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## Special issue Intro: housing estates in the era of marketization – governance practices and urban planning

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## Special issue Intro: housing estates in the era of marketization – governance practices and urban planning

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### Abstract

This paper introduces a Special Issue of the Journal of Housing and the Built Environment entitled “Housing estates in the era of marketization – governance practices and urban development”. The issue includes 10 European case studies on how marketization has impacted large housing estates (LHEs) across Europe. The collection includes novel contributions from well-studied countries like France or the United Kingdom, cases from Scandinavia and Mediterranean countries, as well as articles from post-socialist cities where the majority of LHEs are situated, and as such presents the diversity of experiences that has emerged in housing estates across Europe in the last two decades. Since the global turn towards neoliberal governance regimes at the end of the 20th century the commodification of housing, accompanied by the financialization of real estate, has not left any housing markets or market segments untouched. All articles focus on the interconnections between problems found in the development of housing estates and the processes of privatization and marketization. We aim to address two main research gaps: (1) we demonstrate that marketization and financialization are preconditions for the development of contemporary housing, incl. housing estate neighborhoods, and (2) we address the need for an up-to-date pan-European overview on contemporary urban governance and planning practices related to LHEs.

**Keywords** Housing estates · Marketization · Financialization · Governance · European cities

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## 1 Introduction

Over the last decades, a shift towards marketization of housing, transcending the boundaries of political regimes and economic models, has become a global trend (Jacobs, 2019; Majerowitz & Allweil, 2019). In this special issue, we take a closer look at how marketization has impacted on large housing estates across Europe, i.e., the mass housing districts designed and built since the mid-20th century in response to the acute housing shortage in cities on both sides of the Iron Curtain (Hess et al., 2018; Monclús & Díez Medina, 2016). This was the period, when the provision of decent housing to everyone was considered as a social good, or as an infrastructure that allowed cities to grow and prosper. However, since the global turn towards neoliberal governance regimes at the end of the 20th century the commodification of housing, accompanied by the financialization of real estate (Aalbers, 2017; Belotti, 2021; Fields, 2018; Rolnik, 2013), has not left any housing markets or market segments untouched. The resulting dynamics and the consequences of this development are now *inter alia* being experienced in large housing estates (LHEs).

In general, there is an abundance of literature on housing estates. Recent comparative book projects (Hess et al., 2018; Tammaru et al., 2016), previous comprehensive international comparisons (van Kempen et al., 2005; Wassenberg et al., 2004), as well as many single journal articles (Monclús & Díez Medina, 2016; Musterd & van Kempen, 2007; and others) very adequately cover the architectural and planning history of European mass housing as well as the socioeconomic and ethnic trajectories since their construction until today. Countless studies have critically analyzed the outcomes of urban and housing policies applied within the last decades (Andersen et al., 2016; Brattbakk & Hansen, 2004; Bolt et al., 2008; Glasze et al., 2012; Lelévrier, 2013; Watt & Smets, 2017; Watt, 2021; and others). At the same time, clear research gaps remain. This special issue aims to address two of them.

## 2 Governance of housing estates against the background of global marketization

First, most contributions deal with privatization and marketization as a *challenge*, rather than as *precondition* for the development of contemporary housing, incl. housing estate neighborhoods. This is the position that the contributions of this issue take while interpreting critically LHE-related governance and planning in European cities. Most scholars agree that the nature of statehood has fundamentally changed in recent decades. The roles, who is responsible for housing provision and maintenance, under what conditions and who finally benefits from it (supply or demand side), have fundamentally turned around since the late 20th century. The shift from ‘housing as a right’ to ‘housing as a commodity’ (Bolt, 2018; Rolnik, 2013) has had major implications for contemporary urban inequalities, as the home as a property forms a significant part of household wealth. Although ‘right to housing’ voices are once again gaining prominence (Fields, 2015; Kreide, 2022; Miguel et al., 2022), the market principles are now deeply rooted in governance systems and the turn towards fairer housing models is not a simple task.

