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What is This?
Socialist Summer-home Settlements in Post-socialist Suburbanisation

Kadri Leetmaa, Isolde Brade, Kristi Anniste and Mari Nuga

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Abstract
The construction of new housing has been the most visible of all the spatial changes to have affected the post-socialist suburban landscape. It is argued in this article that former summer-home settlements are a hidden component of contemporary residential suburbanisation in former socialist countries. The building of summer or weekend homes (dacha settlements in the former Soviet Union) around major cities for urban residents was a specific feature of socialist metropolitan planning. After removing construction restrictions, the stock of vacant dachas started to support the supply side of the suburban housing market. While dachas were a reserve of affordable housing during the recession of the 1990s, they served as a stock of building plots during the construction boom of the mid 2000s. In the Tallinn Metropolitan Area, former second homes are even more important than new post-1991 residential areas in terms of giving access to detached houses to the metropolitan population.

Introduction
Over the past 20 years, the phenomenon of residential suburbanisation has shaped the patterns of metropolitan settlement in many former socialist countries. Many researchers have considered this phenomenon to be a qualitatively new process compared with that which occurred during the socialist era (Brade et al., 2009; Boren and Gentile, 2007; Tammaru, 2005). The processes that took place in suburbia during the socialist era in no way resemble the classical suburbanisation of Western cities (Champion, 2001; Hartshorn and Muller, 1989; van den Berg et al., 1982), which may be understood either as a phenomenon of residential segregation on an urban/suburban scale, or as 'urban sprawl'. It has been presumed that, following the collapse of the socialist system, the outward migration...
of more affluent households from the cities to new suburban single-family houses (Hirt, 2007; Kährik and Tammaru, 2008) began in post-socialist cities as well. Indeed, the construction of new housing has been the most visible of all the spatial changes to have affected the post-socialist suburban landscape (Nuissl et al., 2007; Pichler-Milanović et al., 2007). However, the ostentatiousness of the new residential areas may lead to the misrepresentation of the complex set of processes taking place in post-socialist suburbia.

We herein focus on the specific case of the pre-existing housing found in the socialist metropolitan peripheries, otherwise referred to as socialist summer-home settlements (also called ‘dacha settlements’ in the former Soviet Union (SU)). The construction of colonies of summer homes (Figure 1) around major cities for urban residents was a specific feature of socialist metropolitan planning (Brade and Nefedova, 1998; Kostinskiy, 2001; Fialová, 1999; Pócsi, 2009). The cities built under the communist regime were designed to be spatially compact (Hausladen, 1983) and a large part of the population lived (and preferred to live; see Gentile and Tammaru, 2006) in state-subsidised standard urban apartments on large housing estates (Renaud, 1992; van Kempen et al., 2005). Because construction was not subsidised, the private housing in suburban ‘rings’ was rather modest. However, a summer home was an important part of the desired residential model for Soviet urban residents. Some researchers have argued that the Soviet summer home was not a classical second home, but rather formed a part of the ordinary housing stock (Lovell, 2003) and, for some urban dwellers, offered the opportunity to enjoy the suburban green environment. Hence, those households of a higher social status at that time had a residential model similar to that of Western suburbanites, except that an urban apartment and a suburban summer home were separated by the availability in metropolitan space.

Figure 1. Construction and renovation in Soviet dacha settlements.
We herein aim to assess the role played by settlements of socialist-era summer homes in the post-socialist metropolitan housing market. Because the dacha colonies were located mostly around the compact core city, they began to influence outcomes in suburbanisation in the period following the end of the socialist era. First, on a more general level, the case of the Soviet dacha settlements illustrates the way in which the pre-existing and vacant housing stock affects decisions on migration in all cities (Aring and Herfert, 2001, p. 51; Bourne, 1997; Heitkamp, 2002, p. 168; Leetmaa et al., 2009). Secondly, the case of the summer-home settlements can broaden our knowledge of the newly emergent phenomenon of residential suburbanisation in post-socialist cities, understood mostly in terms of the migration of the more affluent urban households to suburbia. Apart from the nature of the former housing stock, the specific context of the transition period concerned also shaped the residential choices made. For example, since the collapse of the socialist regime, no systematic planning regulations have been applied to restrict house building in summer-home settlements. In addition, the socioeconomic conditions of the post-socialist period (for example, the recession in the early 1990s) were somewhat different from the economic growth of the mid 20th century in many Western countries (Crouch, 1999) that enabled many households to improve their living conditions.

