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

Lawson, J.M.

Publication date
2003

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.
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)

- Flows of money
- Flows of influence, management and control

Assessment of DEMAND

NON-DEMOCRATICALLY ACCOUNTABLE – ‘PRIVATE SECTOR’ AGENCIES

Commercial and voluntary
Private sources of finance
Private construction
Real Estate Brokers
Private construction

Stage 1
Stage 2
Stage 3
Stage 4
Stage 5

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

DEMOCRATICALLY ACCOUNTABLE – ‘PUBLIC SECTOR’ AGENCIES

Statement of NEED
Economic factors
Demographic factors
Statutory responsibilities

Spending level
‘Cultural factors’

Effective DEMAND
Economic factors
Demographic factors

PROMOTION
INVESTMENT
CONSTRUCTION
Market ALLOCATION
Non-Market

Maintenance Repair Conversion’ Re-allocation
Appendix 1 (b) Doling's (1997) elaboration of Ambrose' Chain of Provision


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.