



Cohousing – a great potential for sustainable housing and neighbourhood development

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Structure

1. Development of cohousing projects
2. Cohousing projects provide new qualities of housing
3. Obstacles and barriers
4. Housing policy implications

Idea of Cohousing: „Residents share a vision of community-oriented living“

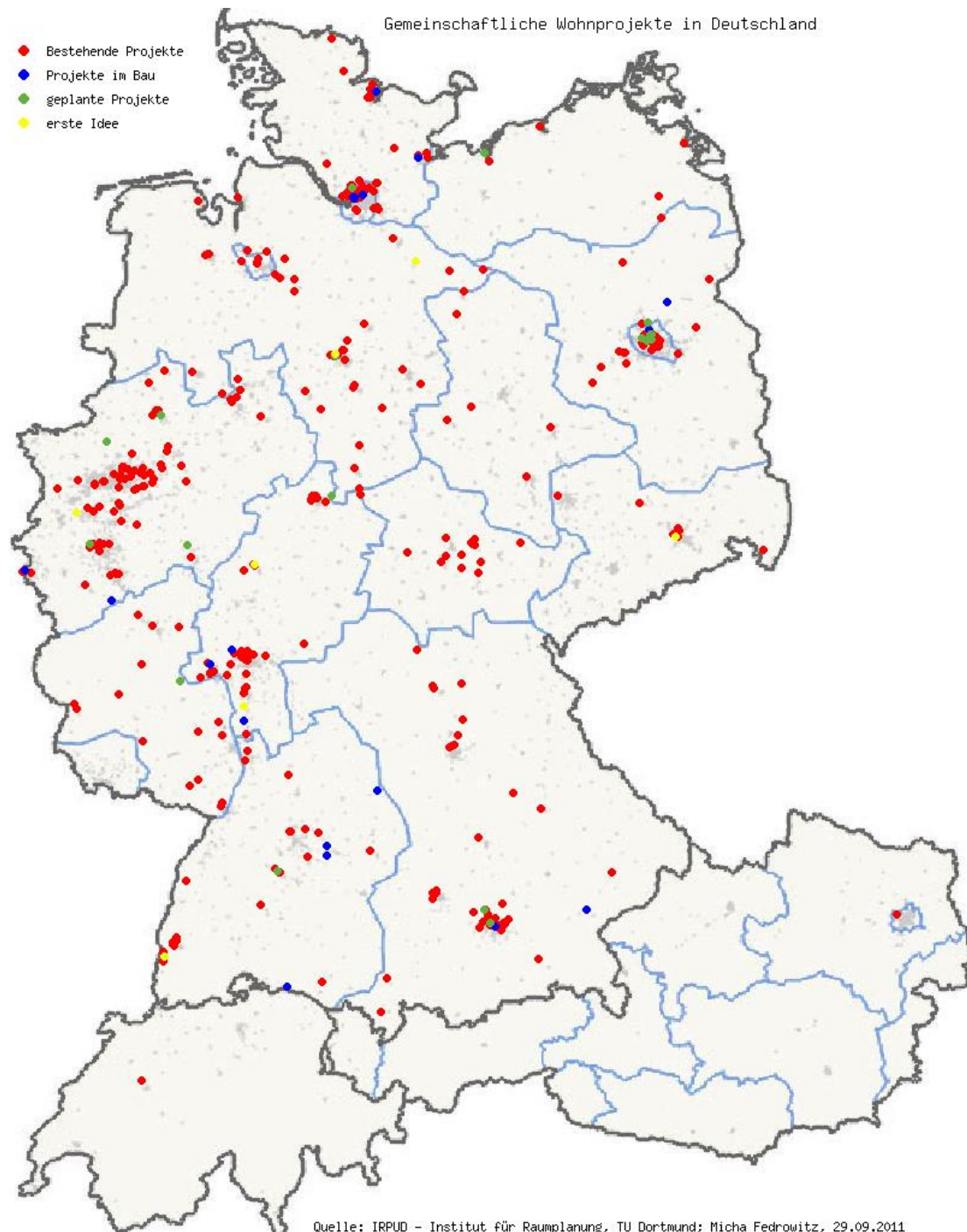
- Cohousing projects attract people who have consciously decided for a mutual supportive and cooperative lifestyle in various degrees
- Often, these projects comprise a mixture of different types of households, income levels, and cultural backgrounds
- The projects are characterized by cooperative planning and management of the projects
- Community-oriented: residents create community activities and a reliable neighborhood
- Most of the projects share common spaces and facilities

(Cohousing Cultures 2012: 17, Fedrowitz 2011)

