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ACHIEVABILITY OF AN OPEN AND INCLUSIVE CITY IDEAL (RIGHT TO THE CITY) IN EUROPEAN POST-SOCIALIST COUNTRIES²

Abstract

In the modern neoliberal world, due to large social stratifications and a large gap in wealth redistribution, the achievability of the ideal of an open city, as the concept of the UN and inclusive city, as the concept of a democratic society, is becoming a great practical challenge and therefore interesting topic for urban policy researchers. The article will open important research topics in contemporary urban policy studies, focusing on post-socialist countries. The main research methods are analysis and presentation (synthesis) of the results of contemporary studies in general, and comparative data on transformation in social housing policy in transitional countries. The paper will also present some challenges of the neoliberal world (example of Occupy London movement), as well as good practices of social housing in Copenhagen, to stimulate better urban and housing policy (learning from experiences) for Belgrade and other post-socialist cities.

Key words: affordable and social housing, post-socialist countries, participatory decision-making, public space, homelessness

1 INTRODUCTION

Today, in the field of urban policy studies, several researchers of social democratic and neo-Marxist orientation, are opening the question of actuality and the importance of the ideal of an open and inclusive city in

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modern society. They theoretically rely on the concept of the right to the city created by Henri Lefebvre (Lefebvre 1996) which is always highly valued by numerous followers. This concept means that everybody has the right to come to the city (open city), and to be accepted with the ability to satisfy existential needs (job, housing, and other public services). In the contemporary global world and social ambiance, several challenges are opened with this concept, which was not the case at the time when this concept was created.

If this right applies to the citizens of the country alone (which was predominantly the case in 1960ties when the concept was born), it could be feasible in a certain sense, with the application of an adequate housing and employment policy. If, however, in the context of globalization, it covers the whole world, numerous challenges appear regarding cities' capacity to accept new residents (deepening international conflicts, the challenge of wars around the world, and the invasions of refugees due to war and environmental problems).

Nowadays countries where migrants would like to settle, have less and less potential to adequately accept them. One can observe that there are serious conflicts between migrants and host societies due to different cultures, values, and lifestyles, which is a great problem for both, migrants (troubles with socialization) and residents of domicile countries. Therefore, we are witnessing in most European countries the strengthening of the resistance against migrants, increasing intolerance and „hatred of foreigners“, and immigration bans (barricades, barbed wire), which brings us closer to racial movements.

1 BODY OF THE PAPER

The article is structured to open the most important topics in contemporary urban policy study, clarifying social and political aspects of stratification and closing cities to people. The beginning of the paper are presented the most important problems in the neoliberal world which also influences post-socialist countries in a certain way: analyzes the gated communities as an indicator of the cancellation of the social democratic concept of mixed housing, as well as the spread of gentrification as the practice of displacing the poor people on periphery from their settlements which are on a good location for creation of new exclusive residential and commercial districts, as well as the rising global urban problem of homelessness. Having in mind an inclusive city, the paper deals with the existence of participatory decision-making and the problem of neglecting public spaces and their sale (privatization), as spaces of essential importance for people to meet and socialize. In this sense, it will be presented the case of the „Occupy London“ urban movement which ambitiously dealt

with these problems in London.

The next part of the article deals with the main topics: changes in social housing in post-socialist countries, the phenomenon of privatization of housing stock as a form of social justice, then the problem of housing availability for socially vulnerable categories that often include a large part of the population, and finally the quality and capacities of social housing in these countries.

The final part of this article is devoted to a comparison between Copenhagen, with an excellent model and practice of social housing (case study), and Belgrade as a post-socialist city with specific challenges in this policy field (case study) followed by concluding remarks.

2 PROBLEMS OF CITIES IN THE NEOLIBERAL WORLD

The ambient and nature of the neoliberal society strongly influence the shaping of cities, spatial planning, and housing policies. These settlements are accompanied by numerous problems including inequality, with the evident division of residents according to wealth (or ethnic origin, skin color). In that sense, these cities of inequality have developed two extremes: settlements of the rich shaped as gated communities, and poor ghettos as their opposition.

Gated communities are inaccessible to other citizens, they receive numerous privileges such as the privatization of the roads that lead from them to public areas (parks, riverbanks, lakes, seas), and over time entire parts of the city remain closed to „ordinary citizens“. Research shows that city authorities permit the closure of some public spaces (streets, small squares, etc.) based on the explanation that there is a danger to safety, without any evidence of this. (Le Goix, Callen 2010, 102, 104, 105.) This increases the gap between the inhabitants and strengthens the feeling of hostility, contempt, and even animosity between the privileged, rich, and the rest of the population, especially the poor citizens (Kenna et al. 2015, 122,123).

