

Housing allocation and ending homelessness: The Finnish Experience

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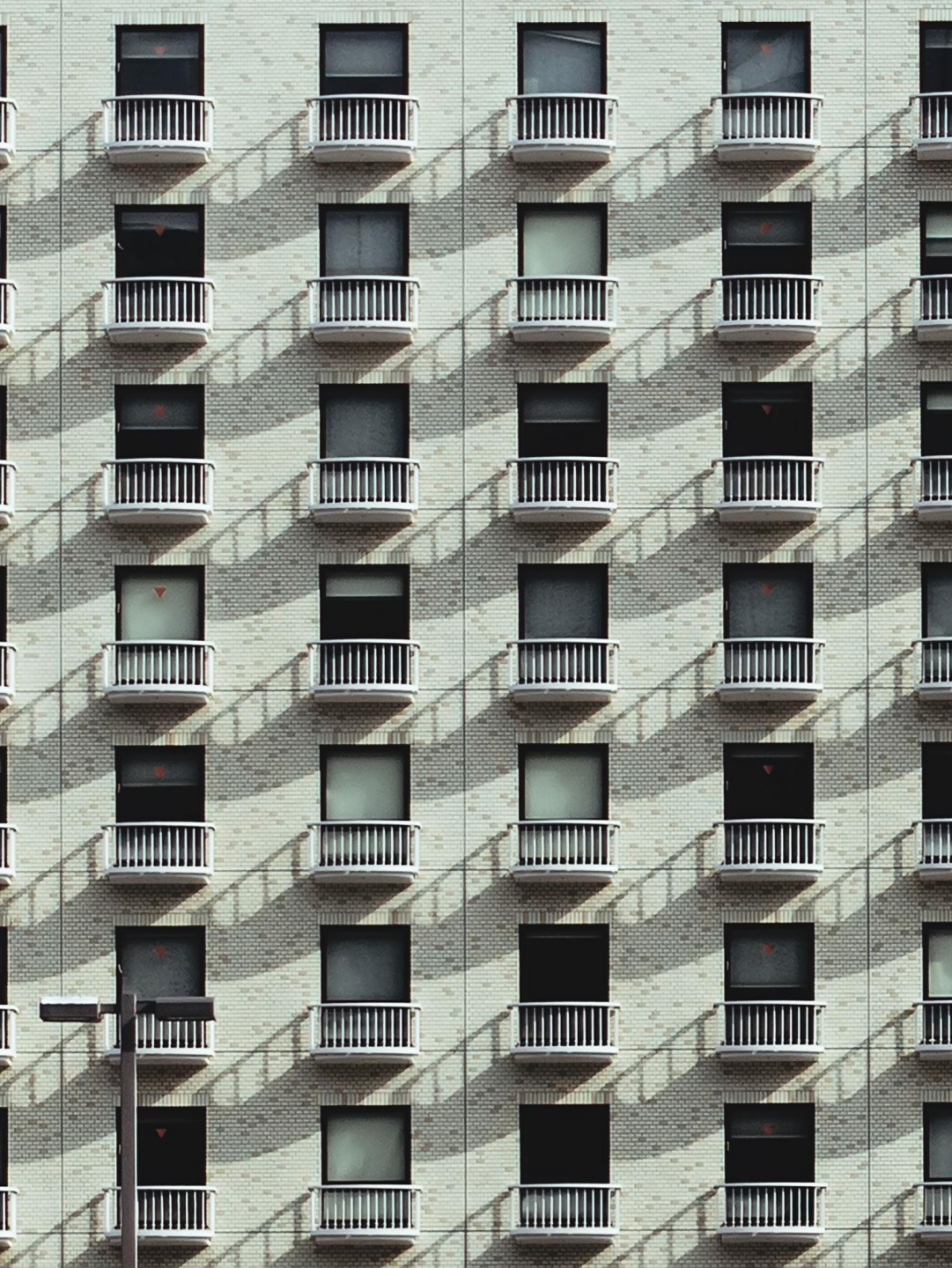
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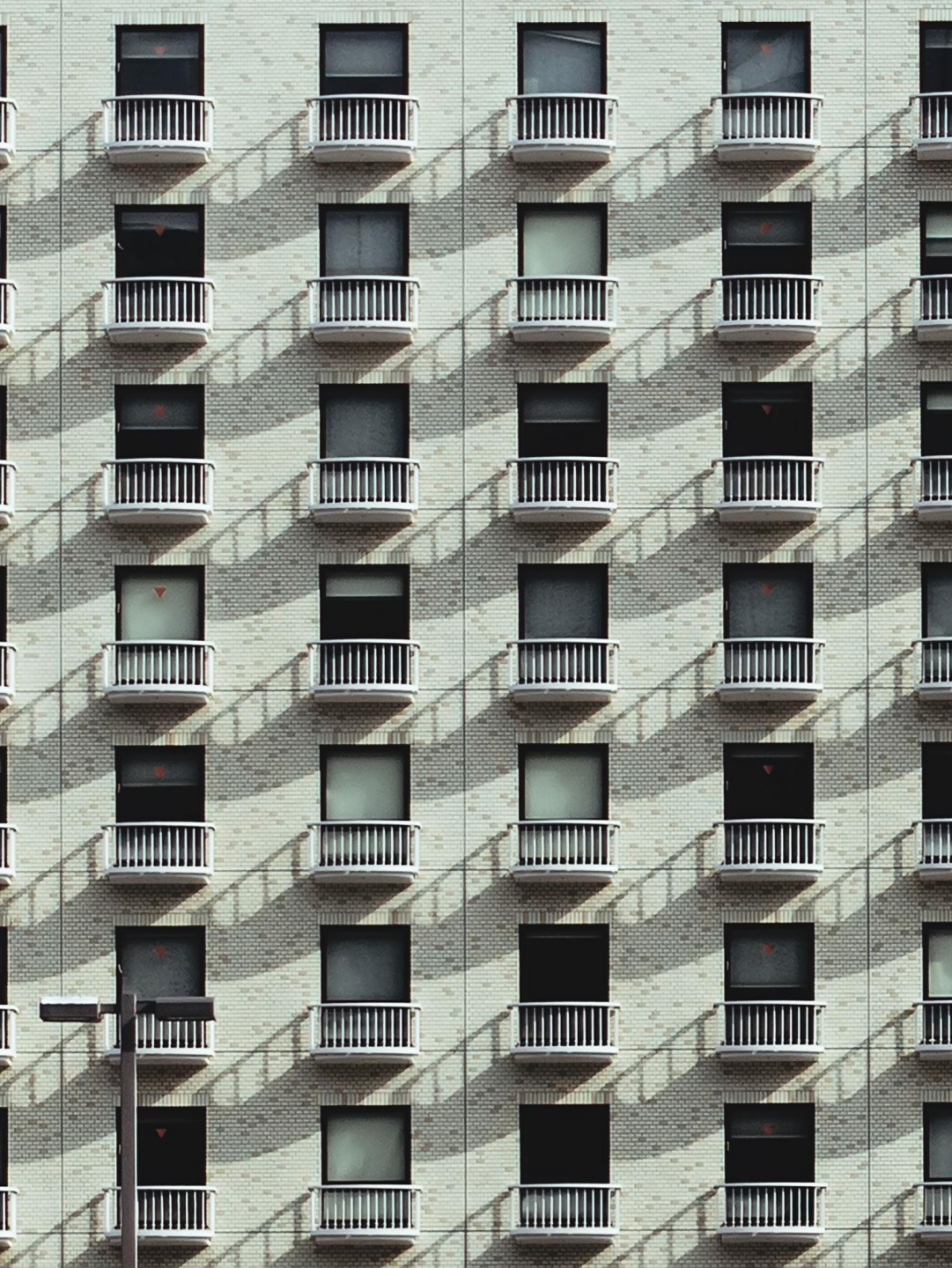
Beginnings

