

И.В. Пилипенко

# Жилищное СТРОИТЕЛЬСТВО

в республиках  
СССР  
за 70 лет:

## МАКРОАНАЛИЗ

И.В. Пилипенко

Жилищное строительство в республиках СССР за 70 лет: макроанализ

The NPD "Institute for Competitiveness and Integration (RICI)"  
Federal Center of Theoretical and Applied Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences  
Institute of Socio-Economic Studies of Population

Igor V. Pilipenko

**Housing**  
**Construction**  
in the **REPUBLICS**  
of the **USSR**  
During  
the **70**-Year Period:  
a **MACROANALYSIS**



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*Reviewers:*

*A.A. Shanin*, Candidate of Geographic Sciences,  
The World Bank Group

*I.M. Shmeiderman*, Candidate of Economic Sciences,  
Institute of Socio-Economic Studies of Population of the FCTAS RAS

**Pilipenko, Igor Valeryevich**

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The book examines the evolution of main indicators of housing construction in the USSR and compares performance of the 15 Union Republics during the period from 1918 to 1990 using a database composed by the author from more than 120 official statistical yearbooks of the USSR and the Union Republics. The work addresses not only state housing construction but also construction of individually-owned houses, activities of housing construction cooperatives and construction in rural areas that have been often overlooked in the contemporary Russian and foreign scholarly literature.

The author distinguishes main stages of housing construction in the USSR, analyses the data collected and calculates 89 indicators on housing completions in urban and rural areas, the evolution of the housing stock, flats and houses built, and inhabitants who improved their housing conditions in each of the 15 Union Republics. Based on the objective data, this book considers such popular questions in the modern public discourse as the problem of communal apartments, barracks, individual housing ownership and opportunities for the population of the USSR to improve their housing conditions on their own.

This monograph is for academics and students, scholars and specialists on housing construction, the utilities sector and economic history of the Russian Federation and the USSR; for governmental officials of federal and regional authorities that deal with the utilities sector and housing issues.

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## Summary

The housing problem concerns every person in varying degrees, and this issue was a topic of many studies of Russian economists, historians, geographers, specialists in architecture and urban planning. Therefore, on the one hand, it seems that this theme has been examined thoroughly by scholars with regard to the Russian Federation nowadays and to the USSR in the historical perspective, and that it is very hard to contribute something new to academic discussions. However, on the other hand, almost no works have been in fact published during last three decades that would contain general reviews of the housing sector's development in the USSR, though it has determined to a large extent the situation in the housing system of the Russian Federation until nowadays. The explanation lies in that the focus of academic studies after the dissolution of the Soviet Union quickly shifted towards market reforms in general and such reforms in the housing and communal services sector in particular. Moreover, no fundamental scholarly studies have been published yet that would compare and contrast indicators of housing construction across all the 15 Republics of the USSR.

Perhaps, this is why some enduring stereotypes about the housing system in the USSR have been shaped in the public discourse and in the professional community in the Russian Federation over last decades. The most common clichés are, for instance, that the majority of the population of the USSR lived in communal apartments (*kommunalka*) throughout the 1920–1950s and a large portion of the people resided in barracks; that housing construction developed at an accelerated pace only predominantly at the end of the 1950s and in the 1960s when standard five-storey buildings with small-sized flats (*khrushchyovka*) were built intensively; that there were no homes in private (individual) property in the USSR; that Soviet citizens were not able to improve their living conditions by themselves, etc. The author of this book faced himself repeatedly this kind of arguments articulated by some specialists as their key points in an attempt to subdue other points of view during scholarly discussions.

However, such statistical information that cannot be challenged anyway but has faded somehow into the background in discussions as the very low degree of urbanisation in the USSR from the 1920s to the

1950s automatically calls into question the above-mentioned point on kommunalkas and barracks. Likewise, the presence of a great number of individual houses (so called “private sector”) built before the beginning of the 1990s, which everyone can see in any town, medium-sized or large city in the Russian Federation casts doubt on assertions about no sale and purchase market for individual houses directly owned by citizens within the planned economy and no opportunities for the population to improve their living conditions by themselves.

The specificities of housing construction in the planned economy determined, despite 30 years of market reforms, the major distinction of the housing sector in the Russian Federation and other former socialist countries from the developed Western states for many decades to come, namely the dominance of outright homeowners (with no mortgage) among the households. At the same time, in the Western countries, the majority of households either rent their dwellings or take out a mortgage, e.g. more than three-fourths of all households in the USA and on average almost two-thirds of households in Western and Northern European states belong to these categories. Therefore, an unbiased insight into major trends of housings construction within the Soviet planned economy might help formulating suggestions aimed at enhancing the state policy in housing in the Russian Federation.

The main goal of this book is to examine the evolution of main indicators of housing construction during the period from 1918 to 1990 in the USSR and to compare them across the 15 Union Republics, namely the Azerbaijan, the Armenian, the Byelorussian, the Estonian, the Georgian, the Kazakh, the Kirghiz, the Latvian, the Lithuanian, the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republics (SSR), the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), the Tajik, the Turkmen, the Ukrainian and the Uzbek SSR. For the purpose of this work, we composed a database of indicators on housing construction from more than 120 official statistical yearbooks “The National Economy of the USSR” and “The National Economy” of every Union Republic published during the 1960s – 1980s by the Union’s and Republics’ statistical authorities.

Our monograph was designed to achieve the following objectives. Firstly, we carried out an analysis of more than 200 fundamental and applied research works of Russian, Soviet and foreign scholars published during more than 100 years (from the 1900s to the 2000s) and focusing

on the housing sector in general and housing construction in the USSR in particular. Secondly, we identified main stages of the evolution of housing construction in the USSR taking into account housing completions by total floor space (new houses built) by five-year plan and the evolution of the regulatory framework in the housing sector during 1918–1990. Thirdly, we compared results of housing construction across the 15 Republics of the USSR in terms of housing completions by total floor space, the housing stock volume, number of flats and houses built and number of inhabitants who improved their housing conditions. Fourthly, we examined the development and results of housing construction in every Union Republic using our method of calculating 89 indicators.

