Rebuilding Cities and Citizens

Mass Housing in Red Vienna and Cold War Berlin

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Table of Contents

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        University
        Press

Für meinen Vater

'Flieg, Gedanke, auf goldenen Schwingen' (Nabucco)
... trotz allem und immer wieder.

List of Illustrations

Acknowledgements

This book has an unusually long history. Some seeds for it were sown in the winters of the late 1980s, when my parents took me cross-country skiing along the Iron Curtain and when I listened in to conversations about 'the West' and 'the East'. Other seeds were sown in Toronto, a city that became my second home in the late 2000s. As is often the case with people leaving their home, arriving at a new place triggers interest in the place left behind, in my case Vienna. These contingencies do, however, not yet account for writing an *academic* book. For this to happen, I had to come across the work by Margaret Kohn. Her books *Radical Space* (2003) and *Brave New Neighborhoods* (2004) pointed out a concrete way of how to connect the study of political ideas with the study of space, which motivated my PhD research at the University of Toronto. She skillfully advised and supported me throughout the PhD project. Thus, my first thanks go to her. Special thanks go also to Frank Cunningham, who is unfortunately no longer with us, and to Joseph Carens, whose academic advice was as dear to me as his personal advice. I would also like to thank numerous colleagues and friends from within and outside academia: Luise Stoisser, Özgur Gurel, Maya Eichler, Andrea Cassatella, Leah Soroko, Alex Livingstone, Kai Krüger, Inder Marwah, Martina Heuser, Igor Shoikhedbrod, Mihaela Mihai, Janna Lüttmann, Patricia Greve, Jörg Wittenbrink, Govind Rao, Adrian Atanasescu, Felix Butzlaff and Hauke Dannemann. In some cases, contact has been lost. This does, however, not change the fact that each of you mentioned here provided support with a view to this project in one way or the other. Thanks also to Ingolfur Blühdorn, one of my more recent academic teachers, for motivating me to bring this publication to completion despite being committed to other fields of research. Special thanks go to Simon Güntner and the Sociology Research Unit at TU Vienna, my new professional home base, for supporting this publication financially. At Amsterdam University Press, I'd like to thank Maryse Elliot, who walked me through the publication process with patience and skill. Thanks also to the reviewers of this book. Last but not least: I am grateful to my husband Philipp whose support was unwavering and to our children, Iliya and Philippa, who were keenly interested in the very undertaking of writing a book and also in when it is – finally – done. The book is dedicated to my father – a prime example of a highly accomplished person without any formal education. To him, school meant being at the mercy of fascist teachers. This made him an autodidact and everything he needed to know, he taught himself by doing it. He became

a passionate farmer, carpenter and hobby opera singer and, as his daughter, I enjoyed waking up to the sounds of cows and arias by Mozart, Rossini or Verdi. This was beautiful. Thanks for this and so many other things. He was often proud of me because of my formal education – an admiration I'd like to hereby return and put into perspective.

Dieses Buch ist meinem Vater gewidmet – einem umfassend gebildeten Menschen ohne formale Bildung. Für ihn bedeutete Schule faschistischen Lehrern ausgeliefert zu sein. Das machte ihn zu einem Autodidakten. Alles was er wissen wollte, lehrte er sich selbst indem er es tat. Aus ihm wurde ein passionierter Bauer, Tischler und Hobby-Opernsänger. Als Tochter kam ich in den Genuss morgens zu den Geräuschen von Kühen und den Arien von Mozart, Rossini oder Verdi aufzuwachen. Das war schön. Danke dafür und für vieles mehr. Er war oft stolz auf mich wegen meiner formalen Bildung – eine Bewunderung die ich hiermit erwidern und in Perspektive setzen möchte.