Recent critical housing research also agrees that housing marketization and financialization, are not so much an outcome of the withdrawal of the welfare state, but instead an overt

state-finance interrelationship (Aigner, 2022; Belotti, 2021; Taşan-Kok et al., 2021; Waldron, 2021) has led to the inflation of housing prices, discriminating housing policies, evictions, homelessness, inadequate housing conditions, and other most extreme contemporary urban miseries. The state with its regulations is not absent, but on the contrary, governments play a decisive role in supporting the inflow of investors' money into urban assets (Belotti, 2021; Rolnik, 2013; Watt & Minton, 2016). The prevailing ideology has long been that the market must have a chance to operate in housing, as this will support national economies and enable homeowners to benefit from rising housing prices. This development has led to exacerbating inequalities in cities (Fields, 2015; Gillespie et al., 2018) and created sharp distinctions between asset-haves and non-asset-haves (Fields, 2015, 2018; Wigger, 2021; cf. Harvey, 1985), whereby the latter have become increasingly vulnerable and distressed. Younger generations face difficulties in starting a reasonable housing career (Byrne, 2020; Waldron, 2021) or leaving deprived neighborhoods (Kadarik & Kährlik, 2022, in this issue). As affordable social housing dries up, low-income groups are being pushed to homeownership or private tenancy (Hoekstra, 2017; Rolnik, 2013). As for estate neighborhoods, the 'rent gap' has systematically moved to lower-class real estate (Lilius & Hirvonen, 2022, in this issue) and deprived neighborhoods (Mösgen et al., 2019; Waldron, 2021), making residential qualities of LHEs dependent on the institutional investors.

In an effort to clarify the broad variety of policy changes under neoliberalism, Peck & Tickell (2002) have identified two interrelated phases or processes: 'roll-back neoliberalism' and 'roll-out neoliberalism'. 'Roll-back neoliberalism' is aimed at "the active destruction or discreditation of Keynesian-welfarist and social-collectivist institutions (broadly defined)" (ibid., 37) and involves the sale of public assets, a transition of previously public housing stock to private ownership, a deregulation of rent regulations, as well as new financial regulation paving the way for a competitive market in home loans in the housing sector. 'Roll-out neoliberalism', in contrast has been defined as "the purposeful construction and consolidation of neoliberalized state forms, modes of governance, and regulatory relations" (ibid., 37). With regard to housing, it includes developments as the re-design of redevelopment programs on the basis of state-led gentrification strategies, the establishment of new organizations and procedural systems, a widespread use of 'public-private partnerships', or a general orientation towards 'urban entrepreneurialism' as a leitmotif for urban policies. Often, these changes have been implemented through 'austerity urbanism' (Chorianopoulos & Tselepi, 2017; Peck, 2012; Whiteside et al., 2021), particularly in the period of intense retrenchment since the 2008 economic crash. Consequently, the capacity of local authorities to intervene in the housing market and/or provide affordable housing has been squeezed and municipalities have been forced into an intensified inter-urban competition.

These changes, we argue, have now been implemented on a broad base. By now, they have ceased to be a new development and can't be regarded as a 'challenge', a 'threat' or a 'trend' anymore. Instead, marketization and privatization are now fundamental conditions against which the development of LHEs across Europe need to be analyzed. Whereas 'roll-back neoliberalism' and 'roll-out neoliberalism' entailed clear references to the previous Fordist–Keynesian social formation, neoliberal governmentality has now been generalized and neoliberal practices, institution and ideologies have been naturalized (cf. Keil, 2009). Previous rounds of privatization and marketization have fundamentally changed the game, with deep-seated consequences for housing estates. Neoliberal policy strategies *vis à vis* housing estates have (with different degrees) been implemented and, as a consequence, led

