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Young People and Housing: A challenge for individuals and the welfare state

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Introduction

With the term "housing" we associate such diverse issues as address and telephone, access and infrastructure, space for individual expression, social relations, cooking, eating, drinking and sleeping, the kitchen area, the hot shower, the sofa in the corner, consumption of media etc. In terms of sociology we can define modern housing arrangements within four dimensions (cf. Häußermann/Siebel 1996, p.13 et seq.):

- a) The functional meaning of housing is derived from the division between home and work. The home is the place for relaxation, consumption, communication and stylisation.
- b) In social terms the home is the place for the partner and one's intimate relations. The shared household is both a legal and economic bond.
- c) Emotionally the home is the place for our private needs, for physicality and intimacy, the counterweight to work and the public sphere.
- d) In legal and economic terms the availability of housing is determined by housing policy, legal regulation and market processes.

These systemic definitions of housing indicate that accommodation problems are always an expression of complex difficulties in a person's general situation in life, giving rise to consequences which have to be dealt with.

The following indicators must therefore be viewed with some concern: a rise in the proportion of available budget expended on housing, particularly in the new German *Länder* and in low-income households; increasing numbers of accommodation emergency cases as a result of financial difficulties following unemployment; increasing homelessness; disadvantages faced by certain groups such as women, foreigners, young adults and families with little children.

In terms of social policy this situation is fraught, because neither the housing market nor housing policy are developing adequate solutions: market supply is addressed primarily to more up-market demand. The political system responds to articulate, organised groupings better prepared for conflict. Despite the socially-desirable effects of housing benefits aiming at improved market access within a legislatively-defined framework of "appropriate standards", the effect of housing-policy support instruments has been that of a redistribution "from bottom to top" and young adults are precisely the ones affected as first-time tenants (Häußermann/Siebel 1996, p.162). The Youth Service, too, with its programmes and projects for the under-27-years-olds,

can at best attempt to solve housing problems on the subject side for some specific target groups.

2.1 Housing and social differentiation

There is an increasing inequality in distribution of utilised housing space: Owner-occupiers, people in high income groups, small households, older people, tenants with long-term leases have as a rule much more living space available than tenants on low incomes, large families, young adults and the "starters" on the housing market. In addition, state regulation tends to increase rather than reduce this imbalance. Not only this: In spite of their relatively smaller homes the rent burden is generally higher for the second group. Should those who make use of much more housing space than the average pay an extra tax? Living space is a commodity in short supply the price of which rises when demand is too high.

In conurbation there is not enough accommodation, in particular with a low rent per square metre (in Germany the level of rents is determined, among other things, by the square-metre-surface area available). Moreover, these flats are not fairly distributed, and those with the lowest incomes are by no means always those with access to the flats with the cheapest rents.

Quality of housing is not only determined by the size of the flat or the (rented) "price", but also by how well-equipped it is and above all where it is situated. Housing means not only a quantifiable amount of residential and functional space available, but includes the immediate surroundings, the part of town and the relative proximity of important civic amenities.

Economic and social processes in the most recent past have led to a considerable social and socio-spatial differentiation. Social inequalities increase as a direct result of economic restructuring. These are expressed above all in:

- a broadening income gap, but also diminishing income and job security (socio-economic polarisation);
- at the same time, and as a result of a general development in wealth levels, there is an increasing differentiation in life and housing types reflected in profound changes in household structures (socio-demographic inequality);
- behind these structural processes of differentiation there are considerable socio-cultural diversifications (lifestyles, multicultural differentiation)

- which in turn affect
- housing demand. As this demand is socially selective, social spatial polarisations are created and enhanced.

2.2 Young people and housing - problems and attempted solutions

Problems of housing provision for many adolescents and young adults has been a subject of discussion in housing and youth-service policy for some time. Nonetheless the specific housing needs of many young people continue to be ignored. Their requirements tend to be acknowledged and taken up more by building societies and furnishing shops than being the target of active housing and residential policy. Housing has grown in importance for young men and women and is an increasingly central element in life planning. This is connected with the broader social development of greater lifestyle differentiation and individualisation which has far-reaching consequences particularly for adolescents: housing has become more important for the "construction" of a personal (patchwork) identity, for social integration and the stabilisation of everyday life. There is more to new housing needs than simply the wish to project oneself or add an aesthetic dimension to one's private spatial environment.

At the same time the housing market - particularly in large cities and conurbation - has unpleasant surprises in store for young accommodation seekers, being "market novices" (see graphs 10, 12, 13 in chapter 4): for instance high first-time rents, landlords who have their reservations about the young, marginalisation in those market segments of flats which are poorly-situated with sub-standard fixtures and fittings.

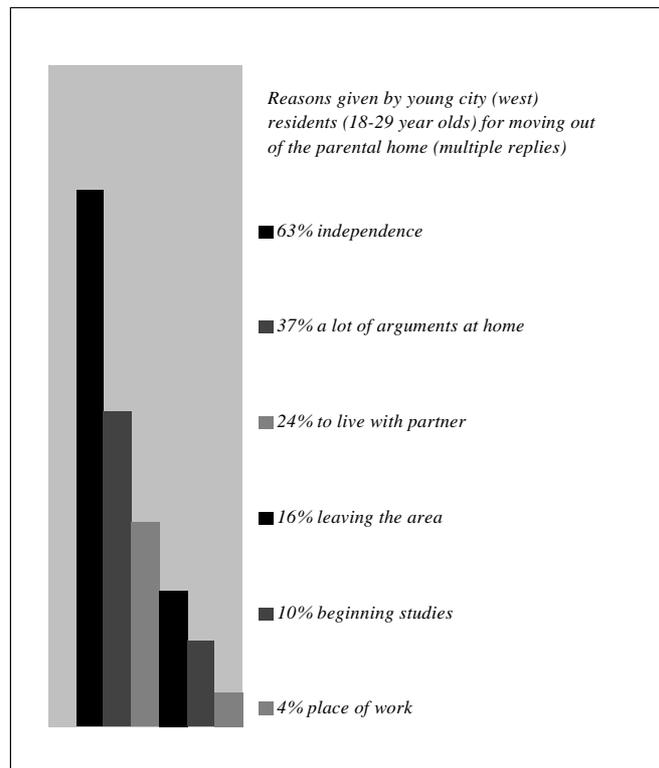
The gap between the increasing importance of housing for adolescents and young adults and the problems young people have on the housing market trying to satisfy this basic need is widening continually. This is potentially both socially and politically explosive. Young people measure the credibility of housing policy as a part of social policy and the efficiency of the welfare state against their own experience of trying to find the right place to live. Serious deficits in housing provision can destabilise families and be a factor in putting off having children till later. At the same time, these deficits have their "social price" at the beginning of professional and working life, affecting the creation of supportive social networks and participation in public life at local level.