1   Introduction: The Making and Remaking of Ideologies through Space

Abstract

In the twentieth century, the housing question served as a prominent battleground on which more was decided than simply the provision of shelter. It implied fundamental negotiations of how to 'rebuild' cities, citizens, and societies. This was the case in Vienna after WWI no less than in Berlin after WWII, where newly empowered political elites sought to anchor their respective visions of society in and through residential and urban space. This chapter makes the case for studying ideologies through space. This undertaking implies leaving behind the 'great books of great thinkers' approach, which is prominent in political theory, and delving into the 'trialectical' production of space: an interplay between grand visions of society and its spaces, existing spatial practices, and appropriations by inhabitants.

Keywords: political ideologies, the production of space, cities, mass housing, socialism, liberalism

'Every society produces its own space' (Lefebvre 1991, p. 31). Indeed, *any* society or 'social existence' that aspires to be real and to be reckoned with *needs* to produce its own space. Otherwise, it would constitute 'a strange entity, a very peculiar kind of abstraction', prone to 'disappear altogether' (ibid., p. 53). One way in which modern societies and 'social existences' (ibid.) such as political movements, parties, and states have sought to produce their own space and specific everyday realities has been the provision and regulation of mass housing. This was the case in Vienna after WWI no less than in Berlin after WWII. In both cities, the newly empowered political elites addressed the housing question head on. They did so because there was a dire need for housing. Yet they also did so because the provision of housing constituted a promising lever with which to anchor their

respective visions of the society to come: socialism in Red Vienna and East Germany, and liberalism in West Germany. By rebuilding housing, Red Vienna's Austro-Marxists – no less than East Germany's socialists and West Germany's Christian Democrats – sought to create 'new men' [*Neue Menschen*]. The respective capital cities served as both laboratories and stages for the pursued societal renewals.

'The residential is political' today (Madden and Marcuse 2016, p. 1), and, as will be shown in the analysis of the 'politics of dwelling' in Red Vienna and Cold War Berlin that follows, it was political in the past as well. From the nineteenth century and far into the twentieth century, two political camps have been shaping responses to the housing question: the liberal camp and the socialist camp. Without denying the multiformity of the respective doctrines, it could be said that the liberal camp considers the market to be the most efficient provider of housing and thus responds to housing crises – be they crises due to a general shortage of housing, a lack of affordability, or poor living conditions – by selective, often temporarily limited state interventions. In addition, it tends to incentivize private homeownership. The socialist camp, by distinction, foregrounds the state and non-profit co-operatives as key providers of sufficient, adequate, and affordable housing. It regards housing as a social right and fosters public, communal, and co-operative approaches to housing provision. The question of whether housing is a right, a key element of public infrastructure, or a commodity has been negotiated by these camps for over a century, and with it, political beliefs about the very meaning and function of society and the state (Häußermann and Siebel 1996; Madden and Marcuse 2016).

The responses to the housing question in Vienna after WWI and Berlin after WWII clearly embody manifestations of these two camps, manifestations this book takes as a point of entry into a more general study of the making and remaking of political beliefs – ideologies – in and through residential and urban space. This undertaking implies that we understand ideologies not as merely manipulative and false beliefs and ideas but as political ones that shape the social and material worlds we inhabit (Freeden 2006, 2008; Freeden et al. 2015b). Ideologies do so by serving as maps that allow us to find our way around in the political world, including everyday life and the socio-material environs we inhabit. They imply ontological assumptions about the human condition and, relatedly, the very meaning and function of society and its spaces. Additionally, they typically entail a program of political action or at least ideas about how to change a given society so that it resembles the one prescribed by the ideology in question (Dobson 2007, p. 3). Ideologies understood in this sense were operative in

the past, leaving their socio-material traces, and continue to be operative in the present. If, as is currently the case in numerous European countries that used to have robust public welfare programs, investing in homeownership is normalized as a key component of providing for one's own social security, this is hardly a politically neutral fact. Instead, current reconfigurations of homeownership – a type of dwelling indebted to imaginaries of security and protection – are squarely nestled within (neo-)liberal sets of political beliefs that make and remake subjects (in terms of their self-governing), spaces (in terms of the meaning and function of housing), and welfare systems (from public to asset-based welfare) (Gurney 1999; Ronald 2008; Smith 2015; Kohl 2019).

