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SOCIAL QUESTIONS IN HOUSING AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE: SOME QUALIFICATIONS

The purpose of this report is to set down some of the unanswered social questions that arise in the present day process of housing and community development in America. It incorporates the suggestions of a fairly representative group of people professionally concerned with housing and city planning.[1] Although the detailed form and emphasis are necessarily the author's, there was remarkable unanimity as to the main issues that puzzle us. A number of recent proposals for research programs in the general field of housing and urbanism provide substantial added support.

In presenting this survey, which is essentially a plea for help from social scientists, certain qualifications should be stressed:

First, the "social" issues here roughly outlined are by no means the only unanswered questions that confront housing and planning practitioners. A similar outline of the serious gaps in our economic knowledge, and another on the technical problems still awaiting solution, could easily be put together. Indeed, they are already available in diverse forms. But the more deeply we get into economic and technical analysis, the more often we come up against social questions, issues that have hardly as yet been properly posed, let alone answered.

Second, what we seem to need is not just another group of independent specialists, a priesthood of "advanced social research," to get off by themselves and try to produce "answers" for us. Undoubtedly, basic contributions to long-term enlightenment will often be made in this way. But all our immediate practical problems cut straight across many diff-

[1] A group discussion was held in Cambridge in 1949. Participating from Columbia was Robert K. Merton, sociologist. Participants from M.I.T. included Victor Fischer, Roland Greeley, and Kevin Lynch, city planners; Robert W. Kennedy and William W. Wurster, architects; Lloyd Rodwin, economist; and Burnham Kelly, director of the Bemis Foundation. From Harvard there were G. Holmes Perkins, architect and planner; John Harkness, architect; William L. C. Wheaton, political scientist; Jesse Epstein, lawyer and housing administrator; and Catherine Bauer. Also participating were Louis Wetmore, planner of Providence, R. I., and William V. Reed, New York architect. Valuable suggestions were later received by letter from Robert B. Black, political scientist and student of British planning administration; Elizabeth Coit, architect with the New York City Housing Authority; Frederick A. Gutheim and Lewis Mumford, writers and critics in the field of human environment; and Coleman Woodbury, political economist and director of the Urban Redevelopment Study, Chicago.

erent fields of expertise: social, economic, political, technical, aesthetic, administrative, etc. And their clarification and solution apparently requires a more integrated approach: continuous team work among the various research disciplines concerned, and active collaboration between researchers and "decision-makers."

Third, this report does not presume to outline a research program *per se*: it merely suggests some unanswered questions as they arise in our business, i.e., in relation to concrete decisions about buildings, streets, open spaces, housing management, financing methods, etc. For purposes of research, it may be that some of our problems should be sorted out on an entirely different basis. A classification according to the specific human needs to be provided for — child-care, privacy, leisure-time pursuits, for instance — might have much to be said for it in some cases.

Fourth, this outline of our problems does not imply any careful weighting as to their relative significance. All we claim is that the questions here posed are relatively "open": they come at points in the housing and planning process where alternative decisions are frequently possible, and where good evidence one way or the other might have some influence.

And fifth, we do not expect research to answer all our questions overnight. Some issues may never lend themselves to scientific methods of social investigation; to tackle others, new techniques will undoubtedly have to be developed and tested. Premature judgments must be avoided; certain questions will require study under a wide variety of conditions to achieve dependable results, and few, if any, of our problems will ever be solved *wholly* by objective analysis. But it is up to us to ask the questions, not to decide the points where research will prove most fruitful here and now. And even where science fails to provide the answers, the personal judgment of experienced students of society, who understand the nature of housing and planning problems, might prove exceedingly valuable.

The Housing Process

Two influences have been working great changes in home-production in the United States, as in the rest of the world. One is the trend toward large-scale building methods and "community" development, and the other is the marked increase in public intervention. Both trends open up enormous opportunities for improvement in human environment, to meet the needs and demands of modern society. At the same time, however, new questions are raised. The respective roles of the consumer, private enterprise and the government have undergone considerable change, and the responsibility of the "expert" has been greatly enhanced. Important social issues are involved in housing policy and design, but the basis for decision often seems confused and inadequate.

The Consumer and the Housing Market

Traditionally in America, the consumer was supposed to decide for himself how and where he would live. If he could not build his own home exactly the way he wanted it, then the automatic adjustments of demand and supply — the "market" —, were expected gradually to satisfy his personal needs and desires, within the limits of physical possibility and his capacity to pay a profitable price.

This concept of the consumer's dominant role in the housing process has always been largely mythical, except for the fortunate few. When a frontiersman built his own house, the limitations of technique and material gave him little leeway in design. And the vast development of technical resources, although it certainly improved the housing of a great many families, has not automatically given them more direct personal control over their environment. Most new homes today are more or less standardized units in large developments, however well equipped or carefully laid out. The home-seeker buys or rents a packaged product, and even his whole neighborhood environment is largely predetermined, subject to little adjustment in use. There is little real knowledge of consumers' wants, even in general terms, and the user's reaction to innovation is seldom seriously investigated. Moreover, the selection available to a given family at a given moment is too narrow as a rule to permit much real choice, above all in a period of severe and continuing shortage.

The consumer's power to shape his environment is greatly influenced, of course, by economic factors: the price of available homes in re the amount he can pay for shelter. And for a great many years the vast majority of householders had little or no influence on home production, even in theory, because they were entirely outside the potential market for current building of standard quality. Since new homes were out of reach they had to be satisfied with whatever older dwellings were available (or self-built shacks), and for a large proportion of the population the only choice was sub-standard living conditions of one kind or another. Slums, blight, and the long-developing housing shortage are all largely traceable to the limited market for new homes.

In recent years, hower, various public policies have been devised, intended to provide housing within reach of lower income families. But this means a new and entirely different kind of force helping to shape the decisions about our home and civic environment.

Increasing Public Responsibility

As a direct result of slums, shortage, and general dissatisfaction with the housing situation, the consumer has stepped into his other role as citizen, and called for public intervention. All levels of government are concerned, and their activities take various forms for a wide range of purposes.

Local governments have long been responsible for restrictive housing standards to protect health and safety, and for the provision of various utilities and services that help to establish land-use and social patterns. But more positive zoning and planning controls are increasing, and many local governments now engage directly in slum clearance and public housing activities.

The Federal government's concern for housing developed through a series of emergencies: foreclosures and unemployment in the depression; housing for war-workers; veterans' housing and the general shortage after the war. There has also been a rising consciousness of slums and urban blight as a national issue. But piecemeal emergency measures have not solved the problems, and Congress has gradually enacted some important links in a "comprehensive long-term housing policy," including: (1) a variety of financial aids to grease the wheels of private home production; (2) subsidies for the construction of low-rent public housing by local authorities, to rehouse families from slums; (3) substantial aid for the clearance and redevelopment of slums and blighted areas by local agencies and private builders; (4) tentative encouragement for broad local land-use planning and community development on a metropolitan or regional basis; (5) various aids for rural rehousing; and (6) research in the whole field of housing and community planning. Although no direct Federal initiative is involved, financial aid normally carries with it a considerable degree of Federal control.

Private home-builders and lending agencies have become almost wholly dependent on Federal financial aid and protection. Public housing for the lowest income group, however controversial, is firmly established with active programs in most big cities and hundreds of smaller communities. Special aid for cooperative housing, to serve "middle income" families who are ineligible for public housing yet cannot afford the product of speculative builders, is a lively issue. And public initiative will doubtless be required once more to meet the housing emergencies incident to defense programs.

This rapid increase in public responsibility results in two different but quite prevalent fallacies. On the one hand, many conservative analysts of building and land use tend to underestimate the role of public policy, hence the influence of political and administrative decision. And on the other hand, many liberal reformers tend to assume that once public responsibility is assured, with social purpose behind it and adequate funds to implement it, the consumer's interest will be served more or less automatically. But is this true?

Housing Policy Involves Basic Social Judgments

The implicit purpose of all housing legislation is to promote the general welfare, whether in terms of physical health, social and civic efficiency, national defense, protection of the family, maintenance of business prosperity and full employment, or the fulfillment of such social ideals as "equal opportunity" and "equal rights."

But these are very general goals, that must be translated into sites and buildings of the most specific, tangible and permanent nature. The Housing and Home Finance Agency is instructed by Congress to encourage and assist "the production of housing of sound standards of design, construction, livability and size for adequate family life," and also "the development of well-planned, integrated, residential neighborhoods and the development and redevelopment of communities." But how do we decide what kind of housing promotes adequate family life, or the exact nature of an integrated neighborhood, or what makes a real community? Housing legislation provides powerful instruments for the achievement of such goals, but little instruction as to what these goals are in three-dimensional terms.