This monograph rests upon the studies of pre-1917 specialists from the British Empire (Ebenezer Howard and George Haw), the German Empire (Adolf Damaschke), the Russian Empire and the Russian Republic (Vladimir I. Boshko, Matvey G. Dikansky, N.V. Dmitriev, Maria I. Pokrovskaya, Vladimir V. Svyatlovsky, Ippolit A. Werner, Sergei Yu. Witte, E. Zuberbillier). The academic and methodological foundations for this study were shaped by works of such Soviet specialists from the 1920s to the 1980s as Viktor V. Anisimov, Pavel F. Antoshkin, Mark A. Arkadyev, V.G. Artyomov, Nikolai V. Baranov, I.Ya. Bass, Vladimir N. Belousov, I.D. Berezin, Anatoly S. Boldyrev, Janis Briedis, David L. Broner, Konstantin K. Chervyakov, Shalva D. Chikvashvili, Tamara N. Chistyakova, I.V. Davydov, Nikolai G. Dmitriev, Sergey B. Dvoretzky, N.I. Dzerozhinsky, Yakov I. Gornstein, I.E. Gorskiy, Vladimir N. Gurskiy, A.R. Gunther, Raisa Kh. Iseeva, S.G. Kadyimov, Stanislovas A. Kalinka, Kira K. Kartashova, A.E. Kharitonova, Vadim M. Khinchuk, Vasily K. Khitev, Ivan T. Khlamov, Vladimir L. Kobalevskiy, Alexander I. Kondashov, Yuri M. Kon'kov, Sergei M. Korneev, Yuri A. Kosenko, N.P. Kozerenko, Pavel M. Kozhanyy, E.B. Krestyanova, E.D. Lebedeva, Mikhail S. Lipetsker, Vladimir K. Litskevich, S.L. Livshits, Valery N. Litovkin, T.B. Maltsman, Israil B. Martkovich, Dmitry S. Meerson, Evgeny D. Mikhailov, Nikolai A. Milyutin, Alfred V. Mol'kov, Andrei E. Mushkin, Arseny I. Nikolaev, Juris Noviks, Petr B. Orlov, Dmitry V. Osipov, Lev M. Perchik, Igor A. Prikhod'ko, Igor V. Prokopa, Vladimir F. Promyslov, Dmitry S. Pudikov, G.B. Puzis, Vladimir T. Robotov, Sergei N. Rozantsev, Boris R. Rubanenko, Leonid M. Sabsovich, Yakov D. Schupak, Vyacheslav A. Shkvarikov, Vladimir G. Sinitsyn, Vitaly R. Skripko, Vasily I. Svetlichny, Yuri K.

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In Chapter 1, we present some evidence of contemporaries on the state of housing sector in the United Kingdom, Germany and the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 20th century, consider the issue of individual housing property in the USSR and provide some statistics that characterise current differences in housing systems between the former socialist and developed Western states. We analyse works of Soviet specialists on housing construction during the 70-year period, recent Russian-language publications on topics considered in this book and foreign studies on the housing sector in the USSR. Subsequently, several scholarly issues are identified that were rather neglected in the works we have reviewed.

In Chapter 2, we identify five main stages of the evolution of housing construction in the USSR based on our analysis of housing completions by total floor space in urban and rural areas and the build-up of the regulatory framework in the housing sector and then describe in detail main patterns of the housing sector's development at every stage. Particular attention is paid *inter alia* to opportunities available for the people in the planned economy to improve their living conditions by themselves, to the development of housing construction cooperatives and housing construction in rural areas.

Chapter 3 considers general indicators on housing construction by five-year plan across the 15 Union Republics that are examined by major property type (state enterprises and organisations, housing

construction cooperatives, individual housing construction and construction by *kolkhozes*) and in urban and rural areas. The results of housing construction in the USSR are examined using such indicators as the evolution of the housing stock in urban settlements and rural areas, housing stock per capita, number of flats / houses built and number of inhabitants who improved their housing conditions annually during the 1950s – 1990s and by five-year plan. Employing the statistical information, which we compiled, we estimate the size of the rural housing stock in the USSR, both individually-owned and state- / publicly-owned, the total individually-owned and state- / publicly-owned Soviet housing stock in 1926, 1940 and 1952. Additionally, we estimate the values of these indicators during the period from 1958 to 1979, which were not provided by the official statistical agencies. With obtained numbers, we further calculate the maximum share of the population of the USSR that lived in communal apartments as well as the share of the population, which resided in barracks.

Chapter 4 is devoted to our analysis of the evolution and results of housing construction in each of the 15 Union Republics presented within several regions: the RSFSR; the Byelorussian, the Moldavian and the Ukrainian SSR; the three Baltic Republics; the three Republics of South Caucasus; the five Republics of Central Asia. We calculated 89 indicators for every Union Republic characterising housing construction in terms of volume, average numbers, shares by the same year and over a specific period of time as well as changes in volumes, average numbers and shares that reflect the degree of the housing sector's development in the 15 Union Republics from different standpoints.

Additionally, the book contains 28 tables, 99 figures as well as 9 annexes with 46 tables presenting the statistical data we compiled and employed in our analysis. The annexes also comprise some standard Soviet documents on housing including the Template of a Tenancy Agreement, a Passport for a State Dwelling Occupied by a Tenant, a Housing Construction Cooperative Member's Book and a Template of a Purchase and Sale Agreement for an individually-owned dwelling. The list of references contains 492 sources in Russian, English, German, and Ukrainian languages including 72 legislative acts, 282 academic publications, volumes and guides on the housing sector's development and relevant legislation, 138 statistical yearbooks and databases.

This study has been carried out at the Non-Profit Organization “Research Institute for Competitiveness and Integration” (RICI) and at the Laboratory for Social and Economic Problems of Housing Policy of the Institute of Socio-Economic Studies of Population of the Federal Center of Theoretical and Applied Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences (ISESP FCTAS RAS). The author would like to express his deep gratitude to the reviewers of the book, Dr. Andrey A. Shanin and Dr. Inna M. Shneiderman, for their useful comments and recommendations that helped improve the text of the book.

Having conducted this study, we can draw the following conclusions.

1. The pre-Revolution official publications, academic and popular science works published at the beginning of the 20th century drew a picture of the Russian Empire considerably lagging behind the advanced Western nations in terms of technologies used in housing construction for the majority of the urban and rural population, the development of the utilities sector in urban areas and the basic communal infrastructure. This state of affairs determined much higher mortality rates in the Russian Empire in comparison to the European states as well as persistent problems in the sphere of public health underlined in publications of Sergei Yu. Witte, Vladimir V. Svyatlovsky, Ippolit A. Werner, Maria I. Pokrovskaya, Matvey G. Dikansky, N.V. Dmitriev, Vladimir I. Boshko, and other authors. While the share of urban population in the Russian Empire stood at only 14.2 per cent by the year of 1913, wooden low-rise buildings made up to 80 per cent of the urban housing stock at that time, and wood boards, straw and other similar, not very reliable materials were used for roof covering for 61 per cent of urban buildings. Kerosene lamps prevailed in street lighting, whereas electric lighting was installed in 11 per cent of cities, water supply systems – in 18 per cent of cities, and sewage systems – in 5 per cent of cities. Even in Saint Petersburg and Moscow, the two largest cities in the Russian Empire, only 51 per cent and 28 per cent of buildings, respectively, were connected to water supply systems, and 25 per cent of buildings in Moscow were connected to the local sewerage. Most of scholars consistently emphasized extreme inequality between housing conditions of the majority of the urban population and the wealthiest dwellers, higher relative rent rates for the poor (when calculated per square meter of usable area) coupled with much worse quality of housing construction, overcrowded residential

premises, the absence of basic amenities in houses, factories' barracks and casernes as well as the disregardful attitude generally prevailing in the society towards the housing issues.