**Table 1** Refigurations of policy strategies and discourses on housing estates

	Previous discourses	New realities
Social mix	Social/tenure mixing, as a response to segregation	Gentrification Intensified segregation Micro-segregation
Organizational framework	Attack on state-provision, emphasis on public-private partnerships	Widespread privatization Financial investors Ownership societies (in CEE)
Urban politics	Urban renaissance	Intensified austerity Piecemeal funding initiatives

to new constellations for the development of housing estates. Table 1 lists some of these refigurations:

While ‘roll with it neoliberalization’ (Keil, 2009) has fundamentally shaped the institutional configurations and policy realities regarding LHEs, it has proceeded in a highly uneven and path-dependent manner. Thus, while privatization of public housing is still ongoing in Northern and Western Europe, countries like Estonia or Romania have ended up in a next to completely privatized housing market with homeownership rates more than 90% already by the mid-2000s. Whereas financial investors are now the biggest landlords holding substantial parts of the housing estates in Germany and Sweden, they have hardly played a role in most countries of the former Eastern Bloc homeowners’ societies. Gentrification as a state-strategy in London’s housing estates (Watt, 2021) is met by a broad social mix in Moscow etc. In sum, while the last decades have seen fundamental reconfigurations in all estates, the ways these have proceeded are highly differentiated.

### 3 An up-to-date pan-european view on contemporary governance practices in housing estates

The incredible variety of constellations and pathways of LHEs across Europe leads us to identify a second research gap which we address with this special issue: although differences and path-dependencies are now widely acknowledged, a systematic pan-European view on contemporary urban governance and planning practices related to LHE districts is largely missing. Systematic cross-national research projects on housing estates were mostly conducted before the 2008 global financial crisis (Droste et al., 2014; Murie & van Kempen, 2009; van Kempen et al., 2005; Wassenberg et al., 2004). Moreover, while many contributions emphasize the need for a differentiated perspective, the bulk of studies is on social housing estates in Northern and Western European countries, especially in the UK. Their findings must therefore be read against the background of the specific context in which they were situated. As a consequence, the explanatory value of existing approaches towards housing estates remains limited for Central and Eastern European countries and Russia where the majority of LHEs are situated. Here, we face a serious lack of academic research – most contributions end with comparing privatization paths in the early transition period (Andrews & Sendi, 2001; Kährlik, 2000) whereas research on governance and planning in post-privatized post-socialist LHEs is only rarely analyzed in the context of the global process of housing marketization.

At the same time, urban and housing studies have revealed a number of developments regarding LHEs in the CEE region which differ from Western counterparts and deserve more attention. The following paragraphs discuss but a few of them:

- There is broad consensus in housing literature that neoliberalization has affected cities and housing markets around the world (Fields & Uffer, 2016; Jacobs, 2019; Majerowitz & Allweil, 2019; Savini, 2017). However, how marketization has played out in the cities of formerly socialist countries in Europe, and especially the consequences for LHE neighborhoods built in the socialist period (where a sizeable part of population still lives, see Hess et al., 2018; Kovács & Herfert, 2012) remains surprisingly under-researched.
- Contrasting the long history of public intervention in housing and urban development in Northern and Western Europe, a wider principle of a non-intervening state has clearly guided the development of estate neighborhoods in most CEE countries. First and foremost, in the early 1990s, at the time of the global onset of neoliberalism (cf. Fukuyama, 1992), when so-called ‘western’ reference cities predominantly praised homeownership, the move towards large-scale privatization of housing in post-socialist cities sounded logical (Hirt et al., 2013). However, post-socialist policies of austerity in the 1990s and 2000s were unprecedented when compared to cuts in social spending elsewhere in Europe. What followed, was a ‘policy collapse’ (Pichler-Milanovitch, 2011) and two decades of neglect, with almost zero public investments to cover the wear and tear of buildings and public spaces.
- What has also been particularly characteristic of neoliberal rule in Central and Eastern Europe, is a form of ‘opportunity planning’ (Taşan-Kok, 2006), i.e., a shift from controlling urban development to enabling piecemeal development where only those issues are addressed in public policies and urban planning for which collaboration opportunities with commercial interests are realistic, while other more complicated ‘difficult-to-achieve’ issues are ignored. For post-socialist mass housing neighborhoods this has led to a widespread neglect. In contrast to flagship-projects and prestigious new developments in the inner-city, or rampant suburbanization, they are rather a “non-issue” hardly addressed by public policies.
- Across the CEE region, large-scale regeneration schemes (as they are experienced in France, Spain, or the UK, see Lelévrier, 2022; Vila Vázquez & Petsimeris, 2022; Watt, 2022, in this issue) have so far been a taboo. Instead, smaller spatial experiments have turned out to be catalytic for initiating change and filling the gaps in urban governance networks (Pirrus & Leetmaa, 2022, in this issue). Despite admitting the positive effect of small-scale planning interventions as well as recent infills and commercial investments, CEE-based authors have laid out the limits of this approach and pointed towards an urgent need for more comprehensive planning and regeneration (Gorczyca et al., 2020; Marin et al., 2022, in this issue).
- The lack of public sector involvement together with the micro-privatization of the 1990s has resulted in a far-reaching fragmentation of property rights, capacities, and responsibilities. The positive flipside of this coin is the increased relevance of the active agency practiced by residents. In Skopje (Mariotti & Hess, 2022, in this issue) this even goes to the help-yourself forms of illegally extending one’s living space, but even there this has been institutionalized in official rules later. We can also observe how homeowners’ associations in Estonia and Lithuania gradually strengthen their management capacity and

become essential partners in housing governance networks (Pirrus & Leetmaa, 2022, in this issue).

- Contrary to many expectations, the privatization of properties to their sitting residents dominating the transition of the housing sector in most post-socialist countries, has had the paradoxical effect of shielding much of the local housing markets against corporate investment interests. The route of fragmented privatization chosen in most CEE countries in the 1990s, i.e., making almost every single former state tenant a homeowner, has turned out to be dysfunctional in terms of large-scale financialization of housing. Thus, while for example former East German cities created favorable grounds for institutional investors by deciding for institutional privatization (Kitzmann, 2017; Bernt et al., 2017), fragmented privatization is currently holding back the extensive overtake of the urban assets by institutional investors in many post-socialist cities, at least in mass housing areas.
- Non-existing social housing provision (Chelcea & Druță, 2016; Hegedüs, 2012) and a poorly regulated private rental market (Shomina, 2010), together with the post-privatization generations entering the housing market, have led to new divisions in many post-socialist cities. The initially envisioned ‘homeowners’ cities’ are more and more resembling classic urban inequality landscapes of asset-haves and non-asset-haves, and rapidly rising urban property prices are only exacerbating this situation. Thus, while a private rental sector is booming, it has largely remained unregulated in most post-socialist countries and private tenants remain a ‘forgotten minority’, (Shomina, 2010) often living under precarious legal conditions. This is also visible in many LHE’s where private tenants form a substantial part of the population but are hardly integrated into any decision-making.
- A common issue in European housing estates addressed by many researchers is the poor quality of public spaces, anonymity in space, unfinished service infrastructure, isolation from the rest of the city, etc. (Bolt, 2018; Leetmaa & Hess, 2019; Sendi et al., 2009; Wassenberg, 2013, 2018; cf. Kilnarová & Wittmann, 2017; Vasilevska et al., 2014). In this special issue, we see quite a lot in common in contemporary spatial planning principles as well. For example, both in France (Lelévrier, 2022, in this issue) and in Baltic countries (Pirrus & Leetmaa, 2022, in this issue) a recent planning strategy has been reorganizing large open spaces in the LHEs into smaller public, semi-public and private spatial units. Besides this, also functional diversification and investing into connectivity (e.g., new public institutions, such as universities, more commercial services in LHEs, developing contemporary public transport; see for example Finnish and Czech contributions in this issue: Lilius & Hirvonen, 2022; Ouředníček & Kopecká, 2022) seem to be key points of improving the spatial qualities today in LHEs.