1. Development of cohousing projects

- **1970s** – projects who claim to change society
- **1980s** – target group orientation (e.g. single parents) and „theme homes“ (e.g. ecological housing, car free) – most of the projects for families as homeowners
- **1990s** – emphasis on projects for the elderly („not alone and not in an senior home“)
- **Since 2000** – growing relevance of inter- and multigenerational cohousing projects

(Brech 1999, Fedrowitz 2011)

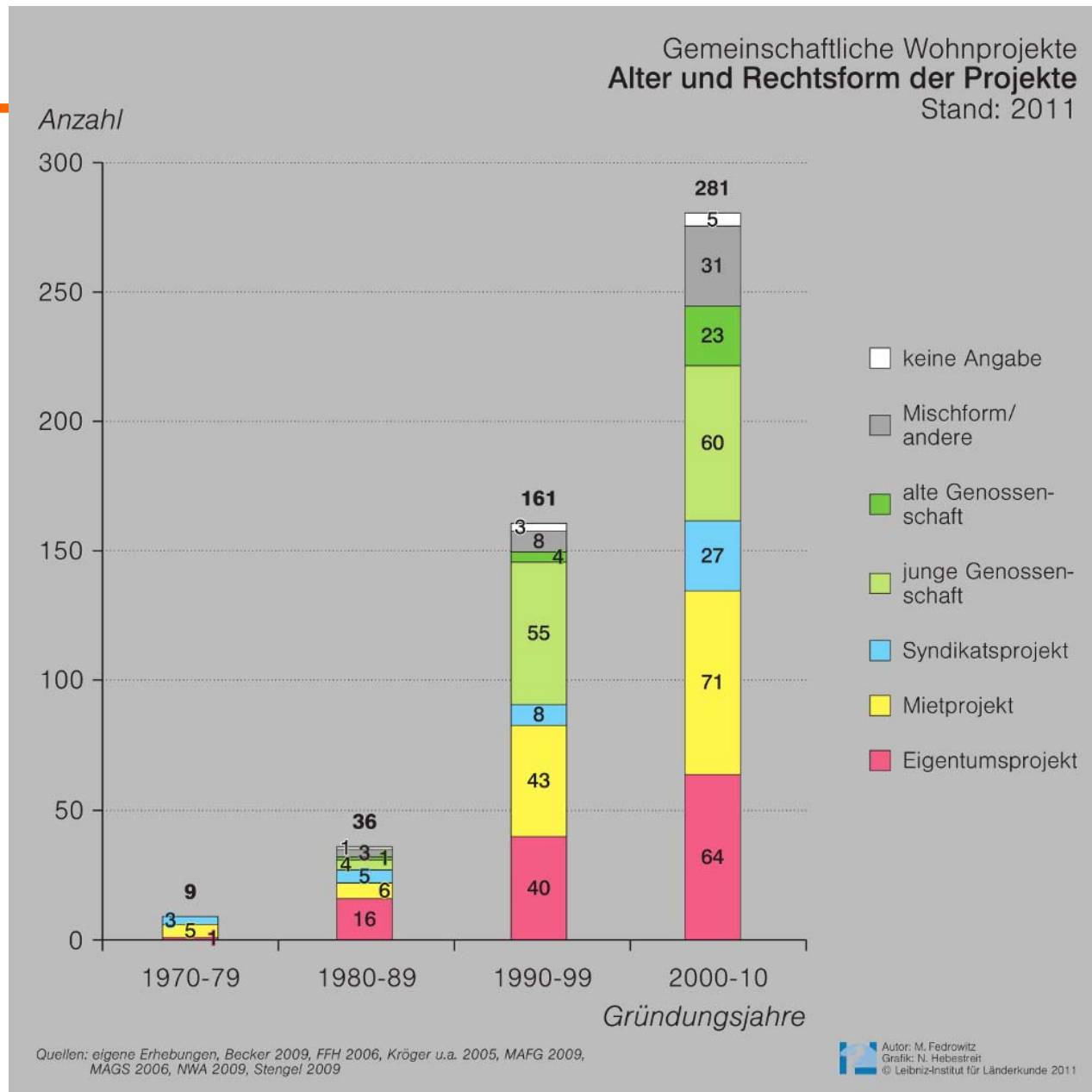


Cohousing projects in Germany

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501 realised projects
26 projects in realization
53 projects in planning
55 first idea

(Fedrowitz 2011)



Cohousing projects in Germany – legal form

(Fedrowitz 2011)

Multigenerational Co-Housing-projects in the legal form of a registered cooperative

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- Survey of cohousing projects in cooperatives (2012)
- Focus on multi-generational cohousing projects
- Differenziation between
 - existing traditional cooperatives,
 - newly established individual cooperatives and
 - projects as part of so-called “roof-cooperatives” (Dachgenossenschaften)



