

Market Interests and Moral Indignation: The Political Psychology of Housing Price Regulations in Postwar Oslo*

LARS GULBRANDSEN
ULF TORGERSEN
University of Oslo

1. The Setting of the Problem and the Organization of the Article

One of the salient political issues in postwar Norway has been the housing situation. Limited prewar construction, a total stop in building during the war, and considerable wartime destruction and ravages gave the issue an added urgency in the later forties and fifties while the great influx to the central urban areas (principally the greater Oslo area) was a potent reason for keeping the question at the top of the political agenda in the sixties. Owing to this general state of affairs, the parties vied with each other in trying to present themselves as the most compassionate and the most effective; this highly emotional issue led to substantial electoral promises and, in the due course of events, shortcomings; pride in performance and charges of mismanagement have been common events on this area of public policy; and the exchanges between the contending parties have been more acrimonious than those in several other political questions.

The political efforts to deal with the housing problem have been varied. The *aims* have been diverse, ranging from a concern with increased production – and the numerous subproblems of efficiency and public guidance of this production – to questions of distribution, where the problem of prices enters with full force. The *measures* have been varied, too: the repertoire includes policies of public sup-

* The authors express their thanks to the Norwegian Ministry for Municipal Affairs; the Division of Housing has supported the main researcher, Lars Gulbrandsen, and the survey on which the article is based through the last 2 years. Their generosity in funding and their lenience in control has made the project into a model of sponsor–researcher relationship in applied research. The Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities has generously undertaken to carry the project through another 3 years: we are understandably grateful for that pledge. Likewise, we extend our thanks to our own institute: at a critical point in the development of the project, the Institute for Political Science supplied a small but most welcome grant. We are similarly grateful to Karl Erik Brofoss and Tore Hansen for comments on an earlier version.

Market Interests and Moral Indignation: The Political Psychology of Housing Price Regulations in Postwar Oslo*

LARS GULBRANDSEN
ULF TORGERSEN
University of Oslo

1. The Setting of the Problem and the Organization of the Article

One of the salient political issues in postwar Norway has been the housing situation. Limited prewar construction, a total stop in building during the war, and considerable wartime destruction and ravages gave the issue an added urgency in the later forties and fifties while the great influx to the central urban areas (principally the greater Oslo area) was a potent reason for keeping the question at the top of the political agenda in the sixties. Owing to this general state of affairs, the parties vied with each other in trying to present themselves as the most compassionate and the most effective; this highly emotional issue led to substantial electoral promises and, in the due course of events, shortcomings; pride in performance and charges of mismanagement have been common events on this area of public policy; and the exchanges between the contending parties have been more acrimonious than those in several other political questions.

The political efforts to deal with the housing problem have been varied. The *aims* have been diverse, ranging from a concern with increased production – and the numerous subproblems of efficiency and public guidance of this production – to questions of distribution, where the problem of prices enters with full force. The *measures* have been varied, too: the repertoire includes policies of public sup-

* The authors express their thanks to the Norwegian Ministry for Municipal Affairs; the Division of Housing has supported the main researcher, Lars Gulbrandsen, and the survey on which the article is based through the last 2 years. Their generosity in funding and their lenience in control has made the project into a model of sponsor–researcher relationship in applied research. The Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities has generously undertaken to carry the project through another 3 years: we are understandably grateful for that pledge. Likewise, we extend our thanks to our own institute: at a critical point in the development of the project, the Institute for Political Science supplied a small but most welcome grant. We are similarly grateful to Karl Erik Brofoss and Tore Hansen for comments on an earlier version.

port of both cooperative and private builders – subsidies, tax deduction, and loans – as well as attempts to interfere directly in the market by requiring certain buyer qualifications (residence length, family size, etc.) or by putting upper limits on apartments prices and making public assessment mandatory, as in Oslo. It is this type of attempt to regulate the market behavior that is the main theme of our article; more specifically, we attempt to describe and explain how young, recently married couples in Oslo react to the housing market and its vicissitudes.

The main point of the article is that this group of people, owing to a highly frustrating situation, develops ideas of fairness, theories about how things actually are, and notions and schemes of interpretation, but that these quite frequently hamper a full understanding of the processes at work and tie the hands of the individual actors without producing any corresponding collective pay-off. Moralism may in a number of cases result in and support collective measures, but several conditions have to be met if this transformation is to work. In the case of postwar price control on apartments in Oslo, these sentiments have not produced any effective means of control or distribution but have, as an unintended by-product of this largely unenforced piece of legislation, created numerous ideas about what is possible and what is real. It looks as if these ideas cramp the exploitation of existing market possibilities of those presumably most needy, while having few other effects. Experience shows, in our opinion, that such controls should be either very effectively enforced or omitted entirely: the in-between situation, which from the purely 'logical' point of view seems like 'at least something', may in fact be worth less than either a completely free market or a fully controlled one, since a black-market operation creates numerous difficulties and puts such a high premium on risk-taking and ability to acquire information quickly, confidently, and discreetly. It is no sociological secret that these requirements tilt the odds in favor of the well-informed and well-connected. We are not too familiar with the economic theory of black markets – if there is such a thing – or with empirical studies of such market conditions – they cannot be numerous – but we are inclined to believe that our points are valid well beyond the case described in this article. We also think that the measures taken on the assumption of interest similarities of people occupying transiently similar positions are likely to have counterparts in other areas: the tenor of the reactions would not make us believe that this temporary conflict between the haves and the have-nots in the housing market is the interesting distinguishing feature of the actors or the basis for any appreciable amount of common interests.

These assumptions are partly the result of some speculation, based on reasonably well-established sociological findings and on our own hunches about and insights into the Oslo market. But the assumptions will throughout the article be substantiated with results from survey data. A pilot study of the attitudes towards, beliefs about, and schemes of interpretations of the market behavior of young newlyweds was conducted by the senior author in 1971.¹ The fairly promising result and the need for further elaboration of some of the problems led the authors to launch a large-scale survey in 1972: somewhat less than 1000 question-

naires were filled out by young newlyweds in the Oslo area; to this we have in 1973 added two minor surveys from two provincial towns, Kristiansand and Ålesund, for purposes of comparison. In the present article most of the data are drawn from the 1972 survey; figures from the other three appear mainly in the form of comments on the veracity or universality of the 1972 findings.²

This article is the first report on the project: for this reason we have chosen to present in broad outline some of the main findings about the market activity and its correlates. In a later and more comprehensive monograph we shall undertake the more painstaking task of dotting the i's and crossing the t's or, possibly, substituting other letters. We have, as a consequence of this choice, decided to pay the not unreasonable price for such a broad picture: we generally abstain from making any fuss about small percentage differences and stick to the more substantial ones. Because of this limitation, we have not tried to go very far beyond fairly simple tabulations; more elaborate multivariate analysis has not been carried out. As will be seen, we have largely used education to explain variations in attitudes and belief; this is on the whole because this factor, as one might expect, is closely linked to matters of belief and opinion and generally functions better than any other background factor. (We shall comment on the exceptions later.) Although this point and the fact that in a young sample social differences in education probably give more of a hint of differences in overall future chances than other factors are valid observations, one cannot really substitute argument for analysis; a more detailed study of the interrelations of the background factors and the attitudes will have to be carried out later.³ In the meantime, we feel confident that the strength of many of the associations found gives some guarantee against any substantial changes in the future analysis.