Summing up, while privatization and marketization were introduced as means towards achieving a ‘normal’ market economy and paving the way to catching up with the West when these policies were introduced three decades ago, they have resulted in rather specific constellations that hardly bear witness to a convergence but rather to a lasting difference between ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ housing markets, policies, and estates. In a nutshell, one could say that the neoliberalization discussed above has changed the conditions for the development of LHEs everywhere – but it has done so in a highly uneven and very differentiated manner.

## 4 The papers of this special issue

The special issue at hand builds on these findings and advances the state-of-the-art in research on large housing estates in two respects:

First, it includes an unrivaled variety of case studies across Europe. Including both novel contributions from well-studied countries like France or the United Kingdom, cases from Scandinavia and Mediterranean countries, as well as articles from the post-socialist North and South, it provides a broad perspective which is more in line with the diversity of experiences that have emerged in housing estates across Europe.

Second, all articles in this special issue focus on the interconnections between problems found in the development of large housing estates and processes of privatization and marketization. While path-dependencies and institutional differences remain, all contributions take stock of these two processes and analyze how this general trend has played out in variegated ways and has impacted on several issues in the development of large housing estates (e.g., planning visions and implementation, social mix and social cohesion, public spaces, tenure structures). Not only have markets become more important in the governance of LHEs but, in addition, the role of the state itself has changed. Both the changed role of the state towards the development of LHEs but also the deep-seated differences experienced between Skopje, St. Petersburg and Helsinki (to name but a few places looked upon in this issue) and path-dependencies experienced are reflected upon in the individual papers in this issue.

The articles in this special issue contain some valuable discussions on these topics. The following is a brief overview of the content and key messages of the articles.

In their longitudinal study Kadarik and Kährik examine how the likelihood of adolescents to move out from estate neighborhoods has changed in the Stockholm metropolitan area. By tracking the neighborhood outcomes of three cohorts of adolescents living in their parental homes in the years 1990, 1997, 2004, they demonstrate how the out-mobility from LHEs towards other neighborhoods has become less common over time. Their contribution demonstrates the changing role of LHEs in the context of an increasingly neoliberal housing regime, inflation in housing prices, increasing housing unaffordability and metropolitan population growth. LHE neighborhoods, even if they have become increasingly stigmatized, are still among the few neighborhoods where affordable housing is available, which essentially structures the housing choices for young households, especially those with non-Western and low-income backgrounds.

Another Nordic contribution in this issue from Lilius and Hirvonen illustrates how the neoliberal housing regime shapes the trajectories of LHE neighborhoods of the 1960s and 1970s in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. The authors demonstrate how traditional large housing estates have recently become attractive destinations for financial investors and commercial developers, especially for developing smaller rental dwellings, whereas the investors count on municipal support in developing local services, infrastructure, building new local centres, moving essential public institutions (like campuses) in these low-reputation neighborhoods. They argue that even the researchers are sometimes too keen on studying estate neighborhoods only from the point of view of the decline, leaving unnoticed that the rent-gap has moved from the inner-city to traditional housing estate neighborhoods, especially in fast growing metropolitan regions. In addition, the article sheds light on how the generous Nordic welfare state indirectly contributes to state-led gentrification – governmen-



tal support for low-income residents avoids displacements, even when the rents increase both in private as well as governmental-subsidized rentals. The article is a valuable contribution to prove that the commercial interests and public policies are working in interaction to enable the increasing financialization of housing.