Studying the ideological production of space (Lefebvre 1991) in Red Vienna and Cold War Berlin means looking into the 'hard-wiring' (Freeden 2006, p. 14) of political beliefs through space, including its scope, limits, and legacies. Instead of enlivening political thinking by reinterpreting texts – the 'great books' of 'great thinkers' – this book examines what happens when political ideas of socialism and liberalism 'flow through' a society and 'turn into social levers' used to change dwellings, cities, and citizens (Freeden 2006, pp. 8–9). To reconstruct and make sense of what becomes of political ideas when they 'hit' space and what becomes of spaces when they are 'hit' by political ideas is the general focus of this volume. More specifically, the book is driven by two questions. First, how were political beliefs in and visions of socialism and liberalism entrenched in everyday life through the provision of mass housing in Red Vienna and Cold War Berlin? This question involves taking a closer look at how and why certain elements of socialist and liberal thinking became real through given spaces while others moved to the background, were supplanted, or even foiled by already existing or competing beliefs and practices. Second, how did citizens appropriate and contest the spaces created, including the norms and ideals underpinning them, to make a home for themselves? This question entails studying the alternatives to the dominant pathways taken to rebuilding dwellings, cities, and citizens and the specific critiques these alternatives involve.

What the following analysis will show is, first, that ideologies cannot be reduced to encompassing systems of thought based on single truths. Instead, their meaning is made and remade through space. Although, for instance, all three 'regimes of truth' (Foucault 1980, p. 131) promised radical new beginnings, the translation of these promises into political action and socio-material environs often implied falling back on and renormalizing existing practices and norms. In Red Vienna, for example, an 'episteme of bourgeois suspicion' (Maderthaner and Musner 2008, p. 160) continued

to shape the administration of the workers' housing, *despite* the Austro-Marxists' commitment to break with the bourgeois [*bürgerliche*][1] past, which meant empowerment to the upper middle class and deprivation to workers. Second, the analysis here will demonstrate that the boundaries between ideologies, even fiercely competing ones such as East German socialism and West German liberalism, may be astoundingly porous. In East Germany, Marxism ultimately played a lesser role in solving the housing question than did Taylorism, that is, an approach to housing shaped by a commitment to building efficiently and cheaply by means of standardization that was also prominent in 'the West'. Third, taking a closer look at the production of specific spaces may challenge common perceptions of a given regime of truth and their underpinning political beliefs. Whereas the West German response to the housing question is commonly perceived as the embodiment of a social democratic approach to the housing question, it was in fact an early and specific instantiation of a neoliberal response – an ordoliberal response. Fourth, this book will show that although certain political beliefs *did* become hegemonic through space, they did not 'control' space. In all three cases, the ideological making and remaking of dwellings, cities, and citizens triggered contestation or were accompanied by cunning subversions and the emergence of alternative practices and imaginaries. In Vienna, the Wild Settlers considered self-help and bottom-up workers' education to be the more appropriate approach to not only the housing question but also social emancipation. In East Germany, garden colonists gradually appropriated the loosely regulated green land in between large-scale housing estates to make a home for themselves. In West Germany, the government-critical, extra-parliamentary opposition [Außerparlamentarische Opposition, APO] emerged out of the large-scale social housing estates to mobilize against high rents and poor, monotonous living conditions.