In our analysis, we make use of the empirical case of the metropolitan area that surrounds the Estonian capital city (hereafter Tallinn MA). Being a former Soviet republic, the spatial structure of the larger urban regions of Estonia resembles that of other cities of the former SU in many respects. This structure is inherent in a considerable number of former summer-home plots that the Tallinn MA inherited from the socialist authorities (Leetmaa and Anniste, 2009). In our analysis, we seek to specify the extent to which dachas, as a reserve of suburban housing and building plots, have complemented the supply side of the suburban housing market during the two post-socialist decades, and to identify the population groups that moved to the suburban dachas, compared with those who moved to the post-1991 residential areas.

The Transforming Functions of Socialist Dacha Settlements in an International Context

The building of summer residences for the nobility has had a long history in both western and eastern Europe, and in Russia (Lõhmus, 2006; Lovell, 2003). Such residences were originally used for representative and social purposes. Later, in the 19th century, in parallel with urbanisation and the development of transport infrastructure, they gradually became less exclusive. For example, in Russia, the dachas became places for the urban upper class to recover from urban stress, as well as for the intelligentsia and artists to meet and find inspiration (Stolberg, 2006). Hence, they mainly served a recreational purpose.

Following the Russian revolution in 1917, all private property in the Soviet Union was nationalised. Although dachas were “branded as remnants of the bourgeois lifestyle” (Lovell, 2002, p. 106), it was primarily the social elite that had access to both the existing and new dachas in the first decades of the Soviet Union. Over time, the official political line was that dachas were available as recreational homes to a larger group of urban dwellers. After World War II, the distribution of dacha plots became a mass phenomenon (Ioffe and Nefedova, 1998). In the Soviet Union, the plots were mostly distributed by major industrial enterprises or by trade unions. Owners of dachas were usually members of a dacha co-operative that enjoyed a formal land use agreement with the state (Lovell, 2003, p. 180). The growth in the urban population was accompanied by an increase in the demand for dacha plots.
An understanding of the ‘dacha’ phenomenon of the Soviet era is a precondition for understanding Soviet urbanisation in general. Soviet second homes were partly at odds with the aim of classical communist-era urban planning and its avoidance of urban sprawl. The building of permanent houses on recreational sites was not permitted (Filippowich, 1994) and, in general, the aim of town planning was to site residential areas close to centres of employment in cities. The desire to own a summer or weekend home was, however, partly related to a desire to escape from the urban environment, to have a small ‘private’ green space and to have some freedom of self-assertion (Lovell, 2003). Hence, socialist urbanisation in fact combined urban and rural life, which has led some researchers to label the process ‘socialist suburbanisation’ (Brade and Nefedova, 1998).

The dacha settlements also provided a solution to some of the shortages (Kornai, 1992; Gentile and Sjöberg, 2006) that characterised centrally planned societies. As a result of relatively low salaries and a shortage of food, subsistence farming became an important function of these settlements. Over time, the size of the distributed plots became smaller and the houses built on them simpler (Ioffe and Nefedova, 2001, p. 276). At the same time, the aim of providing dachas (or the smaller versions, ‘orchards’ or ‘vegetable gardens’) to a large part of the population was essentially achieved (Morton, 1980). Approximately one in five urban families in Russia had a dacha or orchard close to the city (Kostinskiy, 2001, p. 462) and it has been estimated that there were 14 million socialist summer homes in the former Soviet Union by the end of the Soviet period (Listengurt et al., 1987). As they were often used by several generations, even more people benefitted from their use. Interestingly, the existence of dachas also represented some of the hidden mechanisms of the market and inequality in socialist societies. While officially all people had the right to an apartment, even if they had to wait for one for several years, not everyone was entitled to a summer home. A summer home offered an attractive opportunity to invest one’s savings and to accumulate wealth (Lovell, 2003, p. 199).

In other socialist countries, the construction of suburban villas in attractive natural sites had also begun before the communist period (for example, Hirt, 2007; Kok and Kovács, 1999). In contrast, the Czech tramp movement (Bren, 2002; Ptáček, 2002) and the German Schrebergarten culture (Henderson, 1999) were qualitatively different phenomena. In the Czech Republic, former temporary hiking shelters were later used as the basis for second homes. In German culture, the use of vegetable gardens had its origins in the need to alleviate urban poverty, in contrast to the Russian ‘dacha’ culture that symbolised urban wealth.

