

Question Bank Commentary: Housing and Household Amenities

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1) The Social and Economic Importance of Housing

Home is at the centre of most people's lives. For the majority their dwelling is the place where they spend most time and where they most need to feel comfortable, secure and well provided for. The dwelling not only provides shelter and a place to eat, sleep and store possessions. It is also the prime base for family and social activities and a forum for expression of personality and taste and for enjoyment of leisure activities. For owner-occupying households (the majority) finding somewhere to live which is suitable, convenient and attractive, yet affordable, is one of life's big decisions. Once purchased, their dwelling is likely to be their most valuable economic asset and the kind of accommodation occupied by a household is an important indicator of its lifestyle and socio-economic status.

For questions on type of accommodation and amenities see:

1. 1991 Census
 - a. England H form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
 - b. Scotland H form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
 - c. Wales W form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
2. British Household Panel Survey, Household Questionnaire, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995
3. Family Expenditure Survey, Household Questionnaire, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994,

Basic household amenities

The most basic physical requirements that a dwelling provides are shelter, adequate space for all the occupants to live, eat and sleep and a degree of privacy for the household as a whole and for individual members of it. However, we also nowadays expect, as part of the basic minimum housing provision, other built-in housing amenities, such as space heating and proper ventilation, hot and cold running water and cooking, bathing and sanitary facilities. We also expect that the structure and facilities of the dwelling will be properly maintained and in working order.

For questions on amenities see:

1. 1991 Census

- a. England H form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
- b. Scotland H form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
- c. Wales W form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
2. British Household Panel Survey, Household Questionnaire, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995
3. Family Expenditure Survey, Household Questionnaire, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994,

Housing improvement

A century and more ago the dwellings occupied by the poor were often poorly maintained, cramped and lacked basic amenities such as running water. Since the early nineteenth century many social analysts and reformers have been convinced that providing better housing is a key to improving the physical, mental and moral health of the population. In recognition of this both central and local government became heavily involved in slum clearance, rebuilding and housing improvement and the financing of these activities.

Housing deprivation and stress

Over the years housing standards and provision of housing amenities have improved for the great majority of households and individuals. Homelessness and severe overcrowding now affect only small minorities of households. However, governments are still concerned about households and their members (particularly children) who are materially deprived and either without permanent accommodation.

House condition

Households which lack any of the basic amenities or have to live in decaying "slums" are rightly seen as deprived and under stress and becoming homeless is regarded by most individuals and particularly by families as a disaster, since as well as being stressful in itself it cripples their ability to take part fully in other life activities. Local and national governments are therefore concerned not only about housing provision, but also about the physical condition of the housing stock. The major factors here are the age of the structure, the quality of the original building and the degree to which it has been maintained and repaired.

Trends in housing tenure

Historically a feature of the first half of the twentieth century in Britain was the increase in public housing provision and hence in the proportion of households which rented their dwellings from public housing authorities. This was at the expense of private renting. There was also an increase in the proportion of households buying their homes with the aid of loans from building societies and a long term fall in the proportion of households renting privately.

Over recent decades there have been persistent attempts by government to reduce the share of housing falling into the social and particularly into the public (council) housing sectors, to increase the proportions of owner occupiers and private renters. During the latter part of the century the proportion of households owning their own accommodation has risen markedly, so that now about 68% of households are owner-occupiers. Partly because of the expansion in owner occupation, efforts to revive the private rented sector have been less successful and currently only about 10% of households rent privately.

Public and social housing provision now only account for about a fifth of the total housing stock and the private housing market provides for the needs of an increasing majority of households.

Housing finance and the market

Most households spend a substantial proportion of their income on their homes, particularly if we take into account property taxes (eg Council Tax), service costs (energy, water), decoration and maintenance and the cost of furnishings and other durable contents, in addition to the costs of buying or renting the dwelling with its fixtures and basic amenities. Movements of the housing market and changes in government housing policy affect many millions of people through mortgage lending rates, rents, benefit levels, availability of properties and return on housing investments.

National government policies profoundly influence behaviour of the housing market both directly and indirectly, for example through subsidies, mortgage tax relief, rent controls (or the lack of them) and the housing benefits system. Governments are also concerned about maintaining and supplementing the housing stock in terms of quantity, suitability and quality and about how to finance house building and housing benefits and subsidies.

