

# From Barracks to Garden Cities

## The Finnish Population and Family Welfare League as a Housing Policy Expert in the 1940s and 1950s

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### Abstract

This article examines how Väestöliitto, the Finnish Population and Family Welfare League, developed into a housing policy expert during the 1940s and 1950s. Through frame analysis, I outline how Väestöliitto constructed urbanisation and ‘barrack cities’, i.e. an urban, tenement-based environment, as a social problem and how, respectively, it framed ‘garden cities’ as a solution. In the 1940s, Väestöliitto promoted a national body for centralised housing policy and national planning. When the ARAVA laws (1949) turned out to be a mere financing system, Väestöliitto harnessed its expertise into more concrete action. In 1951, together with five other NGOs, Väestöliitto founded the Housing Foundation and embarked on a project for constructing a model city. This garden city became the residential suburb Tapiola. This marked a paradigm shift in Finnish town planning and housing policy, which had until then lacked a holistic and systematic approach. Along the 1940s–1950s, Väestöliitto thus constructed and developed its expertise from an influential interest organisation to a concrete housing policy actor.

**Keywords:** housing policy, town planning, urban history, garden city, expertise, non-governmental organisations

### Introduction

The Second World War was not merciful towards Finland. The country fought against the Soviet Union in two wars (the Winter War 1939–40 and the Continuation War 1941–44) and ended up as one of the losing parties of WWII. The Soviet Union annexed large areas from Karelia and northern Finland, which left over 400,000 evacuees without housing or land. In the period immediately following the war, the focus in regard to housing was on arranging settlements for the (mostly Karelian) evacuees and war veterans. However, it was not the only housing issue that was being noticed and raised.

Väestöliitto, or the Finnish Population and Family Welfare League (due to the long English name, I will use the Finnish name in this article), was founded in 1941. Its purpose was to act as an umbrella organisation for associations involved in population policy. It was a pronatalist organisation that sought to elevate the number and quality of the population. According to Väestöliitto, this was the solution for preventing an unfavourable population growth that would exacerbate the vulnerable geopolitical situation of Finland.

In the very beginning of its activities, Väestöliitto primarily concentrated on the ‘popula-

tion question'. However, housing soon became another central topic. During the 1940s and 1950s, Väestöliitto established a role as a housing policy expert, and it was one of the founders behind Asuntosäätiö, the Housing Foundation. The foundation, for its part, was the agency behind the renowned 'garden city' of Tapiola, built in the outskirts of Finland's capital, Helsinki, in the early 1950s. In this paper, I study how Väestöliitto identified and defined housing-related matters as social problems that needed to be solved, what it labelled as the underlying causes, and how it sought to address these problems. I also study Väestöliitto as an expert: how it built, developed and exercised its role as a housing policy expert.

### Study subject: Väestöliitto

During the research period of this study, the core objective of Väestöliitto was to elevate the number and quality of the population. Its members included social and health policy organisations and politically engaged associations, both left- and right-wing, the latter often with a nationalist stance. Yet, several of Väestöliitto's board members and executive managers were affiliated with nationalist organisations and/or centre-right parties like the Agrarian League or the National Coalition Party. Väestöliitto is thus primarily to be regarded as a centre-right organisation. In addition, it engaged in close governmental collaboration, and its board included two representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Väestöliitto's executive managers and board members (whom I refer to when speaking of 'Väestöliitto') consisted of various professionals. V. J. Sukselainen, one of the people behind the establishment of Väestöliitto and its long-standing chair (1941–1971), was trained in sociology and economics. In addition, he was a politician: he was the leader of the Agrarian League (renamed the Centre Party in 1965) 1945–1964 and acted twice as Prime Minister, among others. Long-standing (1943–1965) executive manager Heikki von Hertzen was a Master of Law. In addition, he was a notable figure within Finnish housing policy, and acted as the chair of the Finnish Housing Foundation 1951–1976.

Other important figures in Väestöliitto during the 1940s and 1950s included, among others,

vice chairs Aarno Turunen and Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio. Turunen was a professor in gynaecology and obstetrics, and he was one of the people behind the blood service of the Finnish Red Cross. Enäjärvi-Haavio was the first Finnish woman to obtain a doctoral degree in folkloristics as well as the first female adjunct professor of the discipline. She was affiliated with the National Coalition Party, and she was actively involved in the Finnish voluntary sector and cultural policy. Within Väestöliitto, she was the prime figure behind its home aid activities.

### Research questions and material

In this paper, I answer the following research questions: How did housing policy become an important theme for Väestöliitto? What were the phenomena that the actors of Väestöliitto perceived as problematic, and how did the association wish to address these issues through housing policy? Indeed – what formed the core of Väestöliitto's housing policy and strategy?

In 1949, ARAVA, the state's agency that provided subsidised financing for rental housing construction, was founded – a process in which Väestöliitto had a prominent role. How did the ARAVA system reflect Väestöliitto's housing policy principles and objectives? What was it not satisfied with and why?

Why did Väestöliitto establish the Housing Foundation? Why did it embark on a garden city housing project, which became one of the most iconic suburbs of Finland, Tapiola? From the perspective of Väestöliitto, how were these to address the issues the association had defined as housing problem?

The research period thus encompasses the 1940s and early 1950s, ending at the laying of the foundation stone of Tapiola and an analysis of what Tapiola symbolised for Väestöliitto.

The source material of this study consists of Väestöliitto's minute books, action plans, annual reports, programmes, researches and other material, both published and unpublished. See Appendix 1 for a complete list of archival sources referred to in this article. I will also utilise the journal *Asuntopoliittikka* (referred to as *Housing Policy* hereinafter), which was published by Väestöliitto, more precisely its Housing Policy

Office (*asuntoasiainmestö*), since 1950. The journal served as a channel for vocalising and distributing the organisation's views on housing policy. For referencing purposes, Väestöliitto's Housing Policy Office is used as the author of anonymous works in *Housing Policy*.

A matter closely linked with housing policy is national planning, which also takes rural areas and their socio-economic viability into account. This topic was also acknowledged in Väestöliitto. In 1955, it began publishing a journal dedicated to the matter, *Valtakunnansuunnittelu* (*National Planning*), in addition to *Housing Policy*. However, in the 1940s and early 1950s, the focus of Väestöliitto was on urban housing policy, which is also the focus of this article.

### **Methodology: Social problems and expertise as constructive processes**

In my analysis, I draw upon a combination of methods. The constructionist analysis of social problems, in accordance with Malcolm Spector and John Kitsuse (2009), problematises the problem nature of phenomena perceived as social problems. It does thus not focus on social problems per se, but rather on the processes through which phenomena are identified, defined and represented as social problems – i.e. how phenomena are constructed as social problems – and on the actors conducting these processes. (Spector and Kitsuse, 2009.)

