Kathleen Scanlon & Christine Whitehead (Eds.) Social Housing in Europe II – A Review of Policies and Outcomes

From the Preface:

This is the second book to be produced by a multidisciplinary group of housing experts that was set up as a result of an initiative by a number of French academics
based at different Paris universities. The group was organised through
the GIS Réseau Socio-Economie de l'Habitat network, which receives support
from the PUCA (Plan Urbain Construction Amenagement, the Research Office
of the Ministry of Capital Works and Housing). Since publication of the first book,
Social Housing in Europe, the group has met three times. In November 2007 a
major international conference was organised in Paris, by the GIS. The papers
presented there, together with a great deal of further input by authors, form the
basis for this text. Since then the group has met in Vienna and in Dublin to discuss
a range of issues core to the continued development of social housing and
will work further on issues of both principles and policy over the next year. We
are extremely grateful for all those who have supported these meetings and for
their interest in ensuring the work can continue. (…)

1. Introduction

Kathleen Scanlon, LSE London

This book is a sequel to and builds on Social Housing in Europe, published in 2007
by LSE London. That first book was descriptive, and aimed to give an overview of the
social housing sector in nine European countries, in a format accessible to the

nonspecialist.

This second book explores in more depth some of the themes that
emerged from the first. Like the first book, this publication was partly funded by
the
UK's Higher Education Innovation Fund, which aims to increase collaboration
between universities and practitioners. (....)

Findings from Social Housing in Europe

The first book sought to give an overview of the social housing sector in (mainly
western)
Europe. It contained reports prepared by housing specialists in nine European
countries. These reports followed a common framework, and generally covered
• Tenure split and the supply of social housing in each country
• Ownership of the social sector
• Involvement of the private sector in social housing
• Decision-making and rent-setting
• Access to social housing
• Provision of housing for the most vulnerable: 'very social' housing
• Demographics and ethnicity in social housing

In the countries studied – Austria, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Hungary,
Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden—social housing as a percentage of the
housing
stock ranged from a high of 35% in the Netherlands to a low of 4% (after mass
privatisation)
in Hungary. In most countries this percentage had fallen over the last ten
years as the provision of social housing had not kept pace with overall building,
and/or
social units were privatised or demolished. In the last decade or so many
countries
had seen a revival of interest in social housing, as it offered one way for
governments
to meet the increasing overall demand for housing that stems from demographic
and
income pressures. So far, however, there had been no step change in the amount
of
money available for construction of new social housing.

The profile of the social housing stock differed across countries, in terms of the age
of units, the housing type, and the percentage located on estates. In many countries
the problems of social housing were almost synonymous with post-war industrially built estates.
Social housing served different client groups in different countries—in some it was a
tenure for the very poor, while in others it housed low-waged working families or even
the middle classes, while the very poor lived elsewhere. In a few countries the social
sector housed a wide range of income groups. Even so, it was generally true that the
social sector accommodated a disproportionate number of single-parent families, the
elderly and the poor.
New social housing was generally being built on mixed-tenure sites. Efforts were also
being made to introduce greater tenure and social mix into existing stock, and to use
public assets more effectively.
Several countries were exploring the potential for public/private partnership. This
could mean that private finance funded provision by traditional social owners; less
commonly, private developers themselves could become involved in operating social
housing. (…)

Full text: [Scanlon and Whitehead (eds) Social Housing in Europe II](#)