The article is organized along the main lines of our argument. In section 2 we present some of the characteristics of market cooperation and of formation of market-regulating ideas: the housing market is found to differ from several other markets. Section 3 describes the frustrations and problems of the entrants in the housing market and the consequent definition of the market situation as 'critical' and 'deteriorating'. In section 4 we show that one consequence is to think of the market in non-economic and moral terms: the seller is singled out as more responsible for the price increase, that his transgression is condemned universally, and that this occurs more often among the less educated. That this response does not wholly absolve the buyer is clear, but in section 5 it is shown that the seller is condemned much more frequently: many are willing to conduct illegal transactions, and quite a few do, again with a socially uneven distribution. These differences are seen to be linked to conceptions of the common price: it is, as we show in section 6, linked to an optimistic, if not downright rosy, view of the market. The unwillingness of the less educated to participate in black-market activities can at least partly be explained by their lack of knowledge of its profitability. In section 7 we sum up the gist of the argument and draw attention to the points in the argument that seem to need further elaboration as well as the possible limitations in the policy implications of our findings.

2. The Housing Market, Interests, and Notions of Fairness

Whenever someone enters a market, he develops strategies to improve, by individual or collective measures, the outcome of the market operation. He may work at developing a shrewder way of handling his own resources or try to establish various ways of interfering with the present operation of the market. The measures applied in the latter instance range from supplying the actors with better or more resources (special-purpose banks or credit institutions like the Housing Bank), via joint action of all the people in the same position on the market (as through the establishment of cooperative societies: in Oslo the semi-municipal OBOS is an important example), to direct interfering by public intervention through the market action permitted (rent control, assessment by public price boards of apartment prices, etc.). Quite frequently these measures are applied simultaneously. Farmers, e.g., are in the same position in a series of markets and have used all these measures with success.

It is generally believed that the endeavors behind all these measures and responses will grow in strength and elaboration as the regularity, frequency, and expected duration of the occupation of the same market position increases. Whenever people stay on a market (rather than just visit), and when the outcome of their transactions there means a lot to them, rather than just affects them tangentially, the basis for concerted action will by that token increase. There is more loyalty between bread buyers than bicycle buyers, between resident workers than migratory workers, between farmers, who always need a loan, than occasional housebuilders, who once need a loan. With this kind of similarly situated individuals, the highest activity and the most competent leadership will normally be delivered by people who are most dependent on that particular market, although there are exceptions, notably in the initial period of organization and in cases where resources are particularly scarce. The organizations arising from these efforts will normally try to homogenize the market dependence within its social base even more, thus unifying the base for action by enforcing or encouraging a high degree of similarity between the actors for whom they speak.

One type of response developed by people in the same situation is the elaboration of certain notions of 'fair exchange', based on some notions at least partly independent of the existing forces of the market. They may range from the elementary notion that no one should take advantage of *short-term changes* (e.g. the medieval idea of *justum pretium*), arising from the potentially volatile local markets, or gross consumer ignorance, to more elaborate notions of 'need', 'reasonable price', etc., involving assumptions about assumed uses of the money earned in a transaction and its sufficiency for covering certain expenses. Notions of this kind involve ideas of substantive justice and are concerned with the considerations governing the employment of indirect measures to influence market action. They play a highly significant role in market battles, since such conflicts quite often affect and disturb 'third parties', who must evaluate the claims of the contending parties and whose opinion thus influences and shapes the outcome of

'class conflict'. They most manifestly are at work when attempts to influence or control the terms of transactions are made by the public authorities.

It is quite obvious that the housing market deviates from the ideal 'class action' situation in several ways:

1. People start as 'buyers' and react as such, but in fact they try to become owners (potential sellers) as fast as possible. Our data show a rather quick change; after 5 years a solid majority are owners and must consequently be classed as *both seller and buyer*, in case they want something else.

2. There is consequently no organization of 'buyers', since the prospective members for an organization of this kind essentially would be coterminous with the entire youth cohort and would thus in fact be engaged in some kind of 'generation battle' in which the point would be 'to become old'. This conflict certainly exists, but it is glossed over.

3. Since being a buyer is not a stable characteristic of people, the tendency to work and think as if it were may be the product of some interesting false notions and may have unintended consequences. It is by no means clear, e.g., that a general lowering of housing prices would benefit the low-income groups, although it may appear so to them from their 'individual experiences'.

4. The transient experience of a high degree of market frustration may nevertheless produce high-pitched indignation of the same kind, and this may give rise to the notion of 'common interests'. As a matter of fact, some of the emotional charge may arise from exactly this unstable situation, rather than from more stable characteristics.

For this reason we may view the various attempts to influence the housing market as flowing from somewhat different sources. Partly they are attempts to improve the possibilities of low-income groups in the present market situation, partly they are attempts to create offers to low-income groups, partly they are attempts to improve the housing situation in general, and partly they are attempts to improve it for young people. This mixture of class support, general efforts, and age-specific endeavors has led to a highly mixed set of strategies, frequently leading to unexpected consequences, not all of which pull in the same direction. Obviously, the age-specific endeavors are considered to be among the most worthy and undisputed aims of public policy, at least at the manifest – or manifesto – level.

In this system there is not necessarily any clear or even positive link between the efforts demanded and their consequences. We believe that it can be shown that the outcome of one of the 'common' measures, i.e. those not linked to social properties of the seller and/or buyer, may very well be most ardently supported by one social group while it in fact benefits another, at least as far as concerns some of its consequences.

We also believe that several of the ideas linked to the tendency to concentrate on the common plight of the buyers are most closely linked to moral ideas and least closely linked to notions of social class. There is a paradox here: as we shall see, the ability to think in terms of a system to explain people's behavior in terms

of remoter consequences and efforts is least common among the less privileged. We turn to these problems in the next section, where we shall pay some attention to the automatic transformation of the interpretation of an individual situation (experiences in the 'distributive plural', as it has been called)⁴ into calls for collective measures.⁵

3. Interest Categories and Market Frustrations: The Severity of the Problem

We have singled out for special analysis a group of people frequently conceived of as an important category in the housing market: recently married young people. Political manifestos frequently comment on their plight, usually stating that their problems are particularly severe. Whether this is due to the high degree of political clout of the members of the group – they are able to express their demands rather strongly – their favorable political position (they have not yet made up their minds and are thus in need of more special political attention), or a considered evaluation of the housing situation of different subgroups (which we doubt), they are conceived of as an important interest category that no political party or actor can afford to snub. We shall present six distinctive characteristics of this group:

1. *People enter into this category fairly early.* The marriage age in Oslo is fairly low, in the low twenties. It has shown a decrease in the postwar period.