As a systematic and structuring tool, I apply frame analysis as formulated by Robert Benford and David Snow (2000). It deals with social problems in a similar way as Spector and Kitsuse (2009). Frames are sets of beliefs and purposes through which actors perceive, interpret and label phenomena in the surrounding reality. Benford and Snow (2000: 614–618, 623–624) have outlined three core framing tasks: 'diagnostic framing' – the process of identifying problems and the entities and reasons the problems can be attributed to; 'prognostic framing' – finding solutions and strategies for problem-solving; and 'motivational framing' – the final thrust for mobilisation, seeking either consensus or action. In addition, framing has an interactive, discursive feature: frames are defined or articulated as well as amplified through specific discourses.

My analytical understanding of power is Foucauldian. According to Foucault (1995, 1980), power is ubiquitous; it is thus not merely a form of dominance or exploitation, but it is produced everywhere and penetrates everything. Foucault ties power, knowledge and truth intrinsically together. All societies have their own regime of truth, and intellectual political struggles are essentially tied to this truth. In this context, 'truth' does not refer to what is or is not true; it refers to the status of truth – who has the power to determine how truth is evaluated, and what its political and economic role is. (Foucault, 1995: 194; Foucault, 1980: 119, 131–132.)

Together, these approaches form a method for identifying and analysing the ways through which the actors construct specific phenomena as social problems. Since the studied actors are associations specialised in various social policy issues, such problem-defining is closely interlinked with their expertise. In other words, expert organisations develop and solidify their expertise and expert role by constructing and addressing social problems.

### **Previous research**

The history of housing policy in Finland has been studied by several researchers from diverse fields and various perspectives.

Antti Palomäki (2011) has studied the resettling of the Karelian evacuees and war veterans in 1940–1960 and its impact on Finnish housing policy. The resettlement process, in which land was given to the evacuees and war veterans in accordance with the Land Acquisition Act (396/1945), was a land reform of magnificent scope: family members included, it had an impact on the lives of 700,000 Finns (of a population of four million), and by 1949, almost all resettled Karelians had received their plots. Like many other, Palomäki (2011) notes that the resettlement process significantly deferred and complicated the urbanisation process in Finland. Construction primarily took place in the countryside, and since new farms were formed by dividing old farms, this more or less abolished big land ownership and replaced it with a large number of small farms. Eventually, this proved to be unsustainable; urbanisation

finally took place in the 1960s, and thousands of small farms were abandoned.

Contrary to many other studies, Palomäki (2011) argues that in the long run, the most viable and sustainable residential areas in accordance with the Land Acquisition Act were constructed, paradoxically, in cities and towns. While the law initially sought to secure land for housing and farming for evacuees and war veterans, urbanisation was already slowly underway. War veterans wanted to settle in their home towns with their families, which put unprecedented pressure on land and housing policy in cities and towns, thereby also eventually complicating the urbanisation process. However, the Land Acquisition Act also led to entire new neighbourhoods being constructed, e.g., in cities like Helsinki and Lahti.

Housing shortage and substandard housing was a severe problem in 1940s Helsinki. Antti Malinen (2014) has studied how families coped with poor housing conditions in 1944–1948. During this time period, the population of Helsinki increased from 262,000 to 290,000, but, as also noted by Palomäki (2011), housing efforts were concentrated in rural Finland. In 1940–1949, a mere 10,600 apartments were constructed, which meant that nearly 28,000 people had to find their place in the existing dwelling stock, which led to severe overpopulation and deteriorating housing conditions. As his key argument, Malinen (2014) notes that the families' success with adjusting to these demanding conditions partially determined how families were able to cope with other, war-related challenges and changes. The longer the families had to wait for adequate housing, the more their emotional and other resources were exhausted. Parents feared not only for their relationships, but also the health of their children.

In her seminal dissertation *Model Houses for Model Families*, Kirsi Saarikangas (1993) has studied the architectural typologies, ideological arguments and cultural and gendered signifying processes regarding the standardised one-family type-planned houses in Finland. The type-planned houses, applicable to rural as well as semi-urban environments, were the standard solution during the post-war reconstruction period. Saarikangas (1993) argues that the type-planned houses served as a tool for creating and normalising

biocultural differences; they were architectural representations of the middle-class, gendered nuclear family.

Saarikangas (1993) and Palomäki (2011) note the so-called home cult and its impact on Finnish housing policy. The home cult glorified womanhood and motherhood, and it connected family and population policy, antiurbanist and bourgeois ideology, and town planning and housing policy. In accordance with pronatalist population policy, housing policy was to cater to families with children and encourage procreation; respectively, poor housing conditions were seen as discouraging reproduction and exposing children to health and moral risks, among others. In general, urban environments and tenements were seen as detrimental to health and morals, and children and young were particularly vulnerable. Instead, single-family houses, agrarian or green environments and the nuclear family were seen as the ideal combination for raising new, large and healthy generations.

Johanna Hankonen's doctoral dissertation in architecture (1994) has become somewhat of a classic within the field of community and town planning. With a sociological approach, she studies the birth and development of suburbia in Finland. Her focus is on the 1960s and early 1970s, during which Finland was undergoing a broad change process; urbanisation was extremely rapid, and the economic structure of the country developed from agribusiness to service industry. In her dissertation, Hankonen (1994) demonstrates how the idea of efficiency emerged and developed within this historical and societal context and was combined with the construction of suburbia in order to manage the urban–rural migration. Hankonen (1994) discusses Tapiola as the first suburb of Finland, which for its part marked a paradigm shift in Finnish housing and town planning, which until the 1940s had been fragmented and lacked a holistic approach.

Mika Pantzar (2013) has written an article on the garden city Tapiola from the perspective of consumer research. He studies the idea and the construction of Tapiola as a means of managing forthcoming affluence (excessive consumption and urban sprawl) in post-war Finland, which he argues was "more utopian dream than any kind

of reality" (Pantzar, 2013: 11). Social progress was viewed as inevitable, and Tapiola was seen as a tool for restricting the wrong kind of growth. It was constructed as a garden city, anti-urban, anti-consumerist and anti-individualistic, but ironically, by the 1970s, it had followed the overall trajectory of Finland and transformed to an urban, consumerist and individualistic community that relied heavily on private transport.

In *Practicing Utopia* (2016), Rosemary Wakeman studies the twentieth-century 'new town' movement from an intellectual history perspective. She approaches the movement, rooted in the British garden city movement of the late nineteenth–early twentieth century, as a global phenomenon of optimistic plans and ideas. One of her case studies is Tapiola, which she pairs with the Swedish town Vällingby as examples of the 'Scandinavian model'. She argues that they were perceived as "spellbinding visions of modern living" and turned out to be more successful than their British counterparts (Wakeman, 2016: 85).