As in the former Soviet Union, in other former socialist countries in Europe the building of new weekend homes with a garden plot within easy reach of cities increased in parallel with the mass construction of housing in industrial cities (Fialová, 1999; Pócsi, 2009). In these cases, also in times of rapid urbanisation under central planning regimes, urban residents maintained close contacts with the countryside (Enyedi, 1996, pp. 116–117) by helping relatives in villages or growing vegetables at their second homes. The only difference between these and the Soviet dacha settlements was the mechanism of distribution. In central and eastern European countries, where market mechanisms were entwined with the socialist economy, the distribution of summer homes and garden plots through enterprises was rare and people mostly purchased them (Pócsi, 2009).

There are no detailed studies that describe how the functions of these seasonal settlements have changed since the collapse of state socialism. In Russian cities, most dacha plots (except small gardens) were privatised during the 1990s (Ioffe and Nefedova, 1998). Some
researchers characterise the summer-home settlements in Russian cities as a mix of simple wooden houses and newly built luxury cottages (Brade et al., 2009; Machrova, 2007). Ioffe and Nefedova (1998, p. 1337) also refer to these processes as "hidden suburbanisation", in which people choose to live permanently in their dachas and rent out their urban apartments or leave them to their children. Even today, many dachas, including those that have been renovated as modern houses, are still used as second homes. A few studies carried out in other formerly centrally planned countries, including the Czech Republic (Ptáček, 2002) and Hungary (Pócsi, 2009), have also revealed the tendency for many former recreational homes close to major cities to serve as attractive destinations for permanent residents.

Although socialist summer-home settlements are associated with specific characteristics of socialist urbanisation, the growth in ownership of a second home either close to one’s main place of residence, or in a more remote area in the same country, or even abroad, has been a common trend in most western and northern European countries and in North America (Clout et al., 1989; Gallent et al., 2003; Hall and Müller, 2004; Marjavaara and Müller, 2007). The welfare growth of the mid 20th century favoured investment in second homes and holidays and weekends in a family’s second home therefore became common for a large section of the population. The main purpose of a second home has typically been recreational, as well as being an investment (Coppock, 1977); subsistence farming plays an insignificant role or is merely a hobby. However, it has also been emphasised that one of the driving-forces behind the ownership of a second home has been the occasional desire to escape from urban stress.

There are examples of first homes having become second homes and also of former second homes having been adopted as first homes. In more remote areas or for second homes abroad, seasonal use by retired people is common. Older people, known as ‘snowbirds’ or ‘winterers’, are freer than others to spend part of their time in more attractive regions (Breuer, 2005; Truly, 2002), while also maintaining social relationships in their region of origin. The extension of second-homeownership in the most attractive recreational regions has been the focus of criticism in terms of the accelerated growth in house prices in these regions. Such growth may force the displacement of the original inhabitants. For example, younger households can no longer enter the local housing market (Marjavaara, 2007; Müller, 2007).

It is in the urban hinterlands that the transformation from secondary to permanent dwellings has been the most widespread, however. Some authors even refer to a displacement in the opposite direction (Lundgren, 1974) in that, due to the fact that the building of new houses requires increasing areas of land, problems may result that are related to a reduced access to that land for recreational users. The transformation of first homes into second homes has been more common for family households, which has enabled also less affluent families to acquire suburban single-family houses (Nyström, 1989). We have thus presumed that the alternative functions of second home and permanent place of residence will increasingly be located side-by-side in the second homes of the socialist era that are typically located close to major cities.

**Evolution of Summer-home Settlements in the Tallinn Metropolitan Area**

In the Tallinn MA, summer-home settlements were established during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (Leetmaa, 2002). These settlements were located close to railway lines or in naturally attractive (coastal) areas with good
To a lesser extent, similar dacha colonies were also established around other, smaller Estonian towns. The permanent occupation of second homes was illegal at that time. Furthermore, due to the cold winters, most of the dachas were not suitable for year-round habitation in any case, because they were built without sufficient thermal insulation. Central water distribution systems, if they existed at all, generally only operated during the warmer season. Public transport was also adequate only in summer. As elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, the plots of land were distributed by enterprises. The construction of a summer home often took up to a decade, because the owners built the houses themselves and because of a shortage of building materials and/or limited financial resources. Ownership of a dacha reflected social status—first because not everyone had the opportunity of obtaining a dacha; and, secondly, because in different settlements the size of the plots and the building rights varied.