Lelévrier provides a valuable insight into French housing policies related to estate neighborhoods (*grandes ensembles*) since the 1970s. Although the withdrawal of the state from the housing provision has been relatively moderate compared to other European countries, the trend towards residualization and semi-privatization of social housing has been obvious. Despite a strong replacement policy, i.e., building new ones instead of demolished social housing, the newer social housing is clearly less affordable, which in turn puts the stigmatised and cheaper older housing stock not touched by regeneration programmes even more under pressure. She also sheds light on French traditions for strong spatial interventions to change the urban social reality. The former principle of open-space planning tends to be abandoned and instead the new appropriation of public and private spaces is applied, where the estate neighborhood is organised into smaller spatial units, etc. The author explains how improving only some segments of initial LHE neighborhoods rather brings along new socio-spatial fragmentation that in turn follows the lines of spatial interventions (e.g., new tenure types). New microsegregation and stigmatization patterns are formed as a result.

Vila Vázquez and Petsimeris observe how two modernist estate neighborhoods with a somewhat different social profile and tenure mixing history in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area have gone through various regeneration programmes in the last decades. They emphasize the role of contextuality and argue that while even within a single metro area the trajectories of initially similar neighborhoods vary, we should be careful while drawing generalizations about southern European cities as a whole. Their analysis shows that even when powerful interventions applied in various administrative levels have essentially improved the spatial qualities of estate neighborhoods, a lot depends on the social profile of initial residents, the histories of territorial stigmatization, and the ownership structure that has developed over the years in Spanish cities. Most importantly, they demonstrate that recent interventions have opened the route towards dualization of estate neighborhoods – while administratively supported gentrification improves some segments of the estate neighborhoods, the remaining parts of estates, although still being indispensable as affordable housing, suffer from marginalization and stigmatization.

Against the background of a rich regeneration literature, Watt's case study on Clapham Park, London, takes a somewhat unconventional position, asking how people feel amid costly and administratively complicated regeneration programs that sometimes take decades of people's lives. He reflects how people's living conditions are getting substantially worse while living in regeneration landscapes. Local communities who have accepted the originally negotiated ownership changes and spatial restructuring plans have in fact perceived essential changes in housing management rules and a state-led deterioration in their living conditions. The study period coincides with significant changes in the societal and economic context. The financial crisis of the 2000s has put housing associations, and their capacity to run the planned regeneration in a completely different position. Increasing financialization of housing clearly structures the regeneration capacities and estate regeneration trajectories, leading to the emergence of new micro-segregation manifestations within the target areas.

The paper of Mariotti and Hess, as other contributions in this issue from formerly socialist countries, describes the move towards a market-based housing in a fundamentally dif-

ferent institutional environment. Transition from former public housing provision to a fragmented landscape of single homeowners took place within a relatively short period here. What makes Skopje in North Macedonia specific is a rather lengthy transition period, in which the legislative, planning and funding vacuum towards housing has lasted longer than in fast-track transition countries (like Estonia, Lithuania, Czech Republic in this issue). The authors demonstrate how even in very tight financial circumstances people and communities have developed adaptive housing strategies and the residents themselves have become active agents who are motivated to contribute to the improvement of their own housing conditions. This initially took the form of illegal extensions of buildings and was in turn supported by the developers-investors who offered ready-made solutions to homeowners. Over time, however, also the planning institutions and municipal offices have adapted to these bottom-up strategies, by offering legal ways to extend buildings. It is also noteworthy, that although comprehensive housing regeneration programmes (like in the UK, France, Spain, and Northern Europe) are missing and EU funding in retrofitting is not available, residents' satisfaction with improved living conditions on their own initiative is quite high.

