

9.1 QUALITY OF THE HOUSING STOCK IN PRAGUE

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The quality of the housing stock provides information on the quality of housing itself (physical aspect), but also on the way and style of housing (social aspect). It also mirrors the standard of living of the population. The main long-term indicators of the quality of the housing stock include the size structure of flats given by the number of rooms and surface area, degree of crowding and availability of facilities (e.g. heating and water systems, bathroom and toilet facilities). The quality of the housing stock can be assessed based on several factors, such as the volume of the housing stock, speed of construction, availability of technologies, architectural approach, housing standards, residential preferences and economic potential of the population (see Musil 1971).

The purpose of this thematic map is to assess and describe the evolution of the quality of housing in the capital of Prague in the 20th and 21st centuries and to define relevant trends and patterns of spatial differentiation. The map sheet illustrates the change in the way of housing of the Prague population since the beginning of the 20th century and the differences in the quality of housing of the individual neighbourhoods. The structure of the housing stock based on its size, degree of crowding and availability of facilities is one of the characteristics used to assess the spatial differentiation of a population in terms of its social, economic and demographic structure (see for example Matějů 1977). Mainly in older studies dealing with the socio-spatial structure of Prague, a correlation can be observed between the structure of the housing stock and social status of the population of the particular neighbourhood. In neighbourhoods with a socio-economically weaker population, there were smaller flats with a lower number of rooms and lower quality (see for example Matějů 1980, Votrubec 1965).

The data used for assessing the quality of the housing stock in the thematic map comes from Prague housing censuses in 1921 and 1930 and censuses between 1950 and 2011¹. The following indicators were included in the analysis: size structure of the housing stock, degree of crowding of the flats and their type (category)² based on the availability of facilities. To assess the size structure of the housing stock, a typology was created based on the share of flats with (i) 1 to 2 rooms³, (ii) 3 rooms and (iii) 4 and more rooms in the individual cadastral territories. The degree of crowding, defined by the number of people per room, is assessed by the 1st and 4th quintiles of occupied flats. The first quintile defines fifth of cadastral territories with the lowest degree of crowding (the lowest number of people per room), whereas the fourth quintile delimits fifth cadastral

¹ Between 1960 and 2001, the data used was related to permanently occupied flats, in 2011 it was flats occupied by usually resident population and in 1950, the data described occupied houses (Praha v číslech 1963, FSÚ 1974, ČSÚ 1950 to 2011).

² In the censuses before 2011, an indicator of flat category (I to IV) was used; in 2011, these categories were merged into the following two: standard quality flats (former categories I and II) and lower quality flats (former categories III and IV) (ČSÚ 2014).

³ In the 1921 and 1930 censuses, all rooms intended to be used for living, including kitchen, were considered as rooms (i. e. habitable rooms) (Soupis bytů v Praze 1921, Sčítání bytů v Praze 1930). Between 1950 and 2001, all rooms intended to be used for living larger than 8 m² (or 4 m² in 1950), were counted as (habitable) rooms, including kitchen – provided that it was larger than 12 m² or that it was the only room in the flat (ČSÚ 1950 to 2001). In 2011, kitchen was included among (habitable) rooms in all cases (ČSÚ 2014).

territories with the most crowded flats. The type of flat indicator divides the housing stock into "standard quality flats" and "lower quality flats". This segmentation is based on the following criteria: the way of heating and the availability of basic facilities⁴ – bathroom and flush toilet (see Table 9.1.1).

Type of flat	Central heating	Basic facilities	
Standard quality flats	Yes	Partial or complete	Bathroom and/or toilet
Standard quality flats	No	Complete	Bathroom and toilet
Lower quality flats	No	Partial	Bathroom or toilet

Table 9.1.1: Type of flat by quality

Source: ČSÚ, 2014

The development of the housing stock structure and quality since the beginning of the 20th century can be assessed based on individual development stages of the capital. For the purposes of this text, the development stages shall be the following: interwar industrial period, socialist period and contemporary post-socialist period. Each of these periods specifically shaped the structure of the housing stock and had a significant impact on the periods that followed as well.