The mass construction of summer-home settlements in the Tallinn MA ended with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. During the course of the land reform that was launched in the early 1990s, all summer homes and their land were privatised in favour of the dacha users. Although the transformation of the summer-home settlements into permanent residential areas was not promoted by the planning authorities concerned, construction and renovation were unrestricted (Leetmaa, 2002). Thus, these settlements provide a good example of the kind of spatial development that occurred under the very liberal social atmosphere that followed the rigid central planning of state socialism.

Figure 2. Location of dacha settlements built between the 1960s and the 1980s in the Tallinn metropolitan area.
**Dacha Settlements in the Post-socialist Metropolitan Housing Market**

Despite the extensive programmes of house building that occurred during the socialist period, at the end of the 1980s there were still long waiting-lists for apartments in Tallinn. Furthermore, the Tallinn MA became the main destination for domestic migrants within Estonia during the transition period (Tammaru et al., 2004), because most of the new jobs were concentrated in this area. The metropolitan housing market was therefore rather tight during the early transition years. The conditions in both the city and the suburban ring improved somewhat via two mechanisms. First, in the early 1990s, some of the Russian-speaking minority left Estonia (Leetmaa et al., 2009); and, secondly, after removing the restrictions on the construction of dacha settlements, many urban families had two alternative residences: their urban apartment or their summer home.

The existence of vacant suburban housing formed the spatial context for rapid changes in society and the economy in the years following the political upheaval of the early 1990s. On the one hand, many people lost their former jobs and the young state institutions fulfilled only minimal welfare functions. At the same time, the withdrawal of the state from the housing sector caused the cost of living in the cities to increase (Marksoo, 1999). On the other hand, alternative affordable dwellings were available outside the city to which people could move in order to cope with economic hardship. For example, apartments in suburban and rural areas were cheaper and the second homes at the disposal of some families offered an opportunity to leave the city.

Previous analyses of the Estonian case, as well as of the conditions in other former centrally planned countries, revealed that in the 1990s, migrants to suburban municipalities consisted of people with rather varied demographic characteristics and socioeconomic backgrounds (Leetmaa and Tammaru, 2007; Ladányi and Szélényi, 1998; Kok and Kovács, 1999; Sýkora and Čermák, 1998). The social changes of the 1990s may have presented some population groups with the opportunity to fulfil their housing ideals (i.e. to move to a new house), whilst forcing others to search for any housing that they could afford. Hence, the intrametropolitan migration that took place in these countries consists in a mosaic of different sub-streams of migration.

Compared with the second post-socialist decade (the 2000s), the prevailing mood of the 1990s may be characterised as ‘wait-and-see’ (Marksoo, 1995) in terms of people’s migration behaviour and in general the intensity of migration was extremely low. The economy recovered gradually from 1995 onwards and, by the end of the 1990s, the privatisation of the housing stock was largely complete (Kährik, 2000). Land reform ensured that a considerable area of suburban land became available around Tallinn, mostly the former fields and coastal areas that had been under military control during the Soviet era. From the end of the 1990s, affordable mortgages (Palacin and Shelburne, 2005) began to stimulate the construction of new housing in Estonia; the rate of house building increased considerably from the late 1990s onwards and a small housing boom took place in the mid 2000s (Tammaru et al., 2009).

We herein presume that the transformational processes in the Soviet-era dacha settlements followed the temporal dynamics of residential suburbanisation in the Tallinn MA, as previously described. However, we also presume that the post-privatisation ownership structure (as inherited from the former mechanisms of distribution) had an important effect on the type of people who moved to summer homes, and when they
moved. Many families now owned both an urban apartment and a suburban dacha. Parallels may be drawn with the debate on the chain of vacancies in the housing market as formulated in Western urban literature (Friedrichs 1995, pp. 72–73; Knox and Pinch, 2000, pp. 350–353), and these could be of use to us here. We presume that ownership of a dacha influenced the willingness of homeowners to change their housing conditions. When the restrictions on living permanently in dachas, or on building proper houses, were dropped, the dachas then became a pool of vacant dwellings that attracted both well-off and less affluent families.

We formulated the following main research question

To what extent and in what ways did the stock of vacant dachas support the supply side of the suburban housing market in the Tallinn MA in the 1990s and the 2000s?

In order to answer this question, we asked more specifically

— To what extent have the former seasonally used dacha settlements been transformed into permanent residential areas, and what role did the suburban dachas play in decisions on suburban housing construction compared with those on new post-1991 suburban settlements?
— Who is now living in the suburban dachas in comparison with the new suburban residential areas that were built during the transition period that followed the end of the socialist era?