Analytically, the subsequent study of the politics of dwelling in Red Vienna and Cold War Berlin is inspired by Henri Lefebvre's production of space (1991) – more precisely, by his identification of three categories that typically shape the making and remaking of space in a dialectical way. The first such category is what Lefebvre calls 'representations of spaces' (conceived space), by which he means the 'space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic

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1   The term 'bourgeois' conveys two meanings – a historical and a political one. It serves as a reference to a specific point in time that signified the economic, political and cultural emancipation of the bourgeoisie from feudalism. It also serves as a political term that denotes the 'opponent' in the social emancipation of workers and relatedly, in socialist discourses. In this book, the term is used in both senses. Context decides on the specific meaning of the term in the text that follows.

sub-dividers and social engineers [...]' (ibid., pp. 38–39) – to which I add sets of political beliefs about the meaning of society and its functions, such as Austro-Marxism, Stalin's 'socialism in one country', or ordoliberalism. Yet, as mentioned above, representations of space are never simply inscribed into space as if space were a void receptacle; rather, representations are molded and remolded by already existing, entrenched spatial practices, which Lefebvre refers to as 'perceived space', the second category. These practices 'structure daily life and a broader urban reality and, in doing so, ensure societal cohesion, continuity and a specific spatial competence' (Merrifield 1993, p. 524). And finally, since 'as human beings, as individuals and as social collectivities, we do not always do what we are told, act as we are supposed to or accept the limitations imposed by others' (Zieleniec 2018, p. 7), there is a third category that matters to the production of space: 'spaces of representation' (lived space). This category refers to conscious appropriations of space by users and inhabitants, appropriations that may confirm – but also challenge and subvert – representations of space and entrenched spatial practices (Lefebvre 1991, p. 39). From a Lefebvrian point of view, these three categories interact in the production of space – a production he conceives of as an ongoing, open-ended dialectical, or rather 'trialectical', process. Informed by these analytical categories, the reconstructions of Red Vienna and Cold War Berlin's productions of residential and urban space that follow require us to engage with theories on socialism and liberalism. Yet it also means letting go of given theories in order to turn towards what may from the perspective of political theory seem insignificant: architectural plans, political decision-making and the ensuing policies, social and urban history, sociological and historical accounts of the perceptions and experiences of the spaces built, and accounts of alternative provisions or counter-hegemonic appropriations of residential space.

'Close acquaintance with ideologies', as Michael Freeden puts it, 'is not only knowledge of a major political phenomenon but a step towards comprehending what the social product we call "political thought" is' (2006, p. 17). Freeden conducted pioneering work on rehabilitating the study of ideologies in political theory and encouraged not only the questioning of common assumptions about ideologies but also the transgression of disciplinary boundaries to make sense of the manifold hard-wirings of political ideas in and through society (2008, 2006, 2015). The focus of this book is the socio-*spatial* hard wiring of Austro-Marxism, East German socialism, and West German liberalism through the provision of mass housing. Whereas the production of space is not a key topic in the field of political theory, it is prominently discussed in the field of urban studies.

Interweaving the two fields to deliver a spatial perspective on political ideologies is one key goal of this book. It takes on Freeden's challenge to political theory and theorists: to more often dare to take a closer look at how political ideas are hard-wired in and through society. The *spatial* hard-wiring of political ideas is what I look at, which means charting into terrains outside political theory, my home turf, such as planning, architecture, sociology and history – 'turfs' I have come to be drawn to without having 'grown up' in them academically.

What is typical of my home turf, however, is to shed light on social phenomena from an explicit conceptual angle, in my case the angle of critical theory. The differences between the thinkers and theorists that are referred to throughout the book – Marx, Engels, Benjamin, Lefebvre, Adorno, Berman, Foucault, Buck-Morss, or Kohn – are considerable. But what unites them is a commitment to emancipatory political agendas; a sensitivity towards power relations that stand in the way of the exercise of autonomy, equality, or democracy; a critical distance to equations of 'human progress' with techno-scientific and economic progress; a conception of modernity as an achievement and promise that at the same time undercuts itself – at times disastrously; a conception of paradoxes and contradictions not as a failure but as a key characteristic of social life; an emphasis on the contingency of given realities, not to give in to the slippery slope of relativism but to denaturalize the present; and judgements that – against the backdrop of normative ideals such as autonomy, equality, and democracy – suggest that some social constellations are worthwhile to revisit, actualize in the present, or fight for while others are not. Thus, the historical analysis in this book is decidedly not a mere recounting of what was (if this is at all possible) but a reconstruction of the past from a specific conceptual angle: a 'historico-critical' angle.

