

Household Shelter Strategies in Comparative Perspective: Evidence from Low-Income Groups in Bamako and La Paz

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Summary. — This article focuses on the shelter strategies of low-income households in Bamako, Mali and La Paz, Bolivia. The structure of the land and housing markets conditions the range of shelter alternatives available to the poor in both cities. Land and housing markets in La Paz show more dynamism than Bamako's, where housing turnover is rare, and filtering processes are slow. Bamako's land and housing markets are characterized by a poor record of shelter improvement; lower rates of mobility to new housing opportunities on the periphery; and more constrained access to home ownership than in La Paz. It is argued that shelter strategies are not determined by structural constraints only. Within the scope of available options, the poor themselves decide what particular alternative will be employed to improve shelter conditions of the household. City-born residents prove to be more fortunate than migrants in securing appropriate shelter.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years the concept of shelter strategies has rapidly come to the fore. The meaning of the concept, however, varies with the purpose for which it is used. Thus, in order to enhance the capacity of shelter delivery systems or to alleviate strains on urban land and housing markets, national shelter programs have been launched by many Third World governments. The UN Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS) has produced a policy document entitled *The Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000*. This "global" strategy emphasizes the role of international assistance in support of the implementation of national shelter strategies, while recognizing the importance of non governmental and community-based organizations and accentuating the enabling approach (UNCHS, 1988; 1989; Urban Edge, 1988). Above all, the global shelter strategy is meant to function as a framework for future action.

In this paper, we will focus on the shelter strategies of the very poor themselves, pursuing their own "housing solutions," largely independent of government housing policies. This is not to deny the importance of national or local housing policies; on the contrary, it is by way of appropriate enabling policies in particular that the poor can be assisted in gaining access to adequate shelter in the cities of the Third World.

It is obvious, however, that most national shelter programs have been no more than partial palliatives for the urban lower classes and that the beneficiaries of those programs represent only a very small proportion of the total number of people in need of housing (Cohen, 1988, p. 114). This is certainly the case in Mali and in Bolivia, countries ranking among the poorest in their respective regions, whose settlement upgrading and sites-and-services schemes in the principal cities Bamako and La Paz have never succeeded in moving beyond the pilot project phase. Since government policies have failed to generate a sufficient supply — let alone a sufficiently differentiated supply — of housing to meet the demands of increasing numbers of low-income households, the mass of population in both of our research cities has to secure adequate shelter by its own effort. Unless major changes in urban planning, taxation policies, and land markets are carried out, no shelter policy is likely to alter this reality in the foreseeable future. Therefore, it is most appropriate to consider various shelter

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strategies from the perspective of the low-income households themselves.

In this study, we will first present a brief description of the main shelter strategies employed by low-income households in Third World cities. In Section 3, some relevant background information is given about the cities in which our research was done: Bamako and La Paz. Then, low-income shelter strategies in both cities are analyzed. After an examination of the main similarities and differences which surface in the cross-cultural analysis, we will assess the major reasons for the specific patterns found in both cities. The paper concludes with some implications for theory and policy.

2. HOUSEHOLD SHELTER STRATEGIES

Three main modalities of shelter strategies of the urban poor may be distinguished. The importance and actual employment of each strategy depend in large measure upon the particular structure of a city's land and housing markets and upon the wider economic structure. The timing of each of the relevant strategy options, however, will be largely determined by the household's changing needs. The first strategy is of vital importance to migrant households and new households of local origin alike, and involves gaining access to shelter in the city for the first time. The other two shelter strategies concern the successive improvements of the household's position in the urban land and housing markets. This may be achieved either by moving to another location (the second strategy); or by the progressive improvement of the housing environment and the occupied dwelling (the third strategy).

The typical starting point for new households in the city is in non-owned shelter. A major strategy to secure entry to the urban housing market is to share the first house with friends or kin, for which some sort of rent may or may not be paid (Afolayan, 1982; Riofrío and Driant, 1987; Vaughan and Feindt, 1973). New households of local origin consisting of young couples without children frequently live for some time with their parents. If possible, they often prefer to live separate from the related household, both financially and physically. In the context of Third World cities, residence with kin and friends does not necessarily mean that the various households live together under the same roof. Particularly in the self-built settlements on the city's periphery, houses are often expanded horizontally, and new "rooms" are built away from the core unit. The common entrance to the

"house" is the gate in the fence which encloses the plot, but the various domestic units are located in separate structures. Thus, their privacy is assured to some extent and people do not live in extremely close quarters as is often the case in more centrally located residential districts.

This also holds for a major part of the rental submarket in many Third World cities. In the past, it has often been assumed that the rental housing stock is essentially limited to the so-called "central city tenement districts." There is now, however, ample evidence that the household rental sector in the self-built neighborhoods constitutes a major segment of many cities' rental housing market (Edwards, 1982, 1983; Gilbert and Varley, 1990a; Ozo, 1986). Most newcomers to the city -- and many locally born residents -- resort to rented or shared accommodation. As a consequence of the spatial distribution of this type of housing opportunity, these "starters" in the urban housing market are bound to settle increasingly on the self-built periphery.

For those who have already found housing within the city, shelter strategies tend to focus primarily on improving the household's position on the land and housing markets. Moving the household is one important strategy by which this may be achieved.

Specific motives for moving to some other place vary. One of many tenants' and sharers' highest ambitions is home ownership, not in the least because this would greatly enhance their control over their direct living environment. Others are in great need of shelter which might offer more living space or more privacy to the expanding household than current accommodations (Mainet, 1979). Self-help construction is one of the few viable alternatives open to the urban poor to meet these housing preferences adequately. Consequently, and depending upon the characteristics of the particular land and housing markets, acquisition of a lot in a (clandestine) subdivision or participation in an invasion movement are two options favored by the urban poor (Baross and Van der Linden, 1990; Durand-Lasserve, 1986; Gilbert, 1981). Like the initial settlement of newly formed households in the city, subsequent relocation decision making, too, is influenced by kinship networks (Conway and Brown, 1980). Whatever the specific motives or alternatives, however, a fairly universal rule of intracity mobility of low-income households is that households will not move into new urban space unless the balance of tenure conditions and (actual or potential) housing standards compare favorably with those of the vacated dwellings.

The other strategy employed by the urban poor in their quest for adequate shelter is the *in*

situ improvement and/or enlargement of the structures they already occupy. This type of shelter strategy is most common among owner-occupiers living in self-built neighborhoods. Various factors contribute to the likelihood of dwelling consolidation, security of tenure being the most important (Abrams, 1966; Struyk and Lynn, 1983; Turner, 1963). Others have rightly argued that this does not mean that a legal title is a necessary precondition for housing improvement: the relevant point is whether the residents assess their tenure as being secure (Angel, 1983; Doebele, 1983; Varley, 1987 and 1989). This perception may be influenced positively by the provision of public utilities in the settlement, the collection of real estate taxes, and other measures which might be explained as signs of *de facto* government recognition (Van der Linden, 1977). Strassmann has repeatedly stressed the importance of infrastructure provision, in particular the installation of indoor piped water and sewerage systems (Strassmann, 1980, 1982). Such infrastructure is the prime factor explaining the variance in the general levels of housing improvement among different neighborhoods. According to Strassmann, "Differences in income mainly determine which *type* of improvement households choose to make. The *rate* of improvement, however, roughly doubles with access to infrastructure" (Strassmann, 1984, p. 743). Others have focused their research more explicitly on the factors accounting for differential housing improvement between individual households in self-built neighborhoods. In doing so, Ward (1978, 1982) argued that a household's capacity to create an "investment surplus" is a major variable explaining dwelling consolidation. Moreover, Ward demonstrates that it is not always the original settler group that is responsible for the dwelling improvements: "today many of the better consolidated dwellings in the settlement — visually very distinctive — were constructed by households who were not original squatters" (Ward, 1982 p. 188). Indeed, where housing turnover is an important force in restructuring the settlement, attention should also be given to the residential mobility aspect of dwelling consolidation (Engelhardt, 1988, p. 17).