Data and Methods

The data used in our study were obtained from two inventories of dacha settlements, the first conducted in 2002 (Leetmaa, 2002) and the second in 2007 (Leetmaa and Anniste, 2009). The 2002 study of summer homes was carried out by the Harju County Government (Tallinn MA). The locations of Soviet-era dacha settlements and the number of dachas in these settlements were originally specified by experts in local municipalities (officials responsible for issues related to construction, planning and land use). All the municipalities were required to complete a standardised questionnaire in which they estimated the proportion of summer homes that were used for permanent living (both according to the population register and unofficially) and the proportion of summer-home plots that could be adopted for permanent use in the future. Because all the municipalities in the Tallinn MA are fairly small (from 900 to 15,000 inhabitants), the officials were well aware of the construction activity in individual settlements and their estimates were therefore considered to be reliable.

The 2007 study was conducted by the Department of Geography at the University of Tartu. This study took the form of a large-area exercise in observational fieldwork. The 2002 study and the Census 2000 GIS database were used to identify the summer-home settlements in the Tallinn MA. All the dacha settlements in the suburban ring of Tallinn were visited and an inventory card was completed for every fifth summer home. The study was carried out during the winter period, when daily life in the original dachas would have been difficult. The two main characteristics under investigation were: the technical condition of the summer homes; and, signs of permanent living. These two characteristics were assessed independently, with the technical conditions of the houses having no influence on the judgement of the signs of permanent living (tracks on snow, smoke from chimneys, the presence of a dog, washed clothing hanging outside, lights on in the windows, etc.). Another inventory card was completed for every summer-home settlement, which included data on the physical characteristics of the plots, such as the presence of infrastructure and the average size of the plots. Some data were collected directly


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during the field work and some were drawn from secondary datasets.

We also used data from the New Residential Area Survey conducted in 2006, for comparative purposes. This study provided detailed information on the construction of houses in new settlements in the suburban ring of Tallinn during the period 1991–2006 (Tammaru et al., 2009). In Estonia, official migration statistics are of inadequate quality and there are no data that enable an analysis of the composition of the population and the changes that have taken place over time in different settlements. In order to analyse the demographic and socioeconomic background of the inhabitants, we used data obtained from the 2000 census. We differentiated between two types of new settlement (those that either did not exist in 1990 or only very rarely had permanent residents)—namely, ‘new residential areas’—and ‘dacha settlements’, and we compared the composition of the population in these settlements.

Our research area comprised the suburban ring of Tallinn, which consists of 23 municipalities located in the vicinity of the city, from which at least 15 per cent of the employees commute daily to Tallinn. A total of 546,000 people lived in the Tallinn metropolitan area in 2008, 401,000 (73 per cent) of whom lived in the city centre and 145,000 (27 per cent) in the suburban ring. The total number of summer-home plots with houses suitable at least for temporary living was approximately 28,000 in the Tallinn MA, 26,000 in the suburban ring (the research area of the current study) and 2000 within the administrative borders of Tallinn. These figures imply that, at the end of the Soviet period, approximately every sixth urban family had a summer home. The size of the dacha plots in the settlements studied ranged from 500 to 4000 square metres, which is similar to the plots in the contemporary residential areas built around Tallinn and provides favourable conditions for the construction of new housing in these settlements.

Findings of the Study

Dacha Settlements as Hidden New Residential Areas

In comparing the different housing environments in the suburban ring of Tallinn, the dacha settlements and new residential areas form only a small fraction of the total suburban housing stock that exists today. As a result of some frenetic house building in industrial satellite towns and agricultural centres during the Soviet period, in 2000 the majority of the suburban population (58 per cent) in the Tallinn MA lived in Soviet-era apartment blocks (according to census data). Only 8 per cent of the suburban residents lived in new single-family houses and only 3 per cent lived in dacha settlements. Other people lived in single-family houses (and rural farms) that dated from earlier periods.

Still, the new residential areas and dacha settlements were distinct from other suburban residential environments in that the highest proportion of their population originated from Tallinn. Half of the residents lived in the city at the time of the previous census in 1989 (Table 1). Many people also moved to these new (or new permanent) settlements from other parts of the suburban ring. This latter process could be labelled ‘suburbanisation within the suburban area’, because people were moving from Soviet-era suburban apartments to single-family houses.