The market is influenced by rises or falls in consumer purchasing power and willingness to invest in housing, as well as by government policies and actions on interest rates etc. The state of the housing market, as reflected in rent and mortgage rates and numbers of transactions is therefore an important indicator of the general state of the economy. Citizens and voters, in their roles as mortgage borrowers and lenders and council tax and income tax payers have a strong interest in housing supply and demand, housing quality, housing choice and affordability and how to finance house purchase and house maintenance.

For questions on housing finances see:

1. British Household Panel Survey, Household Questionnaire, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995
2. Family Expenditure Survey, Household Questionnaire, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994,

Housing preferences and satisfaction

Providers of public housing are concerned to ensure that their housing stock is adequate in terms of the types of unit and their number, condition, location and cost to satisfy then needs of households in their area of responsibility. They are also concerned about the level of housing satisfaction amongst their tenants and about tenants' priorities for housing improvement. The length of public housing waiting lists and the rules applied for giving priority access to public housing are politically contentious.

Survey research on housing

Housing topics have long had a secure place in national Censuses of Population and several major government continuous and repeated government surveys (Survey of English Housing and English, Welsh and Scottish House Condition Surveys) are dedicated to housing topics. Housing is also extensively covered in survey research carried out by or on behalf of charities and academic researchers. The Question Bank currently contains a good deal of material on housing and it is intended in future to expand this by including, for example, the Survey of English Housing.

Housing and households

Because housing is for people to live in, study of housing provision must go hand in hand with study of the housing needs and demand generated by local and national populations. Whereas the natural unit for description and analysis of the physical

housing stock is the dwelling, the natural unit for description and analysis of the population requiring housing is the household, considered as a group of persons who wish or need to live together under the same roof in an interdependent way. Therefore users who access the Question Bank for information on housing surveys and questions will often be referred to the sections on definition of households (and vice versa).

2) Housing Topics

Reflecting the historical, economic, social and political factors briefly reviewed above, the topics most often included in household surveys about housing are the following.

1. Type of accommodation
2. Age of structure
3. Number of rooms
4. Built-in amenities
5. Housing tenure of household
6. Subletting and sharing arrangements
7. House condition
8. Housing costs and financing arrangements.
9. Housing satisfaction and preferences
10. Housing intentions (including moving)
11. Housing stress and homelessness
12. Housing waiting lists/Allocation of public housing
13. Possession of household durables

Housing concepts and definitions

Housing surveys and censuses collect information, on the one hand, about domestic buildings (houses, flats etc.) and what they contain and, on the other hand, about the people who reside in these structures. In general, individuals group themselves together for living purposes into families and households, so housing research is also concerned with the characteristics of households.

Residence

In our society the vast majority of individuals may be identified as permanent residents of a particular private dwelling or address. The dwelling most often consists of one or a number of rooms within a single building, but there are exceptions such as houseboats and caravans on permanent sites. Some people have more than one address and this may be of specific interest for housing surveys, but it is generally thought necessary to identify just one main or permanent address to which the person uniquely "belongs".

For survey and census purposes a person's main or permanent address of residence is usually defined as the address at which he or she normally spends, or expects to spend, at least six months of each year. However, in cases where the person has several homes the permanent address may be more simply defined as the address which he or she considers to be their "main address". In general, definitions need to be applied in such a way that the address which the person clearly treats as his or her "home base" is identified as the main address.

A small minority of persons reside permanently in communal establishments or institutions and an even smaller minority are homeless or have no one permanent dwelling at they reside for long enough to qualify as a resident. The homeless may be individuals or family groups and may be living in temporary accommodation. Persons with no permanent private address probably account for no more than 2%

of the population. They are hard to sample economically, are often omitted from household surveys and present problems for census enumeration also.

For questions on number of rooms see:

1. 1991 Census
 - a. England H form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
 - b. Scotland H form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
 - c. Wales W form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
2. British Household Panel Survey, Household Questionnaire, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995
3. Family Expenditure Survey, Household Questionnaire, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994,

Dwellings

The great majority of private dwellings are structurally separate, in the sense that their accommodation is closed off from the accommodation of other households. There are some exceptions, as for example where people who live separately in their own rooms share kitchen or toilet facilities, or where one dwelling has rooms around a landing used also by residents of other dwellings. Another example is "granny flat" arrangements, whereby elderly people live in the same house and with the same address as a son or daughter an family, but live mainly independent lives rather in the manner of residents of "sheltered accommodation".