2. *Entry is not infrequently associated with pregnancy.* In our 1972 sample, 38% were pregnant when they married (or, rather, 38% happened to have one child by 9 months after the months in which their names were drawn from the marriage register, this period accidentally being the time interval to the administration of the survey). Pregnancy at marriage date, moreover, correlated highly with education and age (see Table I). It seems a fairly reasonable guess that this affects the possibilities for cautious and deliberate search for housing alternatives.

3. *Ownership is a frequent result of the search process.* Our 1972 sample shows 5% being owners of house on owned ground and a further 26% as part owners in

Table I. Couples Married in 1972, with One Child, by Education and Age of Female Spouse (Percentages *N* in Parentheses)

Age	Elementary school only	More than elementary school, but not high school	High school or more	Total
Under 20	90 (10)	63 (56)	50 (10)	66 (76)
21-24	46 (24)	36 (133)	24 (62)	35 (219)
25-30	40 (15)	34 (59)	11 (44)	27 (118)
Total	53 (49)	42 (248)	22 (116)	38 (413)

some form of collective or cooperative scheme; in the 1967 sample these figures were 11% and 49%, respectively. A full 60% had thus become owners in the process of 5 years, if we allow ourselves the statistical lapse of looking at these two samples as two points in the history of one age cohort. The number of people who plan and work with this as a fairly short-term expectation is larger still.

4. *The search for acceptable or optimal alternatives is characterized by a strong feeling of insecurity or chance.* Widespread ignorance has been found by Arndt and Gulbrandsen; their studies⁶ report strikingly similar findings. This is amply corroborated by the 1972 survey. The various public measures, the differences in prices on the open market, and the various types of municipal or cooperative efforts necessarily add further dimensions to this picture of insecurity.

5. *The procedure in case of a sale is cumbersome.* Unlike, e.g., the highly professionalized procedure of housing transactions in the United States, Norwegian rules and practices require so much individual activity vis-à-vis such a number of agencies and contacts and so much confrontation with and interpretation of rules that it amounts to something like a course in civics.

6. *The financial burden is heaviest in the present and diminishes with inflation and the down payment of mortgages.* This is partly a by-product of the concern for not raising rents on older houses, for not raising interests, etc. But the combination of Points 4 and 6 add up to a quantity of frustration that is the product rather than the sum of the two irritants. Recent public measures, based on the assumption that young people are at a special disadvantage, have tried to soften this effect somehow but probably cannot altogether remove it.

This sudden need for big, rushed decisions under conditions of little information and with some measure of economic hardship (almost necessary in case of buying), temporally coinciding with other necessary changes in life style, is apt to create tensions and frustrations in any case. It is almost endemic in the situation that this transition period should be considered a period of 'crisis'.

This is very clearly the case. The responses to the question of how one perceives the present housing situation in Oslo is reported in Table II, showing that only 1% thinks that the housing situation is good or very good, the bulk of the respon-

Table II. Perception of the Oslo Housing Situation in 1972 in the 1967 and 1972 Samples (Percentages)

	1967 sample	1972 sample
Very good	—	—
Good	1	1
Difficult	19	12
Very difficult	48	48
Crisis	31	39
Do not know	1	—
No answer	1	—
N	437	429

dents finding that it is 'very difficult' or amounting to a 'crisis'. The present situation on the whole is viewed in the bleakest perspective possible.

The images of the past and the future add some further black strokes: the past is considered to have been like the present or somewhat better, whereas the future is expected to be like the present or worse. The view, if we assume that individual visions of development correspond roughly to this collective portrait, is that things are going from bad to worse: the past, present, and future are three points on a downwardly sloped line (see Table III). The tendency is much less pronounced for the 1967 sample (and, incidentally, for Ålesund).

Table III. Image of the Past and Future Compared with the Present (Percentages)

	Past			Future		
	1967 sample	1971 sample	1972 sample	1967 sample	1971 sample	1972 sample
Much better	1	1	1	1	5	—
Somewhat better	33	50	50	16	5	16
No difference	51	36	33	34	15	23
Somewhat worse	11	1	5	27	51	32
Much worse	1	—	1	17	23	23
Do not know	3	12	10	4	2	5
No answer	2	—	1	1	—	—
N	437	108	429	437	108	429

Although there is no denying the existing problems, this view hardly corresponds completely with more 'objective' standards, like the number of persons per room, square meters available per person, changes in the marriage age, etc. The present situation may be every bit as unpleasant as reported, but the vague consensus among the members of this interest category that results in the apocalyptic perspective just described cannot be deduced from the housing statistics. Probably the situation of being in the middle of the painful search process is more important than what the tables from the Municipal Office of Statistics of Oslo can tell.

This is given some support by the *distribution* of these opinions. As we see from Table IV,⁷ there are no visible differences between educational groups with respect to their views of the present, the past, and the future. Apart from a not particularly strong or consistent tendency among the less educated to glorify the past, we are struck by the similarity across educational categories. This seems particularly important in light of the many exceptionally strong correlations we shall report elsewhere. We also see that this image is less pronounced in the 1967 sample than in the 1972 sample: the present is better, the past is less bright, and the future less dark.

Table IV. Images of Present, Past, and Future, by Education (Percentages)*

	1	2	3	4	5
Respondents finding the present very difficult or critical.					
1967 sample	77	80	90	72	85
1972 sample	85	88	85	85	89
Respondents finding the past to be much better than the present.					
1967 sample	61	50	35	54	35
1972 sample	48	34	34	27	30
Respondents expecting the future to be worse than the present.					
1967 sample	34	42	50	48	40
1972 sample	50	57	49	52	54

* We shall use this educational classification in several subsequent tables and therefore present here the scheme of classification as well as the percentage basis in the two samples. They are later omitted for reasons of printing economy.

	1967	1972
1 = elementary school only	56	40
2 = elementary school plus some education, but not high school	238	201
3 = high school	20	41
4 = more than high school, but not university or equivalent education	54	60
5 = university level education	20	37
Total	437	429

The totals also include some unclassifiable individuals and thus exceed the sums of the categories.

4. The Anti-Seller Reactions: Some Manifestations

The emphasis on the housing shortage motivates the new entrants on the market, as it has motivated the public authorities, to support price control measures. The specific purpose of these measures is to 'keep prices down', and the sentiments supporting this policy are partly economic, partly legal, and partly moral. The exact link between the moral and the legal way of reasoning is a very complicated one; it may be partly that the moral reaction to a legal transgression is caused by the fact that there is a law. But similarly one may claim that the law is supposed to enforce what decent people do anyway, the only trouble being that these decent people seem to be too few and far between. In this way the law – as well as 'morality' – partly urges people to disregard personal profit possibilities, but the sentiments behind the law doubtlessly also partly run counter to economic reasoning by assuming the behavior of aggregates to be simple 'sums' of individual behavior and motives, as definite a characteristic of moral thinking as one can find, but hardly the prevalent paradigm in economic analysis. It would be a

sociologically naive assumption, and it is certainly not our claim, that this only represents some 'fault' or that the supporters of these notions are just 'mistaken'. The ideas do have their function in the buyer-seller conflict, even though some of their effects are perverse, a point we will take up later. At present we shall confine ourselves to giving two fairly convincing examples of moralism in economic disguise.