Furthermore, in all the cities of the neoliberal world, the practice of gentrification is present worldwide, which „cleanses“ attractive parts of the city of poor residents and builds residential and commercial parts of the city for the rich (Lees, Shin, Lopez-Morales 2016). To hide the connection between the displacement of poorer residents and the construction of new luxury settlements, city authorities often additionally empty neighboring parts of the settlement. In renovated parts of the city, the prices of services are raised, which is a very effective mechanism of subsequent pressure on the remaining poor and even citizens of the middle social class to leave their settlement (Neil, Williams 2007).

The „Occupy London“ social movement, launched in 2010 in London, indicated the alienation of the city from its citizens. The members of the

movement mapped numerous parts of the city that were emptied through gentrification and following activities pointed out to the public that many institutions remained empty: courts, primary and secondary schools, etc. The members of the movement connected these phenomena with the nature of the neoliberal (British) economy, which deals with profits on the global stage that enrich narrow social groups, ignoring the sufferings of the growing number of residents of British cities, including London as the capital city, which is developing as a world political and financial center. The movement indicates that the economy is displaced, that it does not revolve around the real needs and problems of citizens, who are perceived by political elites (state and city authorities) as an expense and a burden to society, showing over time more and more contempt toward citizens.

This revealing analysis of the movement influenced the city authorities to perceive these mapped objects as an unpleasant reminder of citizens displaced to the periphery, and the „solution“ was found in the demolition of these empty objects (!), which indicates the insolence and persistence of invisible centers to realize their interests, despite the price paid by ordinary citizens (Robinson 2015, p. 42).

The movement formed an assembly where everybody can publicly speak about the urgent problems of the community, which was a great refreshment and encouragement for the citizens. The movement identified a problem that accompanies many cities in the neoliberal world. It was pointed out to the active neglecting of public spaces which are of essential importance for meeting and socializing people across London. In the mapping of various public spaces, it was identified that many of them were sold (such as Pater Nostri Square in the City where the movement set up their camp) without any information to the public about this sale (lack of open data). Hence, one of the main demands of the movement was to stop the practice of selling public spaces and to maintain and improve these spaces.

Many public spaces, which remain on the property of the city and its municipalities, are generally neglected and poorly maintained. The Occupy London movement demanded the city government stop the practice of transferring the maintenance of public spaces to the private sector without any control by the city because such arrangements primarily stimulate commercial contents that have nothing to do with the development of the community. The representatives of the movement insisted that the city authorities take care of and maintain public spaces and enrich democratic content to strengthen the community of citizens (Nyong'o, 2012, p. 137).

All these, very logical and normal demands for a democratic society, directly conflict with the values and principles of functioning of neoliberal society and political authorities. Members of the movement were aggressively

attacked and accused of advocating for participatory, i.e., direct democracy, which in the political discourse of British society in the last decade has been valued as a kind of great offense. Members of the Occupy London movement even made excuses for not going that far (!!!), which is a sure indicator of a major shift in the political scene to the right, authoritarian pole (Robinson, 2015. p. 43).

All these examples show us that neoliberal society and cities are often hostile to social democratic values, causing several everyday troubles to communities and citizens, and decreasing their quality of life.

3 CHANGES IN HOUSING POLICY IN TRANSITIONAL, POST-SOCIALIST SOCIETIES

3.1 What is housing policy and why it matters to citizens?

Social housing belongs to extremely important policy areas that greatly contribute to the quality of life of citizens. Much of the social conflict, unrest, and ultimately movement is based on the availability of housing, as well as on housing problems in different neighborhoods (Watt, 2017, Cataneo, 2015). In short, housing, in addition to education, employment, and health, is of great importance for the quality of life and welfare of every citizen.

Neoliberal society has transferred procurement of housing from public to market, private procurement. This structural change directly caused major problems for vulnerable social groups even in developed European countries (poor housing quality, increase in homelessness), and caused even greater spatial injustice and troubles in transitional societies.

3.2 Changes in Housing Policy in European Post-Socialist Societies

In socialism, there was an established universal right for each person to housing. There existed social (state, region, city, municipal) ownership of housing. The person got an apartment with the right of use, and obligation to pay rent and the costs of electricity, heating, cleaning services, garbage removal, and maintenance (the rent and costs were moderate). Citizens in villages and smaller settlements primarily built their own houses and in cities, they mostly lived in apartments in residential buildings. The right to use the apartment implicitly contains the right of inheritance,³ the right to exchange the apartment or to rent it.

The owner of the housing fund was the state, and local authorities (municipalities, cities, districts, or regions), but also public companies and

³ This means that the tenant's heirs have a right to inherit the apartment.

institutions. The share of local government ownership of the housing stock mainly depended on the degree of decentralization in society as well as on the capacity of local authorities to build and maintain housing.

Citizens get an apartment depending on their level of education, job, income, family size, health (or illness), etc. The law determined the criteria for the allocation of apartments and in each institution (mostly working institution), ranking lists were made on which individuals were scored and apartments were allocated accordingly (Lux, Sunega 2014, p. 504,505).