2. We divided the Soviet-era publications on housing construction and resolving the housing question in the USSR into five groups. The first group is represented by the publications in the late 1910s – at the beginning of the 1920s that underlined the necessity of urgent resolution of housing problems, introduction of urban planning, installation of water supply and water sewage systems, heating and ventilation in houses in order to curtail mortality rates and improve public health. The vast body of literature included into the second group provided overviews on the housing sector of the USSR. These works shared to a great extent the same structure: at first, they characterised the period considered, then evaluated the state of housing before 1917 and subsequently analysed in detail developments in housing construction and the utilities sector in the USSR during the period of New Economic Policy (NEP) and by five-year plan. Apart from this, such publications could also consider some adjacent topics and compare / contrast developments in the housing sector of the USSR and in Western nations. The third group is formed by industry-specific publications in the field of architecture, urban planning, the utilities sector, statistics and organisation of the construction industry. The fourth group is comprised of compendiums of legislation on housing issues compiled by lawyers specialising in housing who presented legal acts in a systemic manner as well as analysed law enforcement and judicial practice. Reference guides for the population that we included into the fifth group provided answers in an easy-to-comprehend form to the wide range of questions of dwellers in state and cooperative flats / apartments, dachas and garages and of owners of individual houses. The publications of the 1930 – 1970s often promulgated the advantages of the housing system in the USSR such as the withdrawal of the state-owned housing stock from the market in order to neutralise speculations in housing pricing, and low housing rents set up in the public sector, which were fixed from 1928 to the end of the 1980s and, in fact, did not exceed 5 per cent of household earnings. In turn, the works published in the 1980s started highlighting that the USSR was lagging behind the Western countries in terms of housing floor space per capita. However, the formal indicator

used by the Soviet scholars to measure average floor space per capita neither reflected on the degree of inequality in housing size between different groups of population in developed nations, nor provided any information about the status of dwellers (tenants, owners with a mortgage or outright homeowners). Nor was it possible to infer about the quality of the housing stock and the communal infrastructure, about housing prices and price / quality ratio for apartments and houses in Western nations, also taking into account differences in climate. Besides this, apparent dogmatism of Soviet authors and quite old theoretical and methodological foundations of their studies (predominantly “The Housing Question” written by Frederick Engels in 1872) did not allow them to evaluate objectively dramatic changes that had taken place during the 1940 – 1980s in the Western states and to determine how the positive experience of the USSR affected these shifts in housing policies. These are the increasing role of the state in the developed nations in coordinating housing construction and the launch of direct distribution of dwellings among households in need of housing improvements. As a result, insufficiently deep knowledge about peculiarities of housing systems in developed countries stipulated exaggerated expectations during *perestroika* about the realisation of market reforms in the housing sector of the Russian Federation.

3. The main features of contemporary Russian-language works on the topic of housing construction in the USSR are the following ones. Firstly, the focus of these publications was predominantly on case studies at local or regional levels, whereas insufficient attention was usually paid to the overall historical background and general trends in the housing sector’s developments in the USSR and abroad. Secondly, many authors preferred to examine the period of the sixth five-year plan (1956–1960) and the seven-year plan from 1959 to 1965, while much less attention was paid to the previous five-year plans that laid the foundations for mass housing construction, and to the next five-year plans, which determined to a great extent the state of the housing sector in the post-Soviet times. Thirdly, housing construction in general was de facto associated with state housing construction only, whereas a dwelling for a family was virtually equated to a flat / apartment provided by the state or received from a housing cooperative. At the same time, individual houses with outright ownership by Soviet citizens (the so

called “private sector”) was often not mentioned at all. Fourthly, we also found that peculiarities of housing construction in rural areas were of much less interest to contemporary scholars. Additionally, an interesting approach of some scholars to the Soviet policy of providing housing by the state in exchange for extremely low payments as a form of coercion, punishment or control over the population during the 1920s – 1940s did not fully take into account the fact that only 8 to 9 per cent of the USSR’s population lived in state-owned apartments in the year of 1926, whereas by 1940 the share of such dwellers reached 20 to 21 per cent. It should be also noted that most of contemporary scholarly works do not distinguish between outright homeowners (with no mortgage) and households that have a mortgage, though the status and the structure of expenditures of these two types of households differ markedly.

4. A considerable part of foreign publications presented neutral to negative judgements about the experience of the housing system development within the Soviet planned economy. Many of these works focused on housing shortages, some deficiencies in the process of distribution of flats and, once again, on a formally lower housing space per capita indicator in comparison to the Western economies. At the same time, several voluminous studies revealed not deep enough knowledge of their authors about the Soviet housing legislation and the actual state of affairs in the housing sector of the USSR. In this connection, some publications made erroneous conclusions about allegedly total abolition of private property in 1918, about worsening housing conditions for the urban population in the 1920s to the 1950s and about an insignificant contribution of individual housing construction to resolving the housing issue. Nevertheless, during the period of the 1940s to the 2000s, some works were published which provided a more balanced analysis emphasising the considerable contribution of the USSR to formulation of state policies aimed at fostering individual and cooperative housing construction, the successful solution of the housing issue in cities and towns by shifting at the end of the 1950s – beginning of the 1960s to large-scale construction of standard houses, the Soviet precedence and the following convergence of main principles in urban planning in the USSR and the Western states in terms of limiting growth of largest cities, as well as the fair distribution of dwellings by the state from the point of view of professional qualifications of the citizens, their ethnical and

gender differences. Apart from this, it was revealed at the end of the 1980s that the indicator of housing space per capita systematically overstated the US performance by ca. 25 per cent on average versus the USSR, since gross housing space from perimeter of outside walls was included into calculations. Contrariwise, in the USSR only livable and useful / total housing space indicators were used that neither included non-livable, auxillary premises used by all the dwellers nor load-bearing structures. Moreover, in case inequality in housing distribution in the USA is taken into account, average housing space per capita indicators for the USSR turned out to be persistently higher than those for 60 per cent of the population of the USA during the period from the 1920s to the 1980s.

5. The housing stock of the USSR structurally comprised four types of dwellings. The first type was the state housing stock, which was divided into the housing stock under the authority of local Soviets of people's deputies (the housing stock of local Soviets) and the departmental housing stock (under the authority of state ministries and other agencies). The second type was the public housing stock owned by kolkhozes and other cooperative organisations and their associations, and the housing stock under the authority of labour unions and other public organisations. Dwellings of housing construction cooperatives formed the third components of the total housing stock, whereas the fourth part was represented by houses that were owned individually by citizens. Therefore, quite a popular statement about no opportunities available for the citizens of the Soviet Union to improve their housing conditions on their own within the planned economy, does not correspond to the real state of affairs in the USSR. Moreover, individual houses built by the population (as well as dachas of cities' residents in suburban areas and the countryside), state flats / apartments privatised during last three decades and cooperative dwellings, which their inhabitants had fully paid for, dampened considerably negative consequences for the population of the transition period from plan to market during the 1990s. Employers were also able to offer their personnel lower salaries than in developed states not only in absolute but also in relative terms, while ensuring comparable standards of living in terms of housing conditions. As a result, when conducting international comparisons, the housing ownership factor, in case it is taken into account besides ordinary

income comparisons, implies a much narrower gap in the standard of living between the former socialist countries and the developed nations. And even almost 30 years after the beginning of market reforms, the share of outright homeowners among the Russian households was equal to 84 per cent in 2020, and, according to our calculations, it stood at the level of 76 per cent in 2018 for 11 countries of Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time, this indicator for France was equal to 33 per cent, for the United Kingdom – 28 per cent, for Germany – 26 per cent, for Sweden – 12 per cent, and for the Netherlands – 8.3 per cent.