The first example deals with the consequences of a complete absence of illegal transactions. As we can see from Table V, a fairly substantial part of the respon-

Table V. Perception of the State of the Housing Situation Without Any Illegal Transactions, by Education (Percentages)*

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1967						
Better	45	45	35	26	50	42
No change	23	27	30	32	25	27
Worse	9	11	20	32	10	14
Do not know	21	16	10	7	15	14
No answer	2	2	5	4	-	2
1972						
Better	45	55	44	47	54	51
No change	18	24	22	23	22	23
Worse	10	6	20	10	16	10
Do not know	25	15	15	18	8	16
No answer	3	1	-	2	-	1

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

dents maintain that this would improve the situation and their chances, while a somewhat smaller proportion expected no change; an even smaller minority thought that it would make things still worse. No particularly clear relationship to education can be detected. In all educational categories, except category 3, those expecting the housing situation to improve are by a wide margin more numerous than those expecting the situation to worsen. There is, one may say, full support of a 'moral' point of view without apparent thought about the economic consequences (increase of barter, absence of transactions, etc.). One may also note that this is more pronounced in the 1972 sample than in the 1967 sample: we see here a slight but clear tendency towards less moralizing over the years, which is also apparent in the response to other questions.

A similar case in point is the further question: How would it affect things if you yourself paid more than the publicly stipulated price? An economist would essentially answer that it was not likely to mean very much: people's supply and demand would not be affected; it would make a difference for the individual, but the system would not really be any different. A moralist, on the contrary, would think in diffusionist imagery: he would think in terms of models and copies, of stemming a bad tide, or giving the screw another turn downward.

Table VI. Perceived Consequences of One's Own Illegal Transactions, by Education* (Percentages)

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1967						
Adds to undesirable tendency	82	84	75	76	70	79
No effects	4	11	20	19	30	13
Do not know	11	4	5	2	-	5
No answer	4	2	-	4	-	3
1972						
Adds to undesirable tendency	78	88	93	80	73	86
No effects	5	5	5	15	24	8
Do not know	15	8	2	5	3	6
No answer	3	-	2	5	3	-

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

From Table VI, there can be no two opinions about what the population thinks: they side with the moralist, and overwhelmingly so. More than three out of four assume that they would affect the system. There may be a few more who think this way among the less educated, but there is an even clearer decline of moralism with time, just like in our former question.

No matter what 'economic' objections one may have to this reasoning, its main point is that buyers individually would be better off if all transactions presently conducted were in accordance with the rules; if a buyer accepts another rule, it is at least to some extent an example of lack of solidarity. As we shall see later, the ubiquitous presence of this idea does not alone make it a very strong moral repellent. That it conveys a strong animus against the buyer is, however, clear beyond question.

Table VII. Attitude to Overprice Charge by Education* (Percentages)

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1967 sample						
Perfectly natural	5	-	-	9	5	3
Unfortunate, but on the whole understandable	25	31	40	39	30	32
Very bad, but in some cases excusable	38	47	50	39	30	44
In all cases to be condemned	30	21	10	11	25	20
No answer	2	-	-	2	10	1
1972 sample						
Perfectly natural	5	1	3	-	5	2
Unfortunate, but on the whole understandable	18	20	24	30	30	23
Very bad, but in some cases excusable	33	43	51	50	38	43
In all cases to be condemned	43	35	22	20	27	32
No answer	3	1	-	-	-	1

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

The same strong reaction to the actual occurrence of illegal prices charged by the buyer can be found in the response to the question of how they view such matters. The results show a clear but somewhat nuanced picture.

For both our samples (see Table VII) we find only a very few who subscribe to the notion that this is perfectly all right (2% and 3%). We find about one fourth claiming such behavior to be unfortunate but understandable – which amounts to a mild moral reproach, but with extenuating circumstances. About 40% take an even sterner view of the matter; they are willing to allow for occasional exceptions, but it *is* wrong, *very* wrong. Another fourth show no mercy: it is always wrong. Again the relationship to education is fairly weak, but positive. The main point is that these responses are in fact quite nuanced, and there are comments galore in the questionnaire: ifs, buts, and special conditions; if illegal charges that are not very much in excess; if the payer is rich; if the buyer is in distress, etc. It appears as if the great variety of the responses is also somehow mirrored in the fairly complex responses of individuals.

It may, however, be that there are some differences between groups, differences not discovered by this moral question. We asked one question about the epithet 'housing shark' by first focusing the respondents' attention to an apartment, legally worth N.kr. 15,000, and asking how much a person would have to charge before one should call him a 'housing shark'. There is, as can be seen from Table VIII, hardly any agreement: the moral reactions are thus extremely varied. These

Table VIII. Excess Charge Necessary to Warrant Designation 'Housing Shark', When Legal Price is N. kr. 15 000 (Percentages)

Excess charge	1967 sample	1972 sample
Less than 5000	17	17
5000–10 000	16	16
10 000–15 000	24	22
15 000–30 000	16	16
30 000–45 000	14	14
More than 45 000	7	8
Other answers	1	1
No answer	4	5
N	437	429

variations show a very close connection to education. Table IX shows this very convincingly: the proportion who would use this epithet at prices below N.kr. 30,000 for the apartment decreases very rapidly with increasing education. This brings out what has been called 'working-class authoritarianism', but which may be in need of a more precise designation: we are referring to the fact that the less educated draw a rather more definite line between what is and what is not all right, whereas the middle class is less straitlaced. The latter operates with

Table IX. Respondents Claiming That Prices Between N. kr. 15 000 and 30 000 for an Apartment Worth 15 000 Justifies the Term 'Housing Shark', by Education* (Percentages)

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1967						
Sample	63	61	55	39	35	57
1972						
Sample	75	59	49	45	54	55

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

shades of grey and with large zones of behavior that may not exactly be palatable but which one nevertheless has to accept.

Closely linked to this are the questions of what is the cause of and who is to blame for illegal transactions. These two questions are in one way two variations of the same questions and in another way not, just like the two former questions. The differences in reactions are equally telling, and presumably of the same kind.

The first question elicited rather varied responses. A fairly small minority (see Table X) explained the behavior in terms of 'greed', indicating 'evil' motives.

Table X. Perceived Reasons for Charging Illegal Prices (Percentages)

	1967	1972	1971
Greed and exploitation alone	14	16	11
Profit* alone	10	14	42
Profit or greed, but also system	5	11	
System, but also profit or greed	8	7	11
System alone	55	43	30
Other answers	2	4	5
No answer	7	7	-

* The 1971 survey used a less 'pure' classification in this category, hence the difference in percentages.