All of the above-mentioned studies have studied housing policy and Tapiola with different approaches. They provide a comprehensive and analytical historical picture of the social and gendered frames and processes that were involved in the housing policy development in post-war Finland. My research contributes to the discussion from yet another perspective. Housing policy or Tapiola are not my research topics per se, but rather a means through which I study the processes through which Västoliitto constructed housing as a social problem. Moreover, it serves as a tool for analysing how Västoliitto developed its own expertise in the matter, thus highlighting how also expertise and knowledge are socially constructed.

### **"Save the children from barracks" – framing the housing problem**

In the 1940s, Swedish architects, planners and social reformers engaged in an interdisciplinary discussion about furthering the Social Democratic 'people's home' (*folkhemmet*) ideal through architecture and urban planning. The discussion had a gendered tone, following the ideas of Alva Myrdal, whose population policy ideas portrayed collec-

tive housing as a means to emancipate working women from domestic work and childrearing. (Wakeman, 2016.)

Västoliitto followed the Swedish population and social policy discussion closely and linked population policy and housing policy intrinsically together in a similar vein. However, the organisation did not advocate a Social Democratic welfare state agenda (cf. Wakeman, 2016), but used Myrdalian population policy models for furthering bourgeois-conservative family and gender models (Bergenheim, 2017). Respectively, in its housing policy agenda, it embraced and propagated the home cult (Saarikangas, 1993; Palomäki, 2011) and linked population policy and housing policy intrinsically together. The home was seen as elementary for socially, morally and physically healthy, happy and procreating families, and Västoliitto celebrated motherhood as the most important role and duty of the woman.

In line with this perspective, the very first programme of Västoliitto (1942) featured a section dedicated to the 'housing question' (Västoliitto, 1942: 22). Before I proceed to its content, I wish to draw attention to the wording. Labelling something as a 'question' – for instance, the 'population question' or the 'housing question' – was a rhetorical tool for politicising and depoliticising. Formulating a phenomenon as a 'question' drew attention to the issue and called for action, thereby politicising it. But more importantly, it was a specific and uncontested representation of the issue and how it should be solved. The problem nature of the phenomenon and its outcomes were portrayed as inevitable, and the given solutions, for their part, as the only alternative, thereby depoliticising the issue. (Definitions derived from Kettunen, 2008.) The 'question' representation was thus a form of diagnostic and prognostic framing: it identified the causes of the problem and provided strategies for addressing the issue.

Initially, the housing question concentrated on two aspects of housing. Firstly, since rental housing was the most common form of residency in population centres (cities and towns), it should be placed under the control of the society. Secondly, families with children were having difficulties finding apartments, whereas Västoliitto

saw that they should, on the contrary, be prioritised in procurement of housing. (Väestöliitto, 1942: 22; VL 9.6.1942, Appendix 4.) After the war, the resettlement of the evacuees from the Soviet-annexed areas was an acute housing issue (VL Action Plan 1945; VL Action Plan 1946; Väestöliitto, 1946: 101–102). The visions of prioritising families with children were indeed realised in the Land Acquisition Act. In addition to giving evacuees priority, it included a familial condition for war veterans, which placed single war veterans in a significantly disadvantaged position. (Palomäki, 2011: 455–456.)

As in many other countries, the building industry was more or less paralysed in Finland during and immediately after the war; there was a severe shortage of both work force and building material. However, this did not leave Väestöliitto idle in the matter. Instead, it advocated making use of the mandatory pause and studying what should and could be done once the war ended. In 1942, it set up a committee for planning a housing programme. Väestöliitto's chair V. J. Sukselainen acted as the chair of the committee, and the three other members were board member Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio and architects Ole Gripenberg and Jussi Lappi-Seppälä. Sukselainen had been interested in housing matters already in the 1920s. During the 1930s, he advocated a system similar to the Swedish rental housing cooperative Hyresgästernas Sparkasse och Byggnadsförening (HSB) for solving urban housing problems, i.e., housing shortage and the expensiveness of housing construction in Finland. (Perttula, 2010: 308–309.) Enäjärvi-Haavio was replaced by Heikki von Hertzen in 1943 when he joined Väestöliitto as its executive manager (VL 6.11.1942; VL Annual Report 1942). Before Väestöliitto, legally trained von Hertzen had worked as a bank manager. Yet, housing policy was a great passion of his, and he actively participated in the housing activities of Väestöliitto from the very start of his career in the association. Sukselainen and von Hertzen soon formed Väestöliitto's 'dynamic duo' of housing policy.

According to Väestöliitto's annual report of 1942, the housing policy committee was to avoid "the mistakes in housing policy that have been previously made in regard to population policy"

(VL Annual Report 1942: 16). What these mistakes were, exactly, are not defined in the minute books or annual reports. However, drawing from the general viewpoints and framings of Väestöliitto, the mistakes probably referred to the neglect of a holistic and anti-urban approach that connected housing, population and family policy. According to the association, a pronatalist population and family policy should be intertwined with and promoted through housing policy and national planning that favoured the nuclear family as well as hampered detrimental urbanisation.

The committee finalised its report and programme during 1943 in collaboration with the housing policy experts of larger cities, building construction experts, architects and labour market organisations. The contribution of Otto-livari Meurman, architect and professor of town planning, was given a special mention in Väestöliitto's annual report 1943. (Väestöliitto, 1944: 13–14.) Unfortunately, neither the committee report nor the final programme were found in Väestöliitto's archive, but it can be assumed that the committee's work laid the foundation for the association's housing policy and that the later statements of Väestöliitto reflect the viewpoints of the committee.

After the war, it was time for lobbying – or propaganda, as it was called at the time. In its action plans for 1945 and 1946, Väestöliitto states that it was to perform "strong propaganda in order to guide urban building and town planning into a socially and population policy-wise healthy direction" (VL Action Plan 1945). Propaganda was thus a part of the prognostic and motivational framing of Väestöliitto: in order to address the problem of 'unhealthy housing policy', it sought to formulate a model for ideal and healthy housing policy and to get decision-makers to adopt these ideas.

In 1946, Väestöliitto states that "the housing question has a fundamental societal and population policy-related meaning", which was why the organisation had to monitor and assure that population policy aspects were taken into account in town planning and building activities (VL Action Plan 1946). At the time, cities and municipalities did not impose strict town planning requirements (rural municipalities did not require any town

planning), which together with the post-war resettlement programme and acute housing shortage led to randomly scattered small-town districts in the outskirts of towns (Sundman, 1991: 98–99).

In 1945, Heikki von Hertzen was commissioned by Väestöliitto to compose an illustrated pamphlet on housing policy, in which he consulted Meurman and housing policy expert Yrjö Harvia, in particular (VL 20.12.1945; von Hertzen, 1946: 3). The booklet, entitled *Koti vaiko kasarmi lapsillemme*, or *Homes or Barracks for Our Children* as I will refer to it hereinafter, was published in 1946 and was distributed to various decision-makers on both municipal and national level (von Hertzen, 1946: 3).

