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Netherlands Housing research

Prieskum bývania v Holandsku

Abstract

In the Netherlands there exists great knowledge and experience with national housing research and this can be very helpful for countries that do not yet apply national housing research. Also it can help countries, which already have some kind of national research. For example: compare the two researches, learn from the advantages or mistakes, find things what are positive and try to incorporate them.

The knowledge about Netherlands Housing Research helps to see and to using its advantages. This report could be a tool to show the advantages and also become the beginning of the future application of similar research on the Slovak conditions.

Abstrakt

Holandsko má bohaté skúsenosti a značné poznatky s programom národného prieskumu bývania. Tieto poznatky a skúsenosti môžu byť užitočné krajinám, ktoré ešte takýto typ národného prieskumu bývania neaplikovali. No tiež poznatky z Holandského prieskumu môžu poradiť krajinám, ktoré už určitý druh takéhoto prieskumu vykonávajú. Napríklad porovnaním týchto dvoch prieskumov, poučením sa z úspechov a chýb, nájsť veci čo prinášajú pozitíva a pokúsiť sa ich priniesť do vlastného prieskumu.

Spoznanie Holandského prieskumu bývania pomáha rozpoznať a neskôr použiť jeho výhody. Článok by mohol poslúžiť ako nástroj na poukázanie týchto výhod a stať sa podnetom k zavedeniu podobného podrobného prieskumu v budúcnosti u nás.

Key words

National housing research, Netherlands housing research (WoON), Overall method of the research outline, Execution of housing research

Kľúčové slová

Cenzus domácností, Prieskum bývania v Holandsku, Prehľad použitých metód, Vykonávanie prieskumu

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1. INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this article is to describe National Housing Research (NHR). National housing research (NHR) performed on the national base, gives an overview on the real situation of the housing stock in a country (at that particular moment). It is an appropriate instrument to indicate, what is good and what is wrong with housing stock of that country. National Housing Research is a long-term study, collecting results over time; it is performed periodically. This instrument helps to describe the current situation and to compare it with the past situation. This comparison gives it reliable measures, describes differences and can be use for future plans. National housing research is commissioned by national government and is executed by (research) institutions, companies and private organizations. The intention of every government is to increase both the quantity as well as the quality of housing stock. The NHR is good instrument for government to show the current situation of the housing stock and to (make policy plans that are aimed to) improve it.

2. THE OVERALL METHOD OF THE RESEARCH OUTLINE

The following picture (Figure 1.) shows the overall method which contains three aspects: a physical aspect, a social aspect and an economical aspect) on many different levels (enter into it horizontal). These three aspects can be resolved on the various levels generally in many projects, researches etc. An example of the highest level (country level) of this overall method is the national housing research, specifically in this article it is the Netherlands Housing Research.

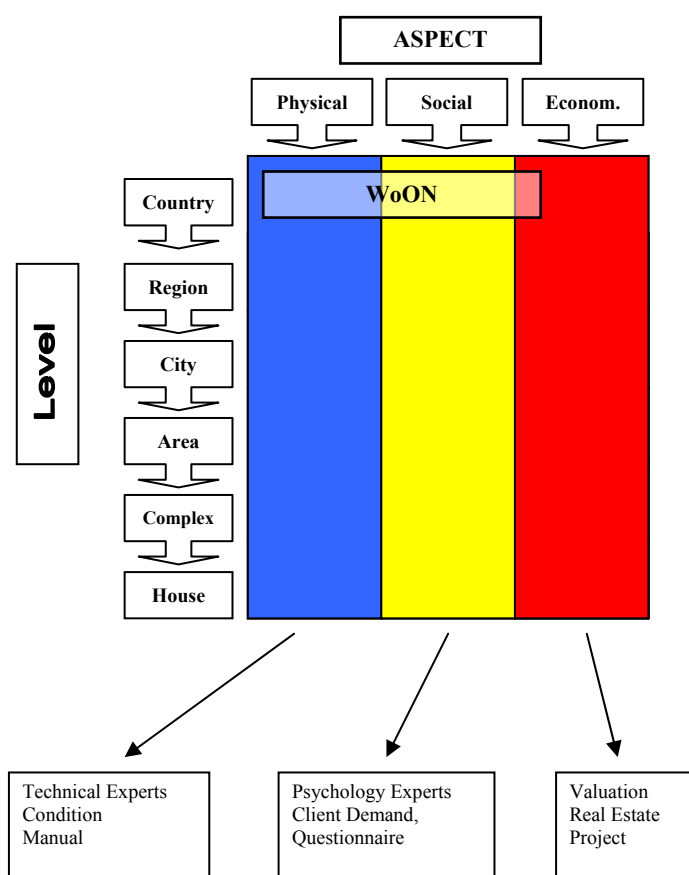


Figure 1. Overall method of research outline

Different groups of people, organizations and institutions are responsible for each different aspect. Government commissions both internal staff as well as external companies (through a tender procedure) to execute this research. Internal and external staff work together to reach the final results co-operatively.