An equal number mentioned the profit motive, without any other feature. Then we have combinations of these motives, but with the 'system' as an additional explanation; the reverse; and, finally, the pure 'system' explanations (about half of the two samples). (As noted earlier, the 1967 sample reacted somewhat less strongly than did the 1972 sample.) When we check for education (see Table XI), a fairly clear pattern emerges: when we look at the balance between those who emphasize just profit and greed and those who add 'system' ideas, there is a fairly pronounced educational difference, 'pure profit' being more of a lower-education explanation. There are, however, irregular features in the table, which makes it far from clear-cut.

However, when we turn to the question of who should be blamed for illegal transactions, differences of an altogether different magnitude occur. In Table XII

Table XI. Perceived Reasons for Charging Illegal Prices, by Education* (Percentages)

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1967						
Profit, greed	34	25	15	4	25	24
Profit, greed, and system	9	12	35	11	35	13
System	43	53	45	78	40	55
Other	-	2	5	2	-	2
No answer	14	7	-	6	-	7
1972						
Profit, greed	33	29	27	30	27	30
Profit, greed, and system	8	19	20	15	30	18
System	33	40	49	50	43	43
Other	3	5	-	3	-	4
No answer	15	9	5	2	-	7

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

we present the responses to this question. As we see, there is the same pattern in both samples, and it is a very clear one. Among the less educated there are many who do not know, and the rest is split between those who blame some actor (mainly the seller) and the system-blamers. In the higher educational categories we find very little ignorance and a universal tendency to blame the 'system'. We now turn to the explanations in section 5, where we shall see what impact the market regulations have on the market, with specific concern for educational variations.

Table XII. The Location of Blame for Illegal Transactions, by Education* (Percentages)

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1967						
Seller	25	16	20	7	5	16
Seller and buyer	2	3	5	-	-	3
Buyer	9	4	5	-	-	4
System	21	47	45	69	75	49
Other answers	-	-	-	-	-	-
No answer	43	27	25	28	10	29
1972						
Seller	28	20	24	12	13	20
Seller and buyer	-	3	2	5	-	2
Buyer	-	5	2	5	-	4
System	33	46	48	68	68	46
Other answers	-	-	2	2	-	1
No answer	40	26	20	8	19	25

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

5. The Actual State of the Market: The Amount and Correlates of Illegal Transactions

In this section we shall look at the impact of the rules forbidding excess prices on the market behavior. We shall do so by first studying people's own reported anticipated reactions to such offers and seeing if there are any differences between educational groups. We shall proceed by inspecting the frequency of illegal offers and its correlates. Linked to this is the respondents' own ideas about the character of the market: the frequency of transgression and the chances of getting caught. This leads us to the final question: the actual frequency and the correlates of such deviance, as well as the need for such deviance in different social circles.

People's anticipated reactions to a favorable but illegal offer give further proof that the rules of law are interpreted quite consistently in favor of the buyer. Indeed, a rather substantial proportion of the respondents have no qualms whatsoever; about half of the respondents report that they would accept the offer, and 'that's that' (see Table XIII). A somewhat smaller proportion hedged their reaction by specifying conditions of need, making exceptions in case the transgression is very small, etc., but certainly did not classify themselves as unconditionally law-abiding citizens: they might well accept, if . . . (Our 1971 investigation did not distinguish between these categories, but the sums add up to a very similar figure.) Rather insignificant proportions would simply do nothing or turn the seller over to the police, and an additional small fraction did not know or did not answer.

These responses seem to vary somewhat with education: the tendency to accept an otherwise favorable offer is higher among people with more education. If we disregard those who did not know or did not respond, the 'accept' group is proportionally larger as we go from less to more education.

Table XIII. Respondents' Own Anticipated Reaction to Good Offer, by Education* (Percentages)

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1967						
Accept	33	49	55	56	50	44
Maybe accept	34	33	30	33	30	31
Refuse and forget	13	14	-	2	10	11
Refuse, call the police	5	6	-	4	10	6
Do not know	11	8	15	4	-	8
No answer	5	1	-	2	-	2
1972						
Accept	36	35	54	55	48	38
Maybe accept	32	35	25	19	25	35
Refuse and forget	5	13	7	8	11	11
Refuse, call the police	10	10	10	-	3	8
Do not know	15	7	5	8	14	8
No answer	3	1	-	-	-	1

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

Table XIV. Respondents Who Had Received Illegal Offers (Percentages)

	1967 sample	1971 sample	1972 sample
Received offers	43	34	36
Know people who have received offers	43	26	65
Only heard or read of offers	12	17	
Unfamiliar with the problem	1	1	1
No answer	2	1	1
N	437	108	429

One important question, then, must be whether people *have* in fact received such offers or not. In Table XIV we present the occurrence of such offers. Close to half of our respondents have in fact received such offers, the figure naturally being slightly lower for newlyweds than for those who have been married for 5 years. (It may be noticed that the figures for the 1972 and 1971 studies are almost identical, thus giving added credibility to both.) About the same number – we do not report the exact figures – claim to know people who have been offered such terms; somewhat more than 10% claim more distant sources of information, while 1% disclaim any familiarity with the problem.

This leads us further: is this practice considered to occur frequently; and what are the beliefs about the chances of getting caught? The belief that it occurs very frequently emerges quite clearly from Tables XV and XVI. Moreover, we see that social differences with respect to belief in the frequency of black-market offers are practically nonexistent; there may be a slight tendency for people with less education to rate the frequency somewhat lower, but the difference is very small indeed. At the same time, there were no clear educational differences with respect to the belief in chances of getting caught (see Table XVII). (In our pilot study there *were* clear tendencies.) There seems, generally speaking, to be very wide-

Table XV. Perceived Frequency of 'Housing Shark' Transactions, by Education* (Percentages)

Percentages	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1967						
0-20	9	10	25	20	25	13
20-50	43	49	45	50	40	44
51-80	23	21	25	8	15	21
81-100	16	20	5	8	15	17
1972						
0-20	3	6	17	12	22	10
20-50	43	43	49	47	38	43
51-80	18	26	15	17	13	22
81-100	25	20	17	15	16	19

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

Table XVI. Perceived Frequency* of Illegal Transactions, by Education**

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1967	19	15	10	18	25	17
1972	25	18	20	13	19	18

* The percentages of those believing that it occurs in less than 75 cases out of 100.

** For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

spread notions that the transactions occur frequently and that the chances of getting caught are quite limited. One may of course also assume that the actual involvement in illegal transaction is the best measure of one's confidence in getting by unnoticed, and, as we noticed earlier, this was very clearly related to education. It thus appears that people with more education do not translate their own experience more directly into their image of general chances.