*Homes or Barracks for Our Children* crystallises what Väestöliitto strived to promote and achieve within Finnish housing policy. The booklet is, cover to cover, a splendid demonstration of an attempt to construct a phenomenon as a social problem through rhetoric and images. To such a degree, even, that it is difficult to select just a few illustrating examples – von Hertzen certainly did not make any efforts to curb his pathos in the pamphlet.

In the foreword, von Hertzen states that Väestöliitto sought to

blow the initial fanfare in the crucial fight for a higher living culture that now must begin. Our heart's desire is that the onslaught now gains momentum and will not stop until the goal – “only fine dwellings, only beautiful, open residential areas” – has been reached. (Von Hertzen, 1946: 3.)

*Homes or Barracks for Our Children* claims to speak on behalf of all people in need of apartments, with a wish list at the end of the booklet. According to the list, people no longer wanted to live in ‘barrack cities’, but wished that the new areas to be built would be park and garden cities, and that old areas would be updated to better conform with modern-day requirements. At its worst, the ‘barrack city’ referred to urban concrete- and tarmac-ridden environments with high tenements and little to no green areas. It could also refer to more rural areas and lower buildings; the common feature was the lack of greenness and the monotony of buildings. Detached and terrace houses were the preferred types of houses, and

tenements higher than four floors were not to be built at all. The tenements that were to be built as residence buildings should be placed away from the city streets, into the middle of nature, “to an open and freely sculptured environment”. (Von Hertzen, 1946: 78.)

The booklet ends with the claim:

WE WANT HOMES – NOT BARRACKS – FOR US AND OUR CHILDREN.

Let our demand ring in the ears of those whom we have selected as the representatives of ourselves and our interests in the governing bodies of cities and boroughs. Let the year 1946 mark the turning point in our country's housing policy. (Von Hertzen, 1946: 79.)

The booklet goes into detail both in words and pictures in describing and explaining the differences between ‘healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’ housing. In the section dealing with the “social” and “societal and population policy-related” impact of the “housing question”, von Hertzen argues how poor housing conditions lead to an array of “social diseases”, such as crime, low morale, alcoholism, poor public health, broken homes and difficult problems among children and the young. (Von Hertzen, 1946: 5–7.) The illustrations support the written message: the pictures represent toddlers in a narrow cul-de-sac, youngsters smoking cigarettes, a factory hall, female typewriters, hard-studying pupils and a café – all signs of an unhealthy environment according to the captions:

Sooner or later, they will all become robots, unless society sees to that they have a home, where they can completely disengage themselves from life's hurries, unwind and refresh themselves in the proximity of nature, to dedicate a moment for their families and hobbies, and to gather new strength.

Yet, this cannot be offered by the modern barrack city. Only cafés, movies and tarmac streets... (Von Hertzen, 1946: 7.)

The pamphlet features several illustrations of various ‘barrack cities’, with captions that emphasise their detrimental nature.

Storehouse or human dwelling – not much of a difference in atmosphere! – We have plenty of such urban landscape. They are telling of neglected opportunities, incompetent municipal politics and the lack of creative cultural will. (Von Herten, 1946: 11.)

Like a city of the dead. No wonder children disappear from here. (Von Herten, 1946: 23.)

Von Herten does not even shun references to the newly ended Second World War:

A concentration camp? – No, but one of the newest residential areas in Finland, completed as late as 1943. A textbook example of how utterly important town planning factors are for the sculpting of residential areas. (Von Herten, 1946: 33.)

The booklet portrays garden cities as a complete opposite to barrack cities. The garden city movement originated in Britain in the early twentieth century, and the term was coined by Ebenezer Howard in his book *Garden Cities of To-Morrow* (1902). Like many of his contemporaries, Howard expressed concern about rapidly progressing urbanisation, which resulted in slums and aggravated social inequality. As a solution, he presented garden cities: self-sufficient planned communities of 32,000 inhabitants, which were run as cooperatives. The garden city coupled nature, agriculture and modern living, and it catered to the needs of individuals as well as the community. Howard's garden city was more than urban planning; it was a socialist utopian plan for social reform and equality. (Wakeman, 2016; Fishman, 2016.)

However, *Homes or Barracks for Our Children* does not make references to the British roots, but instead takes note of American influences, such as Lewis Mumford. He was a notable figure in the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA), a left-leaning organisation that promoted progressive planning and social reform ideas. Mumford articulated his ideas of communitarian regionalism in his book *The Culture of Cities* (1938), and his visions were also depicted in the documentary *The City* (1939), produced for New York World's Fair's exhibit City of Tomorrow. (Wakeman, 2016.) Von Herten had seen the film at the fair, and it had made a profound impression on him (von Herten, 1946).

In contrast to the pictures illustrating 'unhealthy' urban living, *Homes or Barracks for Our Children* features several photographs of young children playing outside in vast, green environments. The captions emphasise how this is the best and most natural environment for children:

The children's world. (Von Herten, 1946: 16.)

The garden city allows children to grow up and develop into bright, free and natural [individuals]. The sons and daughters of dark back yards, on the other hand, often bring about worry and trouble for the society. (Von Herten, 1946: 18.)

Someone who gets to enjoy life... (Von Herten, 1946: 19.)

In other words, urban environments, or 'barrack cities', were explicitly depicted as unsuitable for children; grim places that fostered unhealthy development and did not allow children to lead a happy life. Garden cities, on the other hand, were better environments for children and adults alike:

It certainly is a whole other story to spend time [gardening] rather than being caged inside four walls in a stone barrack, where one's existence might be further sweetened by quarrelling neighbours or the din of the traffic from the street. (Von Herten, 1946: 17.)

While von Herten claims that "we do not know how to build cities" (von Herten, 1946: 29), he has found quite a few examples of ideal residential areas both abroad and within the Finnish borders. He presents several cases from Sweden: a tenement area in Stockholm, the open-air town in Malmö and Guldheden in Gothenburg; and the United States: Radburn, New Jersey, and Greenbelt, Maryland. (Von Herten, 1946: 48–65.) Radburn was a test case planned by the RPAA in 1928. Greenbelt, which was featured in the film *The City*, was a garden city constructed under the auspices of the New Deal Resettlement Administration. The initial aspiration of the programme's administrator, Rexford Tugwell, was to build 3,000 greenbelt towns, but the plan ultimately fell short due to the Americans' suspicions towards government interventionism. (Wakeman, 2016.)