6. Our calculations revealed that since the rural population prevailed in the USSR until the year of 1962, and the private sector comprised a significant portion of the urban housing stock, namely 53 per cent in 1926, 37 per cent in 1940 and 33 per cent to 40 per cent in the 1950s, homeowners of individually-owned houses prevailed in the household structure of the USSR till the beginning of the 1970s. Our estimations reveal that the size of the public housing stock surpassed that of the individually-owned housing stock by the year of 1974 only (it should be also noted that floor space of terraces, verandas, attics and other unheated rooms / areas of individual houses officially were not counted as a part of this housing stock). Therefore, the assertion which has been widely spread in the expert community that the majority of the population of the USSR lived in communal apartments till the 1960s (and that the considerable portion of the country's population lived in barracks) cannot be confirmed by the verifiable data. In reality, according to our estimations, less than one third of the population of the USSR lived in communal apartments at the peak, whereas 2.1 per cent of the country's citizens and 5.0 per cent of the urban population resided in temporary barracks by the year of 1952. Hence, due to the fast-growing urban population, the issue of communal apartments and barracks was a critical problem for cities, especially for large and the largest ones (e.g. ca. 7.4 per cent of the population of Moscow lived in barracks in 1952), and for newly developed regions of Siberia, the Far East and Central Asia in settlements with public urban housing stock. At the same time, the majority of other residents, who lived in individually-owned houses and apartments in rural settlements, towns and cities, did not face this problem directly. By the year of 1989, 4.8 per cent of all families and 6.3 per cent of families in urban areas still lived in communal apartments.

Additionally, 3.1 per cent of all families and 4.3 per cent of families in cities and urban-type settlements (*poselok gorodskogo tipa*) resided in dormitories. Therefore, by the end of the USSR's existence, less than 7.9 per cent of all families and less than 10.3 per cent of families in urban areas did not have their own apartments.

7. Having analysed the dynamics of housing completions by five-year plan and the evolution of the legislation, we identified five main stages in housing construction in the USSR.

7.1. At the first stage (1921–1928), individually-owned housing construction boomed in rural areas of the USSR during NEP, and the larger volume of housing completions by floor space was later achieved during the sixth five-year plan only. The fully-fledged communal services sector was formed in the cities with the main focus on increased public expenditures on sewage and wastewater treatment systems as well as on sanitary and hygienic measures. Housing construction via cooperatives was launched and played a substantial role in the City of Moscow and the Moscow governorate. During and after the process of municipalisation of the most valuable houses in urban areas, the authorities moved underprivileged inhabitants with their families to more comfortable houses in city centres (the so called “great housing redistribution”) and ensured dismantling of urban slums.

7.2. The second stage, which lasted from the first five-year plan to the third five-year plan (1929–1941), was characterised by a 2.1-times increase in urban population with the housing stock in cities and urban-type settlements being expanded less than twofold (the volume of housing completions remained de facto stable across three five-year plans). In the year of 1929, the systemic development of the construction materials industry was launched. The authorities also formed the legislative framework regulating urban planning policy, initiated studies that produced a variety of scientifically-grounded standard projects of houses for rural inhabitants as well as for agricultural enterprises such as kolkhozes and sovkhozes. All these measures allowed implementing the “socialist reconstruction” of cities and rural settlements, whereas the activities of housing cooperatives were curtailed almost completely. In order to raise productivity, the government reorganised the construction sector by creating new construction trusts and enterprises by every industry and territorial administrative unit that began working on a contractual basis only.

7.3. The third stage encompassing the period of the Great Patriotic War and the postwar reconstruction (1941–1955) marked the creation of scientific and technical foundations for the transition to the industrial method in construction of apartment buildings, and new standards in mass housing construction for predominantly room-by-room living of families were elaborated. During and after the Great Patriotic War, the authorities enhanced the support to individual housing construction, streamlined the legislation regulating purchasing and building of individual houses and unleashed housing construction in sovkhozes. In general, despite the exhausting potential of the by-industry / sectorial organisation of housing construction in cities and urban-type settlements, a 3.5-fold increase in housing completions by total floor space was achieved during the fifth five-year plan in comparison to the pre-war five-year plans.

7.4. The fourth stage lasted from the sixth to the ninth five-year plans (from 1956 to 1975), during which the authorities launched the mass housing construction programme when families were provided with small-sized flats in standard apartment buildings. This programme rested upon a set of systemic measures aimed at increasing productivity and cost-cutting in construction. These measures included consolidating housing construction organisations by territory, organising the precast concrete production and the large-panel housing construction industry, developing block-by-block construction of residential houses with all the related infrastructure required by the people and the developed public area. Housing construction cooperatives were revitalised, support to their activities as well as to the sector of individual housing construction was extended, and it allowed reaching a record volume in housing completions during 1956–1960 in individual housing construction in rural settlements. Simultaneously, housing construction in kolkhozes was also deployed at this stage. As a result, the volume of housing completions by total floor space increased 2.3-fold on average by five-year plan in comparison to the period of 1946–1955. At the same time, due to a number of design shortcomings of flats in standard houses at the end of the 1950s to the mid-1960s, more diverse standard projects of residential houses were designed. Such buildings were put into service progressively from the beginning of the 1970s, and their design took into account local climate and weather conditions, technical and material resources, national and cultural traditions of the Republics of the USSR.

7.5. The fifth stage spanning across the tenth to the twelfth five-year plan (1976–1990) was characterised by considerable improvements in quality of standard apartment buildings constructed by the state, whereas the volume of housing completions by total floor area increased by 15 per cent at the end of the 1980s in comparison to the mid-1970s. Simultaneously, the role of individual housing construction decreased, since state enterprises and organisations had focused predominantly on housing construction using state funds. To mitigate such disbalances, the authorities fostered state lending further, intensified installation of modern communal infrastructure in rural areas, launched programmes that allowed specialists demanded by kolkhozes and sovkhozes to obtain new individual houses for half of their actual price, etc. These measures resulted in an inconsiderable increase of individual housing construction only by the end of the 1980s. Apart from this, the authorities gave a new impetus to housing construction cooperatives not only in urban areas, but also in the countryside and alleviated loan terms, permitted sale of vacant rural houses to urban inhabitants who did not have dachas, liberalised the legislation concerning personal land plots, collective gardening and horticulture, and unleashed housing construction in a form of youth housing complexes.