Consequently, it looks as if the belief is that illegal practices are frequent and the chances of getting caught limited, but not negligible; and none of these ideas are related to education, less so in fact than one might have expected from educational differences in the reaction to the 'housing shark' epithet. The reason why we still find differences in beliefs about actual transgression may be related to the severity of judgement and possibly to such facts as the cash at hand. The link between family income and transgression is noticeable. It seems, thus, that the introduction of the black market, while not creating different ideas, has nevertheless added another 'burden', and since it can be carried unequally well, it has in fact inequality as its consequence.

The next question is: what do the respondents do with such offers? From Table XVIII we learn that about one third of the respondents in the 1972 sample who had had the chance accepted the offer (very similar to our smaller 1971 study), whereas close to half of corresponding category in the 1967 sample had accepted.

More important, however, than these gross figures is the relationship between offers, acceptance, and education. The proportion of the sample who accepted

Table XVII. Perceived Frequency of Detection of Illegal Transactions, by Education* (Percentages)

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1972						
No one; one in a hundred	25	24	27	22	32	26
Two to seven	40	39	36	55	41	42
Eight or more	21	30	31	13	25	25
1967						
No one; one in a hundred	29	34	35	35	40	32
Two to seven	29	27	25	51	45	37
Eight or more	24	24	20	10	10	23

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

Table XVIII. Respondents Having Received and Accepted Illegal Offers for the 1967 and the 1972 Samples, by Education* (Percentages)

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1972						
Received	40	33	29	41	40	36
Accepted	13	10	15	13	16	11
Percent accepted of received	31	29	42	24	33	
1967						
Received	27	43	50	54	50	43
Accepted	11	18	35	33	40	21
Percent accepted of received	40	39	70	55	80	

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

shows no relation to education in the 1972 sample; this sounds reasonable, since they have been on the market a much shorter period and have a smaller propensity to accept. For the 1967 sample, however, the relationship is very clear and strong: 11% of those with primary school only had contracted such bargains, whereas a full 40% of the people in the highest educational bracket had. The correlation of offers is also absent in the 1972 sample but is quite strong in the 1967 sample. Since both offers and acceptance show so little correlation with education in the 1972 sample, the proportion of those who received an offer who accept is very stable in relation to education, whereas the correlation of both with education leads to a correlation in the 1967 sample, where these 'class' propensities are given some time to play themselves out. The result is as described above: the less educated get fewer offers and, in addition, accept fewer of these.

In several more detailed analyses it appears that the presence of favorable combinations of preconditions for confident illegal market transactions are more common in the more educated categories: this finding from the 1971 study is borne out in a number of multivariate analyses that lack of space prevents us from presenting. The fairly weak correlations between education and single indicators of ability to take care of one's interests through exploitation of the market acquire considerable strength as the items are combined, and more so for the 1967 sample than for the 1972 sample: it looks as if it takes a while before the effects of the education variable gain full force.

We should like to conclude this section by pointing out that the very need for illegal transactions is much more pronounced when someone is initially acquiring property than when someone is already in a position of ownership. In the latter case illegal transactions can be limited, since barter is possible, and the market price becomes partly irrelevant. Whenever two objects can be exchanged, not just an object and cash, illegality is not necessary to avoid a loss of market value. The choice between respectability and profit is thus not one encountered equally strongly by everybody, and the well-to-do are the gainers.⁸

6. The Social Basis of Market Images

When an individual on the housing market makes a decision, his notions of fairness or legality are not the only determinants: they may again be determined by the individual's conception of the market alternatives. His notions of what the alternatives are, what the market is like, now and in the future, consequently need to be examined if we are to understand how the notions of law and fairness operate within a larger image of the world. This is what we intend to do in this section. Our inquiry will be concerned with three aspects of these images of the market: ideas about the clarity or opaqueness of the market, concrete ideas about the present prices of specific types of apartments, and the future market trends. In connection with this last question we touch quite briefly on conceptions of other strategic components in the buying decision, e.g. attitudes to loans and planning.

Conception of Order in Market Experiences

One may have essentially rather different conceptions about and different ways of ordering one's own experiences. One may either assume that one has experiences that add up to a fairly coherent picture of the market or one may find that all that one possesses is a series of unrelated and confusing events, 'happenings' on the housing market.

In our 1971 study this subject was taken up somewhat indirectly. We asked the respondents which of the following three sentences they found most acceptable:

- 1) The housing market is a jungle, and it is very difficult to know what is profitable or wise action.
- 2) The housing market is complicated, but after some months one acquires some feeling for prices and other conditions.
- 3) The housing market is rather simple, a short inspection tells you all that is needed to know.

Table XIX. Perception of One's Own Experiences as Random or Patterned, by Education (Percentages)*

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1967						
Random	50	56	55	43	15	50
Patterned	43	41	45	56	85	46
No answer	7	3	-	2	-	4
1972						
Random	68	50	56	35	38	49
Patterned	25	46	44	62	60	48
No answer	8	4	-	3	3	3

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

To this question, 29% responded by choosing the first alternative, 52% opted for the second, and only 19% felt that the third was right. The responses seemed fairly closely linked to education.

In the 1972 study this subject was carried somewhat further. The respondents were asked to choose between two different statements, one indicating that he saw the market as essentially chaotic, the other that he perceived it as ordered and regular.

As one can see from inspecting Table XIX, the samples were split evenly between those two conceptions; the results from the two samples do not differ appreciably. Similarly, they both show a rather strong link between education and image of the market: higher education increases the chance that the market is seen as something with a fairly distinct shape and rather clear contours.

To carry this a little further, we also asked a question concerning the proper inference about future events from a series of 'bad' offers: should one assume that these simply reflect the true situation, or should one assume that a series of bad events must mean that one now is in for a stroke of luck?

The data are recorded in Table XX. It appears that the proportion of micawbers, who think that 'something must turn up', are more frequent among those with less education: counterinductive optimism seems to be an underdog phenomenon. We do not want to pass any general judgement on this frame of mind or assess its more general function in society, but in the present context it essentially means waiting, with obvious problematic consequences.