And the consumer is hardly more potent or influential in the detailed operation of public policy than he is in the private market. As a citizen and voter, he can and does exercise enormous influence on broad public purpose, as reflected in the enactment of legislation. But he has little real control over the concrete administrative decisions which affect his own life most intimately: the size and appearance of his house, for instance, the convenience of shops and playgrounds, who his neighbors will be, how far he will have to go to work. Such questions cannot be settled by Yea and Nay. And yet it is the sum of small finite decisions that adds up to a satisfactory or unsatisfactory home and community.

Who Decides? The Role of the "Expert" as Middle-man

At every step in the complicated process of housing and civic development, however, somebody does have to weigh the possible alternatives, and make some sort of decision. And most of these decisions that determine the shape and quality of our environment are made neither by the consumer, by the builder reacting to known consumer demands, nor by elected representatives of the people. They are necessarily made, on the whole, by a long line of specialists, employed by public agencies and also by big builders and lending institutions. These middle-men translate the laws into standards, regulations and operating policies. They advise as to what will or will not be profitable. They design, construct and manage the housing projects. Their decisions are, of course, intermeshed; no one individual is likely to have much power by himself. But together they are largely responsible for the home environment of their ultimate victims or beneficiaries, the people who need housing.

The American consumer has some ultimate check, of course. He can decline to live in a given development, if he can find something he likes better. And if the results of a law were very unpopular, it could eventually be repealed. But this would simply mean that the experts had failed to carry out satisfactorily the noble instructions they received by

due democratic process. And the homes built in the meantime would have to be occupied for years in any case.

The big difficulty lies in the fact that every aspect of housing and city planning policy comes down, sooner or later, to qualitative *social* decisions, "value judgments" about individual needs and preferences, family and community functions, group relations and the whole pattern of civic life. Such judgments are peculiarly difficult to make in a society as varied and changing as ours, but they will nevertheless affect our everyday life for generations to come. And the typical experts currently employed in this field — builders, financiers, lawyers, administrators, economists, architects, city planners, engineers — are often exceedingly ill equipped to make such decisions.

The lack of positive instructions from the consumer, and the dearth of objective knowledge about people's housing needs and wants, is increasingly felt. "Who is our client?" says an architect. "We cannot design houses for faceless, statistical abstractions." Or as an eminent economist puts it, "There is no science of housing. There are only ad hoc cosmologies of prejudices, opinion, and convictions about housing."

What We Need To Know: General View

Clearly, "social research" is needed: but what kind? Various branches of applied social science have been actively concerned with housing and city planning problems for some time. Economics, public administration and public health, for instance, are effectively established in this field. And sociological survey methods provide most of the basic statistical data about homes, families and cities that galvanized the whole movement for housing reform and are now utilized in all plans and programs.

But apparently none of these disciplines, as currently applied, goes very far toward answering some of the questions that trouble us most: these unavoidable judgments in the realm of social values and human relations. To measure "demand," in the traditional economic sense, was one thing. But to measure "need" in concrete qualitative terms is not just a matter of adding a factor for slum replacement, based on some obvious physical attribute such as the lack of plumbing. It is an entirely different kind of market analysis, requiring new criteria and methods throughout.

How do People Live, and How does Environment Affect Them?

To gauge needs, we should know a great deal more than we do about people's behavior, welfare and attitudes under different external conditions. But even if it is known that certain social phenomena are likely to occur in a given type of milieu, this fact alone is not very helpful to the planner or housing designer. Man-made physical environment is the

sum of a number of distinct and variable elements, and what the planner wants to know is *the specific effect of a particular factor in environment over which he has some bona fide control*, and the interrelation between one factor and another.

Also, he needs to know what to do, not merely what to avoid. Even the most refined correlation between slum conditions and an obvious evil like juvenile delinquency is of little aid to the designer of new housing. He won't be copying the slum in any case: what he is interested in is *the social effect of the kind of environment produced, or capable of being produced, today*. Moreover, he needs more constructive criteria than the mere absence of juvenile delinquency. As a distinguished health expert put it, health must be interpreted in the broadest sense in housing and neighborhood design, "to include not only the avoidance of disease but also the positive attainment of mental and emotional well-being."

The effects of housing and planning policy likewise extend into the field of *social organization and human relations*, at the community level. Judgments that affect the whole future framework of race and class relations are of such significance today that they warrant the most able and earnest analysis of their implications. Similarly, the geographic relationship of homes to employment, schools, shops and leisure-time pursuits calls for social investigations beyond the mere measurement of traffic-flow.

Finally, since we are dealing with decisions that affect the long-term future, research should distinguish between average behavior and attitudes under Status Quo conditions, and *emerging trends in social values and activities*, which may often require testing under new and experimental conditions.

How do People Want to Live, and How can they Achieve it?

"Needs," objectively determined, may or may not be the same as what people "want." But in America at least, the ultimate satisfaction of consumers and citizens is the only real test of success in housing and city planning. And a great many experts would sincerely welcome some means of sharing the responsibility for decision with the people who will be most directly affected.

To find out how people really want to live, however, is no simple problem. Random opinion surveys are useful, but they do not provide the whole answer. For one thing, conscious consumer wants are limited by experience and knowledge: by and large, you can only want what you know. But entirely *new* kinds of home, neighborhood, and civic arrangement are possible today: indeed, they are almost inevitable, while on the other hand, some of the old ideals about "home" now seem impossible of achievement, at least in traditional form. What we really need to know therefore is *what people would want if they understood the full range of possibility on the one hand, and all the practical limitations on the other.*

Moreover, conflicting wants must somehow be resolved. Different individuals and groups often want things that are mutually exclusive. Personal desires are frequently in unavoidable conflict with standards and needs that are collectively determined. And even a single individual attaches so many different values to his home that his wants may be incompatible for all practical purposes.

And finally, what people want in houses and cities is not only a matter requiring objective research to illuminate expert decision. The basic challenge for "planning" in a democracy is how to transfer some of the actual responsibility for decision to citizens and consumers themselves. Two different aspects of this problem keep coming up in housing and planning discussions. How can the issues and alternatives be posed more clearly, not only for experts but also for laymen? And, how can we develop responsible citizen-consumer participation at the local level where such participation might conceivably be real and effective? The first question obviously calls for education, and the second for organization. But in both cases the planners, designers, administrators and civic leaders need the help of social scientists.

The Decision-Making Process: How does Environment Change?

The first step is to understand where and how decisions are made about housing and civic development. Useful research must be geared to the points of control, for one thing. And if responsibility is to be shared with sociologists and psychologists, or with citizens and consumers, it is essential to know where they can be brought into the picture most effectively.

The "experts" themselves should likewise come in for a little objective scrutiny: private builders and lenders, public officials, and the long line of specialists. They have to make all kinds of qualitative social assumptions in the ordinary course of their work: who are they? What do they conceive to be the goals of their activity? How are their judgments actually arrived at? In a simple stable one-class community perhaps the personal values of any one member might reflect those of the whole group quite accurately. But the preconceptions and ideals of a middle-class professional man in Washington are likely to be quite different from those of the tenants in a public housing project in El Paso.

Behind the organization chart it is also necessary to get a better understanding of the outside pressures and how they operate. How *does* the consumer exercise influence, direct or indirect, on the private builder, the legislator, the public agency? How does the "market" respond to changing habits and social needs? And how do technological developments and economic conditions change the standard of consumer demand?

How does an experiment get started, for instance in home design, and by what process do innovations become accepted in ordinary practice? How do new civic goals get crystallized? When an idea apparently takes hold, such as "slum clearance" in the United States or "new towns" in England, how did it happen? What is the role of the reformer, the Utopian philosopher, the scientist, the artist, the politician, business interests, organized groups and unorganized public opinion?

What about the civic, business, labor, consumer, racial, religious, professional, welfare, political and other organized "interests" that are actively concerned with public policy in housing and urban planning? What are their motives and assumptions and how do they exercise influence? The recent Congressional hearings on the "Housing Lobby" provide interesting information: but how well do the leaders of pressure groups reflect the rank and file opinion of those they represent? What are the conditions that make housing reform and community improvement move forward rapidly in one area, while they are stopped in another?

The complicated present-day process of housing and urban development is an outstanding example of "mixed enterprise". Not only are "public" and "private" functions intermingled at every step, but the motives and values on both sides are equally mixed. A speculative builder, an insurance company, and a cooperative are all private enterprise: but their purposes in housing development may be entirely different. Public policy is devoted in part to stimulating private initiative, insuring profits and protecting property values, and in part to meeting social needs directly. This political-economic maze is a phenomenon of such basic significance in the Western world that it warrants refined analysis by all branches of social science.