Addresses

Most dwellings have a unique private postal address, though there are rare exceptions where a building converted for occupation by several households does not have the units of household accommodation formally labelled as eg Flat A, Flat B etc. There are also cases, most commonly found within Great Britain in Scottish cities, where a building is purpose-designed to contain more than one structurally separate dwelling, but has only one postal address. Almost all private postal addresses are listed in the Postcode Address File (Small Users) compiled and made available by the Post Office.

Households

In conceptual terms a household may be defined as a group of people who live permanently together in an interdependent way within the same dwelling (and at the same address). Interdependent living is usually defined operationally in surveys as either regularly sharing meals, or regularly sharing a living room, or both. In the great majority of cases there is one household per dwelling, but there are occasional exceptions where the same dwelling is shared by two or more households who live separate lives.

Most adults and effectively all children under 16 (unless they are institutionalised) live together and share a dwelling with other people, thus constituting multi person households. However, a significant proportion, which has increased in recent decades particularly among the elderly, live alone. Households may thus consist either of one person living alone, or of a nuclear family comprising two married or cohabiting adults and their dependent children (if any), or of other groupings such as, for example: a one parent family; more than one nuclear family living together: a nuclear family plus other, unrelated adults; a group of unrelated adults living together with no family; etc.

The items of information needed to separate households (if more than one) living at an address and to identify different types of household living arrangements in a consistent and objective way are:

the number of resident persons by age and gender;

and

the relationships between these resident persons, expressed in terms which allow cohabitation between partners (whether legally married or not and responsibility for dependent children to be inferred).

For further discussion of household classifications see section on 'Household Type' under the topic 'Household Definition and Structure'.

Housing need

Housing need can be studied at the level of households needing to be housed and at the level of the types of accommodation required by households of particularly types.

It is possible, using censuses and surveys, to estimate the number of de facto private households in the country, or in a defined local area, at a given point in time. By putting this estimate together with demographic information about population structure and marriage and birth rates, to develop models to predict the rates of household formation and household dissolution and thus the number of "units" to be housed at some time in the future. This kind of calculation, based on the concept of a "household" as a group of people wishing (or obliged) to live together, is important for housing authorities wishing to predict the shape and volume of housing demand, so as to pursue appropriate house building and housing market policies. A difficulty of prediction arises because adults live together partly as a matter of choice and partly because they need to share the costs of accommodation. Therefore assumptions are needed about the preferences and intentions not only of existing households as units, but also of adults who might, under certain circumstances, elect to form new households.

In an attempt to overcome the difficulty some surveys recognise the concept of a "potential" or "concealed" household, defined (roughly) as an adult or nuclear family "embedded within" a larger household, with the head of household of the larger household not being a member of the "concealed" household. Thus the larger household might consist of head of household, spouse and an adult son with his own spouse and children. The head of the larger household would then probably be the "grandfather" and the concealed household would consist of the son and his family. A further refinement of this method involves carrying out research to establish the mean probability for each type of concealed household that its members actually desire separate accommodation and are likely to have the means to pay for it and thus to become a de facto separate household.

Household classifications

In analysing housing survey data it is generally necessary to classify households. Some types of classification can be achieved by collecting information only about the sharing status, age and sex of the individuals resident at an address. On that basis households may be classified by, for example, the number of persons or the number of adults which they comprise, their composition in terms of persons of different ages (eg "One male and one female adult, two children under 16" etc.). However, classifications of this kind leave many ambiguities as to the family structure of the household. For example, households satisfying the above description

3) Household Size

At one time housing demand and provision were driven largely by population increase and by large-scale slum clearance and improvement schemes. However, the main drivers of the housing market are nowadays rising affluence and rising expectations as regards provision of personal space and privacy, superior amenities and more attractive physical or social environments. An effect of this is the trend for the average size of households to decline over time and for a given number of adults to group themselves into a larger number of households and thus to require a larger number of dwellings than formerly. Some specific causes and effects of this phenomenon are:

1. reduction in the average number of children per family;
2. reduction in the proportion of households containing more than two related adults, or members of more than two generations;
3. decline in boarding and lodging arrangements, where a non-family member shares private family housing accommodation;
4. tendency of young adults to leave the parental home at an earlier age;
5. more elderly people in the population and the trend for and more of these to live as couples or alone, rather than with younger relatives;
6. more frequent family breakdowns, leading to household splits.

