

International comparative housing research

What should be the unit of analysis?

Towards international comparative housing
research 2.0

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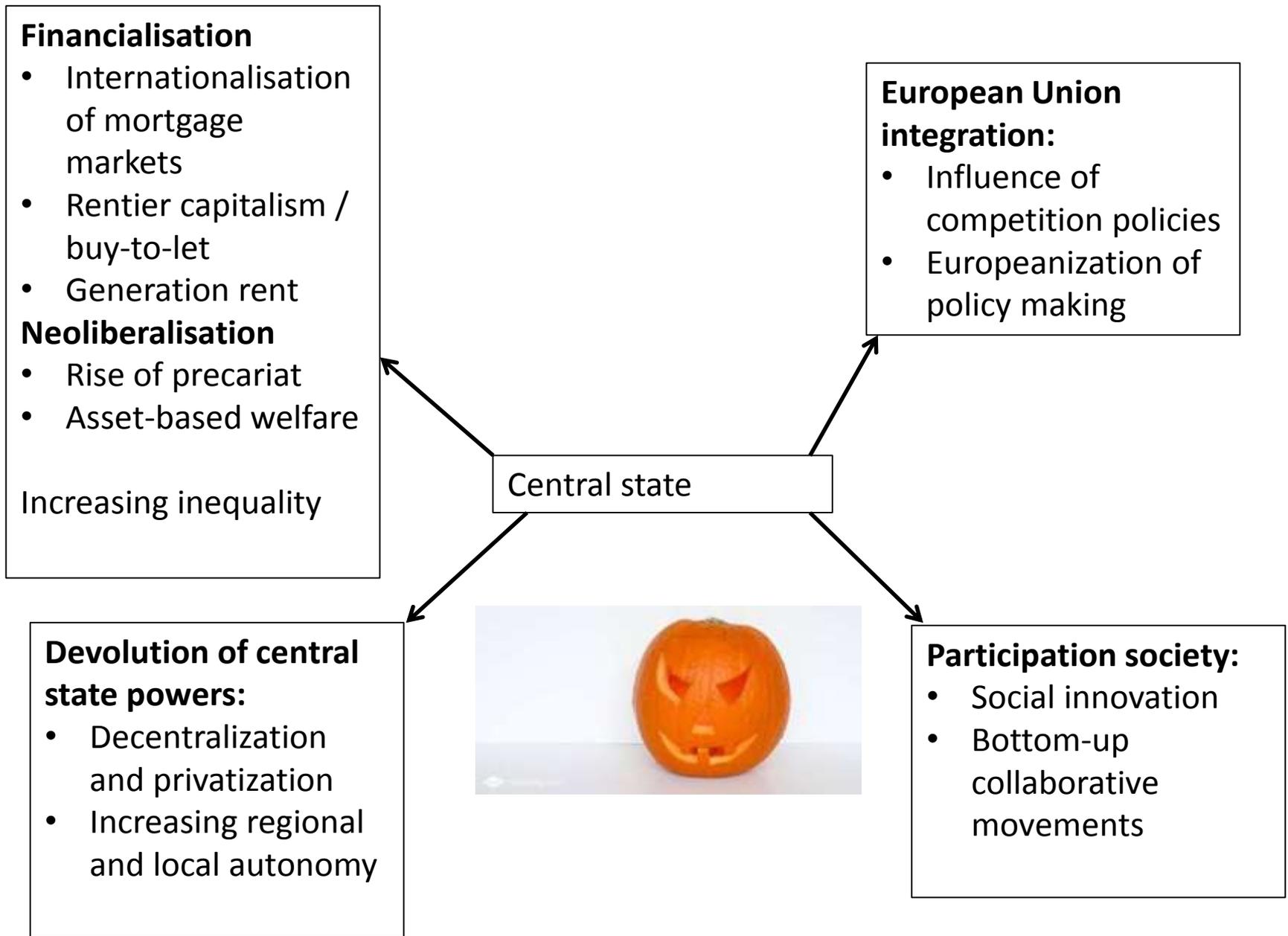


2.0



My argument

- International comparative housing research (Kemeny, Harloe, housing regime approach) has always focused at explaining differences in **national** housing policies and outcomes
- However, the influence of national states is eroding as a result of super-national and sub-national developments: the national state is hollowed out.
- This requires a new form of international comparative housing research in which cities or regions are the unit of analysis: international comparative housing research 2.0
- My brief presentation outlines the background and implications of this new type of housing research



Financialization and neo-liberalization

Financialization:

- Housing and mortgage markets are dependent on international capital markets
- Rentier capitalism / housing as investment good:
 - Gentrification
 - But to let
 - Generation rent

Neo-liberalisation of policies:

- Welfare state are shrinking
- Asset-based welfare
- Rise of the precariat

To a certain extent, these trends are visible in all countries and welfare state types

Result: growing inequality, between groups but also between regions

European Union Integration

Due to European competition policies, the rental systems of Sweden and the Netherlands have been reformed, thereby losing some of their unique (Integrated market oriented) characteristics (Elsinga and Lind, 2013).

The Europeanization of policy making and design is likely to extend to the field of housing as well.

