Housing crisis in Germany: Continuity of 150 years?
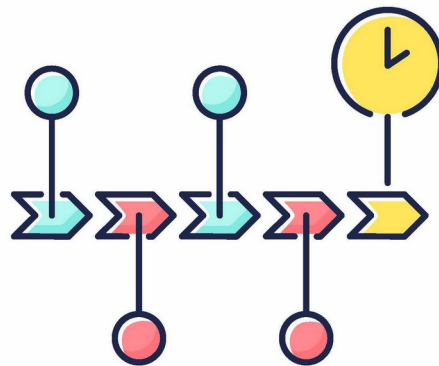

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Recurrence or ever-presence of the crisis?

Housing does not have same relevance always, which is why Researchers do speak about „return of the housing question" (A.Holm).

If the cycles of the housing crisis are placed within a certain time-frame, a certain continuity appears → it becomes possible to talk about ever-presence of the housing crisis.

Continuity of 150 years?

Hypothesis:

Housing Crisis started with industrialization in Germany in the 2nd Half of 19th century and continues until present day, although its intensity varies

Only point in time and space within this 150 years long time-frame, where the Housing crisis seemed to be solved: East Germany at the End of 1980s.

1st Phase: The Empire (1871-1918)

- Extreme growth of cities and urban population

- Appaling living conditions and lack of housing space
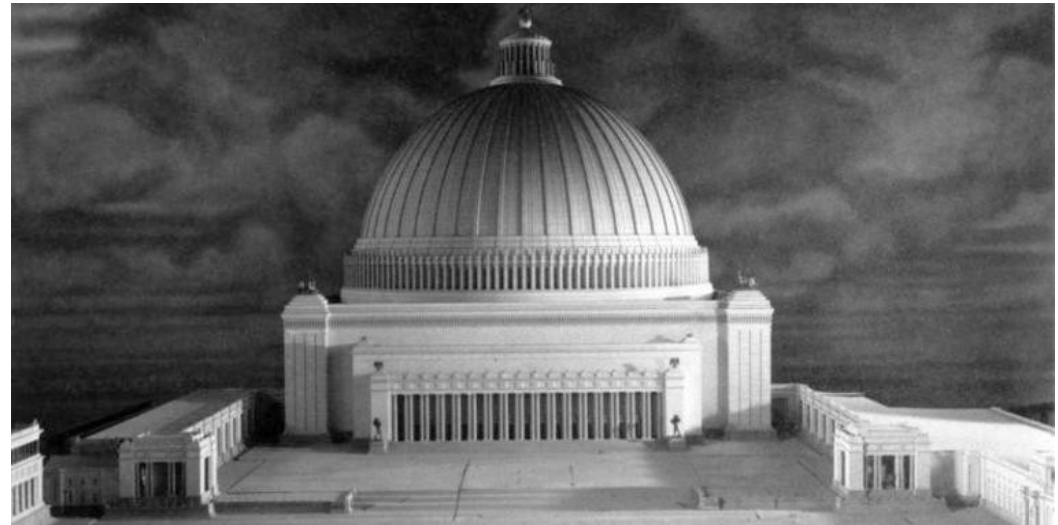
- Laissez-Faire policy

2nd Phase: Weimar Republic (1918-1933)

- Systemic approach to address the problem of the Housing

- Intervention of public actors (State, Municipal authorities)

- New and innovative solutions for funding, design, construction etc.

3rd Phase: Nazi Reign (1933-1945)

- Various changes of the housing policies and strategies

- Resource redistribution driven by racist ideology

- Focus on Spectacle and production of Symbols and Prototypes

4th Phase: Post-war Germany (1945-1989)

- Massive housing programmes in both East and West

- Variety of approaches, solutions and funding schemes

- New challenges and problems

5th Phase: Germany after 1989

- New dynamics: dying-out of the social housing, Gentrification...