This description of household shelter strategies is very general and, of course, far from complete. In particular, two specific observations are pertinent here. First, it is important to note that the suggested connections between types of actors and types of actions bear no causal relationship whatsoever. To give an example, renting is by no means the exclusive domain of starters in the housing market. As a consequence of prevailing housing market conditions in a particular city,

many households may find themselves forced to rent or to lodge with kin during a prolonged phase of the domestic cycle (Necochea, 1987). In the West African context, it has been argued that many migrants prefer non-owned accommodation as they view their stay in the city as transitory (O'Connor, 1983; Peil, 1976). On the other hand, some low-income households may buy a house or a lot to build on from the very start — provided that they are not wholly without means. As was documented by Köster (1989), this proved to be a fairly general pattern among migrants of the middle- and upper-income strata who settled in La Paz. Conway and Brown (1980, p. 116) found for the capital city of Trinidad, Port of Spain, "firm evidence that a proportion of (low-income) in-migrants are omitting the initial steps of bridgeheading in either the central city or the inner zones and moving directly to owner-occupancy in the new peripheral settlements." Hoenderdos and Verbeek have demonstrated that more than one-quarter of the total population living in Chihuahua's low-income *colonias* had indeed moved directly into ownership; the corresponding figure for two other Northern Mexican cities (Ciudad Juárez and San Luis Potosí) amounting to some 15% (Hoenderdos and Verbeek, 1989, p. 56). In Valencia, Venezuela, one-fifth of all migrants settled as owner-occupiers in the city's peripheral invasion settlements immediately on arrival (Gilbert and Ward, 1982, p. 136).

Our second observation refers to the well-known Turner (1968, 1969) model, which depicts the above strategies for low-income migrants in an explicitly spatial framework. In this model, residential mobility and self-built housing are considered to result primarily from shifts in the housing priorities of the migrants. Recently-arrived migrants to the city would prefer accommodation in the central tenement districts, their main concern being to secure employment. Renting yields them a high degree of flexibility. At some later stage in the domestic cycle — when the household has expanded and income opportunities have become stabilized — the migrants' priorities change and self-built housing on the periphery will better meet their needs (Turner, 1968, 1969).

A major criticism of this model concerns its basically voluntaristic perspective. Housing patterns of the urban poor may be less the result of their individual demands and choices than they are determined by supply shortages in the urban land and housing markets, and by general financial and institutional constraints (Brett, 1974; Leeds, 1974). Initial settlement, subsequent housing moves, and self-help construction on the

periphery depend in large measure on differential access to the various land and housing market segments in the city — and so do the housing careers of individual households. Similarly, shelter strategies depend upon the wider city structures, urban planning and housing policies, local politics, and on many other city-specific conditions (see Bähr, 1986; Edwards, 1983; Gilbert, 1983; Gilbert and Varley, 1990b; Gilbert and Ward, 1982; Mertins, 1985).

The validity of this stance is highly probable. It seems obvious, for example, that households living in cities where land is basically a market commodity will resort to shelter strategies different from those which will prevail in societies where customary land tenure and land allocation procedures prevail. It would come as a surprise if crosscultural research were to reveal that shelter strategies of the urban poor are characterized by quite uniform patterns and processes, independent of variations in the political-economic contexts of the cities studied.

Yet, we agree with Green that “Turner’s model remains useful to an evaluation of household choice. Although choices can only be made within the constraints which determine what is available, where and at what price, even the most disadvantaged section of the population usually has more than one alternative to choose from” (Green, 1988, p. 251). Thus, the study of household shelter strategies and their spatial implications should consider at all times the structural contexts within which housing careers are taking shape. In this paper we will analyze the shelter strategies of the poor in two very different contexts: Bamako, Mali and La Paz, Bolivia.

Our purpose is to assess the main similarities and differences in household shelter strategies and to establish if — and how — these have been influenced by locally specific conditions. The study’s principal focus is on the predominant pattern of residential mobility and its major shifts over time. The improvement, enlargement and servicing of self-built accommodation in the cities’ peripheries (that is, the strategy of dwelling consolidation) will be treated implicitly. Shelter conditions in central city areas, in older self-help neighborhoods and in the settlements of recent origin will be compared. The theme of housing tenure dynamics will be mainly dealt with as a mobility-related issue. Special attention will be given to the question of whether migrants to either city employ shelter strategies different from those exercised by city-born families.

To this end, sampling frames were devised for both cities, using a uniform methodology but allowing for local adaptations. Sampling frames

were stratified in order to make sure that sufficiently large numbers of respondents in each of the different low-income housing market segments would be included in the surveys. Information was gathered on 1,541 households in Bamako and on 1,485 households in La Paz, living either in the central areas or in one of the peripheral, self-built neighborhoods. In consideration of the dynamics of these self-built settlements, a further distinction was made between those of relatively recent formation and the older, more consolidated neighborhoods. The resulting concepts of a *recent periphery* and a *former periphery*, which we will use throughout the analysis, are based on the pioneering studies of Vaughan and Feindt (1973) and Ward (1976), who devised the methodology for their intracity mobility surveys in Monterrey, Mexico and Mexico City, respectively.

3. THE SETTINGS

Bamako and La Paz are both the principal cities of landlocked countries. Mali and Bolivia rank among the poorest countries of their respective continents. Rural areas in both countries are extremely poor; industrial development has never really succeeded in overcoming the import-substitution phase in Bolivia and has hardly made a start in Mali. Emigration from the impoverished countryside to neighboring countries has always been an important safety valve for subsistence. In view of the large population flows to Argentina and to the Côte d’Ivoire, it is obvious that neither La Paz nor Bamako functions as the only or even the main destination for rural emigrants. But nationally they certainly rank paramount as centers of attraction.

(a) Bamako

Bamako is the dominant urban center of a country with few economic attractions to Western business interests. Integration in the world capitalist economy during the colonial era brought little productive investment to Mali. Instead, its peasant economies were restructured as a labor reserve for the benefit of the flourishing export economies in neighboring coastal areas of West Africa. This structure left Mali with few resources of its own after independence in 1960. Initial attempts to pursue independent development ended in financial collapse and a military coup in 1968, followed by painful years of austerity and persistent crisis. Bamako’s pattern of urban growth reflects these

structural economic constraints. As the only significant urban concentration in the country, Bamako attracts more people than any other destination in Mali. Its present population may be estimated at some 800,000. Yet, in the face of persistent population growth, the city's resource base has gradually eroded, especially since the 1968 coup ended relative municipal autonomy. Available data show a gradual decline in per capita municipal spending. Most money is spent to keep the extant colonial system of services operating. New housing districts are only crudely parcelled out and are rarely connected to the networks of electricity and pumped water supply, with the exception of one minor World Bank-sponsored sites-and-services scheme of recent years. Capitalist economic expansion since independence has been limited, and Bamako's central business district has hardly expanded into the surrounding residential areas. Partly as a result of prevailing economic stagnation, the social differentiation of the city's housing areas is not very marked, although the postindependence period has witnessed the rise of a few elite residential areas.

Bamako's rate of population growth averaged about 7.5% per year during the first half of the 1980s, tending to decrease gradually. In that period, some 55–60% of this growth was generated by immigration. Migrants traditionally originate from the savanna lands surrounding the city. In recent years, more distant parts of Mali have come to play a more important role as a source area of migrants (Van Westen and Klute, 1986).

Government and related services, as well as trade and transport are the only significant employers in Bamako. According to 1983 data, the state employs some 12% of the total urban labor force. Industrial activities, public utilities included, account for no more than 4% of all urban workers, while total "formal" employment (i.e., with registered employers and covered by social security regulations) does not attain 32%. This even includes students with a state grant. Obviously, a wide array of small-scale activities, mostly in trade and services, absorbs most of Bamako's labor force, and its share is increasing gradually. Employment opportunities are concentrated in the central area. On a modest scale, decentralization of employment opportunities takes place, as some activities are relocated to the south bank of the Niger, where more space and better access to the national road network are available.

The urban land and housing markets are an important factor influencing low-income shelter strategies. The Malian system of land tenure is

dominated by the state — at least on paper. State involvement in the allocation of land has its roots in French colonial practice. The central part of Bamako was reserved for use by Europeans, while allotments in the periphery were issued in usufruct to the African population. The vast majority of Bamako's "owner-occupiers" still live on plots in regular wards that nominally belong to the state, but have a high security of tenure, close to formal ownership. In the rural areas surrounding the city, customary land tenure arrangements persisted throughout the colonial period. In recent decades, Bamako's expansion into these rural areas has initiated tensions between the two modes of land tenure. On the one hand, formal land acquisition and distribution by government organizations deprives rural communities of their traditional rights in favor of urban beneficiaries. On the other hand, the growing demand for residential land in the peri-urban areas provides retainers of traditional land rights and an array of unethical brokers with opportunities for speculative land "sales," even though such sales do not imply transfers of legal titles. In this way, extensive spontaneous settlements have come into existence, accommodating a growing share of the urban population in a second-best situation, as formal housing and land supplies fall increasingly short of demand.