The tension between options and needs gives rise to typical wishes associated with housing:

- housing as the opportunity for withdrawal, a sense of well-being, privacy and intimacy;
- the flat as the socio-spatial resource for the development of personal identity;
- the flat as the material substratum of one's own life plan and symbol of becoming independent;
- independent living outside the parental home as signal and chance for organising relationships and partnerships for oneself,
- detachment from the parental home and a new definition of the relationship to one's parents,
- the infrastructure for standing on one's own feet in a context of social networks, contacts, communication and cultural participation.

A survey of 18-29 year-olds in a city (cf. Rieser 1997) who had already moved out of the parental home showed the wish to be independent to be the most important reason (cf. Fig. 1). Conflicts with parents came second on the list. About a quarter moved out in order to live with the partner. For 16% new residential surroundings were an important element in the search for a flat. Only in a small proportion of cases were beginning studies (10%) or starting a job the decisive factor in moving out of the parental home. This might be connected with the fact that the urban area in which the survey was conducted presented no transport problems for young employees or students.

Figure 1
Reasons for moving out of the parental home



Source: Rieser 1997, own calculations

When looking for a place to live, various aspects interact - with differing significance according to the phase - in specific ways for young accommodation seekers:

- the level of rent, which frequently is related less strictly to quality than to the amount of financial resources available,
- the geographical location, above all proximity to peer groups, educational or training centres and work as well as being near to the

- "scenes" or "action" of youth culture.
- flexibility regarding varying requirements for guests, flatmates, activities, jobs, informal-sector employment etc.
- the housing image: geographical location, residential district, "address", style of flat,
- the chances of balancing privacy and anonymity on the one hand with integration and participation on the other.

2.3 The change in importance of housing

Living independently, being free of daily control and of having to do things a certain way in one's family of origin, one's own door with one's name on it: these have always been dreams of young people and stages on the road to becoming an adult, frequently of more significance than earning enough to live on.

When the subject of "youth and housing" was discussed in the past, it was relatively clearly-defined until the 1970s. Young people were placed firmly in terms of housing sociology and housing policy in the context of "housing in the family unit". When older they were seen, on the one hand, as young people starting a family who, in terms of housing policy, were regarded as "the young family". On the other hand, youth housing in residential units was seen as a temporary situation with varying degrees of social accompaniment, care and guidance and as the norm in a particular housing phase, and as such was studied regularly: Student halls of residence, homes for apprentices, accommodation for special groups. Residential housing was indeed seen as the appropriate and supportive form of accommodation and accepted by many young people as such.

The structural change in the youth phase, which has been much discussed since the 70s, as well as the crystallisation of a distinct life phase of "young adulthood" are connected with a relative increase in the importance of "reproductive" areas of life as compared with paid work and profession, i.e. of areas like socio-cultural activities, same-age relationships, life in various "scenes" and indeed "self-determined" housing "independent" of the family of origin, discovery and adoption of living spaces, "regional involvement" in everyday life. The perceptible increase in "young demand" for flats was noted by housing policy-makers and defined as a problem.

A flat or a room of one's own and living independently - putting this in more general terms: Defining and networking social space have become distinct elements in life planning and the daily routine of young people. Housing has

become a central area of life beyond its function as an obvious "infrastructural" prerequisite during clearly-defined periods or in the phase of starting a family. In particular the socially-defined and partly socially-supportive housing moratoria have lost both plausibility and acceptance in the eyes of adolescents and young adults. This may also be true in a broader sense for "modern" residential units.

The aforementioned structural change also leads to an increasing "separation" of central events in life which are generally associated with the "youth phase". Moving out of the parental home, for example, no longer has a more or less predictable "fixed" position in life determined by other events: it can take place before the end of school or not yet have occurred with the existence of a stable relationship at the beginning of working life and with a steady income, e.g. on account of a pragmatic cost-effectiveness analysis.

Having one's own flat or room is an important prerequisite for young people opening up a radius of activity, an agenda for action. It is the material grounding for "new" and alternative life planning. In a complex age when finding one's way is difficult it provides a stabilising basis for everyday life.

Subjective age status, the feeling of being adult, is - alongside having one's own income - directly related to one's own flat. Self-determined privacy, having one's own space available at any time, the base and the stage for self-presentation and self-dramatisation - these are central aspects which characterise housing for adolescents and young adults: The flat as the "overhead projection" presenting both a feeling for life and life style, one's individual way of life.

However, adolescents and young adults have notions and ambitions about housing which indeed follow the general standards propagated and legitimated by society - as regards living space, housing comfort, equipment of, furniture in and location of the flat. Housing ambitions and the housing realities for young people, however, often are worlds apart. Spaces available for experiment, fantasy and new forms of housing and shared living are tight and so sometimes the tide of youthful enthusiasm is dashed on the rocks of concrete housing reality. Imagination in experimenting with ways of living is often frustrated by lack of the financial resources to create satisfying housing options or bearable longer term living situations out of those flats available. And there is a rapid process of adjustment to inflexible and average quality of rented accommodation. The imaginative drive to find something new soon runs out of steam. The realities of the housing market often get the upper hand. Desires to arrange and decorate are absorbed by the market and commercialised as trend-related individuality. This expresses itself in young people being to a large extent conformist in housing terms - as regards forms of living and life style, use and furnishing of the flat.