Finally, the whole complex of forces that shape our environment should be better integrated at the theoretical level. Serious contributions to urban land use and building theory tend to be narrow in viewpoint, static in scope and method, and rare in any case. Much more attention should be focused on the dynamics of environmental *change*, along with the codification of existing patterns. The shifting roles of the consumer, the property owner, the producer, the lender, government, and experts of all kinds, under present-day conditions, need fuller recognition.

Residential Mobility: Key Field for Research?

An important clue to environmental change, and the effect of environment on people, may lie in the fact that Americans move around so much. About three quarters of the population have changed their address since 1940, and a large proportion have made several shifts within the decade. Much of this movement is from one house to another in the same community but an infinite variety of longer jumps are made, and apparently the historic lines of flow from country to town, from east to west, and from city to suburb, are still predominant.

The incessant movement from one place to another is both cause and

result of some of our most serious housing and planning problems. And at the same time this very mobility creates ever-new opportunities for improvement in living conditions, and also for testing the results of our housing and planning efforts. Here is a key field for research, almost untapped beyond superficial measurement.

When people move, they have reached a conscious decision strong enough to make them act. Their reaction to past conditions and their hopes and expectations for the future are relatively crystallized. *Why* they move is worth investigating. To what extent is geographic mobility related to social-economic mobility: a different job, or a change in social status? And to what extent, under what conditions, do people move primarily because of the way they want to live, in terms of physical environment? How compelling is the fact that people's housing needs may change at different stages in the family cycle?

Moreover, people who have moved from one kind of environment to another provide a kind of laboratory for comparative analysis. What is the effect on their habits, attitudes and social relations of specific changes in their mode of life? To what extent are their hopes and expectations fulfilled? Especially, we should know more about the effect of moving from old areas to new developments, including both the standard product of current housing and planning practice, and more experimental efforts. Some thought has been given to the effects of moving from a slum into public housing, but there are other important shifts to be explored and evaluated. The most hopeful and ingenious innovations have often been wasted, because no one tested them to see how they really worked.

National Policy and Program: Some Basic Questions

In the Housing Act of 1949, Congress declared that the national welfare requires "housing production and related community development sufficient to remedy the serious housing shortage", to eliminate "substandard and other inadequate housing", and to realize "the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family." And all housing legislation requires adherence to positive "standards" of some sort as a condition of Federal aid. On the other hand, of course, there are cost limitations and numerous restrictions to promote economy and conserve public funds. And today the expenditure of money, materials and manpower for homes must also be weighed, in terms of demonstrable social need, against the requirements of military production.

Obviously a number of basic quantitative and qualitative determinations, supported by factual evidence, must be made in the course of translating national housing policy into specific programs. And this type of market analysis often requires social judgments that are outside the

normal purview of economic or technological research, and little illumined by standard survey methods.

Re Qualitative Needs: Some Social Questions

The number of new homes needed within a given future period depends on estimates of the existing shortage of dwellings, the expected net increase in families seeking separate shelter, and the number of obsolete or otherwise unusable homes to be replaced. And all these determinations, which affect many other aspects of housing policy as well, are qualified by social factors about which we know too little.

The increase in households depends in part on demographic data, but apparently birth and marriage rates are difficult to predict. Part of our present shortage of homes and schools is due to the fact that the population experts of the thirties consistently warned us against overexpansion, and did not foresee anything resembling the present boom in new families and babies. Undoubtedly the net reproduction rate should be better understood in relation to social, psychological, economic and environmental conditions. Such understanding will be all the more important if the "population question" becomes a political issue in this country as it has in Europe, where housing policy and design have been greatly influenced by certain assumptions, largely untested, as to the direct effect of physical environment on the birth rate.

To estimate both the present shortage and future households, it is necessary to define the family group requiring separate shelter in terms of social as well as biological trends. The family homestead, which normally sheltered several generations (including maiden aunts) is apparently outmoded. Does this mean that most of the households that include more than a primary family group today are involuntarily "doubled up"? Does it mean that we should plan to provide separate homes for the increasing number of old couples and single adults? What is the effect of economic conditions — incomes, dwelling prices, employment — on this trend? The whole question of family size is directly related, of course, to the size and type of dwellings to be provided, as well as their number.

Moreover, the future housing needs of any given locality will be greatly influenced by in- and out-migration. And the dynamics of population mobility has already been mentioned as one of the great unknowns, fundamental to many aspects of housing and planning policy.

And finally, the establishment of criteria for the demolition and replacement of slums and blighted areas is an exceedingly difficult problem, involving some judgment as to the effect of housing conditions on health and welfare. Somehow a line must be drawn between the dwellings and areas which are at least potentially satisfactory, and those which are "substandard" or bound to become so. The rough measures of quality included in the Housing Census are inadequate, and an intensive

local survey technique prepared by the Committee on the Hygiene of Housing of the American Public Health Association is often employed to supplement the Census. But complex social factors are necessarily involved in any such evaluation, and the methods and criteria should be subjected to constant critical analysis and refinement.

New Housing for Whom? "Filtering Down" versus Housing for Special Groups

The central issue in most of the debates about housing policy can be stated quite simply. Should we build practically all new housing solely for the upper income groups, on the assumption that it will gradually filter down to satisfy the needs of the rest? Or must we provide new dwellings directly within reach of low and moderate income families? Congress has decided that subsidized public housing for families from slums is necessary, but many local governments still disagree. Federal aids have broadened the market for speculative builders somewhat, but there is still the question of special encouragement for "middle-income" cooperatives, and the issue of public housing for defense workers looms once more.

The basic data required to clarify these questions are primarily of an economic nature: incomes, budgets, building costs *in re* acceptable standards, demand versus supply, etc. But there are some intricate social aspects as well. The circumstances under which houses handed down from one generation to another remain pleasant and livable, and the circumstances under which they become slums, cannot be wholly explained in terms of costs, incomes and physical obsolescence. The "filtering down" process cuts across the whole field of civic history, and relates to population movements, social mores, and the differing needs and habits of particular groups of people. The physical life of a dwelling has a great many social ramifications that ought to be explored in connection with present-day housing policy as well as the slum problem.

But if a "comprehensive" program of new housing construction is undertaken, this has some profound effects on social organization as well as health and welfare. For it tends to result in a series of more or less separate housing policies and home-production machinery, designed to serve special groups: low-income, middle-income, upper-income, veterans, families from slums, families with children, people in particular occupations, old people, working women, minority races, or whatnot. Strict rules of eligibility usually apply, and segregation by "projects" or larger areas is likely to result. What is the effect on class structure and consciousness, and on the relations between one group and another? If this trend is unhealthy, how can it be counteracted without sacrificing the benefits of a many-sided program?

In particular, the social effects of the rigid and detailed qualifications for tenancy in a subsidized public housing project should be explored.

Are such families assumed to have the social status of "charity" dependents because the projects are subsidized: by themselves? by housing officials? by their neighbors or the city at large? What is the result of forcing families to move out of public housing whose incomes have increased beyond a certain fixed limit? What is the effect on community relations, individual initiative, and group leadership of large housing developments inhabited solely by low-income families from slums?

Home Tenure: Ownership versus Rental . . . versus Cooperatives?

Most of the traditional arguments for ownership are of a qualitative social nature: security and independence, personal responsibility, family pride and status, civic participation, etc. And all of these arguments should be tested under the actual conditions surrounding the institution of home-ownership today, so unlike the frontier conditions which prevailed when these values were first attached to it. Buying a more or less standard product on a small lot with little or no cash investment, and with small likelihood of remaining there for more than a few years, is not the same thing as nailing together a homestead on a quarter-section of prairie.

Is the old concept merely a sentimental if persistent survival, bolstered by speculative building practice? Or should we try to achieve some of the old values and satisfactions by other means, cooperatives for instance? Or should we try to facilitate more bona fide individual initiative and responsibility, even under modern conditions? What is the effect on home tenure of our mobility?

Does a conscious preference for individual ownership still reflect a positive desire to own a piece of land and a house per se, for reasons of status, security and personal freedom? Or does it merely mean that most families want ground-level dwellings with private yards? Such homes have rarely been procurable in the past except by purchase, but they could also be provided on a rental or cooperative basis.

In any case, the official attitude toward tenancy has changed a great deal in the past generation. Private rental housing is promoted by FHA, large institutional investors are offered special inducements, and low-rent public housing is subsidized. How did this new trend come about? Does it reflect a real change in consumer demand, or changes in building economics and the production mechanism, or mainly the opinion of some top policy makers?