4) Tenure Group

ALTERNATIVE TO HOUSEHOLD AS DEFINED UNIT OF PERSONS LIVING TOGETHER

For questions on tenure group see:

1. 1991 Census
 - a. England H form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
 - b. Scotland H form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
 - c. Wales W form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
2. British Household Panel Survey, Household Questionnaire, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995
3. Family Expenditure Survey, Household Questionnaire, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994,

Private and communal households

Between 98% and 99% of persons in the UK live in private households. That is to say, they live permanently either alone, or with a small group of others in what is clearly a single unit of accommodation (eg a house or flat). The basis of living together arrangements is commonly marriage or cohabitation and parenthood, but sometimes unrelated adults elect to live together as a convenient non-family arrangement.

The remaining small minority of the population live permanently in communal establishments, sometimes referred to as "institutions". These are very varied, including for example, prisons, hostels, hotel and boarding houses, old people's residential homes, nursing homes, convents and monasteries, armed forces bases and some educational establishments. Typically the residents are not related to one another or to the managers or proprietors of the institutional accommodation.

Institutions thus constitute a special case and for survey sampling and survey data collection purposes they mostly have to be treated quite differently from private

households. This translates into high cost and complication for covering a small proportion of the population and for that reason few surveys attempt to cover both the institutional and the private household population. The majority of general population surveys cover just the private household population, but the census comprehensively and the Labour Force Survey to a limited extent are exceptions to this.

Intermediate categories of accommodation

Categories which are intermediate in some ways between institutions and private households are small boarding houses and their residents (including bed and breakfast accommodation used to accommodate families with no permanent home) and "sheltered accommodation" for the elderly or disabled. In some respects these resemble groups of privately renting households, but in other respects they resemble institutions. The rules and procedures used, on the one hand in sampling addresses and identifying private households living at them and, on the other hand, in identifying and sampling institutions have a tendency to miss out small boarding houses in particular. This occurs because they are usually counted as "institutions" by surveys concerned to sample private households only, but on the other hand they are often omitted from the lists of institutions which exist and cannot be consistently identified on address sampling frames.

Two other types of living arrangement also exist, though they have become less common over recent decades. Boarders are defined as persons who are not members of the main household occupying a house or flat, but who on a long-term basis are provided with sleeping accommodation and share household meals, usually in return for payment. Lodgers have a similar arrangement, but limited to accommodation only. These sorts of arrangement are now usually regarded as forms of subletting. In their mode of operation small boarding houses have similarities to private boarding or lodging arrangements, the main legal distinction being to do with various legal requirements and regulations which apply where more than a given number of persons are provided with accommodation in return for payment.

Arrangements as they affect sampling

The way in which most government household surveys proceed in Great Britain is that the interviewer is provided with a randomly selected set of sample addresses, but must then enquire into housing arrangements at each address in order to identify the household or households who are permanent residents of that address. To do this he/she needs to identify a unit of accommodation, such as a house or flat, which is either occupied by one person only, or is shared in a particular way by an interdependent group of people. In most cases this is straightforward but in a small minority of cases, which are of great interest for surveys aiming to identify unsatisfactory or substandard housing, the sharing arrangements may be complicated.

Household accommodation

Since 1981 the definition of a household used in official censuses and surveys has been: "A group of persons who live together and either share at least one meal a day, on average, or share one or more living rooms". This replaced an earlier definition which grouped persons into households on the basis of meal-sharing only. The underlying criteria were, first, that to be counted as members of the same household people should live together permanently under the same roof and, secondly, that they should be interdependent in their budgeting arrangements. Common catering was treated as a proxy indicator of common budgeting.

This definition worked reasonably well in an era when most individuals were "home centred" in their living arrangements, partly because of a need to obtain food and shelter as economically as possible. However, it had to be changed in recognition of changes in lifestyle whereby some adults still found it most convenient and economical to share accommodation, but otherwise lived separate and economically independent lives. Few adults outside institutions live in structurally separate accommodation but cater communally, so the change in household definition effectively shifted from "living and catering in common" to "sharing accommodation".