For many "alternative housing models" - whether "self-run" by housing associations or the administration of another body - the central characteristic is to lead a self-determining life in a community. The motto might be "living, acting and residing together." Nonetheless, such approaches tend to be "little islands" in the "ocean of widespread average housing reality." The occasional public and academic interest shown in them is out of proportion to their actual extent and significance as a form of housing provision for young people. Having said this, the experience derived from these projects provides important impulses for housing policy as well as a stimulus for keeping some housing stock at a reasonable price level.

2.4 Housing problems

If housing becomes a social and spatial problem it is the younger generation which is severely affected.

Desperate housing situations and housing need hugely reduce the quality of life of young people. They "encourage" a rejection of society and politics, increase pessimism and scepticism about the future. For many young people the lack of appropriate "housing options" considerably worsens what is already a difficult phase in their lives, as for example when they have run away from home or been thrown out by their parents. Instead of pursuing their own path to independence with the central resource of their own flat many find themselves forced into "street life" with all the associated effects of marginalisation and exclusion. Increasing numbers of young people - primarily young men, but the number of women is growing - are affected by acute housing need. The provision of flats is regarded by adolescents and young adults as a genuine task of society - even more so than secure jobs or the availability of specific infrastructural facilities. State and society are thus expected to create and offer enough living space at affordable prices and with the average comforts attainable for the average young earner. Failure of housing policy and the institutions of housing provision is blamed on the welfare state as a whole. Sensitivity in this area is very high, disappointment, sharp criticism and resignation, too, are accordingly keen. It is specifically in the housing sphere that adolescents and young adults experience the limits of their lives and ability to organise daily life for themselves.

In the context of housing, difficulties, hurdles and barriers are ascribed to "the state", local authorities, "policy" or "the politicians" more than in that of work or profession. The problems of housing policy which result from an "imbalance" between market activity on the one hand and social-policy

direction and obligation on the other give rise to problematic and stressful constellations in young people's lives and prevent people from putting into effect plans for their lives with the attendant steps in their development.

2.5 Difficult solution patterns

The circumstances which have been sketched give rise to four typical problem complexes for young adults:

- a) They are unable to find a place of their own to live in and stay in their families of origin. This is a situation fraught with latent conflict, particularly for young women because the potential for disagreement between grown-up daughters and mothers in the same household is greater than between mothers and sons. Accordingly, there are almost twice as many young men as young women among the "stay-at-homes" (see graph 1 in chapter 4; this term is problematic because the biological dimension tends to blur the social aspect of the issue). Apart from the gender-specific dynamics of cohabitation there are two further features worthy of note: One is that young men's plans on moving out are delayed by military service or community service. The other is that the third decade in young men's lives is often concentrated on education (multiple specialist training, extra qualifications), career (periods spent abroad, pressure to be mobile) and excessive, cost-intensive leisure activities (cars or motor bikes, sports, active holidays), so that both the effort and cost of running one's own household tend to be avoided. A possibly awkward consequence of not creating one's own social space can be a failure to consciously experience the phase of detachment from the family with side effects on development of identity and the need to set one's own limits.
- b) They are not able to find a flat on long-term lease and are forced to accept temporary solutions; whether in the form of limited-term contracts offered by the landlords, or use of a flat when the tenants are away for a while, or in the form of accommodation relating to specific status: (students' halls of residence, apprentices' or workers' lodgings).
- c) They find cheap but bad, dark, small, out-of-the-way flats or rooms which mean that the abode, instead of being the place for recreation and reproduction, becomes a strain in terms of health, technical defects or because it takes so long to get there.
- d) They rent accommodation which perhaps meets their needs, but is too expensive for their budgets, either because they do not do their sums

- properly or on account of unexpected loss of income (see graph 15 in chapter 4) . This often entails stressful extra jobs in addition to main employment, debt or, at worst, eviction for failure to pay the rent.
- e) With some effort they find accommodation which is sustainable and satisfactory for the moment, but which, at the same time, blocks mobility and prospects in professional and personal terms. The third decade of life can thus be undermined as a phase of active individual development because of the need for short-term solutions to the housing question which pin people down longer term and cut out alternatives.

2.6 Aspects of housing provision

In western Germany the housing market is characterised by both good and bad housing provision at one and the same time for large sections of the population and massive regional shortages for certain groups, e.g. young families but also other "traditional" problem groups.

In eastern Germany the housing situation across all sectors of the market is much more problematic than in the western part of Germany (see tables 18 and 28 of chapter 4). Housing need seems likely to increase disproportionately for adolescents and young adults in the eastern part in the next few years. And the segmentation of the developing housing market in eastern Germany which can be expected will create a much greater strain than in the original German *Länder*, so that problems of access for young people will become more acute.

All in all, eastern households are of poorer quality than their western counterparts: less living space, less rooms per person, fewer owner-occupiers. Housing in the new German *Länder* is mostly in bad condition, for many years it has been neglected. There are regional and sectoral inequalities in the new German *Länder*, but they are less pronounced than in the western part of Germany. In the former GDR the average rental burden (i.e. housing expenses as a proportion of available household income) at the end of the 80s was about 4%, in the former FRG it was at around 20%, for some groups of the populace it exceeded the 40% mark. At present, a rapid adjustment of the eastern burden quotas to western levels can be observed (see graphs 13 and 16 of chapter 4). Experts reckon with an annual building requirement of between 80,000 and 120,000 housing units. The main emphasis is on the construction of houses for families and owner-occupier homes, tenement flats account for a relatively small part of building activity.