The trend toward big rental developments raises some new questions about management-tenant relations. When a single landlord selects all the people who will live in a large area, and controls not only home maintenance but also the use of all nearby open space and community facilities, the social effect is very different from the traditional American pattern of individual home tenure and responsibility. It is quite easy

for over-zealous management to produce a distinctly institutional and paternalistic atmosphere, unattractive to many of the very people whom public housing authorities and insurance companies, for instance, intend to benefit, and quite different from the hopeful ideals of "community" planning.

Moreover, some degree of tenant maintenance is often desirable to help keep rents down. But can tenants be persuaded to do such work, even in their own economic interest, if they are not given considerable freedom and overall responsibility at the same time? Just where is the fine line between regimentation and the kind of restriction on individual freedom that is unavoidable in any close-planned development? How can tenant participation and a normal democratic community life best be encouraged? Every kind of management policy is being tried out in our big new housing projects, public and private, and we should know more about the results.

Finally, what about cooperatives? A considerable wave of interest has been developing in this country since the war. And, theoretically at least, co-op housing preserves some of the merits of individual responsibility and encourages more direct consumer control of the product, while eliminating speculative profits and reaping the advantages of large-scale production and maintenance. But very few Americans have the lifelong education and experience in mutual endeavor that underlies successful cooperative housing abroad. Is this a serious obstacle, and if so, how can it best be overcome?

Also, the principle of cooperation can be applied at several different stages in the housing process. A group might construct a project, with ultimate ownership on either a cooperative or individual basis. Or they might purchase a completed development. Or a project owned by some other agency might be managed and maintained cooperatively by the tenants. Under what conditions will one or another form of cooperation prove most successful? Already there is a field for comparative investigation, in this country as well as in northern Europe.

Qualitative Controls: "Minimum Standards" and Uniformity

Large-scale methods and local building restrictions both tend to promote uniformity in new home construction, but the trend toward standardization is greatly enforced by various Federal controls. FHA and PHA establish minimum standards and numerous other regulations as a condition of financial aid, and the local developer, private or public, usually finds it easier to conform to "approved" methods and patterns than to risk delay and argument.

Undoubtedly some of the worst types of land-sweating, speculative exploitation and jerry-building have been largely eliminated by public controls, and the average quality of new homes is probably better than it would otherwise have been. But "minima" tend to become "maxima."

Enormous areas are covered with practically identical dwellings, and most subdivisions or apartment projects in a given general category tend to look pretty much the same, from coast to coast. The standard postwar house of moderate price, very small, with living room, tiny kitchen, two bedrooms and bath, is not a universal solution for all sizes and types of family. Yet inventive experiment to meet varying local conditions and individual needs is rare and hazardous. Two questions continually arise: Are the standards too low? And are they too rigid? Declining space standards are discussed in the next section, but some general questions on qualitative controls should be raised here.

The minimum level of housing quality established by public policy is influenced, of course, by all kinds of economic and political considerations. But the basic issue is nevertheless social: is the house too mean for "adequate family life" or isn't it? And the gap between the standards recommended by the American Public Health Association and those enforced by the federal agencies is so wide as to invite study from many viewpoints. Perhaps a history of housing standards, in relation to social and economic conditions, might be illuminating.

The need for a greater variety of homes, to suit people with few or many children, differing occupations and cultural tastes, in different stages of the family cycle, living in different regions, is increasingly stressed. The National Conference on Family Life emphasized the changing housing needs of the young family, the expanding family, and the older people who now tend to live apart from their children. They also suggested that if varied accommodations were provided in the same neighborhood, families would not have to move around so much as their needs change. And sporadic efforts are made to overcome the normal inflexibility of public agencies, private builders and lenders, with respect to "mixing" different kinds of people as well as dwelling types, or any other kind of experimentation.

The fact is that rigid uniformity is not an inevitable result of large-scale building and public intervention: quite the contrary. We are beginning to build homes to reach different economic and social groups: there is no reason why we cannot encourage much greater physical and social variety of homes and neighborhoods. But it can no longer be left to accident and individual initiative. Within the present complex framework of the housing industry, variety can be achieved only by conscious policy. The fact that different types of housing are required by different kinds of households must therefore be demonstrated and documented. Also the specific effects of present regulations and building methods should be analysed, to discover how more flexibility can best be achieved. It might be argued that a wider range of "consumer choice" would be a more effective way to determine how people want to live than endless minute research. But more variety probably will not be provided, *without research.*

Design is primarily a process of juggling a number of different variables all at once, to meet certain relatively fixed conditions. If costs must be cut, for instance, the designer may have to decide whether to reduce the dwelling area, increase the density, lower the structural or aesthetic quality, eliminate some equipment, or erase the nursery school. And such a choice involves basic judgments about the whole related pattern of individual, family and collective activity.

A large volume could obviously be written on the social aspects of home design, studded with interrogation marks throughout. But the most urgent and puzzling questions tend to coalesce around a few fundamental issues: space standards and dwelling types in relation to varied family requirements, community facilities, aesthetics of housing design.

Space Standards

The average new home has been getting steadily smaller, on the whole, for some time. Not long ago, a house of 900 to 1000 square feet would have been considered about minimum. Today, FHA encourages the construction of "Economy Houses" for individual sale, at 650 square feet or less. Public housing standards are somewhat higher, but they have recently been reduced to offset high construction costs. However, household equipment is better, the home has lost many of its former functions, and the average family is smaller than it used to be.

But there is little proof of the social validity of these new standards, one way or the other. In a shortage, people take what they can find. And such surveys as have been made seem to indicate that most of the complaints and housekeeping difficulties of the people who live in typical modest homes are caused, directly or indirectly, by too little space. But a really comprehensive study geared to this basic question of policy has yet to be made.

Part of the money that formerly went into floor area now pays for equipment instead. And one crucial question is the comparative importance of dwelling space, beyond a certain point, and such equipment as refrigerators, automatic washers, television sets, automobiles, perhaps other items in the family budget as well.

The effect of family type, size, income and cultural background on desirable space standards, and also the influence of climate, should be explored. And the number of bedrooms required to meet varying concepts of "privacy" is an important aspect of the space problem. The more detailed problems of dwelling layout should also be tested in use. The "open" plan favored by modern architects — with everything but bedrooms, bathrooms and storage in one more or less continuous space — should be compared with the older type of plan that allotted separate

cubicles for each function insofar as possible. The amount of glass and the one-story versus the two-story house are also obvious current issues in design.

Exterior space in a housing development influences light, air, play space, "amenity", privacy, land value, and "density", and is often highly controversial. Open space standards per family range from practically nil on Park Avenue, even in new developments, to the acre-per-family minimum of an upper class suburb. Just how much adjacent open space is needed, by a given type of family, in a given type of building, and for what purposes, is a social question of basic importance to city planning as well as housing design.

One issue just coming over the horizon is the idea of making direct access to private outdoor living space a "minimum standard" for all new housing, particularly for families with children. This would take care of itself in a ground-level home with a yard, but it would mean adding balconies to our typical apartment plans, as has long been customary in most European countries. Would this feature, as claimed, simplify the problem of combining housework with child care in a tall building, and add to the amenities of city living?

Dwelling Types

The choice between high or low buildings, detached homes or a close-knit community development, is a far-reaching decision. It largely determines the suitability of the dwelling for a given kind of family use and also, as a primary factor in urban density, it greatly affects the entire pattern and extent of city development and communication. Even the most extreme and divergent Utopian theories about the "future of the city" (those of Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, and Ebenezer Howard or Mumford, for instance) come down at base to different premises about the ideal type of dwelling.

In the past this choice was largely governed by location. Traditional ideals and zoning practice dictated free-standing houses in small towns and middle-class suburbs. Speculative land prices forced multi-family homes in central areas. But today there is much more freedom of choice in dwelling types. Various public measures make it possible to reduce central congestion very drastically. And on the other hand, "group housing" and apartments are not always automatically excluded in the suburbs. With more freedom, however, the responsibility of the decision-makers to choose the *right* type of dwelling for the people destined to live in it is greatly increased.

A big issue today in connection with slum clearance, public housing and redevelopment policy in large cities, is the decision between elevator apartments and low flats or one-family houses, particularly with respect to the needs of low- or moderate-income families with children. Although Federal aid makes low density theoretically possible, the trend is toward

high buildings due to the combined pressure of central property and political interests, the housing shortage, and the frequent difficulty of finding suitable vacant sites within the city. Also, a great many designers like the concept of architectural urbanity and technological refinement expressed in tall buildings when properly spaced, and among the sophisticated there are those who feel that collective apartment living is more convenient, more efficient, and culturally more desirable than our old small house pattern.

