Critical realism and housing studies: An explanation for diverging housing solutions.

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Ambrose (1994) proposes a model of state – market – civil society relations, illustrated below, that underpin any chain of housing provision. In his book *Urban Process and Power* he analyses the shift in power balance between the state and market and the influence of these shifts upon the built environment (1994:12-13). A polarised characterisation of the state and market are proposed: on the one hand the state is perceived as democratic, responsive to need and allocating on this basis; and on the other is the market, undemocratic, responsive to effective demand and allocating on the basis of capacity to pay. This abstraction ‘floats’ beneath the chain of provision, as illustrated by Appendix 1(b).
Appendix 1 (a) Ambrose' Chain of Provision (1991, 1994)

Assessment of DEMAND

NON- DEMOCRATICALLY ACCOUNTABLE – 'PRIVATE SECTOR' AGENCIES

Savings level

Spending level

'Cultural factors'

Economic factors

Effective DEMAND

Demographic factors

Real Estate Brokers

Private construction

Private sources of finance

Commercial and voluntary

Stage 1

Stage 2

Stage 3

Stage 4

Stage 5

Market ALLOCATION Non-Market

Maintenance Repair Conversion Re-allocation

SUBSIDY INPUT

Central State funding

Authorities with statutory authority

Public revenue sources

State/local government construction

Health, housing, education departments etc

State/Local construction departments

DEOCRATICALLY ACCOUNTABLE – 'PUBLIC SECTOR' AGENCIES

Assessment of NEED

Economic factors

Demographic factors

Statutory responsibilities
Appendix 1 (b) Doling's (1997) elaboration of Ambrose' Chain of Provision


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FINANCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEVELOPMENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAND</td>
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<td>SUBSIDIES</td>
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In particular he stresses the necessary relationship between labour, materials and the construction or production phase and land title and the allocation of consumption phase. Further, it is actors, operating in open economic context, that undertake the process of housing provision. He cautions against ontological isolationism, that ignores important contextual conditions. Specific examples of influential contexts are provided, including wage developments, interest rates, prosperity, rates of return in other sectors of the built environment, demographic developments, technology, and lifestyle changes.