Squatter invasions are virtually unknown in Bamako. Unauthorized housing almost invariably complies with customary land rights, even though the commercialization of the land supply by traditional "owners" means a violation of traditional norms as well as of formal tenure legislation. Nevertheless, security of tenure is an important determinant of the quality of housing in Bamako. In contrast to the experience of most Latin American cities, quality improvement over time is not very marked in the Malian capital. Self-built activities are largely directed toward expansion of the housing stock, and less so to the improvement of physical quality. The expansion of public services is also deficient (Table 1; see also Van Westen, 1987). Once a plot is secured — and usually walled in — the owner builds a house of simple rectangular rooms. In areas of regulated land tenure, many of the buildings are now made of durable materials, mostly cement blocks. Nevertheless, sun-dried mud bricks covered with cemented plastering are still the most common building material in Bamako, and completely dominate the spontaneous wards.

In the early years of its existence, the average Bamako house consists of a rather spacious courtyard, with one or more rooms on one side of the plot. This is the typical situation in new peripheral parts of the urban area. In the

Table 1. *Bamako and La Paz: Some basic housing and population characteristics of low-income zones*

	Bamako			La Paz		
	Center	Former periphery	Recent periphery	Center	Former periphery	Recent periphery
Public services (%)						
pipéd water	20	11	0	96	21	3
sewerage	7	0	0	93	11	2
electricity	64	21	0	99	97	68
Physical Quality Index*	116	114	100	219	133	100
Average number of rooms per household	4.1	2.3	2.8	1.6	2.3	2.1
Average number of inhabitants per room	2.1	2.2	1.9	2.2	1.9	1.9
Sex ratio†	107	113	107	90	98	109
Share of migrants (%)	29	47	51	40	65	77
Tenure conditions (%)						
owner/occupiers	39	28	47	13	41	52
renters	52	67	46	79	38	27
free of charge	9	5	7	8	21	20
Household types (%)						
single persons	13	24	12	21	9	13
nuclear families	32	36	37	42	71	72
extended nuclear units	20	15	28	6	6	6
single parent structures	13	12	9	17	6	4
polygamous households	20	12	13	—	—	—
other	2	1	1	14	8	5

*Physical Quality Index: average proportions of durable construction materials used in dwellings and mean size of dwelling (lowest value = 100).

†Sex Ratio: number of men per 100 women.

advanced stages, so many rooms have been added that the house is likely to occupy all of the plot, leaving one or two small inner courtyards as the only open spaces. Such old, more centrally located houses are the homes of old, established city households, extended families in the African sense of the term: not just home to more than two generations of relatives, but also providing shelter to different families of several siblings. In a polygamous society such as Mali's, a house in the second generation of a family can contain a score of subhouseholds.

(b) *La Paz*

In La Paz the processes of urban growth, social stratification and residential segregation prove to be closely interrelated. Detailed analyses of the structural context of La Paz were provided by Köster (1989) and Van Lindert and Verkoren (1982). With limitations on space we must be content here to point out that the main characteristics of the larger political economy of Bolivia are reproduced at the local level of La

Paz. The revolution of 1952 was a landmark in recent Bolivian history, if only for the liberation of rural labor and the rise of a new financial, commercial and industrial bourgeoisie. One of the effects of the gradual decomposition of the peasant economy has been the flow of labor to the cities, in particular from the deprived Altiplano provinces toward the capital cities of the various departments. Urban growth was not confined to the city of La Paz; other centers such as Cochabamba and Santa Cruz experienced equal or greater shares in Bolivian urban growth. The revolution has led to further intensification of (private and state) capitalist development along with the continued existence and/or recreation of precapitalist relations of production. Within La Paz, this global tendency is expressed in the accentuated division of labor and, concomitantly, in rather severe contradictions in the field of individual and collective consumption (Van Lindert, 1986). Obviously, the occurrence and direction of intracity mobility as well as the possibilities of housing improvement among the La Paz poor are very much influenced by these structural conditions.

La Paz's current rate of population growth, averaging 3.5% per year, is about half that of Bamako and is dominated by an estimated 2% immigration component. Its present population is about one million inhabitants (Anaya, 1987, p. 15; Fox, 1989, p. 94; *Presencia*, June 12, 1988). Most low-income migrants originate from nearby rural provinces of the Northern *Altiplano*. Being the nation's seat of government, La Paz has a labor market which is characterized by a relatively large share of government and administration related jobs. Also, the major part of the country's industrial apparatus is located in La Paz. Yet, no more than 40% of the total urban work force enjoys stable employment and a regular income in the government and large-scale private sectors. In the self-built neighborhoods petty production, distribution activities, and personal services account for some 63% of employment, most of which (38% of the total economically active population) consists of true self-employment (Casanovas, 1986, p. 155).

As in Bamako, most of the city's employment opportunities are to be found in the central areas. This holds true for both large-scale employment and for much of the small-scale and casual labor segments. Only recently has new industrial development taken place on the city's periphery, in an attempt to avoid the diseconomies related to a location in the now congested traditional industrial zone near the colonial city center. As in other Latin American cities, rising land values in the central parts of La Paz have driven up prices enormously. The elite has shifted its area of traditional residence in and around the city center to more comfortable dwellings in the better equipped neighborhoods of the southeastern suburbs. This area, locally known as El Bajo (The Lowland), is situated at an altitude of 3,200 meters — but still 400 meters below the level of the colonial city center. Consequently, in comparison with other zones in La Paz, environmental conditions are fairly pleasant here and, not surprisingly, the La Paz Urban Development Plan designates El Bajo as an area where future residential development will be designed primarily for higher income groups (HAM La Paz, 1977).

The old mansions in the central city have mostly been vacated by the upper classes. They have been either converted to commercial use or are rented by the room to lower income families. Until recently these so-called *conventillos* were an important segment of the low-income rental housing market in La Paz. From the early 1970s onward, however, the city center was gradually converted into a business district, in the course of which many *conventillos* were demolished —

their actual number in central La Paz is estimated at 350–400 (Beijaard, 1986). With an average occupancy of eight households per *conventillo* and household sizes in this type of shelter averaging 3.4 persons, however, the aggregate *conventillo* sector still accommodates more than 10,000 inhabitants — this being about half the total population living in the *Casco Urbano Central* (Van Lindert, 1989).

Situated at an altitude of more than 4,000 meters, the self-built settlements of the El Alto (The Highland) area offer the most opportunities for low-income shelter in La Paz. As the Central Basin (The Cuenca) no longer offers adequate space for new housing construction, almost all the new settlements arise on this inhospitable high plateau. Up until the 1953 land reform, this area was the sole domain of a few *haciendas* and *comunidades agrarias*, although some landowners had already begun to parcel out their lands in fear of expropriation (Urzagasti Aguilera, 1985). The Law on the Agrarian Reform provided for the allotment of the estate lands to former workers and tenant farmers, as well as for the privatization of the communal lands. In the area surrounding La Paz, however, large tracts of land were quickly concentrated once more in the hands of private developers, who themselves often rose from the ranks of the peasants. In particular, the official announcement of the La Paz Urban Development Plan gave rise to a spectacular upsurge of land transactions on the rural-urban fringe zones of the El Alto area from 1978 onward. In reality, the plan sanctioned the quasi-legal practice of subdivision, as it stated that future expansion of the city's cheap, low-quality housing stock was to take place mainly in El Alto. By 1968, when El Alto was officially incorporated into La Paz, an estimated 60,000 inhabitants already lived in its oldest settlements. According to official census data, out of a total La Paz population of 635,000, El Alto accommodated 95,000 inhabitants in 1976. It is now officially estimated that El Alto's total population has grown to at least 300,000 inhabitants; the *Federación de Juntas Vecinales* of El Alto contends that closer to 450,000 persons are actually living in this zone (*Presencia*, March 8, 1987). Though the *Federación's* claim should be judged within the context of the institution's incessant lobbying for real autonomy for El Alto (El Alto formally gained administrative independence in 1985), there are strong indications that the lion's share of La Paz's total population growth during the last decade must be attributed to the dynamic development of El Alto (Sandoval and Sostres, 1989).