All the surveys of ordinary consumer opinion, however, seem to come up with the opposite answer. Almost universally, families with growing children (including most of those who have always lived in apartments) apparently want to live at ground level.

Are the consumers right, or do the experts know better? In addition to direct opinion surveys, there are various background factors to be considered. Are women going to work or stay home? What do people do with their leisure time? What kind of community facilities and professional services are favored, or essential, in a modern apartment development, and do they offset the advantages of ground-level entrance and a private yard? Which kind of environment is conducive to having children and raising them properly? Sooner or later, "population policy" is likely to influence this decision here as it has in Europe, but in which direction? The Swedes put their emphasis on efficient apartment dwellings with maximum services for child and mother, whereas the English favor one-family houses with yards.

But families with children are not the only group to be considered. The needs of older people, childless couples and single adults must also be better understood. Suitable housing for the aged is likely to become a lively public issue sooner or later. But again, in high or low buildings? And also, should such housing be provided in separate projects, or mingled with other types of homes?

The popular reaction to one particular dwelling type, the row or "group" house, deserves special study. From the designer's viewpoint, it has many merits: it provides a ground-level home with a private yard, yet is more economical of land, materials and utilities, and can be more conveniently served by community facilities, than detached homes. Properly planned, it can have sun, air, considerable privacy, and achitectural distinction. But there is a strong prejudice against the row house in most sections of America. What we need to know is whether its unpopularity is due to inherent factors (such as closeness to neighbors, relatively small yards, lack of "individuality") or to the fact that few people have seen or occupied a really well-designed up-to-date version as yet.

Community Facilities

Physically and socially, the modern urban dwelling is an integral part of its surroundings. Tied to a network of pipes, wires, pavement, transportation, and services, it must also have schools and shops nearby, at the very least. And the number and variety of community services and facilities required in residential areas seem to be increasing. It is no news to social scientists that many of the former functions of the home are now taken care of elsewhere on a commercial or communal basis. Also, many services which used to be available only in the city center are now decentralized.

Large-scale housing development not only offers a chance to plan for community facilities: in most cases, they *must* be planned ahead if they are to be provided at all, since no vacant lots or old unused buildings will be available to meet such needs later on.

But what, actually, should be provided, under a given set of conditions? In what form, to serve how many people? Of the numerous experiments, which have proved successful? Which failed, and why? There are strong opinions as to what is needed, but they vary in the extreme. The guiding ideal may be "packaged services" to lighten housework, improved welfare via clinics and child-care centers, or a fuller social life and more responsible participation in public affairs. But there are obvious pitfalls in promoting such ideals from the top down.

Europe offers wide experience, from large community centers in England to all kinds of housekeeping and welfare services in Swedish cooperative apartments. American public housing frequently provides assembly rooms, indoor and outdoor recreation space, facilities for child care centers, clinics and libraries, etc. Experimental "model" projects have always stressed community facilities, and some of the larger commercial builders are now following suit. But we know very little about what happens in actual practical *use*.[2] And on the other hand, what about some new forces that may be restoring certain functions to the home: the automatic washer and television, for instance?

This is not merely a question of providing building space for specialized uses. Heightened group or community life might mean a closer form of development, different dwelling types, more public space even at the expense of some private space. It has been suggested that a basic approach to the problem of planning both homes and community facilities might be to analyse *all* the functions and activities that should be provided for, whether inside the house or elsewhere. By thus abstracting the functions and pooling the space needs of an entire community, instead of starting with the respective uses of kitchens, living rooms,

[2]The United Nations' Department of Social Affairs recently sought factual reports from a number of countries on trends and experience with respect to community facilities in housing developments, but the lack of available primary data in the United States made it impossible for us to participate.

assembly halls, etc., it might be possible to envision new and more effective forms and combinations of space and shelter.

It cannot be assumed, however, that there is always an either-or decision between what is enclosed in a house and what is transferred outside. The fact that small children attend nursery school does not cancel the need for play space at home, and many household services might be employed solely for occasional convenience. It may well be that the trend toward community facilities reflects mainly a desire for more flexibility, more choice, not an outright shift to a more collective mode of life.

The Art of "Large Scale Housing"

New construction methods, new building requirements, new spatial arrangements, new human needs, require fresh aesthetic solutions. And since architecture is inherently a social art (if only because everyone has to live with it continuously) it seems reasonable to assume that housing developments should give pleasure and stimulation to the people who live in them, and express something valid about their life and the values of the community. Few architects would claim, however, that we really know how to achieve such solutions, despite a generation of serious effort and useful experiment.

The most obvious pitfall in large scale housing design is monotony: dreary repetition of identical units, a bleak and boring kind of orderliness. But monotony is not inevitable, and it is closely related to issues previously discussed: too rigid "minimum standards"; too little variety in dwelling types; the need for community facilities. In general, a more intimate knowledge and positive recognition of people's varied needs and desires would greatly help the designer. As long as the future occupants are faceless statistical categories — "slum dwellers", "veterans", "middle income group" — and as long as the goal is merely "decent, safe and sanitary" dwellings, over-simplified standardization is almost inevitable.

Most architects feel that they could do much more distinguished housing projects if they were given a little more leeway, and this further emphasizes the need to encourage experiment and innovation. But aesthetic expression is *itself* a big question, quite apart from functional refinement and administrative obstacles. And it is puzzling because the potential aesthetic virtues of large projects built by mass production methods are extremely different from the values most Americans associate with an attractive home or distinctive residential architecture. What is possible is urbanity: the balancing of mass and space for formal beauty, "civic design" in the classic sense. But instead of "urbanity" in residential architecture, most Americans seek "individuality," in the sense of unique and personal qualities pertaining to each dwelling, or the quaint charm that results from historic accretion and personal craftsmanship. But these are the very qualities that cannot be achieved successfully by a corps of hard-pressed planners, designers and building experts, operating through a system of standards and mass production, no matter how hard they try. Even a romantic isolated plot does not make a prefabricated house seem "individual": its aesthetic virtues are entirely different. And no modern housing project ever looked in the least like a quaint old village, whatever its name or however "Colonial" its detail.

Of course, experimentation with new architectural forms and values is an essential part of the cultural process, and nobody should expect innovations to be popular instantly. But we should know more than we do about the public reaction to modern architectural efforts. What is the initial attitude? How do people feel later when the novelty has worn off? Certain housing projects would generally be considered well designed, interesting or beautiful by progressive architects: do the occupants come to agree with them? Is it possible to distinguish between conscious attitudes toward modern design, and its effect on unconscious attitudes or behavior? Such questions are part of a very large and important general problem: the relation between "experts" (or "artists") and people in modern society.

Social Relations: Segregation versus Social Mixture

Race relations is a major issue in America, and the question of racial discrimination and segregation is one of the most urgent and controversial aspects of housing and planning policy. From the viewpoint of those who are concerned with the process of housing and civic development, however, this is not an isolated issue, related wholly to racial prejudice: it is part of a general tendency to separate different kinds of people and different functions, with resulting standardization of land use over wide areas.

The Overall Trend Toward Segregation

In the more or less feudal pattern of the old South, extreme racial discrimination did not result in wholesale geographic segregation. Quite the contrary. And today there are many northern cities where "white" or "Negro" districts are relatively larger and more concentrated, than in some Southern cities. Clearly, other factors than race prejudice *per se* must have some influence.

One of these influences is undoubtedly the strong trend toward economic segregation, which has been operating in most modern cities for the past century. Zoning and building regulations, large-scale enterprise, and restrictive covenants tend to standardize dwelling types, price and rent levels, and the social-economic class of the residents, over wide

areas. Within this framework, it is very easy for the private covenant to become a major instrument for racial segregation as well, and for the large developer or landlord to establish with complete efficiency any occupancy restrictions he likes. But it should be noted that the trend toward class separation on a geographic basis has been fairly universal, not only in America but also in England with no race problem, and even in the Scandinavian countries with much weaker class distinctions than here. It was reinforced by the upper-middle-class flight to the suburbs, which tends to result in stratification not only by districts but by whole communities and towns, and on the other hand by public housing construction in central districts, limited to "low income families." Public and private projects restricted to "veterans" are a further example.

Moreover, the geographic standardization of dwelling types also promotes the segregation of families by size, type and age-group. Families with small children gravitate toward individual homes where economically feasible, while adult households who prefer apartments must go elsewhere to developments where children are prohibited.