Given the book's locatedness at the intersection of political theory and space, it complements existing urban and architectural histories on Red Vienna (Blau 1999; Maderthaner and Musner 2008) and Cold War Berlin (Ladd 2008; Richie 1999; Stangl 2018). The book also adds to existing accounts of mass housing (Madden and Marcuse 2016; Urban 2012) that tend to be concerned with either policy or architectural form but that barely touch on the housing question as a promising lens for looking at negotiations of ideologies at large. Housing research, Christian Kohl argues, often lacks a 'social theory' perspective (2018). It also often lacks a 'political theory' perspective. By taking a profoundly mundane everyday space – housing – as a point of entry into a history of political thinking, this book provides maybe not a novel but certainly a specific perspective on

the role of housing in the building, negotiating, and contesting variants of the two ideologies that have shaped European twentieth-century history: socialism and liberalism.

The cases studied are Red Vienna (1919–1934), a municipal experiment in socialism, and Berlin from 1945 until the 1970s – a city that, after a brief history as an undivided city (1945–1949), became a prominent stage for the Cold War. Although different in many respects, three common denominators connect post-WWI Vienna and post-WWII Berlin: 1) a dire shortage of housing; 2) the empowerment (or installment) of new political leaders who promised societal renewal and sought to realize this promise by providing housing and rebuilding capital cities; and 3) a commitment to political beliefs within the range of socialism and liberalism. Socialism in Red Vienna and East Berlin obviously meant different things. In the case of Vienna, it manifested itself as a commitment to majoritarian democracy, the rule of law, and gradual as opposed to radical change; in East Germany, socialism meant, among others, governing through a centralized, authoritarian state. Similarly, the meaning of liberalism varies from context to context: it served as a foil for the emergence of Red Vienna; as both an ideal and a red flag in the debates on the future of Great Berlin (1945-1949); it took a specific shape in West Germany that was informed by *Systemkonkurrenz* [system competition], i.e. the Cold War, with East Germany. The following analysis engages with contexts shaped by common denominators *and* historical, political, and cultural differences. It does so to show that spatializing ideologies occurs by contextual battles over interpretation that lead to idiosyncrasies, shades of grey and spectrums with a view to the very meanings, forms, and functions of a given set of beliefs.

This book strives to increase our awareness of the making and remaking of political beliefs via a specific space and challenges common perceptions of ideologies. It also seeks to challenge common perceptions of housing. First, it shows that East German mass housing is not the 'radical other' of West German mass housing but – with a view to form – a close relative given the shared fascination with and commitment to Taylorist mass production on both sides of the Wall. Second, it shows that the public provision of housing often comes with highly divergent intentions. While Red Vienna tamed capitalism via political power in the service of decommodifying housing, ordoliberal West Berlin used social policies in the field of housing to accelerate the return of a market economy. Third, the book systematically adds a feminist perspective to the making and remaking of political ideologies through space – a perspective that is still often underrepresented in accounts of housing. It reflects on the formation of gender roles and

on how given family norms are in some cases reproduced and in some cases questioned by the design of the spaces, its underpinning policies, or through spatial appropriations. Fourth, it shows that the appropriation of green space in cities has a long history, one that offers critical insights into current revivals of garden movements and cooperative movements. Fifth, the book is deliberately historical in nature, not so much to extract lessons from the past as to challenge the focus on the present that is prominent in housing research. Much of the current discussions on 'politics of dwelling', for instance, focuses on the neoliberalization of housing since the 1990 (see, among others, Holm 2014; Kadi 2015; Vollmer and Kadi 2018). Yet as this book shows neoliberal socio-spatial makeovers through the politics of dwelling are not solely a phenomenon of the last decades. West German housing policies in the 1950s are a case in point.