Ideas about Concrete Prices

The concrete impact of this strategy, however, is not definite until one has some basis in the form of more detailed expectations of what is a 'good' or 'bad' offer. This must be considered, at least partly, in relation to ideas about what is 'common', 'average', and 'usual'. For this purpose the 1971 survey devoted a series of questions to people's assessment of prices: the main finding was a strong correlation between education and prices; the higher the education, the higher the price

Table XX. 'Micawbers' and 'Realists', by Education* (Percentages)

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1967						
Micawbers	61	66	60	61	35	62
Realists	34	32	35	39	60	34
No answer	5	2	5	-	5	3
1972						
Micawbers	65	61	66	48	41	58
Realists	33	35	32	48	60	39
No answer	3	4	2	3	-	3

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

estimated.⁹ This idea was studied further in the 1972 study, where we described three apartments differing with respect to location (east end, west end, and borderline location), monthly rent, construction year, and size (square meters and room number).¹⁰

For each of these apartments our respondents were asked three different questions: each question concerned the price, but a different aspect of the price:

The first question dealt with the *actual market price* and ran as follows: *What do you have to pay if you want to get an apartment like that today?*

The second question dealt with the price according to *construction costs and*

Table XXI. Percentage of Respondents Estimating Different Types of Prices at Less than N. kr. 30 000, by Education*

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1967						
<i>Frogner apartment</i>						
(a) Market price	23	15	20	2	—	15
(b) Construction price	61	69	70	58	75	67
(c) Decent price	72	83	80	76	80	84
(c)-(b)	11	14	10	18	5	5
<i>Carl Berner apartment</i>						
(a) Market price	34	25	30	7	15	23
(b) Construction price	64	78	65	78	75	75
(c) Decent price	71	85	85	78	70	81
(c)-(b)	7	7	20	—	5	6
<i>Sagene apartment</i>						
(a) Market price	63	56	65	41	45	55
(b) Construction price	68	87	90	89	90	84
(c) Decent price	77	87	100	89	90	84
(c)-(b)	9	—	10	—	—	—
1972						
<i>Frogner apartment</i>						
(a) Market price	18	17	17	7	—	14
(b) Construction price	55	69	68	60	49	65
(c) Decent price	73	81	83	78	81	79
(c)-(b)	18	12	15	18	32	14
<i>Carl Berner apartment</i>						
(a) Market price	25	20	10	3	5	17
(b) Construction price	53	71	68	65	60	67
(c) Decent price	73	72	75	75	78	76
(c)-(b)	20	1	5	10	18	9
<i>Sagene apartment</i>						
(a) Market price	60	51	44	32	35	47
(b) Construction price	70	80	85	78	84	80
(c) Decent price	70	82	81	82	92	81
(c)-(b)	1	2	4	4	8	1

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

building expenditures. The question was given the following formulation: *What should it cost from your knowledge of building costs and the costs of building lots?*

The third question asks about the *socially decent price*. Here the question was given this form: *What should it cost according to your ideas of what people ought to pay for housing?*

The results are reported in Table XXI. They are, as can be seen, similar for the two age samples and also quite similar for the different apartments. They may briefly be summarized as follows:

1) There is a hierarchy of prices. For all the three apartments the socially decent price is lowest, the construction price higher, and the market price highest.

2) There are small differences between the different educational categories concerning construction costs or socially decent prices: whatever disagreement there is on this subject seems to cut completely across education.

3) There is, however, a rather marked difference between the educational groups when we ask about market price. Gulbrandsen's finding in the 1971 study is fully confirmed by the present study.

This means that for the less educated the gap between what is and what ought to be is narrower than for the educated. There is thus less of a reason to accept a given apartment for a person without education than for a person with education.

Future Market Trends

This 'lower-class' optimism is also reflected in the differences in expectations of inflation on the housing market. We presented our respondents with an apartment worth N.kr. 50,000 in 1972 and asked them to assess its value in 1975. The results are presented in Table XXII. It shows quite clear differences between educational groups, although those for the 1972 sample are less pronounced.

Since inflation essentially favors people with loans, by eating up the real value of the principle and the interest, we inspected the attitude to loans by asking people to choose between three statements reflecting negative, cautiously positive, and strongly positive attitudes to loans (see Table XXIII, bottom).

The relationship between the attitude to loans and education is again clear and

Table XXII. Respondents Who Do Not Expect the Price of Apartments Worth 50 000 in 1972 to Rise Above 70 000 in 1975, by Education (Percentages)*

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1967	57	54	55	50	30	53
1972	50	40	39	42	38	41

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

Table XXIII. Attitude to Loans,* by Education** (Percentages)

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1967						
Negative	4	5	-	2	-	4
Cautiously positive	71	66	65	56	45	63
Positive	20	27	30	41	45	30
No answer	5	2	5	2	10	3
1972						
Negative	15	3	5	2	-	5
Cautiously positive	63	73	61	73	73	69
Positive	20	22	32	22	24	24
No answer	3	2	2	3	3	2

* Negative: 'One ought to avoid loans. If one cannot pay cash, one should keep out of the bargains'. Cautiously positive: 'Loans may be necessary, but if one is not quite sure about being able to pay it back, it is quite risky. The matter calls for careful judgement'. Positive: 'Loans are on the whole an advantage, and one should not worry unduly if one can get one'.

** For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

undisputable. Table XXIII shows that the higher the education, the more positive the attitude.

One reason for this attitude may simply be ignorance. In one question we surveyed the knowledge about one very simple aspect of interests, i.e. that they are tax-deductible. As we see from Table XXIV, there is a clear relation between education and this very elementary piece of financial insight: it seems very reasonable to hold more skeptical notions about loans when at least one of the more important assets are not known. The fact remains, of course, that those with higher incomes profit more from this rule because of heavy marginal income taxation.

This may be one reason for the highly different attitudes to inflation in the different educational categories. It appears from Table XXV that, although the belief in the negative effects of inflation for oneself is quite pronounced, this is much less so in the higher educational groups. The relationship is exceptionally strong and follows from the findings presented earlier: lack of knowledge of inflation and its possibilities leads to lack of measures 'in case', and this fact means

Table XXIV. Knowledge of the Tax Deductibility of Interests, by Education* (Percentages)

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1967	55	63	80	78	75	64
1972	38	55	83	80	83	63

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

Table XXV. Respondents Expecting the Effects of Inflation to Help Them or Harm Them, by Education (Percentages)*

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1967						
Help	13	19	25	32	35	21
In doubt	13	24	10	28	35	22
Harm	68	56	65	41	30	54
1972						
Help	3	12	24	33	41	19
In doubt	33	28	22	15	19	26
Harm	60	59	41	52	40	43

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

that, when inflation comes, one suffers. Although it is far-fetched to assume that one of the main reasons for inflation is that the upper strata of Norwegian society see this process as a benevolent and beneficial one, it is highly unlikely that they put up a particularly fierce fight to stop it.

In all these calculations and arguments we have, of course, taken for granted that people have images of the future and act upon them. At least in certain respects this is only partly true: the attitude to planning ahead, as well as the actual occurrence of planning, is – as can be seen from Table XXVI – very strongly linked to higher education: the difference between the university-educated and those with primary school only is of a magnitude of 30% to 40%.

This point is not made in order to add to the abundant literature on lower-class ignorance and ineptitude in coping with difficult economic problems; it serves the more specific purpose of showing that the moralism is not purely a vindictive reaction to evil actions; it is also linked to a fairly optimistic picture of how things are. The bad events of the free market are more often viewed as cases of occasional animals of prey in an otherwise peaceful garden of Eden than as a

Table XXVI. The Occurrence of Planning and the Attitude to Economic Planning in the Family, by Education (Percentages).*

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Occurrence of economic planning for 1 month (or less) ahead only						
1967	64	43	35	39	30	46
1972	70	44	39	32	24	42
Generally positive attitude to economic planning in the family						
1967	25	47	50	63	70	46
1972	35	52	71	65	60	55

* For definition of educational classification, see Table IV.

realistic image of the fairly common teeth and claws. This image is no doubt furthered by the newspapers; in their description of the housing market they paint the transgressions as pitch-black rather than the common practice in shades of deep grey. For one who believes in this picture, waiting – and/or betting on luck or the cooperative solution – may seem the only feasible way out. Whether it is a profitable one is a moot question. The action of the less educated will, given this image, essentially be somewhat different from that of the educated.