While Guldheden “does not deserve to be entitled an ideal residential area” due to its high tenements, von Herten pays attention to the collective facilities, which were designed to ease the housekeeping burden of women (von Herten, 1946: 60). Considering how domestic appliances such as washing machines and refrigerators were still practically unknown or at least extremely rare in Finland at that time (even running water was considered a luxury in several areas in Helsinki), Guldheden, its equipment and its idea of rationalisation stand out as very modern and innovative. Indeed, once the development reached Finland, it marked a paradigm change in Finnish consumption culture (Pantzar, 2013: 21–23).

As noted earlier, Alva Myrdal saw collective housing as a way to emancipate women: domestic appliances freed women’s resources from house-keeping to, e.g., waged work (Wakeman, 2016). Väestöliitto, on the other hand, propagated the home cult. In this framing, collective housing was not an emancipating measure, but a part of pronatalist population policy. It was a means to make the bourgeois nuclear family model attractive and achievable, and thereby to encourage procreation.

Through *Homes or Barracks for Our Children*, von Herten established a distinct portrait of wanted and unwanted housing development for Finland. The play with images and associations is encapsulated in the booklet’s covers. The front cover features a colour painting with nature, detached houses and low tenements, children playing along a dirt road, with factory pipes looming in the faraway distance. As a contrast, the front cover features a black and white photograph of a concrete inner yard surrounded by high tenements. The back cover portrays a young couple with three small children watching over a small town or district, with low tenements, its own bay, large green areas, and again with factories far away. The picture is finished off with a large, beaming sun.

In short, *Homes or Barracks for Our Children* does not leave much to the imagination in regard to what Heikki von Herten and Väestöliitto perceived as favourable and less favourable housing policy, and what a ‘harmful’ housing policy would lead to. The pamphlet thus served

the role of both diagnostic and prognostic framing. It represented urban environments as unhealthy and detrimental and as the source of various ‘social diseases’. Respectively, the booklet represented, in a wholly unproblematised manner, garden cities as the antidote and the ‘natural way’ that would, in line with the home cult, produce healthy individuals for a healthy society.

### **Promoting a centralised and competent housing policy body**

As noted above, the committee set in 1942 sought to formulate a housing policy programme. Considering how meticulously the committee consulted numerous parties engaged in social and housing policy in drafting its report, it is probable that the final programme was to be distributed broadly in order to have a profound impact on national level.

As procurement of housing got going after the war, it provided quantitative information on the demand for housing. This, in turn, put more flesh on the bones of Väestöliitto’s claim that a specific housing policy programme was needed urgently. (Väestöliitto, 1946: 102.) In September 1947, the board discussed the “extremely critical situation in regard to the housing question” and concluded that the government’s actions were needed in order to solve the situation. The board established a specific division under its Housing Policy Office, to whom it delegated the task of furthering means for addressing the housing question. (VL 3.9.1947.)

In its action plan for 1948, Väestöliitto concluded how the housing question, which had a central role in population policy, had become increasingly severe; it was alarmed by how housing production had almost died down. It criticised heavily that housing policy planning was completely paralysed, even though planning work should have been a focal point of attention and was not dependant on material supply. (VL Action Plan, 1948: 2.) In its draft for the action plan, Väestöliitto expressed particular concern about the lack of a governing body:

One of the worst flaws is that the country has no competent and centralised housing policy management whatsoever, neither a body that would control and develop this economically important field of social policy. Quite the chaos

prevails. [...] It has been 3.5 years since the truce agreement, but the government still has no kind of housing production programme. (VL 2.3.1948, Appendix 4.)

In the plan's final form, Väestöliitto toned down the criticism somewhat, leaving out the accusations of incompetence and by just stating that no housing production programme existed (instead of "no kind of"). It also removed the differentiation between housing policy management and a housing policy body, which would have implied two separate actors. Instead, it emphasised how a body should immediately be established for "comprehensively" managing and developing housing policy, instead of scattering housing policy issues around various ministries. Väestöliitto gave itself the task of furthering this goal by drawing the attention of the government, the parliament and the general public to the matter. (VL 2.3.1948, Appendix 4.) It is slightly unclear why Väestöliitto wished to tone down its statement, considering how it had not refrained from dramatic expressions and representations earlier, e.g. in *Homes or Barracks for Our Children*. Since the changes were made in the annual meeting, which also representatives of the member associations of Väestöliitto attended, one interpretation is that the board of Väestöliitto was more confrontational in its approach compared to some of the member associations. The minutes do not reveal by whom the changes to the action plan were proposed.

In spring 1948, Väestöliitto agreed to team up with the central association for tenants, Vuokralaisten Keskusliitto VKL, in regard to statements on the housing question. In addition to Sukselainen and von Herten, the representatives of Väestöliitto consisted of architect and industrial counsellor Yrjö Laine-Juva and Martta Salmela-Järvinen, who was engaged in various welfare organisations for women, children and elderly and MP representing the Social Democratic Union of Workers and Smallholders. (VL 24.3.1948.)

In June 1948, the associations sent a letter regarding the housing question to the government. The content of the letter reflected the viewpoints Väestöliitto had formulated in its action plan, but in contrast to the plan, the rhetoric was not mellowed. The letter was titled "The housing situation faces imminent disaster", and the rest

of the paper followed suit. The "social flaws and disease phenomena" resulting from increasingly difficult housing circumstances, particularly in population centres, were becoming alarmingly grave. "Turmoil and chaos" prevailed within Finnish housing policy, and "tens of thousands of families impatiently wait for a relief in their extremely difficult, often downright unbearable housing circumstances". In addition, the housing demand was constantly increasing as new marriages and families were formed in the baby boom (what the pronatalist Väestöliitto itself had strongly promoted). The two associations conclude that "it is thus no exaggeration to claim that we are rapidly nearing a complete housing disaster". (VL 8.6.1948, Appendix 1.)

According to the letter, a systematic and comprehensive housing policy programme and a centralised managing body were "essential" in order to solve the housing question. Indeed, a permanent managing body for housing policy was "the only salvation". In regard to concrete activities, the focal points largely reflected Väestöliitto's views: housing should take house types, population growth, health and recreational requirements for children and adults alike into account, as well as collective facilities for housekeeping and childcare. (VL 8.6.1948, Appendix 1.) As a whole, the letter was a depoliticising framing of housing policy, which holistically combined anti-urbanism, pronatalism and the home cult.

It seems the plea was heard. In August 1948, the government appointed a committee for urgently drafting a plan for a centralised governmental body that would manage housing production, its funding and the procurement and distribution of construction material (Committee Report 1948:17: 1). Von Herten was invited as a committee member, which is an indication that housing policy expertise within Väestöliitto was recognised and valued on governmental level.

The committee published its report in October 1948 (Committee Report 1948: 17). It proposed concentrating on population centres and that housing policy planning and execution should be centralised. It also sought to strive towards cost-efficient construction. A national central agency, ARAVA, would be formed for managing housing policy and production and for granting funding.