3. HOUSING IN NETHERLANDS AND IN SLOVAKIA

The Dutch economy is stronger than the Slovakian. The free market wasn't restrictive like Slovakia in the period prior to 1989. It has been easier for people to buy or rent dwellings and this has positively influenced the quality of housing. For a good understanding there are some comparative indicators included on households, dwellings and housing:

Table 1. *Housing information*³

Countries:	Netherlands:	Slovakia:
Size of population	15,987,100	5,379,455
Number of households	6,929,625	2,071,743
Average size of households	2.3 persons	2.6 persons
Net average annual households income	27,600 € ³	2,137 € ³
Number of dwellings per 1000 inhabitants	415	310
Demand for housing in 2003-2013	570,000	255,000
Expected hsg. production in 2003-2013	842,000	236,600
-for extension of stock	650,000	No data
-for replacement of existing stock	192,000	No data

The biggest different is that the income of households in the Netherlands is more than ten times higher than in Slovakia. The demand for housing in the Netherlands is more than two times bigger as in Slovakia, but expected housing production is almost four times bigger, what shows that production in Slovakia is unsatisfactory. There's some data missing/lacking in Slovakia as well. NHR can help with this.

4. MINISTRY OF HOUSING, SPATIAL PLANNING, AND THE ENVIRONMENT THE NETHERLANDS – VROM

It is Government's duty to take care of the housing stock in a country. In Slovakia it is the Ministry of housing and regional development Slovak Republic - MVRR SR. In Netherlands it is the Ministry of Housing, Spatial planning, and the Environment the Netherlands – VROM. The Ministry of VROM has the responsibility and this leads to many activities.

There are several important fields which are VROM focused on. Most of these fields have published a respective document, which is possible to download on a website of VROM International. The fields are:⁴

- *Rent policy* - to keep housing affordable for low income groups
- *Housing for the elderly* – preparing for increasing number of seniors in coming decades

³ Alle Elbers - high rise report VROM.pdf

⁴ <http://international.vrom.nl/pagina.html?id=5450&ref=http://international.vrom.nl/pagina.html?id=7318>

- *Home ownership in the Netherlands* – because there's the growing demand by people for their own homes
- *From quantity to quality* – large numbers of homes eliminated the shortage, quality is central consideration
- *What people want, where people live* – is paper set out the main goals of housing policy (what is their current situation and what is their demand)
- *Freedom of choice, more say in housing* – knowledge and organization, promotion, sale, private, fewer regulations.
- *Opportunities for vulnerable groups* – about individual rent subsidies, rent policy, mortgage interest and buying subsidy
- *Housing and care* – increase offerings, promote affordability improve quality, combination of housing and care. (for elderly and handicapped people)
- *Urban regeneration* – cities centers are not attractive to live in, many people with high income decide to leave the city
- *Co-production public and private sector* – here play an important role housing associations and municipalities

Recent trends – The Dutch housing market is changing from a social rental market towards a private market. The rental market was the result of central planning economy of Dutch government after WW II. The owner occupied market is growing and is nowadays over 50%. The ownership segment is expected to grow to 70%.

Also VROM has made agreements with representatives of twenty urban regions on the amount of dwellings to be built. Between the years 2005 and 2010 those regions will build 360 000 units altogether. Dutch housing legislation has five main subjects:

- Safety
- Health
- Usability
- Energy efficiency
- Environment

One of the instruments that takes into account all those 5 activities and collects measures and analyses s data to get a realistic view is the *Netherlands Housing Research – WoON*.

5. WHICH COUNTRIES DO RESEARCH

The situation regarding is not the same in EU countries. Several countries of the EU already do/undertake/perform national housing research, other countries do only some parts of this research, others countries do their own research and the rest don't have any housing research. The next table (Table 2.) gives an overview of the situation:

Table 2. Overview of National Housing Research (EU)⁵

Country:	Housing Quality Survey	Housing Demand Survey	Local
Austria (AT)	No	Yes	
Belgium (BE)	Yes (10yrs)	No	
Denmark (DK)	No	No	
Finland (FI)	No	No	
France (FR)	No	No	
Germany (DE)	No	Yes (every 3-5yrs)	*
Greece (GR)	No	No	
Ireland (IE)	Yes (10yrs)	Yes (every 3 yrs)	
Italy (IT)	No	Yes	*
Luxembourg (LU)	No	Yes (every 3yrs)	
Netherlands (NL)	Yes (every 4yrs)	Yes (every 4yrs)	*
Portugal (PT)	Yes (every 10yrs)	No	
Spain (ES)	No	No	
Sweden (SE)	Yes (yearly)	Yes (yearly)	*
United Kingdom (UK)	Yes (annually)	No	*
Czech Republic (CZ)	No (local)	No	*
Estonia (EE)	Yes (annually)	No	
Hungary (HU)	Yes (every 3yrs)	Yes (every 3yrs)	*
Latvia (LV)	Yes	No	*
Lithuania (LT)	No	No	
Malta (MT)	No	No	
Poland (PL)	Yes (annually)	No	
Slovakia (SK)	Yes (every 10yrs)	No	
Slovenia (SI)	Yes (every 10yrs)	Yes (annually)	
Cyprus (CY)	no information		
Bulgaria (BG)	No	No	
Romania (RO)	Yes (annually)	Yes (every 4yrs)	
Turkey (TR)	Yes	No	

There is no binding legislation in EU on the performance of housing research. Each government decides whether and what research is executed.

6. NETHERLANDS HOUSING RESEARCH - WOON

The main example of national housing research being on the highest (country) level of the overall method (Figure 1.) is the Netherlands Housing Research - *Woon*.

“The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) is switching to a new research method for assessing housing preferences and conditions. This new research method is to replace the ‘Housing Demand Survey’ (WoningBehoeft Onderzoek – WBO) and ‘Qualitative Housing Registration’ (Kwalitatieve WoningRegistratie

⁵ Alle Elbers - high rise report VROM.pdf

– KWR). WoON will forge a link between policy and implementation, making it an indispensable planning tool for policymakers.”⁶

At first, before starting to talk about current programmes let’s look at a history of housing research in Netherlands. The recently introduced research method WoON links of two independent programmes which both run in the past– KWR and WBO. See (Figure 2.) how these are integrated at current.

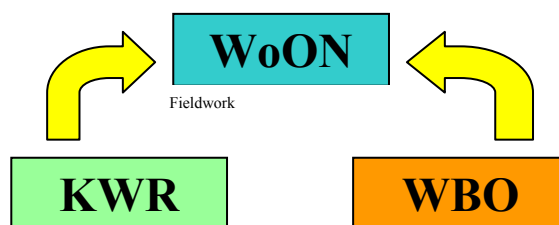


Figure 2. – Origin of WoON

6.1. HOUSING QUALITY SURVEY – KWR

Housing quality survey started off because government wanted to have a better understanding of the current situation of housing stock and to make it more transparently. Information is needed for policy makers to answer the following questions:

- What do home owners and tenants want?
- What are the weakness of housing and surrounding?
- Where are they located?
- How much money is needed for?

The first survey stems from 1975. It was a first attempt and the survey was not structured very well, delivering very little and unreliable data.

The *First* real KWR was realized in the period 1983 – 1985, including a number of 24.000 dwellings. This survey was focused on technical and structural condition of the building and it was ascertained that 12% of dwellings were in a “poor–bad” condition.

The *Second* KWR was realized in the period 1989 – 1991, including a number of 20.000 dwellings. At that time an assessment of the condition of the building was introduced. All surveyors who were executed the survey were trained building inspectors. It was ascertained that 10% of the dwellings were “poor – bad”. Additional items added to survey were hindrance of traffic (stench) and functional quality of dwellings.

The *Third* KWR was realized in the period 1994 – 1996 including a number of 15.000 dwellings, and was computer-aided. The percentage of “poor–bad” dwellings had decreased to 6%. This survey also focused on energy efficiency, housing for elderly & disabled and quality of living environment.

The *Fourth* and last KWR was realized in the period 1999 – 2001, including a number of 15.000 dwellings. This survey was no longer focused on technical condition, because only

⁶ <http://international.vrom.nl/pagina.html?id=5450&ref=http://international.vrom.nl/pagina.html?id=7318>

2% of dwellings were in a “poor – bad” condition. This is one of the biggest success of the KWR. The 4th KWR focused on energy, functional, quality, amenities, services, safety, and road quality. Interviews with a person from the householder were introduced to match the view on quality of the housing by the occupants (WBO) and the objectively determined building quality (KWR).

6.2. HOUSING DEMAND SURVEY – WBO

First housing demand survey started at the end of the 1960s and was organized every 5 years since then. Some 40.000 occupants participated in this program. The WBO is about the perception of the occupants of the housing quality. Their opinions were asked in an interview.

WBO is the other main part of WoON. For example one of the studies shows “*What is an impact of ratio change between house owners and tenants*”. This study says that proportion owners towards tenants has changed and investigates impact of this change on housing in Netherlands.

