



Main trends of the implementation of the state housing policy: case study of the north of the Tyumen Region

Principales tendencias de la implementación de la política estatal de vivienda: estudio de caso del norte de la región de Tyumen

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ABSTRACT:

One of the main indicators of national economic and social stability today is the possibility of improving the living conditions of Russian citizens, which can be considered as one of the important indicators of increasing the public well-being. Independently improving housing conditions or solving housing problems is almost an impossible task for people with average earnings due to the high capital intensity of housing. As a result, one of the main problematic issues of the implementation of the state policy in the Russian Federation is precisely the solution of the public housing problem. One of the basic concepts characterized in this paper is the concept of the state housing policy. Statistical and sociological data characterizing the problems of the state housing policy of the north of the Tyumen Region (on the example of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District) are also given.

Keywords: region, housing policy, housing programs, housing, affordable housing.

RESUMEN:

974/5000 Uno de los principales indicadores de la estabilidad económica y social nacional en la actualidad es la posibilidad de mejorar las condiciones de vida de los ciudadanos rusos, lo que puede considerarse como uno de los indicadores importantes para aumentar el bienestar público. La mejora independiente de las condiciones de la vivienda o la solución de problemas de vivienda es casi una tarea imposible para las personas con ingresos promedio debido a la alta intensidad de capital de la vivienda. Como resultado, uno de los principales problemas problemáticos de la implementación de la política estatal en la Federación de Rusia es precisamente la solución del problema de la vivienda pública. Uno de los conceptos básicos que se caracteriza en este documento es el concepto de la política de vivienda estatal. También se proporcionan datos estadísticos y sociológicos que caracterizan los problemas de la política estatal de vivienda del norte de la región de Tyumen (en el ejemplo del distrito autónomo de Yamal-Nenets).

Palabras clave: región, política de vivienda,

1. Introduction

Today's political and socio-economic transformations in Russia necessitate theoretical interpretation of the processes occurring in the market environment. It should be emphasized that housing plays a leading role in improving the quality of public living standards (Barbakov 2009; Goreva, & Gordiyevskaya 2014; Ustinova 2014a). In view of its important social function, the people, as they meet their needs for food, clothing and other social goods, seek to accumulate funds for the construction or purchase of housing (Alekseyev 1991; Engels, 1961; Ustinova 2014b).

Comprehensive sociological research on the housing market in the Soviet era was not carried out, since the science of that time denied the commercial essence of housing that was in state ownership. Housing was distributed by the state; therefore, it was not possible to make mass purchase and sale. Housing acted mainly as an object of consumption, but not as an object of trade.

Consequently, the housing market as a social phenomenon in the form in which it is understood by sociologists and economists throughout the world remained unformed during the Soviet period. The transition to the market economy in Russia necessitated the abandonment of this situation, since housing objectively acquired the features of a commodity that is quite expensive and socially necessary, and emphasizes the status of the individual. In this regard, a theoretical study of the social role of the housing market and its impact on the quality of people's life acquires particular relevance.

The first fundamental studies of the state housing policy's issues at the market relations' phase began in the early nineties. These include the works by Bessonova, Larionov, Levashov, Tkachenko, Rudi, Chernyshov and others (Bessonova 1993; Larionov 1998; Levashov 2004; Tkachenko 1994; Chernyshov 1997). They focus on general theoretical issues of disclosing the essence of the housing policy, its typification, identification of its place in the state policy system, studying the content and key problems in the housing sector. However, in the reference and encyclopedic literature there are only a few attempts to examine the essence of the housing policy under the conditions of developing market economy (Osipov 1995). For example, in the Explanatory Dictionary on Social Policy it is pointed out that "public housing policy in market economy is a system of unified legislative, executive and supervisory measures. They are carried out by competent state institutions and public organizations in the center and locally in order to stabilize and adapt the existing socio-economic system to changing conditions" (Volgin, 2003). This definition is interesting, but it is, rather, a "searchable" one. In other encyclopedias, the definition of the housing policy is missing.

The authors appreciate the definition proposed by Levashov, who views the housing policy of the state as a set of decisions by state bodies, made by governmental structures at the federal and regional levels, aimed at providing the population with housing in order to improve the quality of people's life (Levashov 2004). The housing policy of the state is a very important social factor that contributes to the development of the entire housing sector, creation and provision of social and economic conditions for universal development and fruitful human activity (Boyer 1999). The purpose of the housing policy of the state should be optimal full and comprehensive satisfaction of the public housing needs in the country, corresponding to the degree of its economic and social development (Belonozhko, Barbakov, Khairullina, Berintseva, Kirsanov, & Baranova, 2013). The state housing policy represents an organic unity of theoretical developments, methods and techniques for solving housing problems. It is the basis of theoretical and organizational development of the entire housing sector (Block 2004).