Housing is centrally fixed as a constituent element in the lives of adolescents and young adults by "market" problems: for one thing through the problem of access - especially in large cities and conurbation, but also in central medium-sized towns or those with higher levels of density - but also as a result of general market shortages and specific lack of provision for young, that is "new" households. The situation on the housing market has continued to worsen for young people into the 90s. In spite of an increase in flat-building activity - including social housing which virtually came to a standstill in the 80s - the situation has only improved in certain sectors and regions. Financial support for owner-occupation continues to be popular while the number of older and more reasonably-priced flats is being reduced. This affects adolescents and young adults, particularly and above all in cities and conurbation. All in all, young flat seekers only profit indirectly or in mild form from the limited "relaxation of the market". In spite of this easing of the market, the fact remains that the number of housing emergency cases in the age group up to 30 remains high. A housing emergency is defined by the German Städtetag (central organisation of municipal authorities) as when people are in imminent danger of homelessness, are at present without a home or are living in unacceptable housing conditions for other reasons (lack of space, overcrowding, unacceptably high rent, escalating social and family conflicts; see paragraph 4.4. in this book). In this area there are still only estimates available, e.g. those of the "Federal Association for the Support of the Homeless". The existing information about the reasons for youth homelessness, policy responses and activities of youth welfare institutions have recently been collected for the European study on homelessness (Busch-Geertsema 1997).

As the housing question is ultimately one of income, housing for young people is centrally determined by the fact that they belong to "low-income groups". They are at the beginning of their occupational careers, are either in training or working in their first job with low starting pay and - to a considerable extent - on a limited contract basis. Frequently they are students working part time or "those in employment studying part-time", still in education or doing further training; they are out of work, doing casual jobs or are involved in special career preparation or social integration programmes; frequently the most important thing for them is just to keep their heads above water for the moment. The beginning of working life is often a precarious phase in life: for example in western Germany (cf. DJI Family Survey 1994) over a quarter of the under-30s (26%) are employed "part time" - young women more than young men - as opposed to 17% of the total population. The proportion of those in temporary employment among the under-30s is significantly higher than in other age groups - 9% as opposed to 4% of the 30 to 40 year-olds and 3% among the over-40s. Income levels of adolescents and young adults tend to be modest. Young consumption-orientated

"hedonistic" high or top-level earners are - in large towns and cities - in the minority: net incomes of over DM 4,000.- can be found among less than 1% of the under-30s. Dealing with life and its daily concerns and pursuing one's interests has to be managed within very tight financial limits for a great many adolescents and young adults. What would appear to be an acceptable level of income often conceals a precarious life situation in the sense that putting one's life on a secure basis (or attaining a "quality of life appropriate to one's age") entails high-risk work activity with few prospects (second jobs, highly insecure self-employment etc.) plus dubious financial arrangements (debts, uncertain transfers, irregular payments and benefits etc.). The fact that the supplementary welfare benefits quota among young adults has rocketed since the early 80s is an indication that they are increasingly at risk in the life sector of "provision and income".

Young families, or family units with minors, face heavy financial burdens setting up house and paying for the children. Young households are only able to compete up to a certain point with other, e.g. older and more established clients on the market.

All in all, the flat-provision problems faced by young flat seekers and households are concentrated in the cities, because adolescents and young adults continue to move to these regions - if less so than in the 70s - in order to do training, study, look for work or take up a profession. The difficulty in finding an affordable flat is an important contingent factor influencing mobility of adolescents and young adults.

From 1989 the already expensive rent levels of new flats rose with change of tenant by up to 10% annually, in old style flats by up to 15%; rents of flats being let for the first time also went up by 10% and more.

It is precisely those young people who want to or must leave the parental home who are most seriously affected by rises in rents and increasingly excluded from the housing market by their limited budgets. Rent-level developments of this kind result in so-called "average earners" of the lower and in part the medium income classes being affected by "acute housing need"; the socially less competitive and many of the "first time" tenants are finding themselves in a sometimes desperate situation.

The "newcomer" status of young people on the housing market is structurally determined as disadvantaged status. Young people have to take the expensive new flats, those which are relatively poorly equipped yet not reasonably priced (see graphs 1B and 11 in chapter 4) or those in out-of-the-way-locations. Existing flats will scarcely meet the needs of those coming on to the market in the future. The opposite is likely to be the case: the segment of the market most required is diminishing, public and private flat-building investment is flowing into markets serving other socio-economic demand

groups. Only planned improvement of housing provision for all market segments and all social groups will relieve the housing situation for adolescents and young adults. Suggestions have been around for some time: Activation of building land (inter alia by local councils invoking a building development charter), changing building-land law, changing the basic principles on which housing subsidies are based (support for those genuinely in need, no subsidies for owners or of those already well provided for) strengthening of housing association structures and housing-supply policy, etc.

2.7 Housing and the Youth Services

In the early 80s, housing for adolescents and young adults was "discovered" as a theme and task area for the Youth Service beyond the remit of youth welfare work. Youth welfare work has a long tradition and considerable experience in the area of housing and residential homes for young people. Until then the Youth Service had treated the subject of "youth and housing" as marginal. In the Children and Youth Service Act (CYSA) the housing of young people underage and those who have come of age is now defined as a (potential) task of the Youth Service.

Youth policy and the Youth Service should "get involved in" this, they should not give up on the difficult business of tackling housing and housing provision as an interdepartmental task.

With the raising of the age limit for the clientele covered by the Youth Service (as compared to the Youth Welfare Act) and the explicit inclusion of young adults (those who have come of age from 18 to 27 years) in the Act some account is taken of the extension of the youth phase and emergence of a specific life period of "young adulthood". Thus, the central prerequisite of such an extended youth phase, i.e. a home of one's own, is, at least potentially, taken into consideration by Youth Service perception, planning and action...

The adoption of the housing theme by the Youth Service has less to do with satisfying housing needs in the sense of "socio-ecological independence and stabilisation", "security and privacy" or "the flat as a place for expression, creativity, and social recognition", but primarily with straightforward accommodation of those socially-disadvantaged adolescents and young adults scarcely or simply not able to compete on the market (specifically for rented flats); this takes account of minimum standards of provision and, if

needs be, the option of adequate specialist care and support - for a longer, not necessarily pre-determined time.

"Those who've missed out", but also young men and women who return to their family of origin after failed attempts to go it alone suffer from having to live at home; their options for contact and regeneration are limited, they feel worse off than others of the same age who are able to live a more independent life.