Owner-occupiers in La Paz generally have

considerably secure tenure. Mass land seizures never have occurred in La Paz. The major mode of land supply for the poor continues to be subdivision. Only on the steep slopes of the central basin has some infiltration (or "colonization": see Burgess, 1985, p. 297) of vacant lands occurred, on a strict family-by-family basis. Here, too, people generally feel quite secure, as the local government has refrained from intervening against this practice. Moreover, many of these "squatters" are connected to the system of electricity supply within a short time, which adds to their sense of security (Table 1). This explains why self-builders in La Paz are willing to invest relatively large sums in the construction and the progressive improvement of their homes. Furthermore, the harsh climate of the *Altiplano* requires the residents to employ durable materials from the very beginning of their self-built efforts. Temporary shacks of makeshift materials are virtually unknown in La Paz and even the least consolidated structures consist entirely of locally made, sun-dried adobe blocks. Thus, the overall minimum physical quality of the La Paz dwellings is, in absolute terms, much higher than that in Bamako. To aid in the comparison of dwelling consolidation figures in both cities, indices of lowest physical shelter quality — in each city to be found in the settlements of most recent formation — were given a value of 100. Even then, Table 1 demonstrates markedly better performances of the self-builders in La Paz than in Bamako. In La Paz, dwelling consolidation is the combined effect of adding new rooms to the existing structures and of improvements in the construction materials, e.g., the plastering of adobe walls, the use of bricks in substitution for adobe, the hardening of earthen floors with cement, wood or tiles, etc. This is greatly at variance with the kind of consolidation that is occurring in Bamako's self-built settlements. In the Malian capital, "quality improvement" is often restricted to the gradual extension of the dwellings, residents appearing hesitant or unable to use better materials. Table 1 also shows that access to collective services in La Paz — while far from adequate — is clearly within the reach of more poor households than is the case in Bamako. In short, scores of dwelling and neighborhood consolidation efforts are markedly better in La Paz than in Bamako, and the same conclusion holds for consolidation rates.

4. SHELTER STRATEGIES IN BAMAKO

Until the late 1960s, the central wards of Bamako served as the main port of entry for

migrants into the housing market. Since then, the main receptor area for migrants has rapidly shifted outward. The intermediate zone performed this function for only a short time. In the course of the 1970s, the districts now defined as the "former periphery" have come to accommodate more new arrivals than the central and intermediate areas. In the 1980s the "recent periphery" took over rapidly, and spontaneous settlements play an increasingly important role as areas of first settlement. This specific trend is even more manifest among indigenous starters in the housing market. As for these native *Bamako-ka*, the central areas preserved the role of main receptor zone for an amazingly long period — until the late 1970s. In recent years, however, first independent addresses of Bamako-born households have spread out over the city, in an almost explosive shift toward the periphery. The role of the new spontaneous settlements is especially intriguing; comparison of the last two cohorts reveals a fivefold increase in the share of this part of the city as a location of first settlement.

After securing a first home, intracity mobility is often confined to the zone of initial occupation in Bamako. Only in the case of recently built, unauthorized housing does one find that the majority of dwellers began their housing careers in another part of the city. In central and transitional areas, around 90% have stayed in the same zone. Even in the neighborhoods of the former periphery, between 70% and 75% of the households in the survey had remained in the same area, or never moved at all. Most surprisingly, even in regular housing schemes more than half of the respondents started their housing careers in the same area. It appears that new extensions not only fall greatly short of demand for new residential land, but also that the few opportunities that are being created by the formal system of land supply do not benefit established households that seek to improve their shelter by moving. More than half of the new housing stock seems to be occupied by relatively wealthy migrant households (civil servants, merchants), or by less well-off kin who are allowed to stay in unfinished dwellings.

The low rate of interzonal mobility observed above does not mean that Bamako households are actually immobile. The survey data indicate that the vast majority of households have made at least one move in their housing careers (Table 2). Much of the mobility takes place over quite short distances, however.

An assessment of interzonal mobility shows that moves are essentially directed toward the periphery (Table 3). Only 3.8% of all relocated

Table 2. *Bamako and La Paz: Total number of moves within city (in %)*

	Bamako	La Paz
no move	28.9	25.7
one	43.2	39.1
two	18.7	22.0
three	6.6	9.1
four	1.9	2.7
five and more	0.7	1.3
<i>n</i> =	1541	1485

households in the sample had moved to a more central location in the urban complex. More than 35% had found a new dwelling place nearer the periphery. Cohort analysis of housing mobility points to a "watershed" in relocation behavior that took place between the coup d'état of 1968 and the end of the Sahelian drought in 1974. In those few years, political changes and a vast increase in drought-induced migration to Bamako altered the context of urban expansion. Initially, the transitional or intermediate area assumed the role of main foothold location, but not convincingly so and only very briefly. Two factors may explain this, the most important being the massive rate of urban growth in this period (over 10% yearly). The then-urban area could not absorb such numbers and in the rural-urban fringe direct settlement of the (now) former periphery took place. Another reason that the intermediate zone soon lost its importance as zone of entry is related to the social composition of this part of Bamako. The present "zone of transition" came into existence during 1945-60, a period of relative prosperity in Mali, when considerable infrastructural investment took place and the state bureaucracy was orga-

nized. Those who took control of the new nation — civil servants, the more successful businessmen and teachers, etc. — settled in this part of Bamako. Later starters would not experience such opportunities. Although far from being an elite area, this section does show a substantial overrepresentation of "white collar" workers, professionals and salaried people in general. Therefore, the area is less likely to offer cheap and easily accessible rental accommodation to new arrivals in the city.

Since the "watershed period" of the early 1970s, moves to areas of unauthorized housing have outnumbered those to authorized extensions of the city. The early 1970s witnessed considerable regular additions to the urban area, but these could not absorb the population growth. As the relatively meagre flow to regular extensions in the recent periphery shows, the authorized supply of new housing has more or less collapsed in recent years.

Analysis of cohort housing mobility behavior reveals that new trends are generally initiated by the migrant subpopulation. Both the movement to the periphery and the flow to unauthorized housing areas started with migrants, and were later adopted by city-born house seekers. The explanation of this trend is obviously the fact that migrants are subject to more pressing needs of finding their own shelter than the native born, who may stay with relatives for a longer period. Yet one interesting deviation from the model of migrant-led changes to mobility patterns can be observed. In the 1980s, the spontaneous settlements of the recent periphery developed into the single most important area of entry of indigenous starters in the housing market. Migrants still tend to begin their housing careers in Bamako's former periphery, however, more often in legal than in unauthorized housing. Thus, city-born households have recently taken the lead in

Table 3. *Intracity mobility in Bamako**

	Zone of present shelter				Total
	Central areas	Intermediate	Former periphery	Present periphery	
Zone of entry central	9.4	1.7	5.6	5.6	22.2
intermediate	0.9	11.6	4.4	5.0	21.5
former periphery	0.6	1.2	26.0	13.0	40.8
recent periphery	0	0.1	1.0	14.0	15.1
unknown	0	0	0.2	0.3	0.4
[<i>n</i> = 1089]	10.8	14.5	37.2	37.5	100%

*Nonmoving households excluded; table shows first and present location in percentage of all moving households

initiating spontaneous settlements in the periphery. Migrants need a port of entry, which usually is provided by relatives in the city; and the distribution of these relatives throughout the urban area defines the initial locations of new arrivals. This also helps explain why migrants are much more mobile than locally born people.

With respect to tenure conditions among Bamako's poor, we found that the drive for homeownership was an important motive for moving. In an idealized sequence model, households would move from free house sharing (with parents, other relatives, or friends) via rental to a home of their own. The Bamako data on successive entry cohorts reveal that, insofar as this sequence occurs, it takes a very long time indeed for most households to make the ownership jump (Figure 1). Closer scrutiny of the cohort data shows, in addition, that later entries into the housing market have gradually become less successful in attaining property. Let us consider the tenure mobility of the households that first appeared in the urban housing market in the 1960s, years of relatively slow growth between two periods of explosive expansion. Twenty percent of them made the jump to private property with the move to their second address in Bamako. The corresponding figure for the 1970-74 entry cohort (in a context of rapid population growth) was 17%, while the 1975-79 starters did not exceed 7% in the same phase of their relocation behavior. Moves, in sum, result less

often in homeownership than was previously the case.

On the other hand, there was a small group of respondents in our survey without financial constraints to secure ownership, which nevertheless chose to continue renting (Table 4). In particular, this group includes renters of the relatively new and comfortable housing in Bamako's most recently developed authorized housing areas. Most of them are civil servants who are subject to periodic transfers from one place to another. It is apparently not for lack of means that they decide not to buy a house in Bamako, and they are likely to own one in their "home" area. As may be inferred from Table 4, however, average household budgets of this category of renters are less than those of almost all owning households in Bamako — the only exception being the owner-occupier households on the spontaneous periphery. Thus, one may argue that some freedom of choice does exist for low-income renters, but the only alternative open to them (i.e., to own a house in a spontaneous settlement) would be very unattractive.