The functional segregation of land use that has been the primary goal of most official city plans should also be mentioned here: the trend toward vast areas that are wholly residential, wholly commercial, or wholly industrial, to the extent that "nonconforming uses" could be weeded out.

In this brief summary the picture has undoubtedly been cartooned. But the general past trend, however imperfectly realized, toward Every-one in His Place, in a standardized one-class, one-age-group, and one-color district devoted wholly to residence, can hardly be disputed.

This was not, however, the result of any conscious overall plan or public decision to encourage maximum social segregation. It came about more or less by accident, as a side-result of forces and policies employed for quite different and often distinctly progressive or idealistic ends, and because we were reluctant to assume any conscious collective responsibility whatsoever for the social pattern. In housing reform and city planning, we have been primarily concerned with plumbing and playgrounds, rent levels and rational building methods, and it was assumed that human relations would take care of themselves on the basis of personal choice. What we failed to recognize was that the powerful tools employed for civic development and home production *also* predetermine social structure to such an extent that there is little room left for free personal choice or flexible adjustment. The big social decisions are all made in advance, inherent in the planning and building process. And if these decisions are not made responsibly and democratically, then they are made irresponsibly by the accidents of technology, the myths of property interest, or the blindness and prejudice of a reactionary minority.

The Forces Operating Against Segregation

The fact that racial separation is now inevitably a matter of public decision, one way or the other, is coming to be recognized. For an independent landlord or builder to say whom he will or will not accept in a building is one thing. But if he requires public finance or subsidy, and court enforcement of his racial policy on a neighborhood scale, then some responsibility also devolves upon government. Once the issue is clearly posed as a matter of conscious public policy, a policy that even has profound international implications, a great many people who took segregation for granted begin to question it. Throughout the North today, the color line is being seriously challenged, due to the new hope and political prowess of the Negroes and to the pricks of democratic conscience. The Supreme Court has outlawed the enforcement of race restrictive covenants in the courts. And even in the South, where the principle of segregation is still firmly established, in law as well as in custom, the potential effect of Supreme Court decisions and national policy is by no means disregarded.

Class segregation is somewhat less officially or dramatically questioned, but there is a growing feeling that a large area occupied wholly by people of identical social-economic status is alien both to our traditions and to our concept of social progress. The need for a greater mixture of age-groups and family types, for reasons of convenience and social health, is increasingly recognized. The zoners' ideal of a pure unsullied "residential area" is being replaced by the notion that shops and community facilities should be located for maximum convenience, and that perhaps even some non-nuisance factories might be introduced. And finally, the desire to relieve the visual as well as social monotony of over-standardized land-use is a factor of some consequence all along the line.

Once we become aware of the issues and alternatives, it is clear that our new housing and planning tools do not *inherently* produce social segregation. Indeed, they can be used to produce the opposite result quite as effectively. Even zoning laws can be drawn up and administered to encourage or insure diversity rather than uniformity. And a housing policy geared to reach all income groups is the primary requirement for the production of "balanced" communities, if that is what we want. There is no reason why public, private and cooperative projects of moderate scale and varied dwelling types cannot be combined in large development or redevelopment schemes. Also, a large project in single ownership can establish a pattern of *non*discrimination just as effectively as it can enforce a color line. A number of public housing authorities in the North have demonstrated that "mixed" living can be entirely successful, and a few private developments are now taking the same step.

Dilemmas for Policy Makers

Federal housing policies can influence all types of segregation, but it is the race question that has become a critical national issue, even though it is most difficult to resolve at that level. Sooner or later some decisions will probably have to be made among three alternatives, each of which raises certain questions that call for serious analysis:

a. Leave segregation or nonsegregation to local decision as in the past, merely trying to insure that minority groups benefit from Federal housing aid in proportion to their need. (Questions: Would this mean slow but solid progress toward nonsegregation? Or would it mean moving backward, on the whole? And how long will it be feasible politically and in the courts in any case?)

b. Make complete nondiscrimination and nonsegregation a legal condition of all Federal housing aid. (Questions: If enforced, would it merely slow down the improvement of housing conditions, particularly in the South where conditions are worst? If not fully enforced, what would be the effect of making segregation technically illegal but practiced in actuality?)

c. Insist on maximum progress toward nonsegregation in whatever terms may accord with local law, habit, and attitudes. (Questions: On what basis could such variable determinations be devised or enforced? Would it mean nonsegregation in all FHA-insured private projects in the North, as well as in public housing? What *is* the next step in the South? Should there be some assurance that the scale of segregation, the size of the areas devoted to Negro or white use, is at least not expanded in the course of new development?)

In public housing outside the South, the trend is against segregation and there is now a considerable laboratory in which to study the effects of varied policies, and the conditions under which "mixed" living is apparently successful or unsuccessful. In some cities, the color line is ignored completely, and in others various patterns and proportions of mixture have been tried. One important issue is whether or not some sort of "quota system" is advisable, to allay the fear of minority inundation that underlies so much race hysteria. Also, what is the effect of having mixed public housing projects, while private developments are segregated?

The race-segregation issue is beginning to come up in connection with private housing also. Can the F.H.A. refuse to approve a cooperative project sponsored by a mixed group? Can a private builder, profiting from public subsidies that enable him to reconstruct a valuable central slum site, refuse occupancy to Negroes, some of whom may have been living on the site previously? New York and San Francisco say No. And while most private builders and lenders are yet to be convinced about "mixed" occupancy, the rising opposition of Negroes to slum

clearance and redevelopment will probably increase until they are assured that their future condition will really be improved thereby.

In some cities, notably Chicago, this issue is producing a state of political and psychological conflict which must somehow be resolved. As voters, the citizens seem to be increasingly opposed to discrimination in any form, while as householders and neighbors they are apparently as fearful and prejudiced as ever, or more so. Is this fear heightened by the housing shortage? by the recent influx of Negroes? by some presumed threat to property values? or by dislike of Negro neighbors *per se?* And if the color line is erased by public action, as is more and more likely, how should the adjustment be handled at the level of everyday living? By clear-cut surgical operation, to remove uncertainties? Or by gradual steps, starting under favorable and carefully controlled conditions? The people responsible for housing and city planning policy need some sound and tested working assumptions on these questions, simply in order to make routine decisions and resolve day-to-day conflicts.

Even that citadel of segregation in all its forms, the "protected" upper class suburban community, is being challenged at a number of points. Zoned for large individual homes, should it still prevent the construction of apartments even though some of its own citizens would like to live in them? Should it keep out a public or cooperative project serving lower income families, even though it has large areas of undeveloped land suitable for such a purpose? Will it prohibit a small non-nuisance industrial plant despite the potential tax benefit? And will it continue to exclude Negroes, and perhaps Jews also, despite the convictions of many of its citizens about "One World" and its implications for America?

One of the long-standing precepts that has furthered segregation of all kinds is that property values and neighborhood "stability" depend on social homogeneity. But it can also be claimed that rigidly guarded uniformity simply means a very inflexible community that cannot adapt to changing conditions and may therefore be highly unstable in the long run. These opposing hypotheses should be tested. Also, what is the relation between homogeneity or heterogeneity and the quality of neighborly social life? Which brings us to another large issue: the nature and purpose of "neighborhood planning".

Social Organization: The Neighborhood Issue

The idea that a residential district should be planned as a physical and social entity, a more or less self-sufficient community with a definite boundary and certain required components, has become widely accepted in city planning practice, but is also subject to frequent and bitter challenge.

The concept of neighborhood planning reflected a general reaction against the monotonous and wasteful gridiron pattern of city development prevalent in the 19th century. Simply to devise an efficient street system, with relative safety and quiet for residential areas, and to locate schools and shops and parks conveniently, required some planning unit larger than the standard lot and block. Also, the endless mechanical grid seemed to symbolize, and perhaps partly explain, the lonely rootlessness and civic irresponsibility that were widely felt to be characteristic weaknesses of urban society. The city was depersonalized, hence the restoration of neighborly communities would humanize it. The settlement house movement endeavored to provide a social focus for slum neighborhoods; and it came to be recognized that slums had a blighting social and economic effect on adjacent areas, necessitating complete "neighborhood" rehabilitation or reconstruction. At the same time, numerous suburban experiments in community planning were launched, with new street and land-use patterns that ultimately influenced ordinary building practice.

In America a neighborhood has usually been defined as the area and population served by an elementary school, and the detailed standards developed by the Committee on the Hygiene of Housing recommend a population range of 2000 to 8000 with 5000 as a desirable goal, and an area of 50 to 250 acres. Outside boundaries should be marked by parks, main highways or other physical barriers, and no neighborhood should be crossed by a through road or railroad. Adequate community facilities for all everyday domestic and social needs should be provided. Such principles have had widespread influence, in Europe as well as America, and they are often reflected in official master plans.

