficient language skills
- Loneliness
- Lack of social cohesion

Location (location, location)
- Concentration in certain cities and areas—not necessarily where demand is
- Large single-tenure areas make social mix hard to achieve

Municipal housing cultures

Should we study differences between nations or between cities?
- Vienna
- Glasgow
- Paris
- Helsingborg
- Birmingham

Creeping influence of the EU

2005: ‘housing for disadvantaged citizens or socially less advantaged groups’ who for financial reasons could not get market housing
...and its effects

- Governments can subsidise housing for the poor and elderly (e.g.)
- ...but not housing open to all.

The end of the universalist tradition?

And now what?

- Will the number of poor and vulnerable households increase?
- Will house price falls lead to changes in tenure preference?
- Will it be easier or harder to create social mix?
- How will impacts vary by country and city?