In tenure matters as well as in the direction of intracity mobility, the 1968-74 period was a turning point. The majority of households that entered the housing market before 1968 have found their way into a privately owned house, while those that started afterward have not (yet) reached the same share of homeownership as their predecessors. The 1958-61 period stands

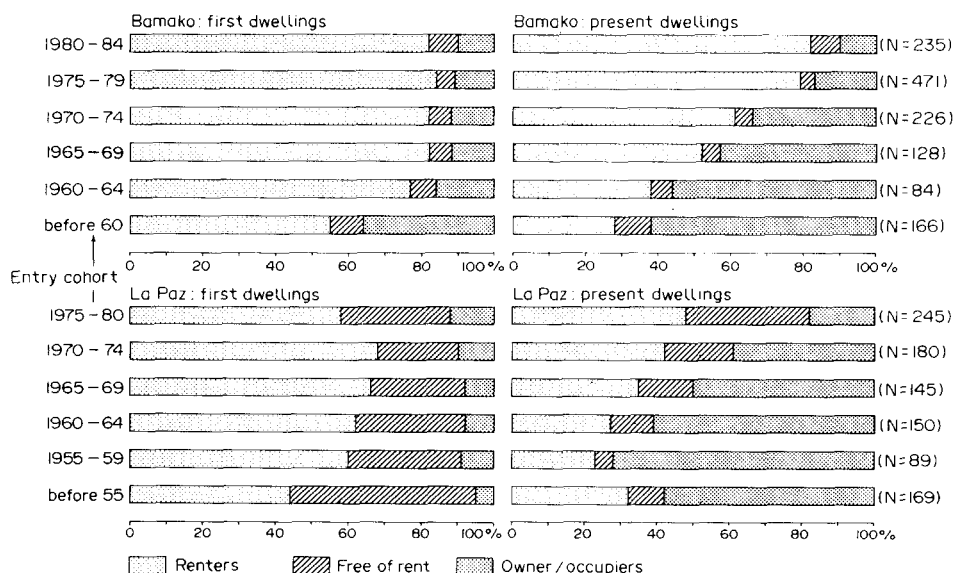


Figure 1. Bamako and La Paz: Housing tenure of first and current dwellings, by period of entry into the housing market (in percentage of entry cohorts).

Table 4. Bamako: Average monthly household budgets of owners and non-owners, according to housing area (in francs CFA, 1984)*

	Central areas	Intermediate	Former periphery	Present periphery
Regular settlements:				
Owner occupants	80,000	54,000	57,750	57,000
Non-owners	32,000	25,750	26,000	38,750
Spontaneous settlements:				
Owner occupants	—	—	41,100	34,000
Non-owners	—	—	26,000	23,750

*Rental incomes excluded.

out as an earlier turning point. Starters before this era of decolonization have largely attained home ownership in a regular city ward, whereas the entrants of the 1960s achieved ownership more often in the spontaneous periphery than in the city's authorized extensions. Both turning points occurred in periods of extreme population growth as a result of massive migrant settlement. Thus, in the case of Bamako, available evidence suggests a close link between the rate of immigration and the structure of the housing market (Van Westen, 1990). Bamako's frail reception structure absorbed the first great wave of migrants during 1958–60 decolonization period only by the creation of spontaneous (that is, insecure) housing, while previous entrants had always found their way to regular housing opportunities. The second great invasion of migrants (during the 1968–74 period of drought and political liberalization) has not yet been fully "digested" in terms of housing creation. This trend is confirmed by other reports on the increasing importance of rental housing.

5. SHELTER STRATEGIES IN LA PAZ

Until very recently, the many neighborhoods surrounding the central urban core served as the main port of entry for migrants to La Paz. Until the 1960s, this so-called intermediate or transitional zone received about 60% of the migrants. For the early entry cohorts the opportunities to find shelter were greatest in these (now) inner-ring neighborhoods. Yet, the role of the inner city as a receptor area for new migrants at that time must certainly not be underestimated: roughly one-third of all heads of household who arrived in La Paz before 1950 initially settled in one of the central city *conventillos*. The gradual decline in importance of the city center as a foothold

zone for migrants is matched by a steady growth of housing opportunities in the former periphery. In the 1955–75 period the intermediate zone and the former periphery received the majority of new arrivals. Toward the end of this period, the former periphery even drew level with the intermediate zone. Only from 1975 onward does the recent periphery come to the fore as an important zone of initial site selection, and then rather persuasively so. Since 1975 almost half of all new migrants have settled directly in the new neighborhoods of the city's recent periphery, leaving all other areas far behind.

For city-born heads of household, the central city *conventillos* have not yet lost their role as zone of entry into the housing market as clearly as is the case for migrants. One out of every five city-born families still commences its housing career in this *conventillo* zone. The gradual decline in importance of the intermediate zone as the foothold area for city-born *Paceños* parallels the trend for migrants revealed above, as does the tendency of the former periphery to adopt an ever-growing share of new starters in the housing market. Yet, a marked distinction between the rates of change should be mentioned. The demise of the intermediate zone as main receptor area has been more definitive and more abrupt for migrants than for city-born households. In addition, locally born residents continue to select the former periphery as zone of entry in increasing proportions, while this area clearly has passed its peak of attraction for new migrant arrivals. Finally, for city-born families the neighborhoods of the recent periphery have rarely been seen as potential points of entry into the housing market, at least until now. In La Paz, the low-income migrant population clearly sets an example for the autochtone urban poor in occupying the new peripheral self-built neighborhoods. This conclusion holds true for the processes of first residential site selection of both

groups, but even more so for subsequent intra urban mobility patterns.

As in Bamako, a large proportion of the mobility component consists of intrazonal moves. Yet, in each of the distinct zones this figure is considerably lower than the corresponding shares in Bamako. Even if we include the households which have not yet moved out of their first dwelling, only slightly over 30% of the households in the recent periphery have always lived there and almost half of all families in the former periphery have never lived in any other area. *Conventillo* inhabitants prove to be the most stable dwellers; 71% of this group has never lived outside the *conventillo* zone.

For an accurate assessment of the spatial directions of the intracity moves, however, we should exclude the households that have never moved at all. Thus, Table 5 presents relative frequencies of zones of entry and current zones of residence for all low-income households which have moved at least once within La Paz. Moves within the same zone are significant. This holds true in particular for the moves within and between the various neighborhoods of the former periphery (19%). But again, intrazonal moves are definitely not the rule to the extent that they are in Bamako; in La Paz, outward mobility within the urban area is much more the universal pattern. Particularly important are moves from the intermediate zone to the former periphery and to the recent periphery, as well as those from the former periphery to the recent periphery. Yet, an inward-bound flow comprising some 9% of all moves also occurs in La Paz. This flow has been a persistent feature among all entry cohorts. In this respect, the role of mobility toward the central *conventillos* deserves some elaboration. As we learned before, the *conventillos* still play a part in accommodating city-born people at the very start of their independent housing careers. Once they have settled in the city center, they

prove to be remarkably stable. Now we may add to this the observation that all inward moves from the intermediate zone to the *conventillos* for each period were made by indigenous *Paceño* families. Admittedly, migrant households of our sample sometimes also move inwardly, but never into the central *conventillos*. Moreover, most of them eventually end up in the former periphery.

Obviously, even though many of the *conventillos* in La Paz have been demolished in the course of recent high-rise city development, a considerable number of city-born families succeed in securing accommodation in the remaining *conventillos*. Since no new cheap rental housing opportunities are added to the existing stock in the central area, this phenomenon may only be explained by the continued processes of filtering and housing turnover in the *conventillos*. In Bamako, however, centrally located housing does not seem to be an attractive alternative for low-income families and, more importantly, neither does it appear to be a real option for the urban poor. As long-time Bamako families are unlikely to dispose of their compounds, housing turnover in the central areas is very low, which adds to the virtual saturation of this housing market segment in the Malian capital.

Having established that mobility in La Paz is not occurring primarily within the limits of certain zones (as is the general pattern in Bamako), we further briefly address the question of whether the rates of mobility in La Paz and Bamako differ as well. Comparing total frequencies of moves among the *Bamakoka* and *Paceño* poor, overall recorded intracity mobility proves to be slightly more frequent in the Bolivian city (Table 2). In both cities households are most frequently reported to have experienced only one move in the city, but in La Paz the share of housing careers with multiple moves (35.1%) exceeds the Bamako figure (27.9%). This feature coincides with longer distance mobility as a more

Table 5. *Intracity mobility in La Paz**

	Zone of present shelter			
	Central area	Former periphery	Recent periphery	Total
Zone of entry central	2.8	2.1	1.8	6.7
intermediate	5.4	24.9	19.8	50.1
former periphery	1.5	19.0	16.0	36.5
recent periphery	0	1.9	4.8	6.7
[n = 939]	9.7	47.9	42.4	100%

*Nonmoving households excluded, table shows first and present location in percentage of all moving households.

general phenomenon in La Paz than in Bamako.