The agency would consist of representatives from various interest and professional groups, such as building and town planning professionals, economists and finance experts, social and population policy experts, municipal governments and representatives for people in need of housing. (Committee Report 1948:17.)

The so-called ARAVA laws were passed in the parliament in 1949, but Västoliitto was not satisfied with the end result, as the bills based on the committee report were amended in the parliament's select committees. In April 1949, Västoliitto sent a letter to the members of parliament (VL 21.4.1949, Appendix 3), in which the association expressed its dissent. The changes had stripped the agency of its authority to plan and implement centralised and general housing policy programmes, as well as removed the goal of furthering suitable and functional town planning. Västoliitto argued that dwellings were not the goal in itself, but high-quality housing and "socially correct" town planning. (VL 21.4.1949, Appendix 3.) In essence, the changes rendered ARAVA primarily into a funding agency for housing construction and disregarded the most fundamental idea Västoliitto had promoted. In addition, the ARAVA loans lacked the objective of social housing and construction. While some evacuee and war veteran alliances did benefit from it, it primarily served to fund property development. (Palomäki, 2011: 472–473.)

## Taking housing matters into own hands

### *The Housing Foundation*

While Västoliitto welcomed ARAVA as a step forward in the housing issue, the agency did not meet the high hopes Västoliitto had set for it. From Västoliitto's perspective, ARAVA did not respond to a sufficient degree to the needs of Finnish housing policy. The board of Västoliitto therefore decided to grab the reins itself and embark on a career in housing construction. It was, in other words, time for the final core framing task, motivational framing: a "call for arms", or a process formulating a rationale for action (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Heikki von Hertzen argued in the late 1950s:

There were no signs of improvement in the development of community and town planning. This was a constant matter of concern in Västoliitto[...] [...] [W]e had perhaps sparked a lively discussion, but nothing more. It truly seemed like the time of holding speeches and [publishing] writings was over. We had to do something concrete. (Von Hertzen & Itkonen, 1985: 22.)

The idea was not sparked by the ARAVA laws, though, but had been bubbling under for some years. In December 1945, the board of Västoliitto discussed the association's possibilities of taking part in social housing production in order to guide housing into a "healthy direction from the perspective of population policy" (VL 10.12.1945). It engaged in discussions with the Social Insurance Institution and the central associations of insurance companies and savings banks. The Swedish rental housing cooperative HSB was proposed as a possible model for the joint company or foundation. The pamphlet *Homes or Barracks for Our Children* was a part of these ideas and plans. (VL 10.12.1945; VL 20.12.1945.)

The housing construction company did not take wing at that time, but the idea was nevertheless fostered in Västoliitto. In its action plans for 1946 and 1947, it stated that it sought to accomplish collaborative activities in social housing construction with other associations engaged in housing policy, and by consulting the best experts in building and town planning (VL Action Plan 1946; VL Action Plan 1947). Von Hertzen also conducted various trips abroad in order to draw from ideas and implementations.

During 1948–1951, Västoliitto engaged in discussions and planning activities with the previously mentioned tenants' association VKL, the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK and the Confederation of Intellectual Employment HTK. The four associations formed a committee in 1949 and began organising joint events and publishing joint statements, and they also discussed collaborating in social housing production. (VL 30.11.1948; VL 24.10.1949, Appendix 9; VL Action Plan 1949; VL 11.5.1950.) In September 1951, three of the associations, Västoliitto, VKL and SAK, together with the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare MLL, Invalidiliitto (the League for Civil and War Invalids) and Virkamiesliitto (the

Federation of Civil Servants) founded the Housing Foundation. Sukselainen and Laine-Juva sat in the foundation's delegation – the former as vice chair and Väestöliitto's representative, the latter as an expert member. Von Herten was elected as the foundation's chair of the board. (VL 12.10.1951; VL 27.11.1951.)

The Housing Foundation had several purposes according to its charter of foundation. It strived to combat the housing shortage and elevate the general quality of housing. It was also to develop social housing production and create unified residential areas in accordance with modern town planning. These areas were described as garden and park cities, which were planned from the very beginning to take into account the interests of the dwellers, as well as the needs for children and the young. (VL 29.2.1952, Appendix 7.) The rules thereby reflected the view of Meurman and Väestöliitto, particularly von Herten, Juva-Laine and Yrjö Kankaanpää (as of 1951, Kouti), that garden cities were the modern and correct – as opposed to outdated and detrimental – way for housing policy.

### **Tapiola**

As noted in the previous section, the idea of addressing the housing and town planning question on a concrete level began to gain momentum in Väestöliitto during the late 1940s. The action plan for 1950 notes how “the housing shortage in its current scale is the most serious social flaw of our society at the moment” and how the housing question was tied to numerous other social and population policy matters. In the plan, Väestöliitto sets its goal to “work hard” for eliminating the housing shortage and for creating housing production that meets “social requirements”. (VL Action Plan 1951.)

The housing issue had become a highly pressing matter for Väestöliitto. It was becoming increasingly difficult to promote pronatalist population policy and the home cult – families who indeed had procreated and had several children (i.e., the baby boomers) were living in substandard housing conditions that were a far cry from what Väestöliitto deemed appropriate.

In his notes from the late 1950s, von Herten describes how “we” (Väestöliitto and its board)

began to establish in the late 1940s the impression that

town planning would never reach the vital level of development if we relied solely on the written or spoken word or sparked heated debates. Something had to be done. We had to show that better housing and communities could be produced also in practice. (Von Herten and Itkonen, 1985: 23.)

While von Herten's words are written in retrospect and from the point of view of only one person, this spirit is generally visible in the minute books, annual reports and other material and publications of Väestöliitto. The people of Väestöliitto engaged in housing policy, primarily von Herten, Sukselainen and Juva-Laine, saw that the association could and should adopt a pioneer role in Finnish housing policy. In terms of frame analysis, Väestöliitto had proceeded from diagnostic and prognostic framing to a very concrete level of motivational framing.

According to Benford and Snow (2000), motivational framing includes constructing vocabularies of motive. Benford (1993) has outlined four such vocabularies: severity, urgency, efficacy, and propriety. In his study of the US nuclear disarmament movement, Benford (1993) also noted that the vocabularies worked in a contradictory rather than complementary fashion; for instance, framing that emphasised the severity and urgency of nuclear threat diminished the sense of efficiency.

However, in the case of Väestöliitto and the Housing Foundation, such contradictions are not distinguishable, but the vocabularies were, on the contrary, complementary. The urgency to act due to the severity of the housing situation was much emphasised. Knowledge production and lobbying (or ‘propaganda’) were a part of motivational framing as well, and they served an important role in the development process of Väestöliitto's expertise. However, lobbying had merely led to the ARAVA system, but not to a centralised housing policy or town planning programme, contrary to the central objective of Väestöliitto. Moreover, housing shortage in Helsinki was still severe, which placed families in difficult situa-

tions and threatened to lead to undesired forms of urbanisation.