Pirrus and Leetmaa compare two cities in Estonia and Lithuania and explore how, following the post-privatization governance vacuum, new neighborhood governance practices have started to gradually emerge since the mid-2010s. They emphasize that the global trust in the inevitability of neoliberalism in the 1990s was also the reference for the privatization of formerly state-owned housing in many CEE cities. The result was an almost-full ownership experiment and the subsequent extreme austerity in housing policies, which was rather unprecedented in the European context. The authors pay special attention to the emerging governance gaps in relation to taking care of public spaces in LHEs. They show that public space issues and interventions functioned as a medium through which new contemporary governance networks were formed: public space debates helped to overcome the neglect of LHEs in public discourse, to bring them back to the desks of planners, and to make the case that public sector support should return to these neighborhoods. Finally, like the French and North-Macedonian cases, this analysis also suggests what contemporary spatial planning principles in modernist residential areas should look like. Whether this is done officially or spontaneously by residents, it seems that new appropriation of large common spaces into cosier public, semi-public and private spaces is what the estate residents today expect.

In their analysis based on Bucharest, Marin, Berescu and Marci highlight structural problems in the contemporary governance models of LHEs in Romanian cities. Many spatial quality issues in socialist-era housing estates date back to the period in which these districts were initially established, such as unfinished infrastructure, problems with the energy efficiency of buildings and outdated apartment plans. The authors argue that today's fragmented and pathologically underfunded urban and housing policies fail to address both the inherited deficiencies as well as the contemporary expectations for spatial qualities. Instead, uncoordinated infills, closure of public spaces, and other often spontaneous interventions in recent decades have exacerbated the existing problems and has even further complicated finding the most reasonable planning solutions in the future. According to the authors, there is an increasing need for a broader integrated discussion on which policies and planning principles could improve the residential quality of estate neighborhoods, in which most of Bucharest's inhabitants still live. At the same time, in public discourse the idea of systematically returning public interventions to socialist housing estates remains quite unpopular.

Ouředníček and Kopecká analyze in their article how the general trend towards commercialization has improved the infrastructure of socialist-era LHEs and connections to the rest of the city in Prague. Housing ownership here is also largely fragmented in the hands of single homeowners, although the mostly commercially built infills have somewhat socially diversified the housing stock in LHEs. However, commercial interests have mainly contributed to complementing the formerly insufficient infrastructure and connectivity. The proliferation of large shopping and recreation centres, even if spatially along the main transport corridors, has made LHEs functionally more diverse. The authors clearly show how the new commercial developments have improved the connections and opened up the estate neighborhoods to the rest of the city. These areas have become new activity and job centres in the metropolitan region. This is clearly complemented by public sector activities in planning contemporary public transport and reorganizing public spaces according to contemporary expectations. The article takes a clear position on how to conceptualize marketization in large housing estates in post-transformation Central and Eastern European cities.

Korableva, Shirobokova, Pachenkov and Bernt present an interesting synthesis of how privatization combines with marketization in the Russian urban context. The authors monitor the progress of an ambitious housing renovation program in St. Petersburg, in a Soviet-built *khrushchyovka* district, and analyze the circumstances for the slowdown in this program. They show how a seemingly politically and financially powerful regeneration program can become easily vulnerable due to the extremely complex ownership arrangements (micro-privatization and mix of tenure types even within one building) in Russian cities and the insufficient involvement of residents. They describe the ‘phenomenon of the last resident’, the state of power imbalance that gave some residents a disproportionate bargaining power in relation to their relocation. Their analysis has proved that unstable governance networks and political changes pose a high risk to the success of initially well-planned regeneration programs. Although the institutional environment is different, the situation can be compared with the London case study in this issue, which also found that living in the middle of a regeneration significantly impairs the quality of life of the local population.

## 5 Suggestions for further research

All these contributions shed light on the implications of marketization and financialization of housing in countries and cities with different institutional arrangements, while also helping to understand the impact on modernist (socialist-era) large housing estates. As LHEs continue to play a very important role in the urban housing market in a wide variety of cities, and in many cities even most of the population still lives in estate neighborhoods, it is very important to understand how interventions on different spatial scales and governmental levels provide or restrict access to affordable homes in cities with rising property prices. This special issue is a step forward from LHE-related research focusing so far mostly on urban inequality and segregation issues. We call for future research to look critically at how urban governance and planning practices change the position of LHEs in the urban housing market, by further residualizing or stabilizing this traditional housing environments in cities.