With respect to the shifts in tenure conditions that parallel the housing moves of the low-income groups in La Paz, it is evident that the change from rental accommodation to plot ownership is the characteristic pattern. The great majority of new starters in the housing market are initially lodged under sharing or rental arrangements. This holds true for migrants and city-born households alike, as well as for each entry cohort. As described elsewhere (Hoenderdos, Van Lindert and Verkoren, 1983), the process of becoming a homeowner in La Paz is rather time consuming compared with general experience in urban Latin America. It was argued that household incomes and the saving capacity of domestic units were major explanatory variables for this divergence. From Figure 1 we may infer that the poor of La Paz generally attain ownership considerably faster than the lower classes in Bamako. Again the less favorable household income positions in the Malian capital city certainly account partly for this divergence. In addition, factors relating to the structural contexts of both cities play an important part.

We will now conclude this summary of intra-city mobility in La Paz with a final comment on migrant-native differences in tenure mobility strategies. At first glance, the data from our research would lead to the rather surprising conclusion that migrant households appear to be more "successful" than La Paz-born residents in buying or building a house of their own. Our data reveal that currently only 36% of all interviewed city-born households are owner-occupiers, against some 45% of all migrant households. It would be erroneous, however, to infer that migrants have better chances at ownership than indigenous residents.

Most indigenous families started their housing careers within, or in the vicinity of, the central urban core. Their subsequent moves were predominantly toward nearby neighborhoods within the city's Cuenca area. Migrant households, instead, vastly outnumber families of local origin in the relatively recent peripheral settlements of El Alto. Furthermore, especially in the centrally located *conventillos*, the population is very stable and even appears to be rather unwilling to move elsewhere. A comparison of mean household incomes for the various resident categories is most telling in this respect: *conventillo* tenants definitely have more resources than owner-occupiers in recent settlements and their income situation is also slightly better than that of homeowners in the former periphery (Table 6). Our argument may be extended to the tenants of

Table 6. *La Paz: Average monthly household budgets of owners and non-owners, according to housing area (in Bolivian pesos, 1980)**

	Central areas	Former periphery	Present periphery
Owners	4,352	3,719	3,224
Non-owners	3,948	3,563	2,553

*Rental incomes excluded.

the consolidated neighborhoods: their incomes are higher on average than those of the owners in the city's far periphery and thus, these tenants would likely be capable of moving into ownership in the periphery if they wished to.

Indeed, we infer from these income data that many renting households in La Paz value a centrally located dwelling higher than home ownership alone. Families of local origin succeed better than migrant households in avoiding settlement in the more distant neighborhoods, particularly those of the inhospitable El Alto area. Insofar as possible, owning in a central location will certainly be the preferred solution. As such, relocation toward a self-built plot in one of the more consolidated neighborhoods of La Paz's central basin would serve two purposes for every low-income household in the city. Under current conditions, migrant families appear to be much less fortunate than indigenous households in this respect — but for natives, too, land and housing market opportunities in the central basin are getting more restricted. This explains why so many choose to continue renting instead of moving into ownership in one of El Alto's recent settlements.

6. A CROSS CULTURAL COMPARISON

Comparison of low-income shelter strategies in such diverse cities as Bamako and La Paz reveals some striking contrasts. Before discussing these differences, however, it is perhaps pertinent to stress some of the main unexpected similarities between Bamako and La Paz.

First, neither in Bamako nor in La Paz do present-day housing careers of the poor begin in the central areas, as the Turner postulates would suggest. On the other hand, cohort analysis revealed that earlier entry cohorts did indeed settle in the central areas, moving on to some peripheral self-help settlement at a later stage in the domestic cycle. From about the mid-1950s onward, new migrant arrivals in La Paz apparently had no choice but to settle in outlying

neighborhoods, most notably in one of the many wards of the intermediate zone. In Bamako, migrants continued to start their housing careers predominantly in the central zone until the late 1960s — and in proportions which were greater than they have ever been in La Paz. Second, these trends toward a gradual decline of the city center as a point of entry and the concomitant outward shifts in settlement patterns have been distinctly more pronounced for low-income migrants than for the city-born poor in both cities. Third, both cities show the presence of a stable, somewhat more prosperous indigenous population in or near the center. Specific characteristics of the local housing markets make these natives tenants in La Paz's *conventillos*, and owner-occupiers in Bamako's colonial wards. Finally, both in Bamako and in La Paz the global sequence in tenancy mobility ideally runs from free or rented accommodation toward ownership.

Equally interesting, however, are the differences recorded in this comparison of household shelter strategies in a Malian and a Bolivian context. Starting with the contrasts in neighborhood and dwelling consolidation, there is a wide gap between housing standards in La Paz and those in Bamako (see Table 1). In Bamako, servicing is defective, and physical improvement in the self-built settlements and even dwelling maintenance are given little attention. In contrast, on the very periphery of La Paz the lowest-income households normally take great pains to invest in their shelter and to improve the structures whenever the opportunity presents itself. Although for the objective observer servicing levels in La Paz's self-built neighborhoods are obviously very low, the important difference with Bamako is that sewerage, water and electricity provision does exist in some measure — and that the future extension of service networks into the most recent settlements appears to be mainly a matter of time.

These differences in neighborhood consolidation are the consequence of various forces that operate in both cities. Most importantly, the universal constraint of urban government finance comes to the fore (Buckley and Renaud, 1989; Linn, 1981; Prakash, 1988). Urban tax revenues are virtually nonexistent in Bamako and very low in La Paz. Broad levels of economic development are reflected in the transfers of money from the national government to the city administration: amounts of such transfers are more significant in Bolivia than in Mali. In the early 1980s total yearly budgets of the Bamako area amounted to the equivalent of less than four million dollars (one billion CFA in 1982–84). Of these budgets, only some 800,000 dollars were devoted each

year to new investments in urban infrastructure and about two million dollars were reserved for the operation and maintenance of existing services and equipment. The remaining share of the budget was destined for wages and salaries. Compared with La Paz these are rather bleak figures. In the 1972–78 period, when Bolivia experienced its own sort of "economic miracle," La Paz saw years of relative financial buoyancy with municipal budgets sometimes totaling up to 38 million dollars per year. In the last decade of economic crisis and adjustment policies, however, municipal resources declined to a yearly average of 18 million dollars, of which some 8 million were destined for investments in urban infrastructure (Aramayo Bernal, 1987, p. 54). It is pertinent to note that these figures include the various loans for urban development obtained from international financial institutions, most importantly from the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank. As Hewitt (1989) records in her overview of international loans for urban development, Africa received only a minor proportion of all money flows, while Latin America received a major share of the loans. Of course, both Bolivia and Mali rank among the most unimportant recipients of their respective continents, but international loans for urban development in La Paz have been far from insignificant relative to the city's own resources. In Bamako, however, international money transfers into urban development have been negligible. These differences in financial capacity between the two cities have obvious results for the aggregate levels of collective services provided.

Urban politics play an essential role in the allocation of scarce resources. It is true that the inadequate expansion of public services in Third World urban low-income neighborhoods must be attributed primarily to politically defined priorities in the distribution of public funds (Singer, 1982, p. 284). This will be all the more so if residential segregation persists under conditions of relative abundance and economic development, as was the case in La Paz during much of the 1970s. In many other Latin American cities, territorially based social organizations have come into existence as a reaction to essential deficiencies in the living environment of the poor. Some of these movements have proven to be quite successful indeed, at least in some instances. This success has been amply documented for the squatter movements in such diverse cities as Santiago (Castells, 1983; Klaarhamer, 1989), Lima (Henry, 1978; Wagner, 1988), Guayaquil (Moser, 1982; Rodríguez and Villavicencio, 1982), São Paulo (Boran, 1989; Roussel, 1988), Vitória (Banck and Doimo, 1989), and also in

various, mostly Northern Mexican cities (Pozas Garza, 1989; Van Lindert and Verkoren, 1986; Vellinga, 1986; Verbeek, 1987). There is also evidence on popular movements regarding urban public services (Bennett, 1989; Jacobi-Neru, 1987; Ramírez Sáiz, 1986; Zolezzi and Calderón, 1985). In La Paz, however, there is no political struggle for land or for urban services waged between *barrio* inhabitants and state institutions. As in so many other cities of Latin America (Burgess, 1986; Gay, 1990; Gilbert and Ward, 1984, 1985; Melé, 1986; Ward, 1981) the *Juntas de Vecinos* of La Paz tend to express their demands for better services by cooperating and bargaining with the local governmental bodies rather than by actively opposing them. Obviously, the effects of this strategy of collective negotiation differ according to the influence the various neighborhood leaders are able to exert on the respective state institutions — this being a matter of cultivating personal connections rather than of obeying the formally established procedures. Many neighborhood organizations in La Paz have no leverage capacity whatsoever as their leaders have no access to the key agents who decide on the allocation of the collective services (Urzagasti Aguilera, 1985; Van Lindert, 1986). The point is, however, that there is mobilization around neighborhood issues in La Paz and that demands for better services have been effective to some extent.