'Under the same roof'

Both before and after the change in 1981 the household definition assumed that, to be members of the same household, persons must live permanently under the same roof. This seems intuitively to reflect the way in which most people form themselves into domestic groups, the members of which are economically and socially more or less interdependent in the way they live their lives. However, it tends to render statistically invisible the cases where interdependence exists between people who live separately, as in the case of elderly people living in their own accommodation who are given social support and domestic and economic assistance by others, such as an adult son or daughter.

Permanent residence

In order to be counted as a member of a household occupying a unit of accommodation (usually but not always coterminous with "a postal address") an individual has to qualify as a "permanent resident" of the address. For the great majority of households and addresses this is not problematic, but an operational definition is needed to deal with marginal cases. In many surveys a permanent resident is defined as one who usually spends, or now intends to spend, at least 6 out of 12 months living at the address. Special supplementary rules are often used to deal with the case of dependent children in education who may spend more than 6 months of the year at a boarding school, but whose "home" is nevertheless the residence of their parent(s) or guardian(s). These definitions usually cope reasonably well with individuals who spend extended periods away from home as part of their school education or employment, but are in economic, familial and social terms members of the household.

Residence of students

More problems arise in the case of older students, mostly in higher education. As for other groups, the aim is to give such individuals a known and controlled chance of selection for survey samples (normally one chance based on where they permanently reside). If they are included as residents of their "home" (parental) address, but live in private accommodation near an institution of higher education elsewhere, they will be given more than one chance of selection in a survey based on a sample of private addresses.

If the parental home is selected as a sample address one solution is to enquire about the living arrangements at the time when the survey is conducted of sons or daughters who are students and to exclude them if they have their own private address. However, if the student children live in a communal establishment (eg a hall of residence) they will only have a chance of selection if counted at the parental home. It may be satisfactory to include them on that basis if the survey aims only to collect factual information about of a kind which would be reliably known to their parents, but clearly not of much practical use if an individual interview is required with someone who, while counted as a resident, is not actually present.

Sampling difficulties in relation to residence

More generally there are problems in seeking to include in effective (ie responding) survey samples those people, many of them young adults, who do not live at any one address for as much as six months at a time. The fact that they tend not to qualify as "residents" of any address accounts for part of the tendency for surveys seriously to under-represent this group. The tendency is exacerbated by the fact that such people are typically socially active, hard to contact and may be suspicious about or not be very interested in participating in surveys.

5) Unit of Household

Separate accommodation

In this country the norm is for households to occupy permanent dwellings with a number of rooms, often arranged on several floors. Dwellings may or may not be structurally attached to other dwellings (as with flats, semi-detached and terraced houses etc.), but in the great majority of cases each household's accommodation is clearly divided off from that of other households.

Sharing of accommodation

The sharing of basic amenities such as water supplies and toilet facilities is now quite rare, but there is still a small minority of housing arrangements where households share some space or facilities (eg landings, cooking facilities, bathrooms). The measured prevalence of this type of arrangement, which is generally regarded as below the acceptable standard, is crucially related to the definition of a household. For example if unrelated adults living under the same roof have their own bedrooms, share a living room but do not cater in common are treated as separate one-person households (as in official statistics up to 1980) the number of amenity-sharing households (and the total number of one-person households) will appear to be larger than if persons with that type of arrangement are treated as a single multi person household (as from 1981 onwards).

A different way of defining units of accommodation and sharing arrangements is in terms of tenure. It is possible to group together those persons who occupy accommodation under a single tenure agreement (whether renting or ownership) and in surveys concerned with arrangements and capacity to pay for housing accommodation this is an important concept. In the great majority of cases the household unit identified by the standard catering and room-sharing definition also constitutes one common tenure group, but there are complications in the case of formal and informal subletting, boarding and lodging arrangements.

Housing tenure

The questions and variables which are used to classify households according to the basis on which they occupy their accommodation are key ones for social surveys. This is partly because any following questions about housing finance arrangements will need to vary according to what the tenure situation is and partly because tenure and, in particular, the distinction between owner occupation and other forms of tenure, operates as an indicator of the socio-economic status of the household which is often useful in the analysis of other topics and is less problematic to obtain than, say, a measure of household income.