But there is also some strong opposition to the neighborhood principle, on the ground that it is reactionary in effect and sentimental in concept. In actuality, it is argued, the neighborhood idea is more often employed to promote the anti-democratic practice of segregation than to further democratic ideals. And there is no question but that most of the "neighborhood" or "community" associations organized by property interests are dedicated to the exclusion of "undesirable" groups, and that many official plans reflect this attitude.

Furthermore, it is claimed that the whole concept is atavistic and false even when it reflects bona fide social idealism: that the healthy trend in modern society is *away* from localized "in-groups" and small parochial communities. True progress, made possible by modern methods of communication, means an ever-broader and more varied pattern of social life, encouraging individual selectivity in friends and activities, and a freer kind of personal development. It has been suggested that the neighborhood ideal represents merely an escape, a rationalization of the real problems which we are afraid to face.

Here is a major dilemma for the planner, whose routine decisions require *some* assumption as to the proper organization of residential areas. And perhaps some of his questions can be stated in more specific terms.

The Physical Pattern of Social Life: Selectivity versus Convenience

Every human activity has some sort of environmental pattern. And every facility used by more than one family has some sort of "catchment" area. A first step toward resolving the neighborhood debate would be to learn how people move around now, for what purposes, under varied local conditions, and with full recognition of age-group and cultural differentials. A useful distinction might be made between activities likely to be shaped by factors of proximity and convenience, and activities in which qualitative selection or special personal interest is more likely to dominate, which therefore may or may not take place within a given area however efficiently organized.

Convenience is probably a primary factor in most of the activities on which our present standards of neighborhood planning are based: everyday household shopping, children's education and recreation, access to rapid transit or main highways. And we already know something about how to plan properly for such relatively simple functions. But when it comes to the more selective types of social activity, and the whole field of inter-personal relations, we know very little about the geographic pattern or what determines it. To what extent are these activities, also, influenced by physical proximity and local conditions? Do most friendships grow out of neighborly contacts, and change when people move? Are cultural and recreational activities stimulated and localized if certain physical facilities are near at hand? Or have rapid transit and the automobile so greatly broadened the potential locus of such attractions that no "neighborhood" could confine them? What kind of people tend to move about freely over wide areas, and for what purposes? Who utilizes which facilities in central metropolitan districts? And who are the people who cling to one district, whether it has any apparent "advantages" or not? How does the pattern differ for different age-groups? If small children and their mothers are the most highly localized group, what is the scale of their activities, and when and for what purposes is their horizon extended?

Should Cohesion and Self-Containment be Encouraged?

However refined our knowledge of the present pattern, the question of whether or not to promote a larger degree of local unity and self-sufficiency, and for what particular functions, must still be answered. Do people trek back and forth mainly because they "belong" nowhere? Is the cohesive group, identified with a well-defined area, an instrument for gossiping "small-town" complacency or is it, like the family and

KEY QUESTION

the home, a basic requirement for emotional security in our society? Does it require a high degree of social similarity, or can a strong neighborhood consciousness develop from a heterogeneous group? How does our high rate of residential mobility relate to the neighborhood question? Should we endeavor to provide an environment conducive to "settling down"? Some interesting evidence is beginning to accumulate. The important start made by the Lavanburg Foundation in financing Merton's studies should now be carried further to cover a wide variety of local conditions.

If some form of neighborhood unit *is* desirable, the conditions for its success should be explored: the social structure, the facilities to be provided, the size, the relation to the rest of the city. And how much should a neighborhood *seem*, physically, like a separate, enclosed unit? The sense of turning inward or outward, of being a distinct civic entity, or an overflow of the city, or wholly a part of it, can be greatly influenced by site selection, layout and architectural form. And this is one of the questions that puzzles the designers. Under what circumstances does enclosure produce a pleasant sense of intimacy, security and uniqueness, and when does it result in the unpleasant institutional "island" quality attributed to many housing projects? Such questions may seem vague and elusive to the social scientist. But the problems are real, the decisions have to be made, and examples of the whole gamut of "neighborhood" qualities and conditions could be found.

What about the "Face to Face" Group?

Some planners who approve the neighborhood principle think that the standard of 1000 to 1500 households is the wrong size: too small to permit real variety in function and facilities and social makeup, too large for genuine "neighboring." And much of the recent empirical research in human relations suggests that the primary or face-to-face group — at the scale of court, block or building complex — is often a significant social entity. Moreover it is this group whose social life is perhaps most directly affected by drafting room decisions, whose impact we know very little about.

In most modern site plans, homes are grouped around courts or cul-de-sacs, primarily for reasons of economy, quiet and traffic safety. But such arrangements quite arbitrarily establish the size of the "face-to-face" group, and the pattern of their everyday contacts. What should the site planner know about small groups? What kind of contacts and activities takes place at this scale, or would take place if properly planned for? The fine line between privacy and family self-sufficiency on the one hand, and casual group contact or cooperation on the other, a line that is constantly shifting in popular mores, has direct bearing on planning and design decisions at this level. Is there a trend toward neighborly cooperation in child care or other functions? What happens

to nonconformers who don't want to know their neighbors, or whom their neighbors don't like? Should the families at this intimate grouping be fairly similar, perhaps self-selected, or would this merely result in isolated cliques? What is the influence of family income, age levels, cultural background, and other factors?

Housing Location and Civic Structure

The two poles of the urban problem are suburban spread and central blight. Those who can afford it tend to move out, shops and services follow them, and there is a separate trend toward industrial decentralization, now strengthened by defense considerations. Meanwhile, business offices, major cultural facilities, and many types of commerce and industry remain closely packed in central districts, ringed by ever-widening areas of slum and blight occupied mainly by those who have no other choice. People tend to live farther from their work, and traffic and transportation problems necessitate ever more costly and temporary remedies, less and less covered by local revenues. High property values have impeded reconstruction at the center, while the lack of any unified power at the metropolitan or regional level prevents comprehensive planning, and obstructs the rational development or preservation of outlying vacant land.

It would be hard to find anyone, least of all in the housing and planning professions, who would defend as positively "good" or "efficient" the present land-use patterns or administrative organization of a single big city or urban area. Invidious terms like "metropolitan sprawl" and "chaotic agglomeration" are almost universally applied, even in staid technical treatises. The remedies suggested are exceedingly varied, however, and our powerful new housing and planning tools could be used to further quite different ends.

The city planner's unanswered questions are legion, and only a few of the major issues that directly affect housing policy will be suggested here. But the home is a base point in the urban web, whose proper relation to other elements such as employment, open space, or the central district, is of key importance to city structure and functioning.

One vital question is the *journey to work*. The average distance covered, and the time, money and energy spent in commuting, have probably all been increasing steadily, but we have very little factual data about it. Now, however, confronted by gargantuan problems of traffic and transportation, and with millions of homes to be built and a great deal of employment shifting its locale, we are beginning to ponder the possibility of a more efficient relationship between homes and work. And num-

erous defense considerations give added emphasis to this issue. Economic analysis is a prime essential, but the social effects of the journey to work should also be explored. What value do people place on relative convenience to their jobs, by comparison with other values? What is the effect of a long, difficult or costly trip on working efficiency and on family and community life? What about the "weekend father" and the increasing segregation of residential areas from their economic base?

Another question, that cuts across the whole range of practical problems from dwelling type to regional planning, is the matter of *open space requirements*. If everyone wants a private yard, it means a spread-out low-density city, with attendant problems of communication. And if people should live within easy reach of big natural parks, farmland or wilderness areas, this fact is obviously a major determinant in any city or metropolitan plan. A great many planners and civic-minded people decry the "ravaging of the land" in spreading urban areas. There is a strong feeling that more open space should be set aside, and that the sprawl should be delimited by green belts. Do the habits and desires of average citizens support these convictions? Is there a conflict between the way people want to live, and their political-economic institutions with respect to land-ownership and land-use control? And what about the purely psychological effect of large open spaces? Would the "greenbelt" principle, as officially endorsed by the British, give people a pleasurable sense of enclosure and contrast, as well as convenient recreation facilities? Is part of the "amenity" of a park the fact that one *might* always use it for pleasant purposes even if one rarely does?

The *use of centralized "big city" facilities* is likewise a key question for city and metropolitan planning, as well as for neighborhood organization. To the extent that people's social, cultural and recreational pursuits depend on frequent and easy contact with the specialized resources and institutions that only a large metropolitan center can provide, this is a counter-force against extreme decentralization.