In Bamako such demand-making organizations are virtually nonexistent. This does not, of course, imply that people in Bamako do not participate in organizations. The contrary is true, as was shown by Meillassoux (1968). The essential difference, however, is in the objectives pursued by these *Bamakoka* organizations, which reflect the social and cultural conditions of Mali. People organize themselves principally along ethnic and religious lines. Very important are the many *associations des ressortissants*, groupings of people from the same area of origin who are preoccupied with helping each other and newcomers to cope with the problems of urban life. They are also instrumental in channelling part of their resources to their needy “home” areas. Although some geographical clustering of migrants from the same area of origin or ethnic group does occur, of course, it is significant that these organizations in Bamako tend not to be neighborhood based. Grassroots religious organizations — around a local mosque — do have a neighborhood base, but their principal aims are not improved urban services. The neighborhood demands typically focus on the *Bamakoka*'s major concern in shelter matters: land tenure regularization rather than services.

With respect to the observed differences in dwelling improvement, in addition to the obvious economic factor, the cultural variance between the two cities should also be mentioned. As outlined before, Malian urban shelter standards — including aspirations for better physical housing conditions — appear to be rather basic relative to Latin American criteria. Housing consolidation in La Paz balances quality improvement and extension of the dwelling while in Bamako it is more restricted to extension. This emphasis on gradual expansion of the structures does not actually imply that inhabitants of the low-income neighborhoods in Bamako enjoy a better housing situation in terms of more ample living space. A basic distinction between the two cities lies in the family structure. There is a considerable number of polygamous families in Bamako the sizes of which tend to grow much beyond what is experienced in predominantly Catholic La Paz. In Latin America, “extended family” usually refers to a three-generation domestic unit, whereas in West Africa it tends to imply more intricate family constellations (Marie, 1988, p. 1165). As indicated by Lowder (1986, p. 234), “the formation of Latin American style shanty towns would seem unlikely, given the different structure of the family. A house in many West African contexts is not perceived just as a shelter for one’s wife and children, but as the potential base for a new lineage in the city and the prestige associated with that position.” More than in La Paz, rooms are added mainly with the explicit aim of accommodating new members of the occupier’s household, or to lodge new households (Kliest and Scheffer, 1981). In addition to the economic motive of increasing the household’s income by renting out rooms, this culturally defined meaning of shelter most certainly affects the modality of dwelling consolidation in Bamako.

The differences observed with respect to intra-city mobility patterns in La Paz and Bamako may be explained by regionally or locally specific factors. In both cities, networks of relatives and friends play a key role in the initial accommodation of starters in the housing market. More than any other factor, such networks determine the location of the entrant’s foothold areas. In Bamako most people will never leave their zone of entry. Those who do so will move in the direction of the periphery, ideally in order to take possession of their own house. In La Paz, mobility is a more common strategy to improve household shelter conditions. Apart from the evolution of household incomes (less likely to increase in Bamako than in Paz), the difference in the mobility rate observed is probably due to

the fact that La Paz's housing market is more dynamic, being subject to the gradual consolidation, upgrading and even gentrification processes, which are so conspicuously lacking in Bamako. As a result, mobility in La Paz is generated by continued changes in the city's housing stock. Such filtering processes are relatively exceptional or slow in Bamako.

Migrants usually take the lead in shaping new patterns of mobility. Native-born households tend to join trends at a later stage. One exception to this rule was reported from Bamako, where in recent years city-born starters in the housing market have overtaken migrants in direct settlement of the new spontaneous periphery. Although this process is not yet completely clear, a tentative explanation of this remarkable "inversion" is suggested by a combination of two factors. The first consists of indications that overcrowding and the gradual penetration of more individualized concepts of housing and family life make more indigenous couples prefer to start living on their own instead of staying with relatives. A second factor is undoubtedly the increasingly constrained availability of new housing areas, even in spontaneous settlements. It seems likely that newly arrived migrants can no longer afford a direct move to peripheral housing, whereas this was an option 10 or 15 years ago. Of course, local households are subject to similar constraints, but as they come from Bamako-based families, they can bide their time and save until they command sufficient resources to make the jump to a private home on the periphery.

Finally, with respect to the tenure aspect of household shelter strategies, in both cities rental housing serves as a buffer between disparities in demand and supply of shelter. Apparently, the elasticity of the rental sector in the Bamako context is greater, which may be partly explained by lower standards of housing and living and partly by cultural differences in migration and housing patterns — although it is not always easy or even possible to separate these from the economic factor.

The importance of rental accommodation is a widely recognized feature of African urban housing (Amis, 1984, 1987; Larsson, 1987; Okpala, 1981; Schlyter, 1987; Sunil and Van den Eerenbeemt, 1988). In a seminal article on African squatter settlements, Peil (1976) claims that Africans (particularly West Africans, and more precisely Nigerians and Ghanaians in the 1950s and 1960s) are less inclined to aspire to home ownership in the city because of the temporary character of much of the rural-urban migration flows. Although Peil's argument has received less

support than might be supposed, African housing experts with abundant local knowledge have affirmed the essential elements of the hypothesized relationship between mobility and tenure. . . . all Nigerians in urban areas keep close ties with their respective villages and it is a status symbol to build in the village. In fact home ownership is a basic part of the culture and in Nigerian society a man is not recognized as having fully reached manhood until he builds his own house in the village . . . Thus at the time of renting in the urban areas the occupants, especially the low-income ones, have no choice because all the initial available extra resources . . . are directed towards owning houses in their respective villages (Oruwari, 1989, p. 9).

In a case study on low-income housing in Kisumu, the third largest town in Kenya, it is also contended that temporary labor migration is bound to affect urban shelter conditions and tenure preferences:

Migrants' intentions of eventual return to their areas of origin have been shown to influence their decisions and behaviour in a number of ways. Firstly, migrants would be reluctant to invest more than an essential minimum in housing even when they can afford to spend considerably more. They would rather invest in their areas of origin. Many respondents in the Kisumu survey considered themselves as sojourners in the town . . . Secondly, temporary or uncommitted urban residents may decide to rent rather than to own a house in the towns (Macoloo, 1988, pp. 166–167).

We will briefly consider this issue of renting as a supposedly preferred alternative to home-ownership in the next and final section of this study.

7. CONCLUSION

(a) *Choice or constraint?*

As the comparative study shows, the particulars of the cities' land and housing markets essentially define the scope for action by the poor. The experiences of Bamako and La Paz also demonstrate that low-income households can choose between various options in order to improve their position in the urban housing market. This does not in any way imply that the poor succeed in satisfying their housing needs — nor that they are always able or even willing to secure accommodations according to their ideal-type housing preferences. Some do, others do not. People may improve their shelter conditions

by moving into ownership, or by moving into a better serviced neighborhood, or by enhancing the standard of the occupied structure itself through self-built activities. Others attach greater value to a prime location in the city. As Eckstein (1990, p. 170) noted, the central tenement district in Mexico City had "a relatively stable population committed to the area. Most people lived there by choice, not default". In a similar vein, Gilbert and Varley (1990b, p. 105) comment: "Rather than tenure always determining location, a particularly favourable location sometimes determines tenure by discouraging the move into peripheral ownership. Notwithstanding the general wish of virtually all tenants to move eventually into ownership, locational factors may lead to their remaining in rental accommodation."