- In Helsinki 1985:
- Bed places in shelters and hostels 1900 (men) 260 (women)
- The biggest one had 405 bed places
- Small social housing apartments (1 room + kitchenette) built by the city:
- 1980 225
- 1981 118
- 1982 78
- 1983 7



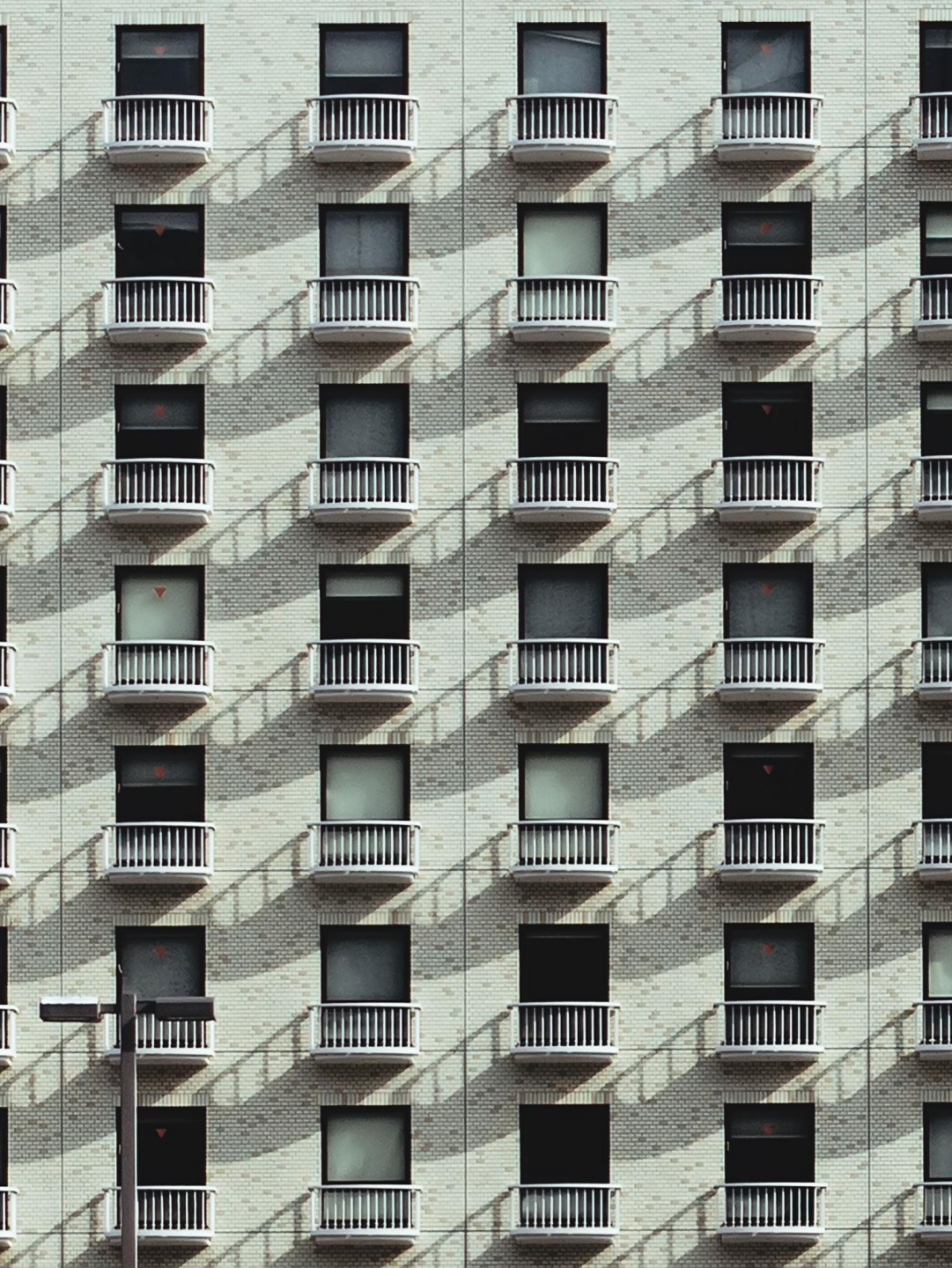
Beginnings

- The city council preferred bigger family apartments
- There were not enough small apartments available for homeless
- As bigger apartments started to remain vacant, they were offered to social department as supported homes for homeless men living in hostels
- The City of Helsinki founded a Housing Company to acquire small apartments from the private market, by 1986 already 65 apartments were leased to Social Dep. to be used as supported rental homes for homeless persons



Beginnings

- Y-Foundation was founded in 1985 to acquire small apartments nationwide with a grant from Slot Machine Association
- In the beginning investment grant was 70%, later 50%
- Social Department also rented a few shared apartments from Student Housing Foundation
- A first supported home with 4 group apartments for 24 homeless persons was opened (three more were opened later)
- A municipal temporary hostel for 80 homeless men was opened in 1984 (closed in 2007)



Beginnings: Conclusions

- All possible channel to get housing were used
- It is not possible to rely only on social housing
- Social housing has managed to prevent family homelessness
- The operational model was still a staircase model, individual apartments were mainly provided for those who needed little or no support
- The Housing plan of the City council was crucial in the first years: it included quotas for homeless persons



What changed in 2008?

- Supported housing units replacing shelters and hostels
- Always independent apartments with normal rental contract
- New scattered supported housing reserved for long-term homeless persons

ara Tenant Selection Criterias in Social Rental Apartments

- Tenants are selected based on their need for housing and the search criteria, ***not a queueing system***
- The tenants selection principles are based in Finnish law. The selection criteria include ***need for housing, wealth and income***
- ***Priority is given to the homeless*** and other applicants of limited means and low income who have the most urgent situation.
- If more than one applicant is in equally urgent need for housing, the applicants' income and assets are compared. Priority will be given to the lowest income applicants
- When selecting tenants, attention is also paid to ***maintaining a varied resident structure in the building and a healthy social balance in the residential area***
- Selection and prioritization is done by landlord and monitored by the municipality
- ARA steers and guides the process in general

How to get a social housing apartment?