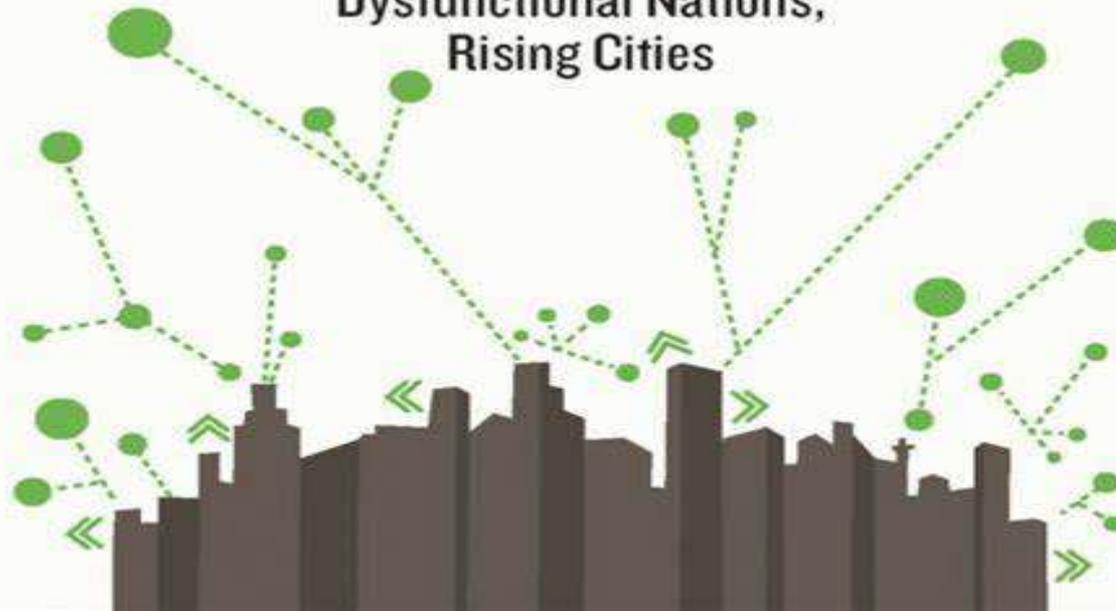


Devolution of central state powers

1. Central state functions have been privatized and decentralized since the 1980 and 1990's: social rental housing is a good example of this process. Nowadays, most social rental housing is provided by locally operating non-profit organizations or local authorities, with limited central state influence (but still within a national framework).
2. Multi-level welfare states: in some countries (UK, Spain, Germany), a large part of the welfare policies (including housing policies) is formulated and implemented at the regional level
3. Increasingly, big cities are developing their own housing policies in order to combat the housing problems that they face (high rents, key worker housing, AirBnB)

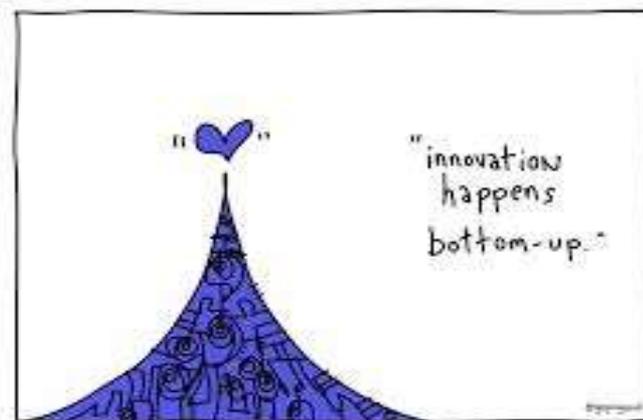
IF MAYORS RULED THE WORLD

Dysfunctional Nations,
Rising Cities



Participation society and social innovation

1. People increasingly take matters into their own hand (participation society), resulting to social innovations such as collaborative housing, co-housing, tiny housing etc...
2. Often, these social innovations are localized phenomena: they are the result of local initiatives and they are tailored to the local context.



Towards a new form of comparative housing research

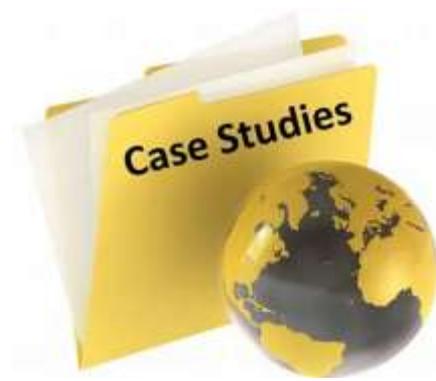
In order to:

- Include supranational, national and sub-national policies and processes in the analysis.
- Do justice to the subnational geographical variation in housing policies and outcomes

Comparative housing research should not by default focus on countries. Rather:

- It should focus on the lowest geographical level with a welfare and housing system that has a real impact on local housing outcomes
- Depending on the context this can be a state, and autonomous region, or a city.

Research agenda



Theory

- How can we conceptualize local or regional housing system?
- To what extent can we speak of local housing regimes?
- Which theory can we use to study local or housing systems? (path dependency, urban regime theory, networks of housing provision)

Data and methods

An analysis of national data and national policy discourses does not suffice. In international comparative housing research 2.0 we need:

- Comparable data on relevant housing outcomes at the subnational level
- Case studies of local welfare and housing systems