This is exactly the point we made for La Paz's city-born *conventillo* inhabitants, many of whom prefer to remain in centrally located rental accommodation instead of moving into owner-built housing on the city's periphery. As was demonstrated, it is certainly not because of lack of financial means that these tenants continue to live in the *conventillos*, since their incomes average considerably higher than those of self-build owners on the periphery. In addition, city-born households that did move to one of the peripheral settlements compared very favorably with migrant movers in terms of the locational implications of their moves. Most of the migrants eventually settled on the far periphery of the city, while indigenous households generally remained relatively near the central area, in one of the consolidated neighborhoods. This trend suggests that under identical conditions both the "choice" and the "constraint" arguments apply to different social categories within the same income bracket.

To the majority of Latin American city residents, however, "ownership is the preferred form of tenure . . . and it seems more likely that most tenants rent due to their inability to own rather than through choice" (Green, 1988, p. 250). But what would be the outcome of the debate for the African context? Since stereotyped African migrants are considered to be sojourners in the city, it has been repeatedly argued that they will be more inclined to choose rental accommodation in the city than do Latin American migrants (Nelson, 1976; O'Connor, 1983, p. 185). Thus, the "choice" argument is supported by alluding to the scheme of preferences of the migrant poor. Urbanization on a major scale is relatively new to Africa and the importance of community life, ownership of rural property, and participation in extensive kinship networks, usually located in rural areas, drives many African migrants to a

firm commitment to "home." Furthermore, the preservation of one's share in the land resources of the kinship group quite often requires urban migrants to be perceived by their peers as members of the village community. Given the precariousness of life in much of urban West Africa, this gives migrants many practical reasons for maintaining their options in both the urban and rural environments.

This view of African urban-rural relations and the resulting consequences for shelter strategies appears to present a contrast to Latin America, at least to some extent. Interestingly, however, Hoenderdos and Verbeek (1989, p. 61) claim that many migrant families living in the Northern Mexican border city Ciudad Juárez were "perfectly content to rent a dwelling in Juárez" — the reason being that they had only come "to make money and return home [whereas] others were still hoping to cross the Río Grande and build a future in the United States". We should also emphasize the transformations taking place within African society — if only because these changes imply a greater probability of the "constraint" claim. Indeed, communal life and collective control of resources are gradually eroding throughout the continent. Progressive individualization does affect ancient patterns. Processes of rural commoditization and proletarianization give rise to new labor division patterns within African societies. In much of Africa, as in Latin America, the distribution of income opportunities essentially determines the places where people will stay. The availability of income opportunities encourages the flow of people to urban areas, as is demonstrated by Africa's rate of urbanization which exceeds that of other continents. In Bamako at least, most migrant households are there to stay. Sixtyfour percent of migrant heads of households in the survey stated that they expect to stay in the city. Whatever the future may bring, these figures do not point to an insurmountable attachment to rural areas.

This shift toward more permanent residence in Africa's urban areas is not new (Byerlee, 1974), but has so far made little impact on the literature on low-income shelter strategies in the region. With prolonged stays in the city, home ownership is likely to become a more important aim. Whether this stems from some mystical "ownership drive" or from financial commonsense is not so important. What matters is that a great many Bamako households would like to "leave rental," as they often put it. If they do not succeed in securing a home of their own, it is almost invariably because of a major financial constraint. Indeed, the average economic position of tenants in Bamako's low-income areas is consid-

erably weaker than that of owners throughout the city. The only exception to this rule is a minor category of civil servants who apparently could buy a house or a lot if they wished to do so, even if only in one of the most recently developed spontaneous settlements. All other tenant groups in Bamako earn much less than these government employees and appear to have no choice but to continue renting. This suggests strongly that the "constraint" claim is more convincing for the Bamako setting than the "choice" argument.

(b) *Policy implications*

The differences in prevailing land and housing market conditions and the variation between household behavior in the cities of Bamako and La Paz caution against generalized approaches and solutions to the housing problem in Third World cities. Policy recommendations should focus not merely on the expansion of the urban housing stock *per se*, but on the supply of those types of shelter for which, under favorable conditions, demand would likely be greatest. The basic idea is to aim at policies which will broaden the scope for choice in the urban housing market by removing the most serious constraints for the various poor sections of society. In the words of Gilbert (1989, p. 48): "The only general recommendation that might be made is that a wider range of housing options should be available to every family. Accommodation under different forms of tenure, in different locations, and with a range of prices and quality are an essential prerequisite for satisfactory housing."

One of the major barriers to enhancing the capacity of the shelter system is the lack of financial resources available to the government. Even if state shelter strategies for the poor focus on the supply of land only, the high costs of its acquisition may still form a serious impediment. As a consequence of high levels of state involvement in Bamako's land market, the parcelling out of plots affordable to the poor would theoretically be met with less difficulty than in La Paz, where the land is privately owned. In practice, however, this option is rarely used in Bamako, because state interference with customary land tenure is usually avoided. At the same time, large spontaneous settlements have come into existence in the peri-urban zones through an ongoing process of subdivision and commercialization of customary lands by the private sector. By cooperating with these practices of commercial land conversion, policy makers will find themselves deprived of an ideal basis from which land could be allocated to the poor at a relatively low cost

and on a massive scale. For Bamako's housing authorities, it is time to take advantage of their unique ability to parcel out state-owned lands to the city's prospective self-builders. Elsewhere, where land in the urban expansion zones is mostly privately owned and where political realities will not readily permit expropriation on a significant scale, alternative solutions for the land question should be sought. Experience from several Asian countries suggests that, e.g., land readjustment and plot reconstitution policies could possibly offer a viable strategy to increase total land supply, though this is not very likely for the poorest categories (Acharija, 1989; Doebele, 1982).

Policy makers should not exclusively focus attention on the provision of land or on sites-and-services schemes. The great number of renters in both La Paz and Bamako shows the importance of rental market absorption capacity in the two cities. It is also important to note that in neither city is the rental market dominated by large-scale landlords. Most typically, owner-occupiers in consolidated neighborhoods rent out part of their property and live with their tenants on the same plot. In this household rental sector rents are not high, but they represent an important source of additional income to the petty landlords (Gilbert and Varley, 1990a). One of the major effects of the increased income levels might be the further extension and/or the physical improvement of the self-built dwellings, thus improving the total housing stock.

Additionally, policy makers in Third World cities should avoid the negative effects of housing intervention upon the low-income rental market segments. Any measure which tends to raise the overall rental price levels in low-income settlements — as is often the case with, e.g., upgrading policies — should be weighed very carefully in advance. Instead, and in addition to more "conventional" policies of settlement upgrading and sites-and-services schemes, any government-induced stimulus to further the development of low-income rental accommodation on a massive scale should be considered as a serious policy option — provided that a rise in large-scale landlordism can be prevented.

Finally, housing turnover rates can be stimulated. Certainly, in La Paz filtering does occur on a relatively modest scale, but in both Bamako and La Paz average rates of housing turnover are relatively low. In order to enhance mobility, a differentiated housing strategy may be recommended, this being all the more important in view of the heterogeneity of settlements and inhabitants in the cities. Referring to this heterogeneity of low-income populations and their

shelter needs, Peattie (1987, pp. 277–278) argues that there will be various “critical thresholds”:

One threshold divides the very poor who are not concerned about housing given their immediate, daily necessities of living, the priorities of food, health, and clothing being principal and full-time occupiers of time, from the next group up that begins to include housing in their range of priorities but still not as a central one. There is probably a series of further thresholds going up the income scale that we should address in designing shelter programs.

In order to avoid a gradual penetration of the lower-middle class into programs for the poor, care should be taken to design special policies

aimed at the various income groups. Thus, a combination of, e.g., affordable land supply for the very poor, aided self-help programs for the poor and more adequate housing provision for the not-so-poor would enhance the chance that these target groups will be reached eventually and may become the owners of their own homes. Indeed, by such differentiated strategies of new land and housing supply, the very new starters on the housing market are likely to benefit by increased opportunities of access to vacated non-owned accommodation in the city — the typical starting condition for newly formed households which presented itself so convincingly in both city studies.

NOTES

1. As the research in La Paz was carried out in 1980, *recent periphery* was defined as consisting of neighborhoods which had come into existence during 1968–80. We also took into consideration all popular neighborhoods which had come into being after the profound societal transformations in the early 1950s (the 1952–54 period of national revolution and agrarian and urban land reforms), which gave rise to voluminous rural-urban migration flows and a massive expansion of the La Paz urban area. Consequently, all self-built neigh-

borhoods which originated in the 1955–67 period were considered to be part of the so-called *former periphery*. As for the Bamako research, all peripheral neighborhoods which originated after the year of independence (1960) were included in the sampling frame. The former periphery of Bamako consists of self-built settlements which came into being during the 1960–73 period; the recent periphery, then, was defined as the built-up area that originated 1974 to 1984 (the year of the survey).

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