Each chapter of this volume is roughly structured based on the component parts of the trialectical production of space mentioned earlier – representations of space and the 'new men' and societies to come (conceived space), actually existing spatial practices (perceived space), and 'unruly', conscious appropriations of space (lived space). Chapter 2 examines municipal housing built in Vienna during the 1920s by the newly empowered workers' party. The creation and continuous expansion of proletarian spaces were central to the so-called Austro-Marxist project, which pursued a gradual rather than revolutionary transition towards socialism. By the early 1930s, every fourth Viennese household lived in municipal housing. Municipal housing consisted of quasi decommodified apartments and communal facilities such as libraries, theaters, clubs, daycare facilities, sports facilities, and health clinics. The Austro-Marxist elite aimed to turn workers into educated and healthy socialist citizens. Their approach to bringing about new 'socialist men' was, however, strongly informed by the bourgeois past. Everyday life in municipal housing was infused by a pedagogical approach to emancipation, which put more emphasis on abstract knowledge than on practical knowledge and more on discipline than on cooperation. This top-down approach to turning workers into socialist citizens had a competitor: a democratically organized, self-help housing movement called The Wild Settlers. Also committed to the goal of socialism, the Wild Settlers built on the 'equality of intelligence' (Rancière 1991, p. 46) as its starting point, a more egalitarian relationship between the educator (the socialist elite) and the educatee (the workers). The chapter presents the rebuilding of everyday life in the name of socialism as shaped by ideals, contradictions, and contestations. It is a rebuilding that left material traces that shape the

city to this very day. Even today, a quarter of Vienna's population live in municipal housing, which the city has never privatized – in stark contrast to global trends.

Chapter 3 focuses on post-WWII Berlin before the onset of the Cold War in 1949. The chapter demonstrates that immediately after 1945, it was visions of nature rather than explicit political ideologies that dominated discourses on urban and societal renewal. The modernist architect Hans Scharoun, whom the Allies had initially entrusted with the task of rebuilding what was called Great Berlin, regarded the bombing of Berlin as not only a disaster but also an opportunity. In line with many others, he considered the metropolis, which had grown rapidly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, unnatural and a key source of moral and social decay. Scharoun suggested destroying more areas of Berlin in order to build decentral city landscapes [*Stadtlandschaften*] in its place, which he regarded as the *sine qua non* for a new beginning for society. The fascination with nature was common among 'progressives' such as Scharoun – who was, at least in principle, committed to emancipatory agendas informed by the values autonomy, equality, and democracy – and conservatives alike, whose critique of modernity targeted not only the metropolis but also modern, emancipatory agendas. Thus, whereas conservatives turned to nature to seek guidance for reestablishing elements of a pre-modern world, such as naturalized hierarchies, progressives took to nature as a source of inspiration for a future-oriented, more egalitarian and democratic society. With the onset of the Cold War, nature ceased to serve as the primary compass for societal renewal, a compass accompanied by political undertones, and was instead supplanted by explicit, political ideologies. As an urban form, city landscapes did, of course, find their way into the reconstruction of East and West Berlin: decentralized, suburban landscapes dotted with mass housing became prominent on both sides of the Wall.

Chapter 4 examines the reconstruction of East Berlin in the name of socialism through the lens of mass housing. Whereas the socialist experiment in Red Vienna came about gradually, the socialist experiment in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) came about by decree. In the early years of the GDR, Stalin's doctrine of 'socialism in one country' ushered in a frantic search for a truly German and at the same time socialist aesthetic vernacular. The historicist rebuilding of East Berlin's *Stalinallee* , which included model mass housing known as 'workers' palaces' [*Arbeiterpaläste*], is a prominent example of this quest. After Stalin's death, palatial mass housing was supplanted by industrialized mass housing. Most East Germans neither slept in monuments nor lived downtown but rather resided in suburban