1. 1991 Census

- a. England H form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
- b. Scotland H form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
- c. Wales W form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4

2. British Household Panel Survey, Household Questionnaire, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995
3. Family Expenditure Survey, Household Questionnaire, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994,

Renting: Public authorities/Housing associations

The proportion of dwellings that are rented from public housing authorities and the degree to which public housing is subsidised have recently declined as a result of government policy, but still exceeds a fifth of all private dwellings. The number of dwellings owned by housing associations has increased and there has been considerable transfer of housing formerly rented from local authorities to private owner-occupation, usually by the former local authority tenants.

Owner occupation

More than two thirds of British households now own or are buying their accommodation, which is thus privately owned. For most of these households it is by far their most valuable asset and, in the case of mortgage borrowers, their biggest debt liability. The great bulk of this privately owned housing was erected by private building firms and has been acquired by its owner-occupiers either as new from the builders or developers, or else through transactions in the private housing market, either privately or through estate agents.

For questions on ownership see:

1. 1991 Census
 - a. England H form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
 - b. Scotland H form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
 - c. Wales W form for Private Households, Section H2 & H4
2. British Household Panel Survey, Household Questionnaire, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995
3. Family Expenditure Survey, Household Questionnaire, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994,

Private renting

The third main form of housing provision in Britain is accommodation occupied through private renting. In Britain the private renting sector has shrunk greatly during the twentieth century and particularly in the last fifty years, with many poorer households of a type which formerly rented privately moving into public housing and many better-off ones becoming owner occupiers. Recent governments have tried hard to halt and reverse this shrinkage and to re-establish a healthy private renting market. The main reasons for doing this are to lighten the burden on local and national tax payers of providing subsidised public housing and a belief that private providers of housing respond more promptly and efficiently to the changing pattern of housing demand.

The private renting sector, though relatively small, is very varied. Particularly in London and other large cities great contrasts can be seen between the top of the private renting market, where there are affluent households who for various reasons find it more advantageous to rent than to own their accommodation, and the bottom of the market, where poor and disadvantaged people and homeless families who do not have access to public housing may be found living in unsuitable and substandard accommodation.

6) Housing Mobility

Another important factor affecting the housing market is the disposition of households and individuals to move house. About 10-12% of existing households, on average, do this in any one year, but the tendency to move is higher amongst households consisting of young adults, for example, than it is amongst middle aged people. Moves by existing households are in addition to the creation of entirely new households by ex-members of "old" households which continue to exist, as when young adults leave their parental home to set up their own home, whether singly or in couples or groups.

There are many reasons why households may move house. In some cases it is to do with families growing up or to change in the number of people to be accommodated, or in income. Some housing mobility is linked to employment mobility. More generally, geographical shifts in population are of interest in planning future housing, transport and other types of physical and social planning at the level of regions and local authorities. For this reason questions on mobility and migration have appeared in censuses and government from time to time sponsors research to identify barriers to housing mobility, due for example to imbalances between supply and demand or to systems of allocating priority on council housing lists.

7) House Condition

At the end of the twentieth century the average physical quality of the housing stock of the UK is probably higher than ever before, but that is not necessarily a permanent trend and there are certainly many defects in the housing stock, particularly in certain areas and in certain categories.

Disrepair and damp are objectively not as prevalent as they were fifty or a hundred years ago, but on the other hand the extension of owner occupation down the income range and the fact that many owner occupiers are elderly and on low incomes has led to fears that average house condition may actually have started to deteriorate, at any rate relative to the higher standards which now prevail. Another factor contributing to such a trend may be the deterioration of the stock created by the slum clearance and house-building boom of the nineteen fifties and sixties.

These trends have shifted the emphasis from the earlier preoccupation with reducing overcrowding, getting roofs over heads and providing basic amenities to a concern about house condition and disrepair. A major series of government sponsored house condition surveys has taken place in Britain over the past 20 years, typically involving both physical surveys of a sample of structures and social surveys of the households inhabiting the structures.