According to von Hertzen, Sukselainen and the other active actors, uncontrolled urbanisation and the housing shortage would lead to inadequate and unhealthy forms of housing (tenements, barrack cities), which would cause various forms of social, health and moral problems. This development was, in other words, perceived as unsustainable and accumulatively detrimental. The solution – embarking on a concrete social housing and garden city project – was justified with both efficacy and propriety. It was framed as a sustainable (efficacy) and socially and morally healthy (propriety) option, a model town, to counteract the harmful looming development and its consequences.

In July 1951, Väestöliitto bought a 220-hectare land area from Espoo, the neighbour municipality of Helsinki. The ownership of the area, called Hagalund (later renamed to Tapiola), was transferred to the Housing Foundation once the foundation was officially established. (VL 20.7.1951; VL 16.8.1951; VL Annual Report 1951: 1–2.) According to the description of the Hagalund plans in Väestöliitto's annual report of 1951, the foundation had begun to create a "modern, detached house-intensive garden city" in accordance with the town plan Meurman had designed for the area. (VL Annual Report 1951: 1.)

Meurman outlined his plan in *Housing Policy* (Meurman, 1950). He argued that despite its good intentions, Howard's garden city model had fallen short. New towns had emerged as dormitory suburbs whose residents commuted to the city centre or remote industrial areas, which brought about increased traffic and provided no relief for the congested centre. Instead of Howard's ideas, Meurman followed (unspecified) newer English models, which probably referred to Patrick Abercrombie's and F. J. Forshaw's ideas for 'Greater London' (Wakeman, 2016: 80–84).

Meurman's plan was based on the idea of a residential suburb, which consisted of residential cells. Each cell would have around 1,000 residents and the residential suburb up to 10,000 residents. Hagalund would thus form a residential suburb of its own. The principle of this town plan idea was to keep distances at a minimum; all necessary

services and activities (schools, cultural activities, businesses etc.) should be within walking distance, and this was to be achieved by creating a business centre for each residential cell. In addition, the residential suburb would have a 'city', the shopping and business centre of the area, as well as diverse common facilities and institutions, harbours and so forth. (Meurman, 1950.)

The pioneer and example-setting role of the Housing Foundation and the Hagalund project was expressed very explicitly:

[A] body has been established that has the practical opportunities to create a model town and to gather experience in large-scale area-based building and the related town plan and plot issues. Based on these experiences, the foundation can guide housing production in a healthier direction[.] (VL Annual Report 1951: 2.)

In 1950, Väestöliitto began to publish the journal *Housing Policy* in order to address topical housing policy issues. The journal was to be distributed to decision-makers and influential people in the government, the parliament, towns and municipalities, within the architect circles, the press and so forth. In short, the target audience of the journal was anyone and everyone who could have a say in Finnish housing policy. The staff of the journal was composed as to have competence and authority. Yrjö Kankaanpää (later Kouti) was selected as editor-in-chief and Heikki von Hertzen as a member of the editorial staff. Kankaanpää was the director of the Housing Policy Office of Väestöliitto and had previously worked in the Ministry for Communications and Public Work, under which ARAVA operated. The editorial staff of *Housing Policy* consisted of several influential people, such as architects Alvar Aalto, Otto-livari Meurman and Esko Suhonen, who was also the director of the Technical Division of ARAVA; social politician and statistician Gunnar Modeen; and Maiju Gebhard, who worked as the director of the home economics unit of Työtehoseura, the Work Efficiency Institute.

The Hagalund project was presented and promoted in *Housing Policy*. In 1951, the first article on the topic was titled "An ideal garden city in the outskirts of Helsinki is being planned". According to the article, Hagalund was not to become a dormitory suburb, but a highly self-

sufficient daughter city of Helsinki. Each residential cell would have its own business centre with its businesses, collective facilities, laundry facilities with washing machines, movie theatres, saunas etc., hence precisely in line with the vision of Meurman. The pictures feature idyllic landscapes with green forests and open waters. (Väestöliitto's Housing Policy Office, 1951: 4–5.)

According to the same article, “modern housing policy aims, as we know, towards systematic area-based building”. This kind of housing policy was “the only effective means” for rationalising housing production, lowering building costs and creating “socially good” residential areas. (Väestöliitto's Housing Policy Office, 1951: 4.) The ‘we/they’ rhetoric implies that the writers and readers of *Housing Policy*, i.e. the housing policy quarters of Finland, formed a homogeneous group. Combined with the idea of knowledge and expertise (“as we know”), this rhetoric suggests and reinforces the idea that this group shares a common vision of the correct principles for housing policy. In other words, anyone who would have a different opinion would not only be excluded from ‘us’, but their expertise would also be called to question. The supremacy and necessity of the presented housing policy was further strengthened and depoliticised by calling it the ‘only means’ for achieving specific goals that were likewise presented as universally accepted.

The foundation stone of Hagalund, which was renamed Tapiola in 1953 according to the winning suggestion of a naming contest (Väestöliitto's Housing Policy Office, 1953b: 2), was laid on 3 September 1953. At the event, the charter of Hagalund was read aloud by von Herten. The charter announced how Hagalund would become a home and ideal living environment for at least 12,000 residents, and how the founding associations of the Housing Foundation have sought to fight against the housing shortage and to elevate the general standard of living. In line with the rules of the foundation, the text emphasised how the area was planned and would be built by taking the residents’ health and recreational needs as starting point. The charter ended in “prophetic and hopeful” (von Herten & Itkonen, 1985: 12) words:

Let the garden city that will arise on this spot fulfil the wishes set for it, and let it serve as a strong thrust forward for the entire nation's housing policy development. (Väestöliitto's Housing Policy Office, 1953a: 5)

In his own speech, von Herten noted that the “best expert force” was used in planning Hagalund, in which connection he mentioned Meurman as the head person behind town planning (Väestöliitto's Housing Policy Office, 1953a: 5). However, it should be noted that the town planning and design activities regarding Tapiola were not quite as straightforward and uncontested as *Housing Policy* or the official material of the Housing Foundation portrays, but included several sources of ideas and inspiration (Pantzar, 2013). Architecture, on the other hand, was publicly opened up to new ideas: an architecture and design competition was organised for the ‘city’ of Tapiola. Both Meurman and von Herten deemed the competition an enormous success. As largely everything else related to Tapiola, von Herten saw that also the competition could and should serve as a pioneer and role model for the entire society. (Väestöliitto's Housing Policy Office, 1953c; Väestöliitto's Housing Policy Office, 1954.)