The CYSA attaches special significance to institutions and services which work with "young people and families whose housing and living circumstances are under threat".

This legislative basis gives the Youth Service both the legal option and the mandate to energetically tackle housing problems from the point of view of adolescents and young adults at the municipal level, and to actively "get involved in" housing policy (see chapter 5 of this book). In view of the shortages and deficiencies in supply on some sectors of the housing market which crucially prevent underprivileged young people and the Youth Service's clientele from setting up house for themselves and in the context of the new rules under the CYSA, the development of divergent tendencies is becoming evident. The availability of a flat as a prerequisite for the independence of young people is increasingly seen as an area of activity for the Youth Service. At the same time lack of living space blocks such professionally necessary development. Housing shortages are also threatening the success of educational support programmes. Decentralised approaches and schemes with smaller flats and residential units, which should be growing in order to encourage independence, often break down for lack of appropriate flats.

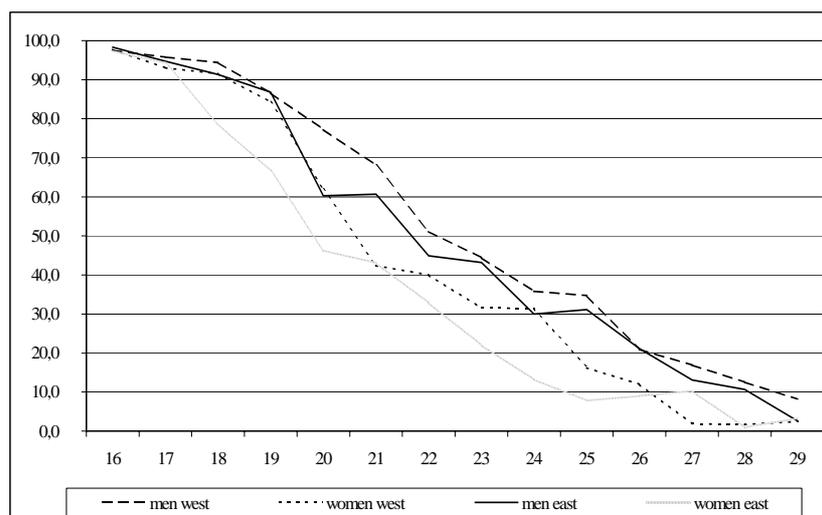
2.8 Empirical data on young Germans housing

In the following reference is made to DJI Youth Survey results. The data show how young people in Germany live, when they leave home and how different regional or educational backgrounds manifest themselves in different housing types. The empirical data was collected for the survey "Youth and Politics" in the years 1992 and 1997 for the DJI Munich. Approximately 7,000 young people of German nationality between 16 and 29 years of age were interviewed face to face for approximately one hour. The data gives a representative survey of views and inter alia of some aspects of the young Germans' housing situation. To obtain specific information on young non-Germans living in Germany an additional survey was conducted

(see paragraph 4.3.5 in this book). As in the entire field of survey research, marginal and problem groups of the housing market (e.g. sub-tenants, people without a home, homeless), tend to be underrepresented in our studies, too.

For young people between 16 and 29 years of age the subject "housing" is especially of interest, because most of them leave home during that time period and try to find their own living and housing styles. This may be related to "living alone", "having a first serious relationship" or "establishing a family" and is manifested in the person or persons with whom young people live together depending on age and gender.

Figure 2
Proportion of 16-29-year-olds living with their parents according to age, gender and region



Source: DJI Youth Survey 1997

2.8.1 Leaving the parental home and housing types of adolescents and young adults

During the past decades the age at which children leave their parental home has shifted upwards. While in 1972 only slightly less than 20% of the 25-

year-olds still lived in their parental home (western Germany), in 1996 this was true for as many as 31% (BMFSFJ 1998, p. 26). The data of the DJI Youth Service from the years 1992 and 1997 forming the basis for the following analysis also support this trend (Table 1). Here the gender-specific differences which are relevant for the age of leaving home are also shown: it is mainly young men (in the western part of Germany) who remain for a longer period of time in the parental home (Fig.2)

Table 1
Persons living in the parental home according to age groups
and gender in time comparison

| <i>men</i> | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | <i>16 to 17</i> | <i>18 to 20</i> | <i>21 to 23</i> | <i>24 to 26</i> | <i>27 to 29</i> |
| <i>1992 west</i> | 98 | 87 | 59 | 24 | 9 |
| <i>1992 east</i> | 97 | 85 | 59 | 24 | 11 |
| <i>1997 west</i> | 97 | 87 | 56 | 30 | 13 |
| <i>1997 east</i> | 97 | 81 | 50 | 27 | 9 |

| <i>women</i> | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | <i>16 to 17</i> | <i>18 to 20</i> | <i>21 to 23</i> | <i>24 to 26</i> | <i>27 to 29</i> |
| <i>1992 west</i> | 97 | 76 | 40 | 15 | 7 |
| <i>1992 east</i> | 98 | 80 | 39 | 7 | 3 |
| <i>1997 west</i> | 96 | 80 | 38 | 20 | 2 |
| <i>1997 east</i> | 97 | 64 | 34 | 10 | 5 |

Source: DJI Youth Survey 1992 and 1997

Various factors determine the wish to move out of the parental home (see also table 12 of chapter 4) and to choose one particular new housing type:

In the original German *Länder*, several different housing types are chosen equally frequently after leaving the parental home. In the new German *Länder*, however, the change in housing types depending on age presents itself differently: there, young people move out to establish a household and partnership with one partner; later to have children.

Only few (6%) of the young people in the Federal Republic share a flat.

The tables show essential differences according to gender: young women leave the parental home earlier and tend to commit themselves to partnership

and family. Young men tend to live alone. Women almost exclusively mentioned "single parenthood" as their living and housing type.

It is only the percentage of young people sharing a flat that is equally high among women and men.