The stock of dachas that was theoretically added to the metropolitan housing market at the beginning of the 1990s was substantial. The number of dachas built during the Soviet years in the suburban ring of Tallinn was 26,000, whereas the total number of new dwellings built during the period 1991–2006 in new residential areas was approximately 5600, with the latter figure including new detached, semi-detached and terraced houses as well as new urban-style apartment buildings. In 2002, municipal experts estimated that approximately 60 per cent of all dacha
plots could potentially be used for permanent living—i.e. 15 600 plots, a number that far exceeds the volume of housing construction in the suburban ring of Tallinn in the post-communist decades. The results of the 2007 field study indicated that 35 per cent of dachas (more than 9000) had permanent residents. Consequently, the former summer-home settlements attracted considerably more households from the beginning of the 1990s than the new residential areas did (Table 2).

The data do not enable us to estimate the precise temporal dynamics of the renovation and construction activities that took place in the dacha settlements. Nevertheless, the two inventories from 2002 and 2007 reveal considerable growth in construction activity in the summer-home areas. While dachas were used only seasonally at the beginning of the 1990s, approximately 15 per cent of the summer homes were in permanent use in 2002 and 35 per cent in 2007 (Table 2). Therefore, almost 60 per cent of the permanently inhabited dachas began to be used between 2002 and 2007, when Estonia experienced a brief housing boom brought about by the availability of cheap mortgages. In comparison, almost 75 per cent of the new post-1991 dwellings in the new residential areas were built during these few years. This finding demonstrates that the suburban dacha settlements also played a part in the housing boom of the mid 2000s.

The location of the dacha settlements follows a somewhat different pattern compared with that of the new residential areas built after 1991 (Figure 2). The latter are located very close to Tallinn and primarily in coastal areas. Soviet-era dacha settlements are rather more scattered throughout the metropolitan space. The data on permanent use (Table 2), however, indicate that the summer-home settlements that lie closer to the capital are the more likely to be converted to permanent living areas. Therefore, the transformation of dacha settlements follows, in general, a spatial pattern similar to that of the new emergent suburban settlements.

Table 1. Origins of the suburban population of Tallinn (percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lived in Tallinn in 1989</th>
<th>Lived in suburban area in 1989</th>
<th>Lived in other regions of Estonia</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New detached houses</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet-era summer homes</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other dwellings</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average in suburban area</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Census 2000.*

Table 2. Number of dachas in the suburban ring of Tallinn and percentages of permanently used summer homes in 2002 and 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbouring municipalities of Tallinn vs distant municipalities in Tallinn MA</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Permanently inhabited in 2002</th>
<th>Permanently inhabited in 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbouring</td>
<td>15 781</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distant</td>
<td>10 183</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal rural vs other municipalities in Tallinn MA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal rural</td>
<td>11 806</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14 158</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25 964</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sources: Summer home area surveys 2002 and 2007.*
The study of 2007 identified the social mix of *dacha* settlements (Figures 3 and 4). A cross-analysis of permanent living in *dachas* and the technical quality of the houses reveals the heterogeneous functions that these areas have acquired. The houses that are

![Figure 3](image-url)  
**Figure 3.** Technical condition of the *dachas* where signs of permanent living were visible. *Source:* Summer Home Area Survey 2007.

![Figure 4](image-url)  
**Figure 4.** Technical condition of the *dachas* where no signs of permanent living were visible. *Source:* Summer Home Area Survey 2007.
permanently inhabited do not comprise only those that are in a good condition (Figure 3). Although most of the inhabited houses were entirely renovated or had been replaced by new houses on the former summer-home plots, around 10 per cent of the houses with permanent residents were not renovated and daily life during the winter months should have been impossible. These are examples of houses in which it is most likely that the residents were coping badly with their everyday lives in the city. Similarly, approximately one-tenth of the houses in which it was not possible to detect any signs of permanent living had been rebuilt or renovated entirely (Figure 4); clearly, these are examples of modern second homes that were owned by more affluent urban dwellers.

The foregoing discussion illustrates that nowadays, dacha settlements have a double function. They are still used as summer or weekend homes, but they have also acquired an essentially residential characteristic. In addition, their function as recreational residences has several expressions: their initial function as temporary shelters for gardening activities has partly remained unchanged, while the former dachas have also partly been turned into modern second homes. In the same way, as residential areas, on the one hand they offer alternative cheaper dwellings for those metropolitan inhabitants who cannot afford a new suburban single-family house or an urban apartment, but on the other hand they also offer alternative sites for new housing for more affluent people.