- A direct rental contract
- A direct rental contract with support provided by the social department (outside Helsinki by Welfare Counties)
- A rental contract between the housing provider (City Social Housing Company) and the Social Department and a secondary rental contract between the Soc.Dep. and the tenant
- In some cities contracts defining responsibilities in case of disturbance or damage
- Also a special insurance covering possible damage has been used



How many apartments are needed to house a single person experiencing homelessness? (according to statistics)

- 2006: 25 apartments/person
- Explanation: Housing authorities had a different definition of homelessness than social authorities
- Flow of new homeless persons
- 2008-2019:
- 5663 homes were provided for long-term homeless persons
- Homelessness decreased by 3360
- 1.7 apartments/person
- Better common understanding of the definition of homelessness
- Better targeting of housing for homeless persons

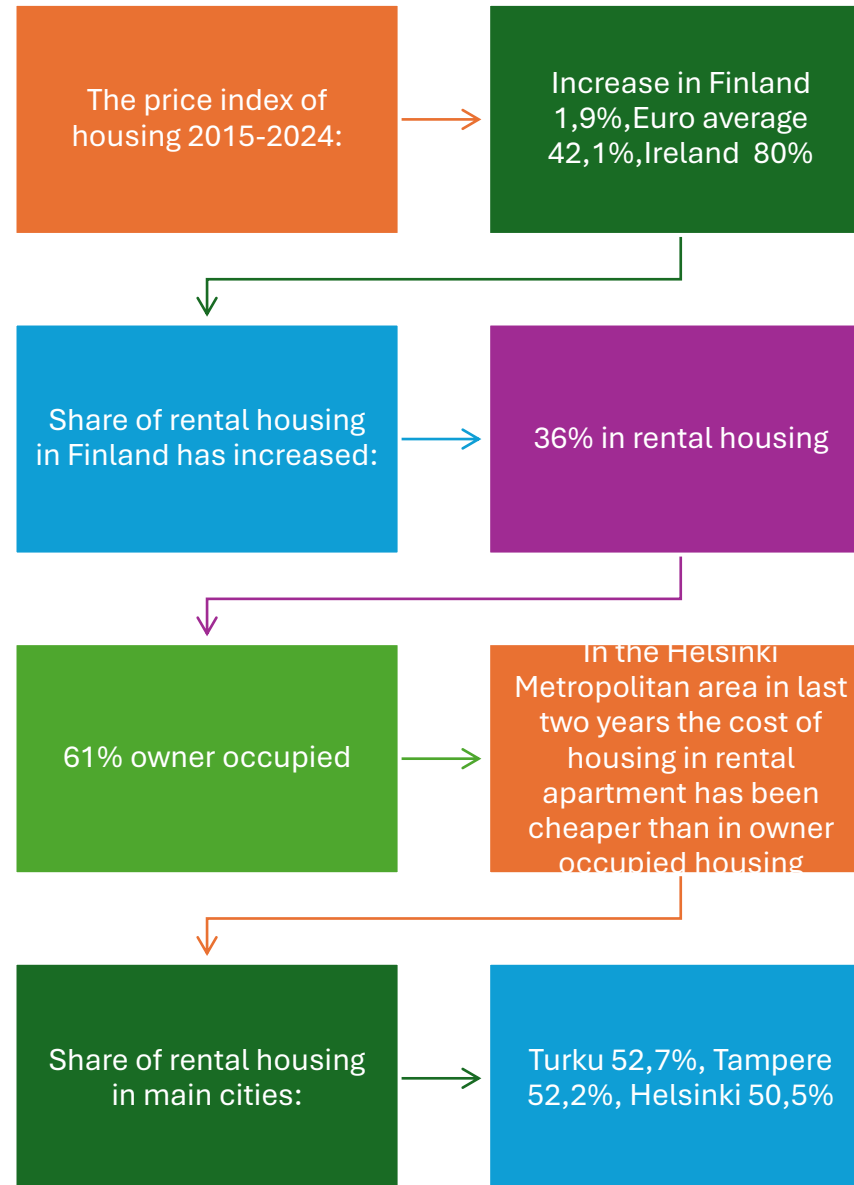


The importance of youth homelessness prevention

- A part of the national programmes to end homelessness since 2008 has been building new affordable social housing for young people (18-29 years old) as a prevention measure
- 2012-2019: 1413 new homes for youth were built in programme cities
- Youth homelessness (under 25 y) dropped from 2049 to 850
- At what age do Europeans leave parental home?
- Finland 21 years
- Ireland 28 years



Housing market





Why social housing will be decreased?

- **Government Programme 2023**
- *“As a rule, high-quality and reasonably priced housing will be promoted through non-subsidised house building”*

The actual situation in building market: Number of apartments started 2022-24