8) Household Durables

For the fortunate majority of households the basic facilities and amenities of the dwelling and material quality of life generally are nowadays usually enhanced by possession of "consumer durables". These include devices for domestic labour saving (eg washing machines and dishwashers), for food storage (eg refrigerators and freezers), for communication (eg telephones and in some cases computers) and for entertainment (eg televisions and video and audio systems). The largest and most expensive consumer durable is for many households is a private motor vehicle which, although not internal to the dwelling (except perhaps in the case of integral garaging) is nevertheless like the durables mentioned in being an adjunct of the relatively affluent lifestyles enjoyed by many households. Over the past 25 years regular surveys such as the General Household Survey have charted the steadily increasing penetration of amenities and possessions formerly available only to an affluent minority.

9) Housing Attitudes

People and households in nearly all segments of the housing market are able to exercise some degree of choice when it comes to moving or not moving and to selecting where to move to and a (new) dwelling. Therefore levels of housing satisfaction and housing preferences have important effects on the behaviour of the housing market. Interest in housing satisfaction measures has been boosted by pressure on housing authorities to monitor their own performance in providing a stock of housing which corresponds to the composition, preferences and expectations of their customer group, keeping it up to standard and keeping rents affordable. Interest may extend beyond the preferred characteristics of the dwelling itself to housing environment preferences which are relevant to the design of new or the remodelling of old housing estates and the transport and services infrastructures which they require.

10) Types of Accommodation

Several dimensions of type of accommodation are often asked about in housing surveys. The physical arrangement of the accommodation is obviously important. In the UK the main types are:

1. "Houses", which may be detached, semi-detached, terraced or bungalows.
2. Flats and maisonettes, which may be purpose-built, or "conversions" forming part of buildings originally intended as single-household dwellings, or nested within business or other institutional premises.
3. Bed-sitting rooms or other small units lacking full amenities, again forming part of buildings originally intended as single-household dwellings.
4. Other structures, such as caravans

The first two of these account for the vast majority of dwellings.

Variables

1. Age of building
2. Number of rooms/bedrooms
3. Housing amenities
4. Housing tenure
5. Housing finance arrangements
6. Housing and tenure preferences
7. Housing satisfaction
8. Household durables
9. Housing mobility and migration

Terms to be defined and explained

1. Dwelling
2. Household space
3. Address
4. Home
5. Accommodation

FALLOUT

(It is generally assumed that the vast majority of households possess, or have

sufficient income or resources to obtain, necessities such as basic furniture and cooking and eating utensils, adequate clothing and an adequate diet.)

1. The everyday lives of individuals and households are greatly affected by the size, suitability, amenities, condition and cost of the dwelling which they occupy.
2. The unit which policy makers have traditionally assumed should have its own home is "the household" - that is, a group of people living together in an interdependent way under one roof. The majority of these groups are "nuclear families" consisting of legal or de facto spouses and their children (if any). However, the prevalence of some other types of household and, in particular, of one-person households, has increased, while the prevalence of larger family households with four or more adults has decreased.
3. As well as increasing the aggregate demand for separate accommodation, these trends affect the profile of demand for housing units of various types and sizes and at varying levels of cost and quality.
4. Buildings deteriorate over time and, to keep up the quality of the housing stock, it is necessary not only to build and improve, but also to repair and maintain structures. This applies to publicly and privately rented property as well as to owner occupied dwellings.
5. There is a circularity in estimating the demand for accommodation by reference to the number of actual households, since the operational definition of a household in surveys and censuses depends upon de facto, rather than preferred, living arrangements. This has led to a concern to identify and study through surveys the characteristics of "concealed households" - that is, individuals or groups embedded in existing households who would prefer to live separately if they could and might therefore boost demand, most often at the bottom of the housing market, if their incomes rose.

11) Housing Variables Generally

Surveys specifically concerned with housing go in detail into topics such as the nature and layout of buildings and the dwellings which they contain, the size and internal arrangement of dwellings, arrangements for sharing dwellings or amenities, physical house condition, housing mobility and the reasons for it, housing finance arrangements, housing preferences and attitudes and so on. Even if not specifically concerned with housing matters, surveys often collect information about housing tenure, housing amenities and also household durable possessions such as cars, washing machines, electronic equipment etc. as general socio-economic indicators.

There are considerable practical difficulties in designing and running surveys on the position of households and individuals who are without a permanent home, since survey methods usually depend heavily on the assumption that each of the households or individuals in the population has a permanent address. Innovative methods are required in particular when seeking to survey persons who are "roofless" or sleeping rough.

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