Moreover, our analysis indicates that the proportion of entirely renovated or new houses in dacha settlements (where the accompanying renovation costs are comparable with those of building of a new house) that are also permanently inhabited was 19 per cent of the stock of summer homes. In absolute terms, this means that approximately 5000 inhabited new or entirely renovated single-family houses were located in former dacha settlements between the beginning of the 1990s and 2007. This figure is impressive when compared with the volume of house building in the new suburban residential areas built during the period 1991–2006, but a sizeable proportion lived in the new urban-style apartment buildings that were built in the mid 2000s in areas very close to Tallinn. In the same period, only 3000 new single-family homes were built in the new residential areas (Table 3). This demonstrates that Soviet-era second-home settlements have played a crucial role in residential suburbanisation from urban apartments to new suburban single-family houses during the post-socialist period. These were plots that were available for the construction of new housing and that the metropolitan residents often already owned when considering an improvement in their living conditions.

**Population of Dacha Settlements and New Residential Areas**

Analysis of the data obtained from the 2000 census also reveals the heterogeneity of the inhabitants in the dacha settlements (Table 4). Considerably fewer children and young inhabitants, and three times more retired people, lived in dacha settlements than in the new residential areas at this time. Typically, households in dachas had one or two members, whereas the new residential areas were more attractive to families with three or more members. Both types of settlement were primarily inhabited by Estonians, while the proportion of the Russian-speaking population was slightly higher in the dacha settlements. This finding reflects the fact that, during the Soviet decades, dachas were distributed preferentially to urban residents. Similarly, there were fewer graduates of higher education
living in the dachas and more unemployed and inactive people (retired people, housewives, etc.). Approximately half the working-age population in the dacha settlements did not work, whereas in the new residential areas only 25 per cent were unemployed or inactive. This is indicative of the different rationale that governed the formation of these settlements. It is likely that relocation to a dacha is related to the residents’ former ties to these settlements and to the choices that people make between urban and rural living if they have two dwellings at their disposal. This explains the heterogeneous population groups that live in these settlements today. Relocation to new residential areas has entailed a greater degree of selectivity in terms of the population groups involved, however, in that it is mostly younger households, made up of better educated and wealthier people, who favour the new suburban dwellings in the new residential areas.

**Planning Issues Related to Summer-home Settlements**

Because the building of new houses in the 1990s and 2000s discussed herein took place in formerly built-up areas and is therefore less visible compared with that found in the new residential areas, some studies of contemporary residential suburbanisation have largely neglected it. Furthermore, because house building and renovation in dacha settlements do not occupy new areas, the related planning problems are also invisible. Yet this does not mean that planning problems are less acute in these ‘hidden new residential areas’. Just as in the new residential areas, water and sewage supply, as well as schools and kindergartens, must all be provided.

In the new residential areas, construction is now more co-ordinated and several large areas are usually developed at the same time. Although the public authorities in Estonia have often been criticised for the insufficient co-ordination of housing projects, as they have in many other countries in transition, in general the building of technical infrastructure and the meeting of environmental conditions in new residential areas are, to a certain extent, under the control of the public sector. Public-sector co-ordination is much more complicated in dacha settlements because the renovation and construction in these cases are carried out on a plot-by-plot basis and in most cases by the owners themselves. The initial pre-conditions required in dacha settlements are also different. Built for recreational purposes, these settlements were sited in areas where social infrastructure (such as schools) was not accessible (Figure 5). Although the locations of many of the new suburban settlements that have been built since 1991 have also failed to take existing social infrastructure into account (Tammaru et al., 2009), at least these are typically located very close to Tallinn and access to the city’s schools and kindergartens is easier. The poor
extent of the existing public transport network means that the use of personal transport is much higher in the new residential areas, where market forces have played an essential role in decisions on location, whereas the dacha settlements were planned during the Soviet years, taking bus routes and railway lines into account (Figure 2).

### Table 4. Composition of population in new residential areas and in dacha settlements in the suburban ring of Tallinn, 2000 (percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New detached houses</th>
<th>Former summer homes</th>
<th>Other dwellings</th>
<th>Average in suburban area</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>46</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (years)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>15–29</td>
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<td>30–49</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–64</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Household size</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 member</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>2 members</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>3–4 members</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td>5 or more members</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Estonian</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (mainly Russian-speaking)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>48</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td><strong>Employment status</strong></td>
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<td>High-ranking occupations</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle-ranking occupations</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low-ranking occupations</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactive people</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a* Except children aged 0–14.

*b* Other: students, persons in military service, employment status unknown.