During the transition, all post-socialist countries have gone through political reforms accepting the concept and principles of Western democracy, as well as through economic reform accepting the rules and principles of the market economy. In this process, the authorities opened the possibility for people to buy apartments that they already used, at favorable prices (because the incomes of citizens were also modest), which influenced many citizens to get apartments in personal ownership (Lux, Sunega 2014, p. 506-509).

Additionally, from that moment on, the housing market developed, the largest part of the public housing fund was privatized, and there was a big change in the housing policy. A new policy is being created in which the state and local authorities largely withdraw from the process of building residential buildings and providing apartments.

The following table gives the basic results of the research conducted in 2010 and 2011 on the characteristics of public or social housing in ten post-socialist countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe. The research was conducted on a sample of 10 post-socialist countries shown in the table by abbreviations: BA - Bosnia and Herzegovina, HR - Croatia, CZ - Czech Republic, EE - Estonia, HU - Hungary, PL - Poland, RO - Romania, RU - Russia, RS - Republic of Serbia, SK - Slovakia, SI - Slovenia and UA - Ukraine. The research was carried out by filling out 3 questionnaires, i.e., by conducting a semi-standardized survey and questionnaire (empirical research) (Lux, Sunega 2014, p. 506-509).

For better following of the data, we present abbreviations: P1 - public, non-profit housing as a percentage of the total stock of apartments, P2 - non-profit housing as a percentage of the total stock of apartments, AVR - Principle of assessed value, CP - cost principle, SG - second generation, SH - social housing, ST - precise tariffs, IR - defined according to income, PH - public housing.

Research data indicate that there are certain differences in the scope of privatization of the public housing stock, the extent of additional construction of public housing facilities, the regime and method of regulating the amount of rent, and the extent of financing of new housing facilities by the state and/or by local authorities.

Table 1. Characteristics of public/social housing in a sample of post-socialist countries

Country	P1	P2	Central control of rents for public housings SH/PH	Central control of rents for new public housings SH/PH	New fund of public housing- (1995-2010)	Central (state) ansingSH/ PH	Local unicipal) finansing SH/PH
BA	2.0	≤ 0.1	Yes, AVR	No	Marginal	Yes	No
HR	2.0	-	Yes, AVR	No	Marginal	Yes	Yes, in the capital city mainly
CZ	8.0	-	Yes, ST, since 2012 SG	Yes, CP	Substantial	Yes	No
EE	4.0	-	No	No	Low	No	Yes, in the capital city mainly
HU	4.0	-	No	Yes, CP	Marginal	Yes	No
PL	10.0	2.0	Yes, SG	Yes, CP	Middle	Yes	No
RO	2.0	-	Yes, IR	Yes, IR	Low	Yes	No
RU	16.0	2.0	Yes, ST	Yes, ST	Marginal	Yes	Yes, in the capital city mainly
RS	0.5	-	Yes, ST	Yes, ST	Middle	Yes	Yes, mostly in the capital city
SK	3.0	-	Yes, ST	Yes, CP	Substantial	Yes	No
SL	4.0	2.0	Yes, AVR	Yes, AVR	Substantial	Yes	Yes, for elderly
UA	5.0	-	Yes, ST	Yes, ST	Marginal	Yes	No

Source: partially abbreviated table, author according to Martin Lux, Peter Sunega 2014. "Public Housing in the Post-Socialist States of Central and Eastern Europe: Decline and an Open Future", *Housing Studies*, 29/4: 501–519, p. 508.

The data shows that Russia (16%), Poland (10%), and the Czech Republic (8%) have preserved the largest volume of public housing, although even in their case the stock is not too large. It is interesting that in Poland and

the Czech Republic, the law was not adopted by the parliament due to major conflicts, but it was left to the will of municipalities and cities to implement the privatization of their housing stock, which was mostly done (Lowe, Tsenkova 2003).

On this issue, there was a „dramatic“ break with socialist practice and a significant shift towards a market-based, capitalist society, which was a big and sudden change. We see that even though this change greatly contributed to raising family standards as well as the personal wealth of most residents, this decision caused sharp debates and conflicts in several countries. A good example is precisely these three countries that have kept a substantial share of public housing funds.

Most of the other countries went somewhat more ambitiously towards privatization. The percentage of public housing in the total housing stock varies from 5% in Ukraine, 4% in Estonia, Hungary, and Slovenia, 3% in Slovakia, and up to 2% in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Romania. In contrast, Serbia is a country where total privatization was carried out (only 0.5% of the public housing fund was not privatized), which resulted in almost all citizens having privately owned apartments.

There are different methods of privatization in countries from the sample. In Serbia, the users of apartments got the right to buy the apartment for a symbolic sum of money. In many countries, apartments were given for free (in this way, the state solved the problem of maintenance costs that it passed on to users). In the mentioned three countries (Russia, Poland, and the Czech Republic), it happened that some tenants refused to buy the apartment, and the state (and the local government) accepted that such a regime of using the apartment without buying it would still be maintained (Lux, Sunega 2014, p. 507).