2. Methods

At the stage of market development, the housing sector of the Russian Federation is being formed and implemented at three levels: federal, regional and municipal.

Let us analyze the case of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District (YNAO) in connection with the present state, formation and orientation of the housing policy. Today in the Yamal Peninsula, which is 750.3 thousand square km, some 540 thousand people are living, that is, 0.7 person per square kilometer. The YNAO ranks third in Russia in terms of the amount of taxes received by the federal budget. Since 2000, this figure has increased five-fold. The gross regional product of YNAO grows by an average of 14.5% per year.

According to the data of the Territorial Body of the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) in the YNAO as of January 1, 2014, the total area of housing was 10,502.1 thousand square meters. Meantime, the active development of housing construction in the region did not stop. So, in January-December 2014, organizations of all forms of ownership and individuals in the YNAO commissioned 4,416 apartments with a total area of 276.6 thousand square meters, or 112.5% of the corresponding period of 2013.

Individuals built some 32,147 m² of the total area of houses, which accounted for 11.6% of the total volume of housing commissioned, in January-December 2014 (in 2013 – 18.6%). At the same time, the growth in the housing commissioning did not stop as of the beginning of 2015. In January-February 2015, organizations of all forms of ownership and individuals in the YNAO commissioned 894 apartments with a total area of about 51.5 thousand square meters, which was 2.3 times more than in January-February 2014. Despite some success achieved in this area, the housing problem in the YNAO remains acute, and its solution is of urgency. So, at the beginning of 2013, 17.8 thousand families were registered as those in need to improve living conditions at the place of residence. The severity of the problem associated with the presence of dilapidated and emergency housing stock was not in a position to decrease. At the beginning of 2013, the volume of dilapidated and emergency housing amounted to 1,210.5 thousand m², or 11.8% of the total housing stock in the district. In the conditions of dilapidated and emergency housing, 54.5 thousand people are living.

An important obstacle to the development of mass housing construction is the acute shortage of land for housing construction provided with engineering and transport infrastructure. The absence of large cities in the district does not allow for the comprehensive development of large residential areas, which makes the construction of engineering infrastructure in unoccupied areas costly, with an extremely low rate of return on investment and, accordingly, completely unattractive from the point of view of potential investors (Abazova, Avdeeva and Bobrovskaya et al. 2014; Chernov 2014; Lebedeva 1990).

In recent years, the district has adopted a number of programs aimed at improving the affordability of housing, which generally indicates a fairly active local housing policy ("Long-term district targeted program for the resettlement of individuals from the emergency housing stock, accounting for the need to develop low-rise housing construction in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District for 2013-2017", Program "Resettlement of residents of the YNAO from the Far North", State Program of the YNAO "The main directions of the town-planning policy of the YNAO for 2014-2020").

3. Results

In order to investigate the problems of housing provision for the district's population, in December 2014 – February 2015, a questionnaire survey of 247 inhabitants selected according to the quota sample was conducted in the administrative center of the district – Salekhard city. The answers of the respondents to the question "How can you characterize the condition of the housing stock in Salekhard?" showed that the most common characteristic of the state of the housing stock in Salekhard was "strong depreciation of the main housing stock" – 51.3%, followed by the answers "only elite housing is being built" – 44.6%, and "not enough social housing is being built" – 34.7% (Table 1).

Table 1
Distribution of opinions by Salekhard residents on the present state of Salekhard's housing stock, %

State of housing stock	%*
Social housing is not being built sufficiently	34.7
Social housing is being actively and large-scale built	2
Only elite housing is being built	44.6
Strong depreciation of the main housing stock	51.3
Satisfactory condition of the main housing stock	2
Hard to say	3.3

Note: * A few variants of answers were possible.

When asked whether the respondents consider the situation of providing housing as a problem, the answers were as follows: the overwhelming majority of respondents (91.3%) answered that such a problem existed, and only 3.3% – that they did not see such a problem.

To identify the population's assessment of their ability to solve the housing problem, the following question was asked: "Are you going to change your living conditions within the next 5 years?" Answers showed that 67.3% of respondents, despite the existing shortcomings of housing conditions in the city of Salekhard, were not going to change them (Table 2).

Table 2
Distribution of answers by respondents to: "Are you going to change your living conditions within the next 5 years?", %

Variants	%
Will hire housing	4.7
Will buy housing	6.7
Will buy housing on credit	8.7
Will change housing to get more space	3.3
Will change housing to get less space	2.7
Hard to say	4.7

Other	2.0
Will not change anything	67.3

As can be seen from Table 2, purchase of new premises to live through a loan is planned by 8.7% of respondents, and at their own expense – by 6.7% of respondents. According to the authors, the high percentage of people who are not going to change their housing conditions can be explained rather not by the fact that everyone lives in good conditions, but by the fact that people cannot change their housing conditions for the better, and they do not hope for real help from the state.