According to von Herten's speech, the initial construction phase of Tapiola included building both detached houses and tenements as high as ten floors (Väestöliitto's Housing Policy Office, 1953a). These were to be placed next to each other, so that detached houses create spaciousness amidst tenements, and block houses allowed detached houses to be equipped with the same technical conveniences and maintenance as tenements (Pantzar, 2013). This probably referred to plumbing and electric or district heating, which were by no means to take for granted at the time.

In 1956, von Herten published an article on the planning and execution of Tapiola. He resolutely dismissed comparisons between Tapiola and Vällingby, Sweden, and claimed they differed in spirit and core idea. According to von Herten, Vällingby was a somewhat depressing city of masses – masses of people and masses of buildings. Tapiola, on the other hand, gave priority to nature, and it represented a “socially and, first and foremost, biologically correct living environment for the human being”. The “biologically

correct" character of the garden city was probably a reference to modern cities, which von Hertzen described as "powerful destroyers of human material", causing family lineages to die out. (Von Hertzen, 1956.) Tapiola was, in other words, designed to encourage and facilitate reproduction through a 'socially and biologically sound' environment.

Tapiola was seen as a project of constructing "a perfect small city" for everyone, from workers to professors (von Hertzen, 1956). Wakeman links von Hertzen's vision to the new town movement's idealist visions of social equality and justice, rooted in Howardian social utopianism, and describes new towns as the "deus ex machina of the welfare state" (Wakeman, 2016: 49). However, she also notes how social hierarchies were embedded in the idealist visions for Tapiola (manifested, e.g., as the grander buildings' better views over natural scenery), and Tapiola soon gained a reputation as an area for the better-off (Wakeman, 2016: 97). In an unpublished response to a polemical book that criticised Tapiola as a "village of better people" (Hiisiö, 1970), von Hertzen asks with slight bafflement what is wrong with "the upper middle class [becoming] an object of imitation" (quoted in Pantzar, 2013: 26).

Von Hertzen's reaction highlights how the welfare state (at least the Social Democratic welfare state) might not be the best frame for interpreting Västoliitto's housing policy efforts. While there certainly were genuine aspirations to improve the life of individuals, and Västoliitto's housing policy ideology was rooted in social reformist and social utopian ideas, the starting point and objective was nevertheless to normalise the home cult, i.e., a pronatalist bourgeois lifestyle, rather than enabling different lifestyles in a pluralist spirit.

While von Hertzen hailed Tapiola as a success story, which indeed ticked several boxes in accordance with *Homes or Barracks for Our Children*, it did not meet all of von Hertzen's or Västoliitto's requirements and wishes. Von Hertzen had to cave in to tenements towards which he had a profound antipathy – and not just any tenements, but ten-floor block houses, which were portrayed as an abomination in the pamphlet. In addition, Tapiola would have its own movie theatres,

cafés and even bars, which von Hertzen saw as detrimental. (This is also discussed in Pantzar (2013) from a consumer research perspective.) To further add to the insult, by the 1970s, Tapiola had developed to the opposite of what was envisioned for it: an individualistic, urban, consumerist community that relied on private transport (Pantzar, 2013; see also Wakeman, 2016: 97–98).

Nevertheless, at the time of its planning and construction in the late 1940s and the 1950s, Tapiola can be regarded as a success for Västoliitto and its housing policy actors. Where motivational framing in the form of propaganda and ARAVA fell somewhat short, Tapiola was a significant step towards the ideal housing policy in accordance with the prognostic framing of Västoliitto. The garden city suburb was believed to act as a buffer against uncontrollable urbanisation, which would lead to unhealthy housing. Despite the initial and eventual shortcomings of Tapiola (from the perspective of von Hertzen et al.), its town plan was in accordance with Meurman's residential suburb plans with its residential cells, 'city', vast green areas, short distances, and so forth. The technical conveniences of the block houses facilitated domestic work, which reinforced the home cult with a modern touch. All of this was believed to encourage reproduction in happy families and provide suitable social, health and moral conditions for children and families.

## Conclusions

The housing policy of Västoliitto during the 1940s and early 1950s forms an interesting example of the construction of a social problem. From the perspective of frame analysis, it includes all three framing tasks as well as discursive methods. Through diagnostic framing and deliberate rhetoric, Västoliitto established an unproblematised image of urban housing, or 'barrack cities', as detrimental, unnatural and downright dangerous on a social and societal level. As the opposite, Västoliitto represented garden cities as the ideal and natural option. This was connected to the main objective of Västoliitto, namely, pronatalist population policy.

The diagnostic framing was not constructed on a whim, but was a result of meticulous inves-

tigation and research, including study and inspiration trips abroad. Directing housing policy in Finland towards garden cities was thus a part of prognostic framing – an attempt to distinguish the means for combatting the problem and preventing it from spreading and arising in the future. In order to achieve this goal, Väestöliitto attempted to influence both decision-makers and the general public through propaganda.

These processes of diagnostic and prognostic framing also included knowledge production. Väestöliitto studied housing policy from a problem-identification and problem-solving perspective: it attempted to recognise the core of the problem and develop methods for addressing it. These methods were based both on theory as well as practice (examples from abroad) and were not intended to remain mere written words. On the contrary, the goal was to spread this knowledge among decision-makers in order to transform it into practical reality. ARAVA can be seen to have come to being partially as a result of this influence.

However, when this means for addressing the problem proved to not quite have the impact Väestöliitto sought (i.e., the shortcomings of ARAVA), the association proceeded to a new form of prognostic and motivational framing. Namely, planning, developing and finally realising its own housing policy project. In this project, the association could act according to its own goals and ideals, in which it by and large succeeded at the time, even if the development later on proved to take the opposite trajectory of what was intended.

In the course of these processes, Väestöliitto established an expert role within Finnish housing

policy quarters. A demonstration of the acknowledgement of this expertise was for example that von Hertzen was invited to as a member to the committee that drafted the ARAVA agency and laws, and that the government requested statements from Väestöliitto on diverse housing policy matters. The influential editorial staff of *Housing Policy*, published by Väestöliitto, also shows that the association was reckoned as a serious actor within the field.

In addition to being a very concrete means for addressing the housing problem, the Tapiola project was also a new level in the housing policy expertise of Väestöliitto. Väestöliitto regarded the project as a pioneer within Finnish housing policy, and one can say that the view was indeed justified – the project was the first of its kind, and Tapiola can be regarded as the first Finnish modern suburb. Väestöliitto certainly did “do something”, and from its perspective, it did “show that better housing and communities can be produced also in practice”.

## Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland and the Finnish Cultural Foundation.

I wish to thank my supervisors, professor Pauli Kettunen (University of Helsinki) and university lecturer Johan Strang (University of Helsinki), as well as my anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments, which helped me improve my manuscript.



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## **Appendix 1:**

### ***Archival sources***

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