In this context, the researchers created a classification of social housing policy models according to specific features at this first transitional phase. A conservative model is present in Russia and Ukraine, which have preserved many elements of the socialist system: lists for apartments made according to old (socialist developed) criteria, preservation of public housing stock, strictly regulated rents, and poorly developed housing and lending market.

The emergency policy was developed in countries affected by wars causing the migration of people, and the state had to quickly solve these problems (Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina). This model covers only that extraordinary phase of development. Over time, it too shifts to the market model that dominates most of the countries in this sample.

The market model is characterized by the development of the real estate market, financing, lending and insurance, privatization of housing stock, etc. The authors usually make a distinction according to whether public housing

facilities (apartments) are a certain supplement to the market housing system (market complement policy) – in Poland and the Czech Republic or whether these public apartments are a remnant of the old system (market residual policy) - Estonia, Hungary, and Romania (Lux, Sunega 2014, p. 510).

Today, almost 10 years later, most of these models are market-based, the models of these countries are getting closer (there is some convergence due to the use of similar instruments and mechanisms) because countries learn from each other, finally shaping the model according to the needs of their society.

In terms of rent control in the public sector, most countries have preserved that control with strict tariffs (ST) or tariffs created according to the assessed value (AVR) of the apartment. Estonia and Hungary are exceptions because they do not have central control over the amount of these rents.

In the case of rents introduced for newly built public housing, they are generally determined according to the cost principle (CP), which indicates the adaptation of the authorities to market conditions. In Romania and Serbia, the regime did not change the previously built housing stock (strict tariffs, ST), like the practice in Portugal. However, in the case of Romania more recently, rents for newly built public housing are established according to the income of the user of public housing (IR), which is the principle that exists in Germany. Similar changes are occurring in Slovakia, except that the amount of rent is determined according to the principle of the appraised value of the apartment (AVR), which is again the principle used by the Netherlands. Based on these examples, it can be seen that post-socialist countries learn and adapt some of the practices of Western European countries that are most useful to them.

The scope of further public housing construction is monitored in this research from 1995 to 2010. The scope of construction depends on many factors: primarily population growth, and migration, but also the strength of the economy, and these remain the main factors these days. Estonia and Romania, for example, have little construction in the observed period, almost negligible in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Hungary, moderate construction of new apartments in Poland and Serbia, and large in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Slovenia. In the Czech Republic, the construction of new apartments was created through cooperation, so that the future users co-financed the construction (the construction was very favorable - cheap) and thereby got a kind of ownership over the apartment. However, in this way, a group of poor citizens who did not have money for a deposit was excluded. Later, this type of construction continued (following the same model) for luxury buildings and facilities, which further distanced the project from supporting vulnerable groups. This example can be found in many other countries in this sample.

Based on the data obtained from research that measured the volume of new construction of public buildings and apartments (Lux, Sunega 2014, p. 511), it turned out as a kind of paradox that richer, more economically developed countries have a higher scope and quality of construction than poorer countries in which socially vulnerable population and thus the need for social housing, is greater.

Furthermore, the authors highlight the paradox of privatization as the main cause of the weaker sustainability of the stock of newly built public housing. In most countries, citizens, by getting an apartment for use, expect that, like other citizens before them, also will get a chance to buy it cheaply. Political elites accept this (principle of equality) and thus the fund for newly built public housing buildings and apartments is permanently “melted”.

The main financier of construction is primarily the state, with the fact that local authorities implement these projects mainly in large cities (usually the capital): in Serbia, Croatia, Russia, and Estonia, while in Slovenia, cities invest in the construction of apartments for elderly citizens (Lux, Sunega 2014, p. 511).

In socialism, no distinction was made between public and social housing because the concept of the universal right to housing for all citizens prevailed. With the development of the housing market system, the concept of social housing is specifically defined by regulations as support for smaller and vulnerable social groups with the application of measures such as: providing an apartment for use or covering part or all the rent. In most countries, the regulation has been enriched with these solutions, which were largely influenced by the impoverishment of part of the population due to the transition, and the increased need of part of society for this type of support. It turned out that even in the case, when this regulation was not adopted (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia, and Hungary), this support system developed, which we understand as the inertia of the previously socialist system, to take care of people in need.

The researchers concluded that, nevertheless, this new system of social housing in post-socialist countries is neither effective nor sustainable. One of the main problems is the poor targeting of vulnerable categories of residents (which means that the databases are not adequate either in terms of coverage or quality), and when the targeting is done correctly, social protection projects are not adequate for various reasons. Hence, in most countries, we can still encounter a population (Roma and the poorest citizens) living in illegal settlements (ghettos) because there is always a lack of money for their reconstruction. Furthermore, part of the vulnerable population, due to a weak evidence system, is not visible and solves its problems through family, relatives, and friends (privately). No wonder that these societies constantly have a certain population of homeless

people, whose problems are solved ad hoc.