Opinions of respondents on the social groups being most in need of housing showed that these were young families (82.7%). Employees of the budgetary sphere ranked second (40.6%). The need to increase the emphasis in the district’s housing policy, primarily aimed at supporting young families in purchasing housing, is acknowledged by other data obtained by the authors during the survey. Among those who have underage children, slightly less than a third (28.9%) are going to improve their housing conditions, while more than half of those who choose to do it and have children (63.6%) plan to buy housing through a loan.

4. Discussion

The survey showed that among respondents aged 18-29, 37.8% hired housing or lived with relatives, while in the age categories 30-44 and 45-59 the proportion of those was much smaller and was, respectively, 10.2% and 9.8%.

21.6% of respondents in the age group under 29 plan to buy housing in the next 5 years. Among the respondents aged 30-44 this percentage is much lower – 10.2%. It should also be noted that 62.5% of young people aged 18-29 who are currently renting housing or living with relatives intend to purchase housing through a loan in the next 5 years.

The answers of the respondents showed that the majority of them (64.7%) were not going to change their place of residence within the next five years. 13.3% planned to move within Salekhard, 8.7% - to Tyumen or other cities (settlements) in the south of Tyumen region, while 3.8% planned to move to another municipality or settlement in the YNAO. 6.9% of respondents intended to migrate to another region of the country (outside the Tyumen Region). Of the number of respondents who plan to change their place of residence, 76.3% will move due to the desire or need to change the living conditions. In 23.7% of respondents, the planned migration is not associated with a potential change in housing conditions.

Respondents who are not going to change their place of residence in the next 5 years, or are going to move only within the boundaries of the YNAO, for the most part (30.7%) make this decision because they like the city (district), the area, friends and relatives. Nevertheless, 25.3% of the respondents in this group would like to radically change their place of residence, but they are unable to move to a more remote location. When analyzing the answers to this question, depending on the age of the respondents, the following tendency was found: rather inclined to move outside the YNAO (to the south of the Tyumen Region, to another region of Russia or to another country) was the population at the age of 30-40 (34.7% of respondents in this age group).

In the 18-30 age group, 14.8% of respondents were identified (in comparison with 8.7% of the aggregate of respondents) wishing to move to the south of the Tyumen Region in the coming years, as well as 12.7% of those wishing to move to other cities of Russia, and abroad.

Half of the respondents (50.7%) noted that the problem of providing housing was one of the main reasons for the outflow of population from the YNAO. The optimal measures to reduce the outflow of population from the district, according to respondents, are: wage growth (49.1%), affordability of housing, namely, reduction in housing prices (32.3%), lower prices for goods and services (24.6%), decrease in utility tariffs (24%).

Thus, the received data testify that the growth of wages is the main factor in solving the problem of "preserving" the population of the district. But if we take into account that the positions of "affordability of housing" (noted by 32.3%) and "decrease in utility tariffs" (24%) address the solution of the housing problem, it can be reasonably concluded that in the outflow of population from the YNAO the solution of housing problems plays a more important role than wage growth (56.3% vs. 49.1%). Respondents' answers to the question about the readiness to leave the YNAO for another permanent place of residence provided that the problem of housing would be solved, showed the dependency between the level of housing provision and the plans to move from the district. If quality housing was available, the majority of respondents (68.7%) would definitely stay in their permanent places of residence in the city; 18.7% would stay most likely. However, 4.7% of respondents would not change their plans to leave. Thus, it can be assumed that, given the possibility of improving housing conditions, about 90% of respondents will stay in the YNAO.

5. Conclusion

The results of the survey are rather disappointing; of the total number of respondents, among whom the overwhelming majority is represented by people of working age, 18.2% want to leave YNAO within the next five years. Therefore, the housing policy implemented in the district, primarily aimed at providing housing for young families and younger people, is justified. Nevertheless, these activities should be implemented and maintained more efficiently, as the younger generation is not satisfied with the affordable housing conditions.

Purchase and construction of housing in the district's capital is available only to a limited number of families. The main reasons for this situation are: high housing costs; large differentiation of salaries in the district - from quite high (mainly for managers and employees of oil and gas producing enterprises) to very low typical for social workers and youth; high level of depreciation of housing stock; inefficiency of institutions for long-term housing loans; high level of bank interest on mortgage loans (which have especially increased since the second half of 2014). At the same time, the relatively severe climatic conditions of the area, the desire of a significant part of young people to get education outside YNAO contribute to a regular outflow of the local population from the district.

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