7. The Conclusions and Their Consequences

In the course of this article we have presented evidence bearing on the functioning of the open housing market in Oslo. We shall now review our findings and indicate which points we intend to examine further in order to reach more definite conclusions. We shall also add a few words about the implications for public policy in this and related areas.

We believe that the preceding argument has shown rather convincingly that, as a control system, the attempts to control housing prices by setting maximum prices cannot be said to work particularly well; it certainly does not go very much beyond a pious wish. The main impression from our analysis is that a considerable lack of realism is an almost inevitable by-product – as well as the cause – of this endeavor, and it seems to affect the less well educated more adversely than the well educated. This is shown in different ways and in different degrees in different types of questions, but we do not think the overall impression can be questioned.

There are, however, several points where we feel that further analysis would be helpful in order to assess more properly the magnitude of these effects and their relative importance. We would like to ensure that the effects of alternately using characteristics of the interview object (education, opinions, beliefs) and of the family (residence, apartment quality, family income) are not leading us to wrong interpretations: we have checked for several of the more relevant control variables, with rather reassuring results, but the matter needs to be pursued further. We need to go further in linking clusters of background factors to clusters of opinions and beliefs. We need to explore the differences between the 1967 sample and the 1972 sample, as well as age differences within these samples; a number of attempts in this direction are presently being carried out.¹¹ Some minor surprises, e.g. the occasional examples of moralism in the very highest educational groups, should be inspected and, if possible, explained. We should also devote more energy to assessing why, in some tables, the connection between education and behavior or beliefs is monotonous, while in other cases it is not, and why the dividing line sometimes falls at one point along the educational level and sometimes at another. These are the obvious points for tidying up and consolidating the argument. In addition to this are the numerous possibilities for cross-community comparisons of rates and correlations in order to check our findings from the Oslo survey.

The political question is no less vexing and hard to answer.

Judged by itself, in presumed isolation from other measures and processes, the answer seems reasonably clear. We must assume that the main effect of this 'low price – bad seller' ideology is to confine a large number of people's transactions to absolutely safe ones, essentially involving cooperative housing and transactions within the family. This has two kinds of effects. On the one hand, it works to keep low-income people out of certain kinds of risky situations (made risky, however, partly by the rules in question). But it also confines them to operations where they essentially do not profit from their deals. Another effect is caused by loop-sided taxation, since highly valued property is not subject to taxation that corresponds to its market value as compared to other objects of ownership. That this helps low-income groups is highly doubtful: rather, it creates an opaque situation where the social effect of measures becomes difficult to assess.

Again, we would be cautious; the net effect of this process may be problematic, and the policy as such self-defeating, but what if it is an unavoidable consequence of fairly aggressive housing policy, the net effects of which are essentially that the less fortunate are better off? This can hardly be judged without both more explicitly formulated value preferences and a better appreciation of the actual functioning of the municipal cooperative system, which plays a very important role in Oslo. If this worked exclusively to the benefit of the less fortunate, by severely limiting the possibility of inheritance or transfer at the will of the owner, there might be a chance. There are limitations, but not so stringent as to render plausible such assumptions. Given these assumptions, it becomes very difficult to be sure that the price controls have been efficient or even have pulled in the right direction. What has been established and intended as a barrier to 'exploitation' may have become a major stumbling block to the less fortunate, who apparently might have been better off if they had been 'exploited' a few more times. Given the public's unwarranted and dataless confidence in direct control measures we feel no hesitation in pushing this point somewhat further than we otherwise would have done.

NOTES

1. The findings are presented in Lars Gulbrandsen, *Unge nygifte og boligmarkedet. Et forsøk på å belyse boligmarkedet i Oslo gjennom en intervju-undersøkelse av nygifte ektepar*. Oslo, Institutt for statsvitenskap, Universitetet i Oslo, 1972, mimeograph.
2. The 1972 study contains two subsamples, couples married in Oslo in 1972 and couples married in 1967, under 30 years of age, drawn from the marriage registers and still living in Oslo at the time of interviewing (October–November 1972). Only one spouse, randomly selected, was interviewed in each household. The interviewer called and explained the purpose of the investigation, and a date for picking up the questionnaire was agreed upon. Whether because of the fairly popular topic or the excellence of the interviewers, we obtained a very high response rate, above 90%. The corresponding figure for the pilot study was 85%, and for Ålesund and Kristiansand the figures were, respectively, 95% and 96%. The questionnaires returned also show a very low percentage of 'no answer' to the individual questions. We feel that the high quality of the procedures allows maximal possible confidence in the data.

3. In a preliminary analysis, Bjørn Ketilson reports gamma-coefficients of -0.047 and 0.419 between the male income and education in the 1972 and 1967 samples, respectively. From this change from a complete absence of correlation to a clear positive correlation, it seems that what has happened is an adjustment of income to education, since the level of the latter is equal at both times.
4. Jon Elster, *Det distributive flertall*. Oslo, Filosofisk Institutt, 1972, mimeograph.
5. Empirical studies of how individual interpretations are writ large as collective measures without any further reflection are fairly few. That this is less often the case among the well-to-do than among others seems quite certain, the class formation thus proceeding from the top and downwards, and probably with a built-in misdirection of lower-status collective measures. Political sociologists have frequently commented on the lower level of information of the less well-to-do. They have, however, been somewhat reluctant to draw a not unreasonable conclusion: that the policies they pursue are less certainly in their interest than is the case for other levels.
6. Johan Arndt. *Consumer Search Behavior*. Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1972; and Lars Gulbrandsen, *op. cit.*
7. The footnote to Table IV explains the classification of education used throughout the article. As one can see, this classification does lead to somewhat low numbers for two categories. Since it rarely affects the general picture and since it is in most cases fairly clear how it would affect the percentages if two neighboring categories were combined, we have chosen to present the more detailed classification.
8. This also has the implication that, whenever something is being swapped for an apartment, this may be sold for a very low price, rather than the apartment for a high one, since the difference is what counts. This presumably favors individuals who are involved in frequent transactions.
9. See Gulbrandsen, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
10. We do not find it profitable or necessary in this context to give all details about the profile of the three different apartments. Suffice it to say that they were fairly distinct types; since our findings turn out to be similar for the different apartments, this seems to be the most relevant aspect. Any further specification would carry us into the minutiae of the Oslo housing market and geography and can hardly be supposed to concern the general reader.
11. See Bjørn Ketilson's forthcoming paper on the differences in the intercorrelation of background factors in the two samples.