Post-socialist countries (cities and municipalities) face homelessness as one of the most serious social problems. Bearing in mind that in the neoliberal system, there has been a large increase in the number of homeless people in developed European countries that have far greater economic and developmental capacities and public funds to solve these problems, it is not unusual for this problem to also occur in economically far less developed post-socialist societies.

These countries have adopted European strategies for preventing and combating homelessness. In these processes, in addition to the state, the role of local authorities is very important. Post-socialist countries can only partially alleviate or prevent this difficult social phenomenon, in contrast to the integral approach of more developed countries that immediately go to eliminate the cause of the problem: training, employment, procuring other public services (health, psychological support, and counseling) and providing apartment (concept Housing first), which is certainly one of the most important measures for which large funds are needed.

Post-socialist countries usually do not have these capacities and implement measures such as temporary accommodation (shared bedrooms, bathrooms), support of public kitchens, day centers, health care, possible housing subsidies as well as a winter shelter (Bilanovic, Cikiric 2021, p. 135-137). Often, programs are developed for special vulnerable social groups such as children and youth without parental care and housing (homeless - street children), migrants, and victims of domestic violence. Some kind of collective accommodation is provided for them, but the capacities are always smaller than the scope of the real needs.

4 THE PROBLEM OF HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND THE ADEQUACY OF HOUSING POLICY: COMPARATIVE EXPERIENCES

This part of the article will analyze the experiences and functioning of Copenhagen as a smart city with an integrated model of social housing, with democratic, participatory decision-making procedures, good quality databases that are open (available), and good practice of co-production also in housing policy, as a good practice. These lessons will be useful for Belgrade. Although Belgrade uses some of the IT instruments in some policy sectors, in social housing it often lacks good databases, lacks transparency in the creation of public documents and projects (rare public hearings), the policy is often ad hoc, instead of mission and result-driven, evidence-based.

4.1 Copenhagen – a case study of smart housing policy (affordable and good quality social housing)

Denmark has an integral and accessible housing model owning a large fund of social housing about the total housing fund (over 19%). Therefore, it belongs to a group of countries (together with the Netherlands, Sweden, and Austria) with the best-developed social housing systems (Bilanovic, Cikiric 2021, 134,135).

In this context, Copenhagen city authorities since the time of the welfare state have nurtured the concept of affordable housing, which they have carefully and dedicatedly preserved. The city strives to provide citizens with quality housing and does not allow homelessness, which is a growing problem in most developed European and even Scandinavian societies and cities (Hedin, Clark, Lundholm, Malmberg 2012, p. 460).

The problem of homelessness in Copenhagen (as in the whole country) is solved by integrative policies aimed at solving the causes of the problem. This process also includes training centers that enable a person to be trained for a job and start earning, a health institution treats him in case of sickness together with social and psychological support and an apartment is provided (model housing first). As mentioned, in Copenhagen there is a large stock of public buildings and housing provided for vulnerable social groups, which allows this policy to be effectively implemented. The amount of rent for these apartments is formed according to costs, which is a model that also exists in Finland, Austria, and France (Bilanovic, Cikiric 2021, p. 135).

The city authorities are further developing the concept of mixed housing as a social democratic creation that enables people of different financial statuses to live together and get to know each other better. It contributes to the better integration of people into the community, which is the basis for the existence of local democracy. This significantly reduces social zoning in the city (a phenomenon that creates neighborhoods of rich and poor people). There is no closed rich community (gated communities) in Copenhagen (Holden, Airas, Larsen 2019, p.149-170).

Contrary to this, in Kristianshavn, in the southern part of the city, since 1971 there has been a settlement of Kristiania, founded as a hippie community by squatters who occupied old military barracks. They managed to resist the government's intention to remove them and were „saved“ as a kind of „social experiment“. In this way, they gained and have preserved their power in the settlement to this day: they stipulate their regulation, they choose their governing bodies and have self-government, they have specific economic activities from which they are additionally originally financed (cafés, restaurants, the sale of

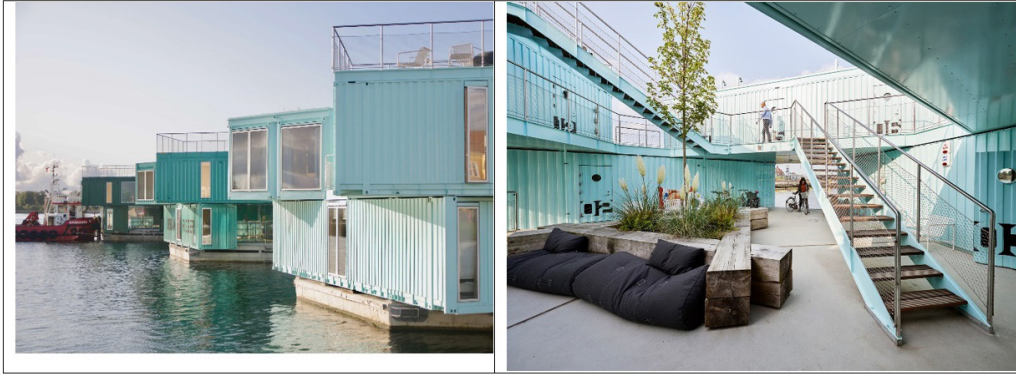
works of art and handicrafts) and they nurture a specific lifestyle.