8. Individual housing construction prevailed during the first stage (7.6 times more houses by floor space completed than houses built by the state and housing cooperatives), provided 44 per cent of new housing during the second stage and also dominated during the third stage (58 per cent of housing completions by floor space). In general, the population financed 63 per cent of housing completions during 1918–1955, whereas during next five-year plans (1956–1990) this indicator dropped to 26 per cent (excluding housing construction cooperatives). Initially, state housing construction was a primary way of providing dwellings to the population only in urban settlements (86 per cent of housing completions, including housing cooperatives, during the period from 1918 to 1990). State housing construction coupled with housing cooperatives started to prevail in the country just from the seventh five-year plan (1961–1965) onwards, and it eventually contributed 63 per cent of all housing by floor space built from 1918 to 1990. Meanwhile, the state was building more spacious apartments up until the sixth five-year plan for predominantly room-by-room occupancy by families before the mid-1950s. However, from this time onwards, the citizens themselves began building more

spacious dwellings (the average floor space of state housing during 1985–1990 was 55 square meters, while the floor space of houses built by inhabitants was on average as large as 76.9 square meters). The state participated actively in housing construction in rural areas starting from the 1950s (primarily, in sovkhozes) and enabled construction of 27 per cent of housing in rural settlements all together. In general, there was no single five-year plan, when the share of state housing construction was more than 50 per cent of housing completions by total floor space in all the 15 Union Republics: 13 Republics was the maximum during the period from 1981 to 1985, and the lowest point was reached during 1918–1928 and 1938–1941, when the state contributed less than 50 per cent in all 15 Union Republics. Moreover, despite the predominance of the state since the beginning of the 1960s, 36.5 per cent of families lived in individual houses by the year of 1989 (19.8 per cent of families in urban settlements and 72.1 per cent in rural areas). In turn, the housing construction cooperatives movement was developing mainly in cities from the beginning of the 1960s onwards, and its share in total housing construction in the USSR from 1966 to 1990 was fluctuating around 5.0 to 6.0 per cent. Lastly, kolkhozes contributed to housing construction in rural areas from the beginning of the 1960s as well, and their share in total housing completions by floor space in the USSR augmented to 5.6 per cent during the twelfth five-year plan (1985 to 1990).

9. The main general problem was the decreasing share of the population who improved their housing conditions after the peak in the year of 1959, when 12.6 million people or 6.0 per cent of the total population obtained new dwellings. The local minimum was reached during the end of the 1970s – beginning of the 1980s (ca. 10 million citizens or 3.7 per cent of the total population annually), whereas during the period of perestroika the number of people who improved their housing conditions increased to 11.5 million annually (4.1 per cent of the population of the USSR). When considering on a five-year plan basis, 16.2 per cent of the population had their housing conditions improved during 1951–1955. Then, this indicator increased to 26.2 per cent in 1956–1960 and started to decrease to the level of 18.5 per cent by the five-year plan of 1981 to 1985.

10. Our method of comparing housing construction trends in the Republics of the USSR includes calculations of six groups of 89

indicators that comprehensively characterise dynamics and results of the housing sector's development. Group 1 comprises 20 indicators on housing completions by total floor space in both urban and rural areas. Group 2 consists of 12 indicators on housing completions in urban areas, and Group 3 contains 16 indicators describing housing completions in rural areas. The characteristics of the housing stock in urban and rural settlements are revealed by 16 indicators in Group 4, whereas 13 indicators from Group 5 reflect on developments in terms of flats / houses built, and 12 indicators from Group 6 – on number of inhabitants who improved their housing conditions. Our method envisages calculating other indicators too, in case relevant data is available. In general, all indicators can be subdivided into those describing growth patterns for volume numbers, average values, per capita statistics at a certain point of time, average per capita numbers for a certain period of time (during several five-year plans, decades or years), contributions (shares) of several components to housing construction and changes in per capita numbers and shares. Specifically, we calculated indicators that characterise housing construction by main sources of financing, that is by state enterprises and organisations, by population at their own expense and with assistance of state loans, by housing construction cooperatives and kolkhozes.

11. We selected a shortened period for calculating 89 indicators that stretches from the fourth to the twelfth five-year plan (1946–1990) as it allowed taking into account to the full extent the data on the Latvian, the Lithuanian, the Moldavian and the Estonian SSR as well as the statistics on Western Ukraine and Belorussia that accessed the USSR in 1939. The main drawback of the calculations of 89 indicators is that we were forced to use even shorter time periods for calculating some indicators because not all of the panel data for the considered period of 1946–1990 was available. Nevertheless, we adhered to the rule of contrasting the Union Republics by indicators with the same time span or comparable ones. Additionally, the limitations of the statistics available allowed us calculating only 55 indicators for the Tajik SSR, 58 indicators for the Lithuanian SSR, 86 indicators for the Byelorussian SSR and 88 indicators for the Kazakh SSR.

12. The time series, which we computed, demonstrate that the development of housing construction and the housing sector in general was quite synchronized and well-balanced across the Union Republics. The situation when some of the Republics would rank systematically

among the top-3 and some others would be found consistently among the bottom-3 was not the case. The leaders by number of first places in rankings of 89 indicators were the Byelorussian SSR, which ranked first 14 times, the Estonian SSR (13 times), the Azerbaijan SSR (11 times) and the Uzbek SSR (10 times). In turn, Byelorussian SSR was a leader among the 15 Republics in terms of top-3 rankings (35 times), whereas the Uzbek SSR, the Latvian SSR, the RSFSR and the Azerbaijan SSR followed with 21 to 28 top-3 rankings in total. The highest average rankings across 89 indicators were of the Lithuanian and the Byelorussian SSR, and then of the Moldavian, the Kazakh, the Estonian, the Uzbek SSR, the RSFSR and the Latvian SSR. When we compared the Union Republics across 55 indicators (i.e., those with the statistics available for all the 15 Republics of the USSR) the leaders in that ranking were the Lithuanian, the Byelorussian, the Estonian and the Moldavian SSR. Almost the same Republics (excluding the Estonian SSR and including the Azerbaijan SSR) topped the table with highest average rankings across 11 key indicators characterising the dynamics of housing construction. At the same time, the Estonian, the Lithuanian SSR, the RSFSR and the Byelorussian SSR were leaders in the ranking with 11 indicators that reflected on a degree of the housing sector's development. The only two Republics that never took first places in 89 rankings, namely the Ukrainian and the Kirghiz SSR, nevertheless, ranked 8th and 13th, respectively, in terms of the number of bottom-3 rankings (the Ukrainian SSR – 18 times and the Kirghiz SSR – 24 times). These Republics were also the 10th and the 12th, accordingly, in the ranking across 55 indicators.