2.8.2 Housing types according to age

When studying the entire population of the 16-to-29-year-olds for the year 1997, clear patterns of how the biographical process of growing up delayed in time which is dependent on gender emerge in the housing types: young men - in general, but a significantly larger number in the western part of Germany - live longer with their parents or alone. Women in general - but especially in the eastern part of Germany - leave the parental home earlier, move to their partners and may even have children when they do so.

Figure 3: Housing types according to age (Source: DJI Youth Survey 1997)

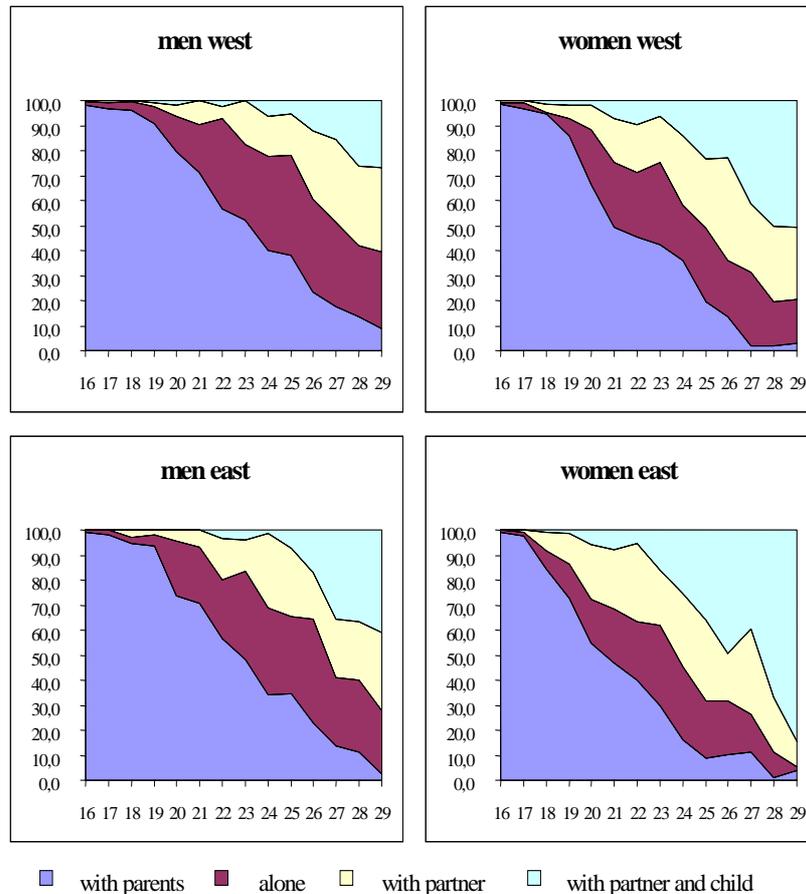


Figure 3 shows how different housing types vary with age as regards their quantitative distribution. It outlines the long period of time for leaving the parental home and seeking one's own housing type.

The curves, representing the development of different housing types, are relatively continuous and do not exhibit any deviations clearly dependent on one particular age. On average, young people in eastern and western Germany leave their parental homes at 21 - young men approximately one year later than young women. The individual age at which young people leave the parental home, however, varies greatly: the first ones leave the parental home as early as 16 or 17, the last ones still live with their parents when they are 29. Obviously, one cannot assume that "normal biographies" with uniform development and standardised transitions still exist, especially as far as the aspect of young people's "living" is concerned. Being rather affected by economic, gender-specific, and spatial structures of inequality, young people select their housing types according to their private condition, self-determined life plans and personal tastes and wishes. This is how varying individual biographies of "housing and young people" are created.

2.8.3 Regional differences

The difference in housing types has always been related to regional differences. Table 2 shows that in western Germany's rural areas rather traditional housing and lifestyles are chosen more frequently. The percentage of persons living together with their own family is the largest here; the percentage of those living alone, sharing flats, or living alone with child(ren) the lowest. In the new German *Länder* this traditional distribution of housing types also applies to urban areas. Contrary to that, conurbation in eastern and western Germany is the centre of differing individualised housing types (cf. table 9 of chapter 4).

Table 2
Differences between rural and urban areas in housing
(column percentage)

| | <i>West</i> | | | <i>East</i> | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | <i>rural areas</i> | <i>urban areas</i> | <i>conurbation</i> | <i>rural areas</i> | <i>urban areas</i> | <i>conurbation</i> |
| <i>housing type</i> | | | | | | |
| <i>with parents</i> | 47 | 45 | 40 | 55 | 47 | 34 |
| <i>alone</i> | 13 | 17 | 24 | 9 | 12 | 25 |
| <i>only with partner</i> | 18 | 16 | 16 | 11 | 16 | 14 |
| <i>only with child(ren)</i> | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| <i>partner and child</i> | 18 | 12 | 12 | 20 | 16 | 13 |
| <i>sharing flat or similar</i> | 2 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 10 |
| <i>other</i> | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| <i>n</i> | 965 | 1331 | 2105 | 734 | 953 | 793 |

Source: DJI Youth Survey 1997

2.8.4 *School education and housing types*

Obvious differences in housing types also exist in connection with the different educational levels of young adults (cf. table 3). This fact is most evident regarding persons sharing a flat: many more young people with higher educational standards share a flat with others than those with lower or medium educational levels. Most of them are students: in the original German *Länder* approximately half of all persons sharing a flat with others are of that group, in the new federal states approximately one third. Persons with higher educational levels in the new German *Länder* also live less frequently in a family than people of their own age with lower qualifications.