These issues and many others will affect decisions about the location of new dwellings. In relation to overall urban structure there are at least three distinct types of site theoretically available for housing development: a dormitory suburb, a reconstructed central site, and a complete new community. They will be considered here as "alternatives" simply to highlight their respective problems and implications and because different viewpoints tend to emphasize one or another. Almost any urban area might, however, find all three types of development going on concurrently.

Location No. 1: The Suburban Fringe

Traditionally, most new housing is added on piecemeal at the edge of present built-up areas, and this is still the easiest and most "natural" location for the construction of middle class homes by private builders. But if millions of additional dwellings are added in this way, it means an endless continuation of the "sprawl," and a still greater distance between central areas and open countryside. Also, since most white collar and professional employment would probably still be concentrated in central districts, the journey to work would be greatly extended.

If these conditions are accepted as inevitable, however, it is only on the premise that a metropolitan area is a single urban entity, a social-economic hence a physical *continuum*. And the corollary, as agreed by most planners and public administration experts, is that some sort of unified control at the metropolitan level is absolutely essential, to replace the present anarchic struggle among dozens of wholly independent communities. But this is no simple problem. The movement toward metropolitan government, which once looked so hopeful, is now apparently quite dead in any effective sense. The central city and its several suburbs are more jealous and uncooperative than ever, as a general rule. But why? Aside from the political and economic obstacles, so easy to dispose of by rational argument, are there perhaps some basic social obstacles? Does the increasing degree of class segregation as between city and suburb foster political isolationism? Is there such a thing as a "metropolitan community," despite its obvious functional oneness? Is it perhaps too new and unstable, too big and too diverse, for the average person to identify his civic interests with it? Would it be possible to unify some governmental functions if certain others (e.g., school administration) remained in local hands?

Location No. 2: Central Redevelopment

The wholesale clearance and reconstruction of slum and blighted areas has only recently been made possible in the United States, through Federal subsidy and State enabling legislation, and this offers a second major choice for the location of new homes. This program raises some new problems, however: conflicting goals to be resolved, and basic decisions about urban form and function.

The urban redevelopment movement is expected, variously, to improve the welfare of slum families, to remove civic eyesores, to stabilize central property values, to make old areas available for profitable building enterprise, and to "save" cities from the disintegrating forces of decentralization. But in any case it is a major civic operation. Substantial population shifts may result, with all kinds of social implications. What will happen to the displaced families is one key question. Do they have strong neighborhood attachments? Will they live nearer their work or farther away? Will minority racial groups be better or worse off after the move? The forcible displacement of Negroes by public action in a crowded city full of color barriers raises the race relations issue in its most acute and turbulent form.

The welfare of badly housed families would often best be served by building an adequate supply of low-rent homes on vacant land before clearing the slums. But most local housing authorities can operate only within the city limits, where suitable vacant sites may be either nonexistent, expensive, or in middle class residential areas opposed to the "intrusion" of public housing.

And what principles should guide the re-use of areas slated for demolition? The most routine decision about the kind of development to be encouraged, and about "density" or dwelling type if it is to be residential, involves some basic premise about the city's social, civic and economic requirements. In a number of cities new elevator projects house two or three times as many people as occupied the former slums on the site. But if few people really want to live that way, there is a serious question whether such methods can either solve the housing problem or "save" central districts in the long run. Other cities, particularly in Britain, are taking an opposite course and reducing the number of people living in central areas, in order to make the city better able to compete with suburban standards of amenity.

A drastic policy of central decongestion, however, often means that the "overspill" must move outside the city limits entirely. Will our traditional civic boosterism permit us to acknowledge that our cities are too big and must be thinned out? And where will the people go? Sooner or later, redevelopment raises all the other questions.

Location No. 3: New Communities

The third possibility, crystallized in British policy, is to group varied types of housing, industry, etc. together to form a new and relatively self-sufficient urban entity. The "new towns" hypothesis assumes that further decentralization is inevitable, if only to relieve central congestion, but that it can be better handled than by piecemeal attachments to the older urban fabric. The new community would be large enough to support adequate civic services and cultural facilities and provide varied employment, but it would be limited in size, and permanently protected from other built-up areas by a greenbelt of farms or parks. It might still be located, however, so that people could travel to the city or other communities with relative ease.

In America this alternative has been given little official attention until recently, but pressure for industrial decentralization and general dispersal as a defense measure is rapidly bringing it into public focus. But the power to encourage the development of complete new towns would put some heavy new responsibilities on housers and planners. The new British towns will have around 60,000 population: is this an efficient economic size under American conditions? A desirable social size? And just how self-sufficient could they or should they be?

The possibility of building a good-sized town *all at once*, to serve varied functions and a more or less cross-section population, likewise presents some special problems. Everyone living in it and all its institutions would be "new": how does a healthy community develop under such circumstances? Is it important to attract and organize a group of potential citizens, employers, etc. ahead of time, to participate directly in the planning and development? Despite our traditional "small town" idolum, which implies some degree of social mixture, would it be difficult to attract middle-class and professional families to such a community? Would it be better to start on raw land, from scratch, or with a small existing village or town?

Conclusion

This is a long list of questions to put to the social scientists. And it could be a great deal longer. In presenting the problems posed so urgently by the small group of planners, architects, and housing experts consulted, the difficulty has been mainly a matter of selection and ruthless cutting.

And at best it is only a rough outline, suggesting the complexity and practical significance of numerous issues without explaining any of them fully. But it seemed important to emphasize the range and variety of questions that confront us, even at the price of superficiality, in order to demonstrate the wide field for fruitful social studies of all kinds.

Whatever its limitations, however, this article poses *real problems*. Every one of these questions has to be answered in some form in the ordinary course of our work, whether or not adequate evidence is available. To the extent that social research can enlighten our decisions, the essential framework for satisfactory family and community life will thereby be improved.

Bibliography

(Miss Bauer has prepared an extensive annotated bibliography to accompany this paper. Because of limitations of space, it is impossible to include more than the following list of agencies whose research programs include various social aspects of housing and civic development. The full annotated bibliography is available on request to the Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University, 427 West 117th Street, New York 27, New York. — The Editors)

American Public Health Association, New York, New York
Committee on the Hygiene of Housing

Columbia University, New York, New York
Bureau of Applied Social Research
Institute for Urban Land Use and Housing Studies
Cornell University, Ithaca, New York
Housing Institute
Housing and Home Finance Agency, Washington, D. C.
Research Division
John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation, Los Angeles, Calif.
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts
John Farwell Bemis Foundation
New York University, New York
Research Center for Human Relations
Public Administration Clearing House, Chicago, Illinois
Urban Redevelopment Study
Social Science Research Council, New York, New York
Committee on Housing Research
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina
Institute for Research in Social Science

SOCIAL SURVEYS AS PLANNING INSTRUMENTS FOR HOUSING: BRITAIN[1]

HENRY COHEN

THE ASCENDENCY OF THE SURVEY

The British Social Survey in its basic form dates from the work of Booth and Rowntree. The classical surveys were exhaustive statistical reports primarily oriented to poverty conditions. They became a tool of the reformer by pointing up discrepancies among the population and depicting the problems of the poor.

More recently, before the enactment of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1944, a number of social and economic surveys have assisted in the town planning process. The Wartime Social Survey, an official government agency, organized a series of studies dealing with the wartime adjustment of civilians and military personnel to the difficult conditions of British existence. The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act was revolutionary in character. It indicated the need for comprehensive surveys prior to the development of town plans. This need did not emerge as a theoretical requirement, but rather as a realistic attempt to assess conditions prior to planning and to examine alternative courses of action. A leading part in the development of the planning survey was played by Ruth Glass, Max Lock, P. Sargant Florence, Tom Brennan, Janet Madge, Dennis Chapman, and a group of talented young researchers under the able leadership of Louis Moss in the Government Social Survey. This activity received the strong support of groups like the West Midland Group and the Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction.

It would be difficult to deal thoroughly with their total output; what follows is an attempt at a partial evaluation. Only time will tell how successful the surveys have been; achievement in planning is the basic criterion by which they can be judged.

THE RATIONALE OF THE SURVEY

The public housing movement in Great Britain received wide support much earlier than in the United States. The large-scale construction of public housing affects the housing market in many ways. First of all, such large scale developments by a responsible building group (the municipality) cannot be accomplished without careful consideration of the auxiliary facilities and services required by housing estates. The

[1]I am greatly indebted to Professor P. Sargant Florence, Director, and Mr. Leo Kuper, Assistant Director of the Coventry Sociological Survey.