In each neighborhood, in addition to private apartments, the city also provides a percentage of public apartments for socially disadvantaged residents (low rent) so that they can be normally integrated into the community. In this way, segregation is prevented in advance and all these efforts, and the results obtained, make Copenhagen an excellent example of an open city. The management process (together with monitoring) in this policy area is facilitated by good databases on the ownership structure of apartments in each settlement and good social maps of the population (Damsgaard 2014, p. 21-41). The databases also identify the locations of poorer neighborhoods and settlements. Residents are asked about their daily problems, and the city invests significant resources in renovating these neighborhoods, not allowing the quality of housing to fall below a decent level.

When renovating or building residential housing for poorer citizens, a lot of effort is put into making these buildings of good quality, functional and beautiful (Vagnby, Jensen 2002, p. 3-13). There are many such examples. Dorteavai in the Northwest neighborhood (picture 1) is a modern, functional, and beautiful neighborhood for low-income residents. In this case, we see how good architectural solutions can improve a previously neglected settlement. The five-story building with a colorful facade in pastel colors, with alternately protruding and recessed cubes, gives the space a bright and dynamic look. The curvature of the building creates a pleasant feeling in the courtyard space in front of the building as if it encompasses and protects it. In the courtyard, there is a bicycle parking lot and a nice green area with lawns and trees.

Another successful renovation project is the reconstruction of social buildings in Sundholm Sid (picture 2), which transformed a monotonous neighborhood into a neighborhood with wooden houses, each with four apartments. The buildings are a kind of industrial, prefabricated low-energy modules, with large windows, flexible shutters, and nice, comfortable balconies. The settlement is focused on sustainability and biodiversity, and the residents have reasonable rents, with the responsibility of the tenants to clean, repair and maintain the building, apartments, and green spaces around the building.

Pictures 1. Dortheavej and 2. Sundholm Syd



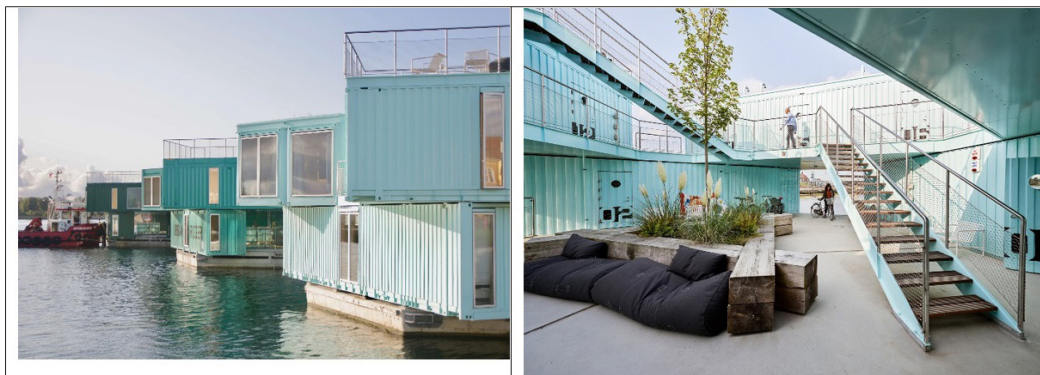
Source: <https://www.visitcopenhagen.com/copenhagen/planning/dortheavej-gdk1110809>

[www. https://dac.dk/en/knowledgebase/architecture/sundholm-syd-2/#](https://dac.dk/en/knowledgebase/architecture/sundholm-syd-2/#)

The city often takes care of apartments for artists, as a particularly sensitive social group. During the renovation, a complex of apartments was built for them around the former port and warehouse. The former warehouses were converted into art studios for painting, sculpting, and other artistic purposes (ballet halls, theater spaces, galleries, etc.).

Attention is also paid to young people who have problems with the availability of good and affordable housing. The city smartly used the sea surface to locate the apartments. Urban Rigger Project designed student apartments on the water with a visionary and innovative architectural solution. These floating apartments are made from old shipping containers, with the use of solar energy with technology that activates a low-energy pump and hydro-source heating (passive, solar house). Urban settlement Rigger was created in 2017 with 12 small student apartments. In 2019, a small village of 72 apartments was created, which, in addition to the apartments, has nice common spaces for gathering on the boat and the terraces. The floating village is very popular and in demand (pictures 3 and 4).

Pictures 3. and 4. Urban Rigger



Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=Urban+Rigger+in+Copenhagen>

Copenhagen is a „city of architecture“ and its political leaders and public servants are proud of the practice of participative policy and decision-making. In social housing policy, city offices involve various social groups of tenants, citizens, and the public, in the creation of facilities, monitoring the quality of life of people in the settlements, and in the correction of services and their improvement. This is a reason why Copenhagen is a livable city of satisfied people (Agger, Pulsen, 2017). In this sense, this is an example of good practice from which many cities worldwide, together with European post-socialist cities, can learn.