Table 3
Selected housing types according to school education
(column percentage)

| | <i>West</i> | | | <i>East</i> | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| | extended elementary school | intermediate high school certificate | (specialised) school-leaving examination | extended elementary school | intermediate high school certificate | (specialised) school-leaving examination |
| housing type | | | | | | |
| with parents | 38 | 42 | 45 | 58 | 43 | 44 |
| alone | 18 | 16 | 22 | 12 | 14 | 17 |
| partner and child | 23 | 19 | 6 | 15 | 21 | 11 |
| sharing flat or similar | 1 | 2 | 10 | 3 | 2 | 13 |
| n | 869 | 1344 | 2121 | 290 | 1269 | 877 |

Source: DJI Youth Survey

The tendency for young people to stay for a longer period of time with their family of origin is currently being discussed. Possibly this points to the fact that altered intergenerational relationships and new biographical models of youth have developed. The phenomenon of "moving-out" can be explained with the help of socio-demographic and life-course related variables (see table 12 of chapter 4). Several studies show that factors clearly influencing the decision to leave the parental home earlier exist:

- gender (young women move out earlier than young men);
- educational level (persons with a lower educational level move out earlier),
and
- place of residence (inhabitants of larger cities tend to leave the parental home earlier).

In addition earlier sexual experiences are associated with moving out earlier, and the point in time of leaving the parental home is mainly synchronised with private life and not with occupational status (cf. Georg/Strzoda/Zinnecker 1994), which is strongly confirmed by the logistic regression in chapter 4 (table 12).

2.8.5 *Having a separate room in the parental home*

Data on the parental home's housing conditions gives an insight into why their own housing facilities are so important to most young adults (cf. Jugendwerk der Deutschen Shell 1992). The desire for separate

accommodation is also created by cramped housing conditions that are stressful and do not offer enough opportunity for private space or individual development. In the group of 13-to-17-year-olds (specifically surveyed within the total population of 13-to-24-year-olds living in the parental home) only 20% in western Germany and just 10% in eastern Germany have a room of their own of more than 10 square meters. 10% in the western part of Germany and 20% in the eastern part have to share a room with their brothers and sisters or other persons. 70% of those young people having their own room have one that is less than 10 square meters. Thus, of the young people between 13 and 17 years of age 39% in the old and 62% in the new German *Länder* live under cramped or very cramped housing conditions in their parental home; and this not only refers to their own room, but also to the amount of space that is generally at the young people's disposal in the parental home. So leaving the parental home cannot always be attributed to the attraction of new perspectives for housing and living, but is often related to the pressure resulting from the cramped housing conditions in the family of origin.

2.8.6 Different housing types and reasons given for them

Which housing type is chosen or accepted is dependent on various conditions and considerations, i.e. on age, gender, occupation or even economic calculation, i.e. (at the moment) wanting to spend as little money as possible or not being able to spend more money on housing. Empirical results exhibit only the beginnings of the densely interwoven reasons for the housing and lifestyle chosen.

Tab. 4:

Form of accommodation of 18-to-34-year-olds and reasons given for it (multiple response) (in %)

| | Total | Gender | | Age | | | Occupation | |
|---|-------|--------|-----|-------|-------|-------|------------|-----|
| | | Women | Men | 18-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | yes | no |
| 1. <i>I'm living with my parents because it is cheaper</i> | 28 | 23 | 34 | 50 | 24 | 6 | 25 | 34 |
| 2. <i>I'm living with my parents because it's the easiest option</i> | 22 | 17 | 27 | 38 | 20 | 4 | 17 | 32 |
| 3. <i>I'm living alone because I want to be alone</i> | 9 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 11 | 8 | 10 | 7 |
| 4. <i>I'm living in a shared flat because I like living together with others</i> | 9 | 7 | 11 | 10 | 12 | 5 | 3 | 19 |
| 5. <i>I'm living with my partner because we can't afford two flats</i> | 13 | 11 | 16 | 10 | 20 | 11 | 14 | 11 |
| 6. <i>I'm living with my partner as a trial before marrying</i> | 29 | 28 | 30 | 23 | 34 | 33 | 36 | 17 |
| 7. <i>I'm living with husband/wife and children as a family</i> | 45 | 57 | 33 | 21 | 44 | 76 | 49 | 39 |
| 8. <i>I'm living cheaply at the moment consciously because I am saving for my own place</i> | 30 | 24 | 35 | 39 | 22 | 25 | 32 | 26 |
| <i>Total</i> | 185 | 177 | 194 | 199 | 187 | 168 | 186 | 185 |

Source: Das Haus / 2 / 1997 // INRA 1996 // own calculations

Table 4 (multiple response was possible) shows that approximately one-third of the 18-to-34-year-olds consciously live cheaply at present, because they are saving for their own place. However, this does not result in their remaining in the parental home until the fourth decade of their lives. While half of the 18-to-24-year-olds state financial reasons for living with their parents, this is only true for approximately one-fourth of the 25 to 29-year-olds and merely for 6% of the 30-to-34 year-olds.

Choosing the housing type of sharing a flat not due to financial or practical reasons, but because one wants to live together with others is clearly related to occupational status: only 3% of those working, but as many as 19% of pupils, students, trainees and unemployed state that they share a flat because they desire social contacts.

Living together with the partner because one cannot afford two flats is quite the exception with an average of 13% giving that reason; however, for the 25-to-29-year-olds it is not so very rare with 20% choosing that answer.

While "marriage on trial" is chosen as a lifestyle by those between 25 and 34 years of age, i.e. during several age stages, the percentage of those living together with husband, wife and child(ren) is continuously increasing with age, i.e. from 21% in the youngest age group, more than 44% in the middle age group and 76% in the oldest age group.

Only approximately 10% decided on living alone because it seemed to them that independence and the desire for autonomy could only thus be put into practice. This tendency was slightly more marked in the female persons interviewed and those of the medium age group.

2.8.7 Satisfaction with housing situation and housing as an objective of policy

For one thing one could assume that there is a correlation between the dissatisfaction with the individual's own housing conditions and the importance that is attributed to "provision of housing" as an objective for state policy (see Tables 5 and 6). This has not been confirmed by our data.