In the early 20th century, the housing situation in the capital was quite unfavourable; the number of flats was insufficient and they were lacking basic facilities. The vast majority of flats only consisted of one to two rooms (see Figure 9.1.1). Based on the 1921 census results, only very few flats were equipped with basic facilities, such as piped water (38%), bathroom (18%) or toilet (37%), whereby such facilities were not included in several houses in neighbourhoods with socially stronger residents either (Horská 2002). However, the housing stock was significantly differentiated within the city as well. In the 1930s map (see map sheet), we can see the difference in size structure and degree of crowding between blue-collar neighbourhoods (such as Žižkov, Vršovice, Nusle) and white-collar neighbourhoods (such as Vinohrady, Karlín, Dejvice)⁵. Whereas the bourgeoisie built their houses "in good locations on the sunny side of the city", for the blue-collar and white-collar populations blocks of flats were constructed on the outskirts of the city centre (Votrubec 1965). The poorest classes lived in temporary flats within slums, which were constructed in the worst locations in waterlogged (Na Slatinách), slopy (Na Krejčárku), constricted (Libeňský ostrov) or remote (Na Košíku) areas (Votrubec 1959).

The Second World War was marked with stagnation in housing construction, which was only revived again in the late 1950s (Votrubec 1965). Even though the number of flats was increasing already at the beginning of the socialist period, it was the 1970s that

⁴ Basic facilities are those that are only accessible to the user of the flat (ČSÚ 2011).

⁵ The social structure of Prague neighbourhoods was described by, for example, Matějů (1977) or Linhart, Rak, Voženílek (1977).

brought a significant turn in the volume of housing construction and a marked increase in the quality of the housing stock (Matějů 1977). The extensive housing construction of the 1970s had a positive impact on the housing stock structure both in terms of quantitative indicators (greater number of flats and rooms) and qualitative indicators (availability of basic facilities) (see Figure 9.1.1 and 9.1.2 and Table 9.1.2). However, the effects on the quality of the housing stock in individual Prague neighbourhoods were quite diverse. The greatest share of fully equipped flats was in the housing estates on the outskirts of the inner city (e. g. Záběhlice, Kobylisy, Strašnice, Chodov). Almost 100% of the housing estate flats were equipped with a bathroom or shower (Votrubec 1965). The lowest quality flats were in the historical city centre and in the inner city, where the housing stock was mostly older⁶ (e. g. Smíchov, Malá Strana, Žižkov, Nové Město). In the interwar period, this was an area with more quality housing as compared to the rest of the city; however, in the socialist period the government didn't invest into this area and the housing stock was degraded (Musil 1987).

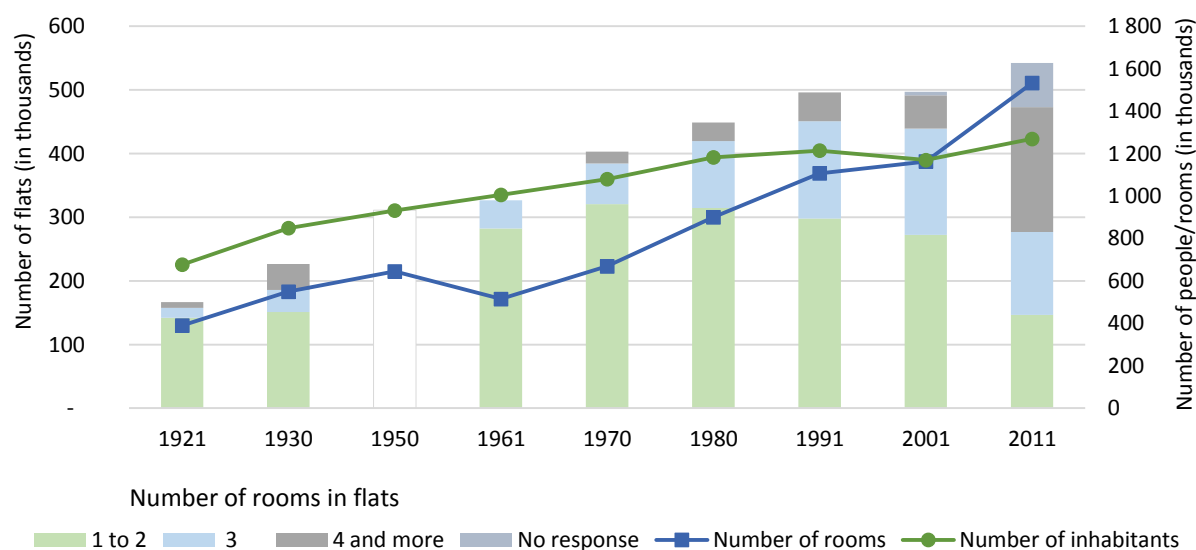


Figure 9.1.1: Development of the size structure of Prague housing stock between 1921 and 2011

Source: *Soupis bytů v Praze, 1921; Sčítání bytů v Praze, 1930; ÚKLKS, 1963; FSÚ, 1974; ČSÚ, 1950, 1961, 1970, 1980, 1991, 2001, 2011*

Note 1: For 1950, the data regarding the size structure of the Prague housing stock is not available.