13. In general, across the Union Republics, the Moldavian SSR demonstrated the highest growth rate of housing construction by volume, and the Kazakh and the Byelorussian SSR led in per capita numbers. In turn, the Uzbek SSR distinguished itself in terms of the highest growth rate of housing construction by the state, whereas the Kazakh, the Estonian and the Byelorussian SSR were leaders in the share of state housing construction. Cooperatives played the most important role in building houses in the Lithuanian, the Byelorussian, the Georgian, the Latvian and the Estonian SSR. Housing construction financed by the population prevailed in the Azerbaijan, the Uzbek, the Turkmen, the Tajik and the Moldavian SSR, whereas the contribution of kolkhozes was the most significant in the Byelorussian and the Estonian SSR.

14. In urban settlements, the Moldavian and the Azerbaijan SSR were leaders in terms of housing completions by total floor space, while the Byelorussian SSR topped the rating of the 15 Republics by housing completions financed by the state, and the Uzbek SSR ranked 1st by housing completions financed by citizens and with state loans. Also, the Byelorussian SSR had the highest score of housing completions by total floor space per capita in urban areas. For rural settlements, the Uzbek SSR revealed the highest rating by a growth rate of housing construction, whereas the Estonian, the Kazakh and the Latvian SSR were among the top Republics by per capita numbers. State enterprises and organisations played the most active role in housing completions in rural areas in the Byelorussian and the Kazakh SSR. The contribution of the population to housing construction was the highest in the Azerbaijan and the Moldavian SSR, and kolkhozes were most active in the Latvian and the Estonian SSR.

15. In the list of indicators that characterise the housing stock's development, the Moldavian SSR ranked 1st by an increase in the urban housing stock, whereas housing stock per capita numbers and a growth rate of housing stock per capita were the highest in the Estonian SSR and the Kazakh SSR, respectively. The Uzbek and the Azerbaijan SSR were leaders by a growth rate of the total housing stock (the data is limited to the period of 1980 to 1990), while the Estonian SSR demonstrated highest scores in such indicators as total housing stock per capita and rural housing stock per capita. In rural areas, the Azerbaijan SSR performed the best in terms of a growth rate of the rural housing stock.

16. The RSFSR ranked 1st in all four indicators characterising growth rates of total number of flats / houses built, of this indicator per capita for 1986–1990 and for the period of 1966–1980 as well as of average number of flats / houses built per capita. Besides this, the RSFSR was a leader among the Union Republics in terms of the growth rate of average floor space of flats / houses built by the population at their own expense and with state loans. At the same time, the Turkmen, the Uzbek, the Azerbaijan, the Kazakh, the Moldavian and the Latvian SSR excelled in average floor space of flats / houses built. Therefore, it is important to notice that the indicator of flats / houses built per capita and average housing floor space per capita were often inversely related to each other. Apart from this, per capita indicators of the Union Republics

were affected by such objective variables as a degree of urbanisation, natural population growth and a distribution of families by size (by number of family members living together).

17. The Latvian SSR achieved the highest growth rate by number of inhabitants who improved their housing conditions, whereas the share of such inhabitants was the highest in the Estonian SSR. In turn, the Kazakh and the Tajik SSR were leaders in average shares of inhabitants who improved their housing conditions in the period of the 1950s to the 1980s, and the best results in terms of an increase of households who improved their housing conditions in urban settlements were demonstrated by the Byelorussian and the Estonian SSR.

18. As we noticed above, the ratio between state-owned and individually-owned dwellings in housing stocks of the Republics of the USSR largely depended on their degree of urbanisation. However, by the year of 1990, even in the most urbanised Baltic Republics and the RSFSR, the share of individually-owned housing stock was still higher than the share of outright homeowners in the USA nowadays (23.3 per cent as of 2018). In comparison to the USA, the share of outright homeowners by floor space in 1990 stood at 26 per cent in the Latvian SSR and the RSFSR, at 29 per cent in the Estonian SSR and at 39 per cent in the Lithuanian SSR. Moreover, in the Kazakh SSR this indicator amounted to 32 per cent, in the Byelorussian SSR – to 42 per cent, in the Armenian SSR – to 51 per cent and in the Ukrainian SSR – to 53 per cent. Other less urbanised Union Republics revealed even higher scores in shares of individually-owned housing stock by total floor space varying from 61 per cent in the Turkmenian SSR, 64 per cent in the Tajik SSR, 65 per cent in the Azerbaijan SSR to 67 per cent in the Kirghiz SSR, 68 per cent in the Uzbek SSR and 69 per cent in the Moldavian and the Georgian SSR. Moreover, if we added apartments in buildings of housing construction cooperatives that were erected using funds provided by inhabitants then the scores of the Baltic Republics and the RSFSR would be even higher: additionally ca. 5 per cent of the housing stock in the Latvian SSR, 6 per cent in the RSFSR and the Estonian SSR and 9 per cent in the Lithuanian SSR. Therefore, despite large-scale state housing construction activities during the last 30 years of the USSR's existence, the role of individual housing construction and the private sector in the housing issue resolution across the country remained fairly significant.

19. The RSFSR stood out in terms of the most stable volumes among all the Union Republics of housing completions during the postwar five-year plans as in eight out of nine five-year plans the volume of housing completions by floor space per capita was above the Soviet average level. Secondly, the RSFSR was characterised by a high share of state housing construction by the end of the 1980s, which reached 80 per cent, and this indicator was on average 67 per cent during the period from 1918 to 1990 (by volume of housing completions). Thirdly, the share of individually-owned houses built by inhabitants decreased to 7 per cent by the twelfth five-year plan, and that of housing construction cooperatives – to 5 per cent, whereas the former indicator stood on average at 27 per cent from 1918 to 1990, and the latter – at 6 per cent from the 1960s to the end of the 1980s. The share of kolkhozes was quite stable and fluctuated around 6 per cent during the 1960s – 1980s. Besides this, the RSFSR was a leader in terms of the share of the state and housing construction cooperatives in housing completions by floor space in urban settlements (on average 95 per cent from 1966 to 1990) and one of the top Republics by the share of state housing construction in rural settlements (54 per cent of total volume during the period of the eighth to the twelfth five-year plans). In per capita terms, the RSFSR ranked close to the USSR's average by housing completions in cities and urban-type settlements and in terms of housing floor space per capita overall as well as in urban settlements, whereas the RSFSR indicator of housing completions by floor space in rural settlements was on average 11 per cent higher than the average Soviet level during the period of 1966–1990. The rural population of the RSFSR enjoyed on average 14 per cent more spacious dwellings than the urban inhabitants in the Republic. At the same time, the RSFSR was lagging behind other Republics in terms of the average floor space of houses and apartments built, and the average floor space of homes built by the population was 10 per cent lower than the average USSR's level. However, logically, the RSFSR was the leader during the 1966s – 1990s in terms of the number of houses / apartments built per capita and by the share of dwellers who had their housing conditions improved from 1951 to 1985 (on average 24 per cent of the Republic's population within every five-year plan).