Plattenbauten [concrete slab buildings] (see also Rubin 2016). The predominance of the *Platte* had less to do with a specific political vision than with economic constraints and a lingering housing crisis that constituted a risk for the East German state's stability and, more generally, the credibility of the superiority of Marxism-Leninism (one-party-rule, a centralized state, and a planned economy) over the liberal-capitalist West. Standardization and prefabrication – two key features of Taylorism that Stalin and his East German acolytes had initially rejected as alienating, dehumanizing capitalist practices – became acceptable and even crucial for turning the GDR's formal promise of a right to public housing into a substantive one. The housing question was ultimately solved in East Germany, a fact that was widely appreciated by the East German citizenry well beyond the fall of the Berlin Wall. Yet in between the concrete slab towers, there emerged spaces that were infused by musings of everyday life beyond standardization, prefabrication, and social control: allotment gardens, which this chapter discusses as spaces that were located simultaneously within and outside of the socialist state.

Chapter 5 explores West Germany's (the Federal Republic of Germany, FRG) reenvisioning of Berlin and its politically loaded take on the housing crisis. It shows that while nature continued to serve as a guideline for urban and societal renewal well into the late 1950s, it was integrated into explicitly liberal narratives. The housing of the future was to emerge in city landscapes, that is, in large green areas speckled with residential high-rise towers. Political elites regarded city landscapes to be ideal urban forms to facilitate the practice of freedom, the unfolding of individuality, and the nurture of healthy (nuclear) families. Although strikingly similar to socialist mass housing after Stalin at the level of urban form, mass housing in the West was underpinned by political norms that differed starkly from the norms that informed mass housing in the East. Decommodification was the core rationale behind East German housing policies, while recommodification was the basis of West German housing policies. Based on a close analysis of housing policies in the 1950s, the chapter presents West Germany's post-WWII liberalism as an early and very specific form of neoliberalism: ordoliberalism. Its core constituents are the free market and an enabling rather than redistributive state. Both shaped West German housing policies, whose central goal was to eventually facilitate the acquisition of a privately owned, single family home. The chapter also examines spaces of everyday life that engaged critically with the norms inscribed into West German mass housing. In the late 1970s, the *Märkische Viertel*, one of West Berlin's largest housing developments, turned into a site of protest against the

market logic that underpinned West German mass housing more generally. Also in the 1970s, *Kommune 1*, a commune in the midst of Berlin, became a recurrent focus of public debate given its experimentation with gender roles and family norms that challenged the ones that had been entrenched by post-WWII housing policies.

The conclusion summarizes the main findings regarding the relationship between political ideas or visions and actual everyday spaces. In addition, it builds a bridge between past and present – a present shaped by the return of the housing question as a key social question (an affordability question) *and* as an ecological question. The book concludes with Benjamin-inspired, postcard-like messages from the past – interventions – whose purpose is to trigger reflection on the present. The *legacy* of mass housing built in post-WWI Vienna and post-WWII Germany does not, in my opinion, lie in offering lessons for – let alone solutions to – present-day challenges. Instead, its legacy consists in reminding us that how people dwell is and has always been a profoundly political question to which there was never one answer but many. The answers given to the question in the past continue to shape the present – physically or ideationally or both. This book reveals the negotiations, contestations, and contingencies that underpinned mass housing in Red Vienna and Cold War Berlin and concludes with opening a discursive space: What are the scopes and limits of state and market-based approaches to housing? How 'private' is the unbroken dream of the privately owned, single family home, a dream that implies 'emancipation' from mass housing? What is the actuality of debates on high rise versus low rise, on loose city landscapes versus dense metropolises in light of current socio-ecological challenges – debates that had already shaped the remaking of Red Vienna and Cold War Berlin? What are the scope and limits of civil-society-driven housing provision? And how can we account for the unbroken relevance of the question famously asked by the architectural historian Dolores Hayden more than 40 years ago (1980): What would a non-sexist city be like?

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