Results (I): Significant increase in cooperative housing projects

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- Total 131 cohousing projects (1988-2011)
- 106 projects are realized between 2000 bis 2011
- 2000-2006: 5 to 8 realized projects a year
2007-2011: 10 to 13 realized projects a year
- Marjority of project consists of 21 to 50 units and was realized in new buildings
- Regional differences in the relevance of cooperative projects

(Fedrowitz/Kiehle/Szypulski 2012)

Regional differences in the relevance of cooperative projects

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**Main areas are
Hamburg (27)
and Berlin (11),
Hessen (13) and
North Rhine-
Westphalia (13)**

Results (II): Special relevance of the multi-generational approach

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- Between 2000 and 2011, a total of 57 out of 106 projects followed a multi-generational approach
- Significant increase of these projects since 2006:
2000-2005: 12 projects
2006-2010: 37 projects
2011: 8 projects
- Considering the current figures and follow-up surveys, a further increase in the number of Co-Housing projects in all legal forms can be expected in the future, especially of those projects with a multi-generational approach.

(Fedrowitz/Kiehle/Szypulski 2012)

2. New qualities of housing are required

Cohousing projects find answers to current social problem areas and future questions:

- High ecological standard and quality architecture
- Housing suitable for the elderly
- Affordable housing
- Potential for neighborhood development

Housing suitable for the elderly

- Multi-generational projects provide benefits, especially on the level of everyday help between residents
- But - any additional care services, in particular for older people, are usually **not** covered by other residents, but provided by professionals
- Nevertheless, other investigations show, that neighbourly help postpones a stay in a nursing home

- „Sister“ of Amaryllis eG.
- founded 2011
- 13 residents (22 to 90 years) in need for assistance
- 24 hour care service also used by the residents of the neighborhood
- They understand their project as a civil initiative of the neighborhood

(www.villa-emma-bonn.de)

Affordable housing

- Many of the projects provide affordable housing, but they are depending on funding
- Enable social mixes:
combination of private ownership and rental units owned by investors/housing companies or cooperatives
- Elements of solidarity-based financing

Elements of solidarity-based financing

- „Elements of solidarity-based financing are connected with social housing units. Some of the future residents could not afford the compulsory contribution of capital for the cooperative. To help them the project has established a internal solidarity fond to finanze the compulsory contribution on basis of a loan.“

(Interview Amaryllis in Fedrowitz/Kiehle/Szypulski 2012)

Potentials of cohousing projects for neighborhood development

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- Many of the cohousing projects interact with surrounding neighbourhoods
- Provision of infrastructure – share the common facilities with the residents of the neighborhood
- Mobilization of engagement, self-organisation and self-help as a potential for neighborhood development
- Cohousing projects as reliable partner in urban development processes and as important element of a forward-looking strategy for neighborhood development

3. Obstacles and barriers

- In the last 10 years a professional network of engaged experts emerged and
- a couple of cities established strategies and instruments to support cohousing (e.g. Hamburg, München)
- The starting position for further projects has thus been improved, especially in the field of information and the establishment of contacts
- But there are still many obstacles and barriers

3. Obstacles and barriers

- Missing support during the project conceptualization
- The willingness of institutions (e.g. banks and cities) to support cohousing projects emerges only **after** a successful realization
- Availability of land is the main barrier when developing a new Co-Housing project. Due to the specific development process and timing, it is usually not possible for Co-Housing initiatives to acquire land within the usual tender period.

(Fedrowitz/Kiehle/Szypulski 2012)

4. Housing policy implications - Funding

- Help initiatives in the starting phase to enable the formation of stable groups by small funding.
- In individual federal states, there are few funding opportunities, including the promotion of project development
- or financial support for the establishment of common spaces as part of social housing programs (Hamburg, North Rhine-Westphalia).
- Social housing promotion should be available for cooperatives in all federal states.
- Furthermore, loans of promotional banks ought to be available for newly established cooperatives, and be secured by state guarantees, if necessary.

4. Housing policy implications: Access to land

- Access to land or an existing building: Support from local authorities is particularly important
- The reservation of plots for Co-Housing projects during the phase of conceptualization, or subsidized supply of land would be of great help.
- Some cities have adopted cohousing as a main principle of their land allocation – but what about the implementation?

Conclusion

We need research on cohousing:

- Motives and expectations and „ten years after“ studies
- Organisation structures (legal forms) and how to organize the management after realization
- Existing and still missing support structures
- Systematic overview of the existing local strategies and instruments and the experience with the implementation
- Learning from other European countries
- (...)

Conclusion

What we also need:

- (re)establishing a non-profit housing sector

Thank you for your attention

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