4.2 Belgrade – housing policy case study

In Yugoslavia (including Belgrade), the concept of affordable and mixed housing has been developed over four decades, from 1945 to 1990. It was based on the universal right of all citizens to housing. It was a logical part of the socialist and self-governing system, aimed at taking care of the well-being of the citizens. This system was decentralized, so large municipalities (the average size was around 40,000 inhabitants) and cities could build apartments themselves and lead a housing policy appropriate to the needs of the local community. Companies and institutions also had a part of the public housing fund, which, according to ranking lists, they distributed to employees, following some criteria such as education, position, salary, number of household members, the health status of family members, etc. The apartments were socially owned and used by tenants, who were paying very affordable rents (about 5% of the average salary) and covered the costs (water, sewage, garbage, electricity, gas, etc) (Djordjevic, 2017, p 114).

With the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the wars in 1990

(embargo, sanctions, impoverishment of citizens), the existing facilities were neglected, but the construction of new ones is also weaker. Due to the large wave of refugees (from Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo), there was an urgent need for building new apartments (emergency model of Social Housing - Lux, Sunega, 2014, p. 510). Construction often took place under time pressure and without sufficient funds, and these buildings were often of inferior quality. In that process, for example, the settlement of Batajnica on the periphery of Belgrade was built without the necessary infrastructure, which posed a big problem to subsequently correction in 2000.

In the 1990s, the government gave citizens - tenants the right to buy the apartment which they used, under very favorable conditions. This led to the large privatization of apartments, which resulted in a good situation, where over 95% of citizens (Petronijevic 2016, p. 15-17) have their apartments. In this process, only 0.5% of apartments remain in public ownership, which makes Serbia an exception in the sample of post-socialist countries. This measure was an attempt of public authorities to ease the impoverishment and decline in the quality of life of citizens, during the time of civil wars and international sanctions. State and local authorities mostly left this policy field.

In time, with the strengthening of the neoliberal concept of housing, new vulnerable groups appeared, demanding public officials help them. Citizens who do not have an apartment (often young people or newcomers to the city) have the option of:

- a. Renting - it is no longer so available because the rents are much higher because they are formed on the market, or
- b. Buying an apartment - money is very expensive and loans double the value of the apartment that the buyer must finally pay off.

In this sense, the introduction of the National Housing Credit Insurance Corporation (NKOSK) in 2004 as a state guarantee that the housing loan will be repaid, had the effect of reducing interest rates on loans, which somewhat facilitated the purchase of an apartment. This moment is important as a factor in the development of the market housing system (Djordjevic, 2019, p.727). However, research shows that citizens pay off loans for an apartment of average size (60m²) between a third and a half of their monthly salary, for 20-30 years, which causes great difficulties and stress at a time of job insecurity. With unemployment and insecure regular funding, there is a great danger that people will become homeless (Petronijevic 2016, p. 94-103; Djordjevic, Petronijevic 2015, p. 123-124).

It is a paradox that Serbia as a leader in public housing privatization did not willingly participate in the restitution of nationalized apartments. Researchers explained that it was caused precisely because of comprehensive

privatization (Lux, Cirman, Sunega, 2017, p. 150-153).

Furthermore, the construction of new public apartments (Serbia has a medium volume of new construction compared to other post-socialist countries) does not ensure the long-term sustainability of this fund, because it is permanently transformed into private apartments by purchase by the tenants (paradox of privatization).

The state builds apartments only in special situations, most often for vulnerable social groups: the army, the police, young scientists, and low-income families. As for the Roma population the most vulnerable social group (40,000 in Belgrade), their informal settlements (there are about 100 of them) are being rebuilt very slowly to improve the quality of houses, to provide infrastructure and other facilities. Since 2014, 266 Roma families have received adequate housing, and part of the settlement has received water supply, sewage, and better hygienic conditions, but much more needs to be done (Birmancevic 2021, p. 39-56).

There are huge social changes during the transition time in Serbia when new values and principles were established. The return to capitalism, somewhat parallel to the civil wars, was accompanied in Serbia by aggressive looting of public property, which led to a great social stratification. These processes continued through the privatization of companies and factories, abuse of public space “flourished”, and even today, 20 years after the start of the democratic transition, such lucrative forms of abuse are reluctantly abandoned.