20. The Byelorussian SSR excelled in housing construction by floor space per capita (this indicator was above the USSR average in 6 out of 9

postwar five-year plans and on average 8 per cent higher than the USSR level); in the share of state construction that increased by 51 per cent during the period of 1946–1990; in fostering construction via housing cooperatives (a 2.25-fold increase in the 1980s in comparison to the 1960s); in the share of housing construction in kolkhozes (8 per cent of the total volume of housing construction during last five-year plans and on average 24 per cent in rural areas from 1966 to 1990); in terms of housing completions per capita in urban settlements from 1966 to 1990 (30 per cent more than the USSR's average level); in construction of flats/houses per capita (10 per cent above the Union's level). The Ukrainian SSR was among the leaders in terms of individual housing construction financed by inhabitants in urban areas (18 per cent of housing completions overall in 1966–1990), the share of kolkhozes in rural housing construction (18 per cent as well), and housing floor space per capita in urban settlements (8 per cent higher than the USSR's indicator). In turn, one of the main features of the housing sector in the Moldavian SSR was that housing floor space per capita in rural settlements was 50 per cent higher than in urban areas, and that this Republic was among the top Republics in terms of housing construction intensity in urban settlements (14 per cent higher than the USSR average). In general, the Byelorussian, the Ukrainian and the Moldavian SSR were in the upper part of the list of the Union Republics by housing floor space per capita (17.8–17.9 square meters per person) and were characterised by large shares of individual housing construction (56 per cent in Moldavian SSR, 46 per cent in Ukrainian SSR and 39 per cent in Byelorussian SSR) and by relatively low shares of state housing construction (38 per cent, 47 per cent and 49 per cent, accordingly).

21. The three Baltic republics were leaders in many per capita indicators, such as housing completions by floor space during the period from 1970 to 1985 (the Lithuanian and Estonian SSR were 20 to 40 per cent above the USSR average, and the Latvian SSR was 5 to 10 per cent higher); housing floor space per capita in general (3 top places among the 15 Union Republics with 19.0 to 21.6 square meters per capita – the Estonian SSR was above the USSR's indicator by 35 per cent, the Latvian SSR – by 24 per cent, the Lithuanian SSR – by 19 per cent); housing floor space per capita in urban settlements (on average 16.6 to 19.9 square meters per capita, that is 7 to 28 per cent

higher than the Soviet average); housing floor space per capita in rural areas (on average 24 to 26 square meters per capita – 43 to 54 per cent above the USSR's average); number of flats / houses built per capita from 1966 to 1990, which was 9 to 15 per cent higher in the Lithuanian and Estonian SSR than the USSR's average. Additionally, the Estonian SSR was ahead of the other Union Republics in housing completions per capita by floor space in urban and rural settlements (13 per cent and 27 per cent higher than the USSR's average, respectively) as well as in the share of the population registered in urban areas as in need for a larger dwelling who improved their housing conditions (on average 31.6 per cent annually during the period of 1987 to 1990). The Baltic republics were also leaders in terms of average housing floor space built by inhabitants (33 to 39 per cent higher than the USSR's average), the share of kolkhozes in housing construction during last four five-year plans (12 per cent in the Estonian SSR, 11 per cent in the Latvian SSR and 8 per cent in the Lithuanian SSR), and the share of kolkhozes in housing construction in rural areas (33 per cent in the Latvian SSR and 32 per cent in the Estonian SSR). By the end of the 1980s, the housing construction sector became quite diversified in all three Baltic republics, with housing construction cooperatives playing an important role besides kolkhozes from the 1960s onwards (14 per cent of total housing completions by floor space in the Lithuanian SSR, 10 per cent in the Estonian SSR and 9 per cent in the Latvian SSR). Additionally, citizens financed construction of 32 per cent, 17 per cent and 14 per cent of new housing in these Republics, respectively.

22. The three Transcaucasian republics can be divided into two subgroups in accordance with indicators we employed in our analysis. The Georgian and the Armenian SSR were among the leaders in housing floor space per capita (the Georgian SSR enjoyed 18.3 square meters per person overall, 16.5 square meters in urban settlements and 21.6 square meters in rural areas); in average floor space of flats / houses built overall and of flats / houses built by inhabitants (the Georgian SSR – 29 per cent and 40 per cent higher than the average Soviet numbers, respectively); in the share of citizens who improved their housing conditions during five-year plans (on average 24 per cent of the population of the Armenian SSR); in housing completions per capita in 1946–1975 (10 per cent above the USSR's average in the Armenian SSR); and in growth of average floor

space of flats / houses (by 71 per cent in 1951–1990 in the Armenian SSR). In turn, due to high rates of natural population growth, the Azerbaijan SSR was more often found in the lower part of the list of the Union Republics by per capita indicators. On the other hand, the Azerbaijan SSR stood out in terms of high shares of individual housing construction in urban areas (16 per cent during the eighth to eleventh five-year plans) and in rural settlements (on average 88 per cent), the highest increase in average floor space of flats / houses built (a 2.2-fold increase during the fifth to the twelfth five-year plans), and growth rates of individually-owned urban and rural housing stocks (90 per cent higher than the Union's level in 1960–1990 and 51 per cent above the USSR's average in 1980–1990, respectively). Other main features of the Transcaucasian Republics included extremely modest contributions of kolkhozes (less than 1 per cent from the 1960s onwards); high rates of the population's participation in housing construction (53 per cent in the Azerbaijan SSR, 52 per cent in the Georgian SSR and 39 per cent in the Armenian SSR) as well as a rapid expansion of construction via housing cooperatives in the 1960s – 1980s in the Georgian SSR (10 per cent of total housing completions by floor space) and the Armenian SSR (7 per cent).

23. Higher natural population growth rates and larger average size of families were also salient features of the Soviet republics of Central Asia (like for the Azerbaijan SSR). As of 1989, the share of families with five members and more reached 63 per cent in the Tajik SSR, 59 per cent in the Turkmen SSR and Uzbek SSR, 45 per cent in the Kirghiz SSR and 30 per cent in the Kazakh SSR. Therefore, most per capita indicators of the Uzbek, the Turkmen, the Tajik and the Kirghiz SSR were below the USSR's level except for average floor space of flats / houses built overall (25 per cent more in the Tajik SSR and 20 per cent more in the Uzbek SSR than the USSR's average) and of flats / houses built by inhabitants (20 per cent higher in the Uzbek SSR and 16 per cent higher in the Turkmen SSR). These Union Republics were also characterised by a high share of people who improved their housing conditions by obtaining dwellings in newly built houses (83 to 86 per cent) and by a prevalence of individual housing construction over state-funded construction (57 and 38 per cent in the Kirghiz SSR, respectively, 56 and 41 per cent in the Uzbek SSR, 54 and 40 per cent in the Tajik SSR, 51 and 41 per cent in the Turkmen SSR). At the same time, the contribution of kolkhozes and

housing construction cooperatives was limited to 1.4–4.0 per cent and 1.0–4.5 per cent, accordingly. The Kazakh SSR differed markedly from the other four Republics in this region, as it was the leader in terms of the relative amount of inhabitants who improved their housing conditions within every five-year plan (on average 26 per cent during 1961–1985), and it shared the first place with the RSFSR by a number of postwar five-year plans when housing completions by floor space per capita exceeded the average level of the USSR (in 8 five-year plans out of 9 ones). Unlike in other Union Republics of Central Asia, the share of state housing construction in the Kazakh SSR reached 73 per cent during the postwar five-year plans, whereas the population financed construction of 20 per cent of new housing, and housing cooperatives and kolkhozes added 2.2–2.3 per cent each. The Uzbek, the Tajik and the Kazakh SSR were similar in terms of shares of inhabitants who improved their housing conditions during 1987–1990 (18.9 per cent, 17.3 per cent and 17.2 per cent of all residents on the lists for larger dwellings, respectively).