With the set of articles collected, we have aimed to broaden our understanding about the meanings and the relevance of the processes of privatization, marketization and financialization of housing in different institutional, national, and urban contexts across the Euro-

pean continent. We have analyzed how neoliberalization has affected the governance and planning of LHE's and how this is related to the living conditions, the socioeconomic trajectories, and the spatial qualities of these neighborhoods. As mass housing estates form a substantial part of the housing stock in many European cities, we believe that understanding both the changes in the role of markets and states underlying their development, but also recognizing the variety of trajectories and path-dependencies is key for developing adequate ideas for their future development.

As LHEs were designed and built on similar principles across Europe, these neighborhoods tend to share a number of common challenges today and in the future. At the same time, housing policies and the organization of urban planning vary greatly across European countries, and the formulation of joint research in these areas is therefore a rather demanding task. Recognizing that this seemingly contradictory constellation makes any attempt to formulate general recommendations a difficult undertaking, we would still like to offer some points of reference for future comparative research on governance and planning issues related to LHE across Europe.

(1) The precondition for any research should be that global financial markets and the attraction of urban assets for investors have become a condition *sine qua non* for most urban housing markets. As a consequence, LHEs are more than ever before dependent on investors' long-term revenue plans – be it in the form of 'state-led gentrification', further residualization of deprived estate neighborhoods, or alternatively, ignoring LHEs as 'left-over spaces' and favoring new upmarket projects instead. In one way or another, the financialization of housing is present, affecting the housing conditions and housing security in cities, including in LHEs.

(2) As a significant shift in housing provision, towards a 'housing as a right' approach, is unlikely to occur in the near future, more critical research is needed to shed light on the wide range of public and private financial interrelationships through which cities and governments support the commodification of housing and secure financial returns for institutional investors. Marketization and financialization have come to stay – and this needs to be more intensively reflected in the research on LHE.

(3) In the emerging urban inequality landscapes, where asset-haves and non-asset-haves are becoming increasingly distinct as social classes, it is essential to reveal the housing practices and coping strategies of those who navigate in residualized social housing and private rental market. Research is needed to shed light on their perceived constraints in overpriced urban housing markets and how this in turn relates to the social mobility, reasonable family career, etc. It is equally important that the research in the cities of Central and Eastern European countries, where the urban policies have long been inclined towards homeowners, also starts to explore the urban experience of the growing non-asset-having class.

(4) We also strongly encourage all analyses that focus on fair housing initiatives – on contemporary cooperative housing practices, Housing First initiatives, experiments of providing housing for more vulnerable groups where the funding models give security to those on the demand side. It should be noted, that in overpriced cities these housing models may also address middle-class residents. Understanding the long-term performance of fair housing models is valuable to be able to scale up best practices in the future.

(5) Although the effects of regeneration have been studied quite extensively, more attention should be paid to learning from participatory approaches for LHE regeneration. It is essential to understand the views of residents on regeneration practices, including those who

are not relocated. How people experience the regeneration years (and sometimes decades) or how they perceive the change between what was initially expected and what is realized. Although comprehensive revitalization of the socialist-era LHEs is still less common, and residents play a relatively active role in small-scale interventions and do-it-yourself actions, it is essential to understand how to keep local people, homeowners and neighborhood associations engaged in the future, when more resources become available for retrofitting vast LHE landscapes of the CEE cities.

(6) And finally, the links between new spatial rearrangements in LHE neighborhoods and new patterns of spatial inequalities need more detailed examination. The initiatives of social and tenure diversification as well as replanning of large open areas into smaller units tend to create new internal socio-spatial divisions and fragmentation within the initial LHE districts. We should better understand what the consequences of the social and spatial diversification of housing estate neighborhoods are, to what extent it destigmatizes estates and how it creates new micro-segregation and perceived boundaries within the targeted areas.

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