Source: Census 2000.
Conclusions and Discussion

Most researchers consider residential suburbanisation to be a demand-related phenomenon, driven by the preference of individuals to live in quieter and naturally more attractive residential environments than those found in the city. The case of the Tallinn MA, which experienced five decades of socialist urban planning and which has inherited a number of large dacha settlements from this period, demonstrates how the metropolitan housing market shapes the structure of residential choice among inhabitants. Following the elimination of strict Soviet-era building regulations, the stock of Soviet summer homes became an integral part of the metropolitan housing market. A large proportion of urban families had access to a suburban dacha at the end of the Soviet period; today, one-third of the original dachas are being used as permanent dwellings. Our study has revealed that, in terms of the contribution to residential suburbanisation, former second homes are more important than new post-1991 residential areas in terms of giving access to new detached houses to the metropolitan population.

Social conditions, and thus also the preconditions for migration, have changed during the transition decades. Our analysis has shown that dachas (compared with new residential areas) have attracted population groups with very heterogeneous social backgrounds. Compared with the classical new suburban residential areas, the decision to move to a summer home is often influenced by an individual’s former ties with the area concerned, in that if they have a familiar site in mind, people often discard the other available options on the housing market. In the early 1990s, many households had two alternatives for where to live—namely, in an urban apartment or in a summer home. Many people therefore moved to summer homes for a variety of reasons, whereas the migrational motives of the households who decided to move to the new residential areas were more

Figure 5. Location of dacha settlements in relation to other settlements.
Sources: New Residential Area Survey 2006; Summer Home Area Survey 2007
similar, in that it was mostly only affluent people and the upper-middle class who moved there. The transformational processes in the *dacha* settlements have now begun to follow the general trends in house building in the suburban area of Tallinn, however. While *dachas* were a reserve of affordable housing during the recession of the 1990s, they served as a stock of building plots during the construction boom of the mid 2000s.

Former summer-home settlements are thus a hidden component of contemporary residential suburbanisation in the former socialist countries. Because they are less visible in the suburban landscape than new settlements built on former agricultural fields, the role of planning in the development of these areas has largely been overlooked. Nevertheless, the issue of how to provide the required social and technical infrastructure in these settlements, which were initially planned for recreational purposes and remote from existing settlements, is nowadays of great importance.

In most of the formerly centrally planned countries, suburbanisation is considered to be the most important process that affects population change in metropolitan areas. However, the role of summer-home settlements, as well as of pre-existing housing stock in general, has received scant attention in the literature. Migration in post-socialist countries has been mostly explained using classical Western theories, such as discussions on suburbanisation and re-urbanisation, and debates on counter-urbanisation (Champion, 2001; Geyer and Kontuly, 1993; van den Berg et al., 1982). A clearer focus on how the housing stock that was inherited from the period of socialist urban planning, as well as the specific context of the transition period, influence outcomes in contemporary migration would help us to achieve a better interpretation of these theories in a post-socialist metropolitan context.

The case of socialist *dacha* settlements is just one example in a broader picture of how vacant housing stock enables people to adjust their living conditions according to their needs. The debate on Western suburbanisation also contains studies that show the ways in which existing alternatives in the housing market can shape migrational outcomes (Aring and Herfert, 2001, p. 51; Bourne, 1997; Heitkamp, 2002, p. 168). For example, in many cities in western Europe where suburbanisation has been taking place for several decades, ‘generational change’ is taking place in settlements that originate from the earliest decades of suburbanisation and cheaper housing is therefore also available in the suburban housing market. Furthermore, the spatial legacy of state socialism shapes contemporary metropolitan change in many forms. For instance, in the cities of former East Germany, the existence of vacant inner-city properties, which often consist of housing abandoned during the socialist period, nowadays strengthens the case for re-urbanisation as opposed to suburbanisation (Herfert, 2007).

The examples cited herein demonstrate that alternative choices in the housing market deserve greater attention in studies of the motives behind migration in general terms, especially when countries with different historical backgrounds are compared. It follows that, even if all of the significant reforms of society appear now to be complete (and the transition period in post-socialist societies now seems to be over), spatial legacies will continue to shape the socio-spatial processes in these countries for many decades to come. Understanding post-socialist urban spatial change requires an understanding of the metropolitan planning of the socialist years. The converse also applies, in that the classical argument about spatially compact socialist cities compared with the ‘urban sprawl’ of Western cities loses its credibility when set against the speed with which socialist seasonal settlements have become classical suburban residential areas.
References


Corrigendum


The following corrections apply:

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