Note 2: The 1950 data relates to flats in occupied houses; the number can also include unoccupied flats in occupied houses (ČSÚ 1950).

After the revolution, the structure of the housing stock started changing significantly in terms of all quality indicators used (size of the flat – area and number of rooms, degree of crowding, surface area per person, availability of facilities – see Table 9.1.2 and Figure 9.1.2). What changed most in the structure of the housing stock was the size structure (see map sheet and Figure 9.1.1). Almost in all areas of the city, the share of larger flats increased at the expense of the smaller ones; however, this fact was also influenced by a

⁶ The distribution of the housing stock by the period of construction is covered, for example, by map sheet section B 9.3 Typology of residential areas.

change in methodology (see above). The greatest change could be observed on the outskirts (in neighbourhoods such as Kolovraty, Uhříněves, Lipence, Březiněves), where the housing construction became more intense. The size structure of the flats also depends on the period of construction and the share of family houses (see map sheet section B 9.2 Typology of residential areas). Flats with the highest degree of crowding could be found in the inner city (e. g. Žižkov, Vyšehrad) and in the housing estates of the outer city (e. g. Černý Most, Řepy). However, the degree of crowding was rather low even here. In the 1990s, the difference in the availability of facilities was still noticeable in the housing stock of different parts of the city (for example city centre versus outer city). However, mainly thanks to reconstruction, the number of lower quality flats in the inner city has been decreasing and nowadays, the difference between neighbourhoods in the availability of facilities is not significant any more.

	Number of flats		Share of flats [%]	
	standard quality	lower quality	standard quality	lower quality
1970	283,799	119,097	70	30
1980	372,419	76,322	83	17
1991	466,529	29,275	94	6
2001	485,419	6,219	99	1
2011	477,909	36,358	93	7

Table 9.1.2: Development of the quality of Prague housing stock between 1970 and 2011

Source: FSÚ, 1974; ČSÚ, 1980, 1991, 2001, 2011

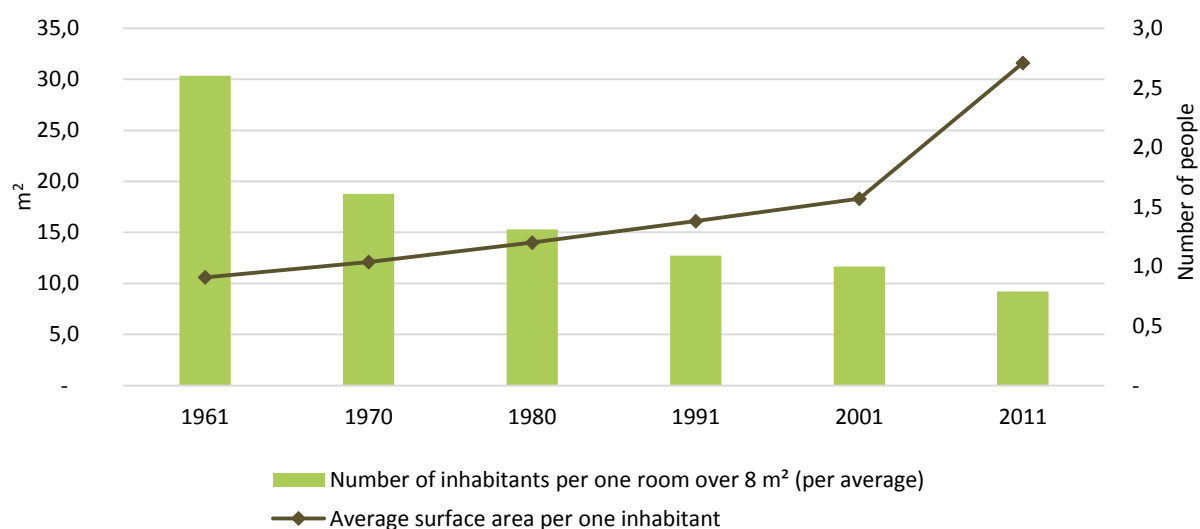


Figure 9.1.2: Development of the degree of crowding and average surface area of flats in Prague between 1961 and 2011

Source: Vitoušek et al. (1963); FSÚ, 1974; ČSÚ, 1980, 1991, 2001, 2011

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