In conclusion, two more inferences can be articulated with regard to methods of assessment and resolution of the housing problem in the USSR in the 1960s – 1990s.

Firstly, the objective to catch up at an accelerated pace on the USA and some European states in terms of such a formal indicator as housing floor space per capita by increasing the volume of state housing construction, while also adhering to strict (i.e. high-level) Soviet standards in construction and having an additional burden of providing new dwellers by all the needed social infrastructure that was taken voluntarily by the state, was not quite an adequate goal-setting.

In a market economy, excess demand for housing is usually offset by a price increase, whereas the population of developed countries conceives such a market mechanism as an objective reality that they can just live with. For instance, in the year of 2021, the USA was short ca. 5.3 million homes, since 7 million new homes built in the country from January 2012 to June 2021 could not quite meet the demand of 12.3 newly formed households during this period of time. On the contrary, in a planned economy, demand for housing under constant prices, limited variety of homes and constantly rising incomes of the population could remain unsatisfied, and the state authorities responsible for setting prices were easy to blame for such a situation. Additionally, the state

dominance in the process of resolving the housing issue during the 1960s – 1980s evoked high expectations from the population, while the objective inability of the state to fulfill rapidly all the self-imposed social obligations in the housing construction sector eventually undermined the social consensus.

Subsequently and secondly, a mistake can be acknowledged to have the rate of individual housing construction reduced during the 1970s – 1980s in the USSR as a whole and in the RSFSR, in particular (it was also admitted in decrees of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Council of Ministers of the USSR in the 1980s and in the relevant literature). It is also worth noting that the beginning of the heyday of “the Era of Stagnation” in social and political life of the USSR in the middle of the 1970s coincided with the end of the predominance of homes individually-owned by inhabitants in the structure of the total housing stock of the USSR that took place, according to our calculations, in the year of 1974.

Contrariwise, fostering private initiative in construction of individual houses, as it was the case in the 1920s – 1960s, could enable better balancing of obligations and responsibilities between the state and the population, satisfy an excessive demand for housing and mitigate the problem of a steady decrease of the share of inhabitants who had their housing conditions improved during the 1960s – 1980s. Furthermore, employing spare reserves of individual housing construction could contribute to an accelerated growth of the construction sector and all adjacent industries, especially against a backdrop of the level of economic development of the USSR at that time, which was incomparable to the one during the pre-war and postwar five-year plans.

Therefore, when considering the housing sector of the USSR, it is of utmost importance to take into account individual housing construction and housing construction in rural areas that are de facto a key to a better and unbiased understanding of this sector’s development in the USSR, particularly prior to the 1960s. This finding also opens new perspectives for economic, historical, economic geographical and statistical studies in the area of housing in the Soviet Union and in post-Soviet states.

## Information about the author

Igor V. Pilipenko is a Russian economic geographer and economist, Director of the Institute for Competitiveness and Integration (RICI), Leading Research Fellow at the Laboratory for Social and Economic Problems of Housing Policy of the Institute of Socio-Economic Studies of Population of the FCTAS RAS. He received his Bachelor's (2001) and Master's (2003) degrees in geography, both *summa cum laude*, and PhD degree in economic, social and political geography (2004) from Lomonosov Moscow State University (Russia) with three internships (2001, 2002, 2002–2003) at the Geographical Institute and the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of the Eberhard Karl University of Tübingen (Germany), and MPA degree (2010) in Economic Policy Management from Columbia University in the City of New York (USA), School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). He speaks Russian, English, German, Spanish and Ukrainian.

Dr. Pilipenko has 14 years of experience in research and teaching as well as 11 years of experience working on Russia, the CIS countries and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in the private sector and international financial organisations in Russia, the USA, Czechia, and the United Kingdom. He worked at the Lomonosov Moscow State University (2001–2012), the University of Economics, Prague (2010), the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation (2018–2019). He was elected Vice-President of the European Geography Association (EGEA) (2004–2005) and elected Representative of the EGEA Eastern region that comprised EGEA entities in the CIS and CEE countries. Dr. Pilipenko also worked at the Russian office of the multinational automotive corporation DaimlerChrysler AG in Moscow (2002), at “Business Russia” (2006–2009), which is one of the leading business associations in the country, at the World Bank's headquarters in Washington, DC (2010) and its Moscow resident office (2010–2011), at the headquarters of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in London (2011–2018).

Dr. Pilipenko is the author of three books and 87 scholarly articles and other works. He made 94 presentations of his own research at international conferences in Russia, the USA, Germany, Spain, Finland, Slovakia, Lithuania, Estonia, the Netherlands and China. For his book

“The Competitiveness of Nations and Regions in the World Economy: Theory, the Experience of Small Nations of Western and Northern Europe” (2005), he received the Medal of the Russian Academy of Sciences for Young Scholars in 2006. In his academic works published in 2003–2006, he introduced the concept of clusters into broad scholarly discussions in Russian economic geography and regional economics and compared it with the Soviet theory of territorial-production complexes (TPC). In 2007, he was the first to formulate main principles and to suggest directions for cluster policy implementation in the Russian Federation. From 2006 to 2016, Dr. Pilipenko was the most cited young scholar in Russia in the field of economics (or was among the top-3 most cited young economists) and the most cited young Russian scholar in the field of geography.

For his work at the Board of Directors of the EBRD in the Office for the Russian Federation, Belarus and Tajikistan, Dr. Pilipenko received two Commendations of the Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation (2013, 2017) and a Commendation of the Minister of Economy of the Republic of Belarus (2017). He was an editor and co-author of the book “The Transition to a Market Economy and Structural Reforms in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) Member States” published in 2019. In this monograph, using the uniform author’s methodology, five teams of researchers from universities of all the EAEU members states carried out an analysis of economic reforms during the 1990s to the 2010s in Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation. He also wrote the monograph “The Method of Implementing the Clearing Payment System in Foreign Trade of the Russian Federation under Sanctions”, which was published at the end of 2022.

While on business trips, Dr. Pilipenko visited 13 out of 15 Republics of the former Soviet Union, 37 regions of the Russian Federation, production facilities of more than 150 industrial enterprises in 22 countries, including those from the utilities sector. He performed financial analysis and evaluation of more than 300 investment projects in Russia and 35 countries in Europe, Asia and Northern Africa, including more than 60 investment projects in the Republics of the former USSR in construction and the utilities sector.