7. WOON CURRENTLY

Nowadays WBO and KWR (Figure 2.) co-operate in one unit as a research called the Netherlands Housing Research (WoON). Survey started in 2005 of a group of 64.000 participants. It combines the perception of occupants and it measures the quality. WoON is designed as a modular system, which makes it flexible to adapt to trends and varying political demands. Also alongside WoON runs surveys aimed on specific target groups. (e.g. elderly, handicapped, young families, etc.)

There're several modules in WoON. Some of them already completed and some of them just under construction:

- Housing market module
- Liveability
- Living surroundings survey
- Energy and safety
- Consumer behaviour and affordability
- Housing and care
- Home improvement and maintenance
- Building structure survey

Table 3. – Scheduling of WoON [3]

WoON 2006						
Module	2005		2006		2007	
Housing market Response: 40.000 -- ± 50.000 in parent survey	Preparation		Fieldwork	Data processing and publication	Respondents will be used as Parent survey for other modules.	
Sociaal-Fysiek (Questionnaires for occupants about housing condition)		Preparation and tender	Fieldwork	Data processing and publication		
Housing conditions survey Response: 8.000		Preparation		Fieldwork	Data processing and publication	
Energy		European Tender Fieldwork		Preparation	Fieldwork	Data processing and publication
Consumer behaviour	Execution of module; plan of activities yet to be drawn up.					
Maintenance and refurbishment	Sample survey from parent survey		Execution of module; plan of activities yet to be drawn up.			
Housing for the elderly	Execution of module; plan of activities yet to be drawn up.					

tab. 3.1 – Scheduling of WoON [3]

WoON is implemented from April 2005 until the end of 2007. VROM has commissioned market and other research companies to carry out the study. Every module is executed by other company.

7.1. ASPECTS OF WOON

As is already known there are three aspects entered in program WoON:

- physical
- social
- economical

Physical aspect is generally about the technical side. That means condition of housing stock, damages of buildings, what the quality of the building is, fire safety, deterioration, quality of the surroundings, infrastructure, total areas in square meters, etc. It includes all quantifiable parameters to be measured exactly and to be compared. It is objective measurement method for quality. The KWR focused on this aspect in the past.

Social aspect is about the perception of occupants on their housing quality. That means the feelings of occupants and the reasons behind their feelings. They are asked to fill out a questionnaire. It gives insight into the structure of occupants, age, nationality, incomes of households. This aspect can not be measured objectively and in the past this was part of the WBO.

Economical aspect is about valuation of housing stock and houses. Experts calculate a value of housing. Final prices are different and depend on many other factors. (location, infrastructure, facilities, opportunities, age of objects, etc.)

7.2. INSTRUMENTS TO GET THE RESULTS

The results. What is necessary to get the results? Evaluation of data. What is necessary for evaluation of data? A computer central database statistical programme and experts working with information technologies. Data are collected and sent to a central database. Which kinds of instruments are used for collecting data?

- a) Field work is executed by experts. These people are trained to perform field work. They go out with tools to measure the current situation, following the same process every time supported by a manual. This is a module that is filled step by step. Often they give points by rank on a scale, which is showing condition in final effect. The form is prepared very carefully and has to contain all important points and many additional points to use it again later.
- b) Questionnaire is another way to get data. It's sent to occupants and dwellings by post, or it is given to occupants by experts during their field work. After the questionnaire is filled out by occupants they return the questionnaire with all the data. The questionnaire is prepared in co-operation between VROM, experts, scientists, professors, psychologists etc.

Very important factor for WoON is the use of information technologies. That is to make optimal use of computer experts to compose a programme for the field work. PDA's are used for the field work. Brand-new programmes were developed and installed by computer experts in the PDAs. The PDAs ease the process of data collection and analysis and more efficient and can correct mistakes immediately.

7.3. WHO DOES THE WOON

WoON is commissioned by government to private companies for execution on the ground. National government hires institutions and companies therefore this. But who are they?

- a) Private companies which are working in housing sector and have knowledge and experiences. Also it has to be a company that has available a range of experts that are qualified to do perform the measurement.
- b) Institutions where are working scientists, professors and other experts whose are interested in housing stock. For example:
 - o Universities as professors and teachers with extensive knowledge about survey and research. Also students looking for experiences trained and controlled by experts.
 - o Academy of science and scientists involved in problems of housing quality.
 - o Material engineering developed new better materials and technologies.
 - o Psychologists co-operated on programme and prepared and evaluated questionnaire.

All these parties participate in WOON and together deliver the results.

8. CONCLUSION

The advantage of national housing research is in detailed survey of current housing situation with a huge focus and several levels. This detailed survey brings an exact view on reality and helps to politics and government to do correct steps on the field of housing with pay attention to demands and needs of occupants and makes their dwellings better.

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