Table 5

*Satisfaction with different areas of life*¹⁾
(percents)

| <i>Extent of Satisfaction</i> | <i>West</i> | | <i>East</i> | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| | <i>unsatis- fied</i> | <i>satis- fied</i> | <i>unsatis- fied</i> | <i>satis- fied</i> |
| <i>Financial situation</i> | 19 | 28 | 30 | 20 |
| <i>Political influence</i> | 38 | 15 | 49 | 9 |
| <i>Housing situation</i> | 7 | 61 | 9 | 58 |
| <i>Relationships to my friends</i> | 2 | 83 | 2 | 83 |

Source: DJI Youth Survey 1997

¹⁾ The 10-stage scale (0-10) of possible answers was divided into three parts for simplification. The Table shows the extreme positions of the "dissatisfied" (scale values 0 to 3) and the "satisfied" (scale values 8 to 10). Percentages were done for the number of valid values.

Satisfaction with one's own housing conditions is rather related to satisfaction with the other private circumstances in life: with the relationship to one's father, mother, or circle of friends. Regardless of this, approximately one-third of the persons interviewed still attribute considerable importance to political activity in the field of housing for adolescents and young adults, that is, rather less importance than is attributed to the creation of apprenticeships and jobs and to environmental protection, but significantly more than to the better integration of foreigners and to making more progress with the unification of Europe (cf. graph 23 in chapter 4).

Table 6
Importance of political tasks ¹⁾

| | <i>West</i> | <i>East</i> |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| | % | % |
| <i>Create more apprenticeships and jobs</i> | 95 | 98 |
| <i>Protect environment and nature more effectively</i> | 87 | 90 |
| <i>Improve housing provision</i> | 75 | 74 |
| <i>Integrate foreigners better</i> | 64 | 52 |
| <i>Make more progress with unification of Europe</i> | 53 | 40 |

Source: DJI-Youth Survey 1997

- 1) Measurement of the importance of political tasks was done with a 7-stage scale (1-7). The Table shows the percentages of those who consider the respective tasks to be important (scale values 5-7)

Obviously, this emphasises the need for the welfare state to safeguard the material substratum "housing" independent of subjective feelings concerning living. "Housing" as a personal, social and spatial aspect of living on the one hand and "housing" as space created by construction, architecture and society on the other hand are perceived by adolescents and young adults on independent levels.

2.9 A theoretically defined outlook

The views of adolescents and young adults analytically outlined above that differentiate between housing as being part of the direct social space for living and housing as built space corresponds to what has been formulated in the theory of social space quite well. Here the dimension "container space" is

distinguished from the dimension "social space". It is important, however, not to see the material and physical spatial structure in isolation, but to develop an awareness of the fact that the material substratum space is generated above all by the social production, employment and appropriation process (characterised by differences in power and money). As far as the analysis of social spaces is concerned, three levels have to be distinguished: micro, meso and macro spaces: at the centre of the "micro space" is the human being and the entirety of his or her experiences of space in the flat. Regional working and living contexts as well as the various interweaving structures of a city are related to the "meso space". The "macro space" may be understood as society organised as national states with their intra- and international destinations and interconnections. (Läpple 1991)

Läpple (1991) in his concept of "social space" analytically distinguishes four dimensions:

1. The material and physical substratum of social relations,
2. the social structures of interaction and action (social practice of production, employment and appropriation of space),
3. the institutionalised and normative regulation system (property, power and control relations, legal regulations, planning, social norms), and
4. the system of signs, symbols and representations for space.

On 1: The material and physical substratum is the morphology of a city with the spatial pattern of different qualities of flats and surroundings. The larger the differences in those qualities are objectively, the larger the differences when judging the spaces and the larger the number of homogenous spatial cluster, the more likely it is that social inequality is transported to urban space.

On 2: The system of signs, symbols, and representations is directly related to the material and physical substratum. Here, the determining factor is architecture and design of the surroundings, which in turn affect the demographic structure and prestige of individual quarters. For Bourdieu, social inequality becomes established above all on this particular level: "The appropriated space is one of those places at which power is confirmed and executed, and that is in its doubtless most subtle form: symbolic violence as violence not perceived. Among the most important components of symbolism ... are without doubt architectural spaces, the silent dictates of which are aimed directly at the body" (Bourdieu 1991, p. 28). The symbolic character of the availability of space is, in addition, significant for the formation of identity.

On 3: The institutionalised and normative regulation system provides the superstructure, i.e. the basic requirements for the production of space, its

symbolism and employment. Here, the legal prerequisites for the appropriation and employment of space are determined (tax law, possibilities for financing, municipal town planning etc.).

On 4: Social practice is space-related action, as far as it is significant for appropriation and/or maintenance of the flat of one's own or the surroundings. Here, distinction begins, the competition for hegemony in a particular quarter. According to Bourdieu (1991, p. 31) it is "the habitus that makes the habitat". Social practice depends on the regulation system as well as on the material, symbolic, and representative content of the particular quarter.

The material and physical substratum is thus the result of regulation (real estate market, town (quarter) planning, location policy, social movement). Symbolism is largely determined by architecture. A quarter's social structure is anchored in the meso level. It represents the individuals and their amount of capital. They give collective signs or react to the existing signs and symbols, respectively. For Bourdieu, class differences are also reflected in space. Society is to be understood as "social space", which is at least two-dimensional. The vertical dimension is formed by the entire amount of capital, while the horizontal axis is characterised by the tense relations between economic and cultural capital. Contradictions are largest in the middle class. This "social space (is determined) by reciprocal exclusion" (Bourdieu 1991, p. 25). Attaining special positions in physical space is manifested in various forms of "*localisation profits*":

- *situation yields* (closeness to desirable persons and objects and remoteness from undesirable persons and objects; increase in silence, aesthetics and security),
 - *occupation profits* (quantity of used (housing) space, non-obstructable vision) as well as
 - *position or rank profits* (address) as special form of symbolic capital.
- Bourdieu thus emphasises the existing parallels of competition for space to other social positioning struggles.

Concluding remarks

Housing, living, space and neighbourhood in the biographical process of social positioning thus mean more than just accommodation and a roof over one's head. While taking their socio-spatial steps towards adulthood young people at the same time take material and symbolic steps towards their further prospects. Decreasing or increasing these options, as far as "living" is concerned, thus also narrows or broadens other prospects in life.