- Dominance of the free-market Narrative

- Gradual build-up of the housing crisis
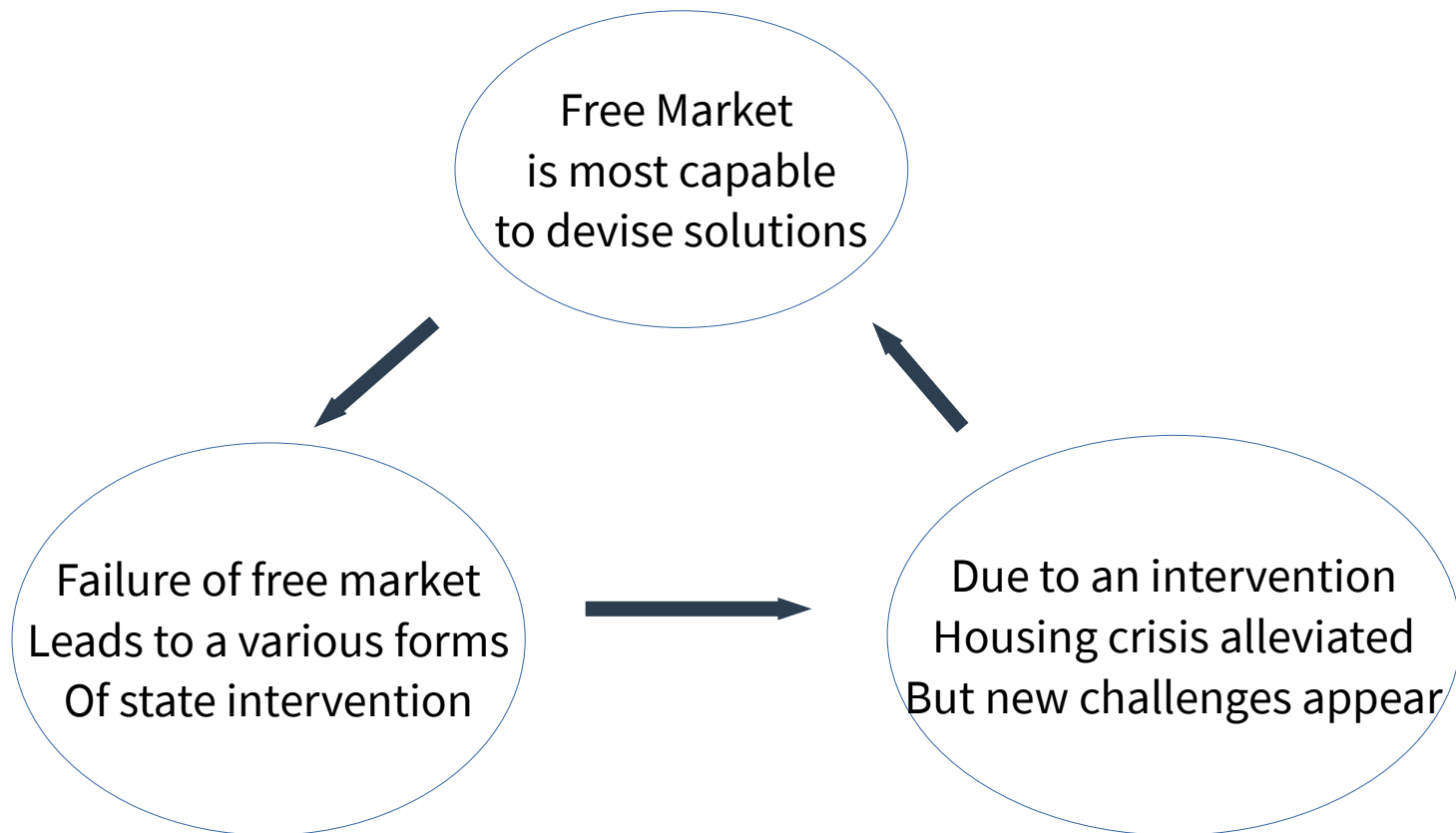

GENTRIFICATION

Current situation

- Overall instability: financial crisis, energy crisis, climate crisis

- Funding problems, extreme increase of costs, complex procedures

- Lack of affordable housing and possibilities for real-estate development

- Diverse micro solutions reached their limits

Repeating pattern

Free Market
is most capable
to devise solutions

Failure of free market
Leads to a various forms
Of state intervention

Due to an intervention
Housing crisis alleviated
But new challenges appear

Interplay of actors as an Solution

1. Active role of public actors:

 - Setting up the housing as an political priority

- Design of progressive policies (away from family homes, toward colective housing)

- Development of supportive legislature, tax policy and funding programmes.

- Incentives for development of innovative solutions

2. Active role of commercial and non-commercial stakeholders

- Assessment of the housing needs and lifestyles

- Design of housing models and forms, including construction

- Design of innovative solutions

Reflection+Reinvention = Innovation

- Holistic approach („housing-working-living balance")

- Repurposing (transformation) of avaliable assets

- Creative approaches toward building design (modular construction)

- Pooling the resources

- Diversity of solutions

Thank you!