At the crossroads:

The future development of Post War Single-Family Housing Estates in Germany

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London, 28.11.2014
Background

- the West-German suburbanisation after the second world war is manifested in a large stock of aging single-family houses.
- nearly every third residential building is a single family home built between 1950 and 1980.
- “remanence”-effect: long occupancy of the owners leads to a homogeneous age-structure which increases in average.
- there is not enough interest amongst the descendants to live in, because they have already moved out to other regions.
- uncertain living conditions hinder acquisition of property.
- competition between housing stock and new building in greenfield building areas is high.
A Mismatch of Supply and Demand

Demographic change: structural imbalance of supply and demand?

Age-specific buyer and seller rate

cohort size ↓

buyer rate

cohort size ↑

seller rate

Age


Background
## Methodology

### General analysis of the housing stock
- Risk analysis on regional and municipal level
- General characterisation of residential areas and housing types

### Case studies
- Analysis of municipal data
- Inspection of the case study areas
- Interviews with local officials
- Interviews with property experts
- Survey of residents

### Recommendations for a sustainable development of the residential areas
- Recommendations on municipal and national scale
- Scenarios of development options
Risk analysis on regional scale

### Supply-indicators
- Share of detached and semi-detached houses from the 1950s to 1970s in the housing stock 2005
- Share of detached and semi-detached houses from the 50s to the 70s in the detached and semi-detached housing stock 2005
- Increase of the old-age dependency ratio from 2005 to 2025
- Average land value of the building areas 2003-2007

### Demand-indicators
- Population development from 2005 to 2025
- Decrease of the number of big households (three persons and more) from 2005 to 2025
- Employees per 1000 inhabitants 2005
- Changing in household income from 1996 to 2005
- Access to the next high-order centre
Case studies

Types of regions

Spacial imprint
- rural
- partially urban
- predominantly urban

Situation
- very peripheral
- peripheral
- central
- very central

Participating municipalities

Datengrundlage: BBSR, ROB 2010
Case study Beverungen, NRW

Beverungen, administrative district Höxter

- 92.3% detached and semi-detached houses
- 44.4% 1950s – 1970s residential buildings
- Population development (2002-2012): - 11%
- Population forecast (2011–2030, IT NRW): - 18.3%
- Old-age dependency ratio 65 (2012): 0.37
- Share of foreigners: 5.8%
- High risk for marketing difficulties of the stock of single-family houses
Case studies

Beverungen, North Rhine-Westphalia
dwelling area „Poelten“ Settlement from the 1950s to the 1960s

Findings of data analysis

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<td>number of buildings</td>
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<td>number of detached houses</td>
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<td>average parcel extent</td>
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<td>share of foreigners</td>
<td>7.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>settlement density (netto)</td>
<td>23 inh./ha</td>
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</table>
Case studies

Beverungen, North Rhine-Westphalia
Results of the expert interviews

Core statements of the interviews:

„We really have the impression that considerably more used houses will be brought to market…. It’s difficult to estimate if problems to sell the houses will occur.“

„The location of the houses is unfavourable for the elders and the size is too small for the younger.“

„The determining criterion is location, location, location.“

„In the villages the purchase prices will continue to decrease. You can better give the houses as a present. Nobody will buy a house there, in the centre the prices are still more or less acceptable.“
Survey results

Total number of distributed questionnaires: 2004
Response rate: 586 = 29.2%

Ownership: First or subsequent owner
- built or bought as a new house, 40%
- inherited the house, 16%
- bought a used house, 31%
- prefer not to say, 13%

N = 516

Age of inhabitants

- 30-44 years
- 45-64 years
- 65-79 years
- plus 79 years

N = 361

Nearly 90% of the primary owners are 65 years and older

primary owners (N=162)
subsequent owners (N=199)
Survey results

Difficulties to sell the house

Do you fear difficulties to sell the house?

- Yes, 44%
- No, 56%

N = 232

What kind of difficulties do you fear?

- To find a potential buyer: 67%
- Realisability of the designated price: 80%, 79%, 82%
- Finding an age adapted flat: 24%, 21%, 25%

All respondents (N=97)
- peripherally situated municipalities
- centrally situated municipalities

N=97
Conclusion from the case studies

- **At present** there is not yet a serious marketing problem, vacancies only punctual, problems in the future

- **Generation change is still taking place** – high age average, low dwelling density (single inhabitant per house is very common)

- Many buildings are **not qualified for accommodating elderlies**

- Most buildings are (to some extent) upgraded; **main deficits in insulation**

- **No problems anticipated** for dwelling areas in urban and suburban regions (demand through other population groups)

- **Need for action** especially in rural-peripheral and economically underdeveloped regions and in small and medium sized towns
Approach to municipal intervention

Advancement-options for the single-family housing stock:

- **Stabilisation:** “Fast-selling items“, preservation of the actual structure and function, utilisation of location potentials (revaluation to the needs of the aging residents)

- **Qualification:** “Problems related to a long-term use“, upgrading to improve the utilisation perspective (measures to support generation change and attract new target groups for the dwelling area)

- **Restructuring:** “Problems of reuse are obvious“, deconstruction, substituting new buildings with favoured dwellings, conversions
„toolbox“, a flexible range of instruments to be applied by local stakeholders individually or in different combinations:

- Strategic urban development planning and monitoring
- Policies focusing on existing estates
- Infrastructure and local amenities
- Public space and townscape
- Public transport and mobility
- Buildings and houses
- Residents and their participation

Superordinate topics (on governmental and regional scale)
Adjustment measures

Strategic urban development planning and monitoring

• monitoring of supply and demand is needed

• compiling available data on municipal or regional scale:
  – use of buildings (vacancies), status of inhabitants (owner or lessee), including further data such as land value, infrastructure
  – interviews with inhabitants or estate agents to get full information

• objective: „detached houses area check“
  early warning system which enables municipalities to take actions before serious problems arise
Adjustment measures

Policies focusing on existing estates

• estate development centred on existing buildings, limitations on new development
• cooperation with neighbouring communities to avoid rivalry and supply surpluses
• activating vacant lots or brownfields
• conversion of vacant non-residential buildings
• stimulating demand towards existing buildings and gap sites
## European comparison of population development

### Projections of Total Population

Index: 2015=100

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**Data:** Eurostat 2012

### Population in Family Formation (Age: 20-34)

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**Data:** Eurostat 2012

### Dependent Population (Age: 65 and above)

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**Data:** Eurostat 2012
Thank you very much for your attention!

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Project report can be ordered for free: info@wuestenrot-stiftung.de

Article in *Comparative population studies* 18 June 2014
“Prospects for West German Post-War Single-Family Home Neighbourhoods”

Article in *Journal of Urbanism* Vol. 7, No. 3, 03 Jul 2014
“Demography-driven suburban decline? At the crossroads: mature single-family housing estates in Germany”