With the growth of social differences, the social zoning of Belgrade is becoming more visible. This process took place gradually over 30 years, and today the differences in the quality of settlements, buildings, and apartments are much more visible than in the socialist period. Today, luxury, elite settlements are often built (high apartment prices) and they are unaffordable even for the middle class. The process of gentrification in Belgrade is not present because there are a lot of neglected empty spaces affordable for building (project Belgrade on water). The main problem in Belgrade is still in slowly solving the problems of informal settlements that sometimes lack basic infrastructure (water supply, sewage, electricity). The practice of gated communities is not overly popular, but it is present. The main reason given by the tenants, why they want this kind of settlement, is the need for greater security for their families. In the following pictures, one can see the gated villas in Dedinje, as well as the gates of the residential complex in the center of the city. Nevertheless, many citizens of Belgrade live in some form of mixed settlement and are happy with this solution. In 2020, the new law on housing management included maintenance of buildings by managers (modernization of management according to market principles too).

Pictures 5. Gated villa in Dedinje and 6. Gated housing complex in the city center



Source: <https://www.apartmani-u-beogradu.com/blog/dedinje-beogradski-beverli-hils>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/aleksandarm021/17773960298>

The problem of homelessness remains quite significant for Belgrade, as well as other cities in Serbia. Centers for social work have a social housing program as part of their activities, but it is usually about procuring only temporary housing because the necessary fund for social housing is missing. Usually, either housing or rent payments are provided for the most vulnerable clients. The vulnerable clients are provided with the services of temporary shelters, a public kitchen, health care, daycare, and winter shelters. Programs are often created for particularly sensitive groups: children and youth without parental care, women and children's victims of domestic violence, migrants, etc. Numerous non-governmental organizations help in these processes, thereby easing the problems and providing support to these vulnerable social groups (Babic – Mihailovic 2021, 25-39).

Although the city authorities have an overview of the state of socially vulnerable groups and housing conditions (for the most vulnerable clients), often a part of this population remains invisible. That led us to the conclusion that the evidence system should be better developed, in permanent communication with the community and people in need, focusing on the roots and causes of their problems (unemployment, homelessness, drug abuse, etc.). Integral strategy, as well as the mission and result-driven model of public management, are superior to the present ad hoc ones (Đorđević, 2017, p.112-119).

Additionally, the public and citizens are often poorly informed about the state and city strategy and programs in this area and social needs. Thus, the city government again denies the community and citizens a beneficial influence on the creation and implementation of policies, plans, and projects

in this area, and the IT instruments that are used more and more are rarely used to better information of the public and their involvement in decision making on these issues.

In the next pictures are presented one Roma settlement on the periphery of Belgrade (picture 7) and one accommodation for homeless people (picture 8).

Pictures 7. Gettho (Roma settlement) and 8. Homeless accommodation



Source: <https://www.ligaroma.org.rs/sr/vesti/408-dnevni-list-danas-zastonam-potreban-lex-specialis-o-legalizaciji-romskih-naselja-u-srbiji.html>
<https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/srbija/2604659/beskucnike-spasli-zime-otvoreno-prihvatiliste-za-ljude-bez-doma>

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The policy of affordable and quality housing is an important subject of research because the availability of housing (problems of unavailable or inadequate housing) can be analyzed through a series of indicators and thus the impact of these problems on people's quality of life. This situation indicates to what extent policy is created according to the needs of citizens, how sensitive their needs and whether they are included in the creation of service packages, measuring the quality of those services and requests for corrections (quality of democracy). It turned out that the most important issue is the quality of providing this service for socially sensitive and vulnerable social groups (young, old, sick, migrants, poor, minorities such as the Roma population, etc.) because as a rule, they require the support of the state and local authorities.

Social housing policies in post-socialist countries largely depend on the wealth of the society. As a rule, wealthier societies build more social housing, so the potential for more adequate care for the most vulnerable (homeless and

other vulnerable groups) is greater. Most of the countries in this group still lack social housing funds, so support is mainly focused on temporary, shared accommodation, public kitchens, psychological assistance, counseling, job training, and winter shelters. A big problem for these countries remains poor targeting of sensitive social groups and individuals, and support services are not created according to needs.

The ideal for these countries would be a system of several developed countries (Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and Austria) that set aside sufficient funds for the housing stock and support programs for these vulnerable groups.

Social housing policy in Denmark and especially in Copenhagen has a rich practice of affordable and mixed housing model, which greatly stimulates the development of a democratic community. This policy, like others, is created with the participation of citizens, various social groups, and communities. Denmark is a pioneer in the development and application of IT packages in the creation and implementation of policies, which has proven to be very useful in this field of social housing as well. The example of Copenhagen shows that IT applications are an important tool for producing good solutions.

Political leaders and experts in city services are proud of the fact that there is developed communication with vulnerable social groups (residents with low incomes, artists, students, etc.) to identify their housing problems (lack of housing, poor quality of housing) which is the basis for the redevelopment of existing settlements and creating new solutions. In this sense, this city is an example of excellent practice that should be emulated by the cities of post-socialist countries as well as cities of other developed Western democracies. This activity greatly contributes to the good social adaptation of vulnerable groups and their fine integration into the local community.

Although Serbia had the concept of an affordable and mixed housing model for 40 decades, the radical privatization of the housing fund made it possible for even 90% of citizens to have their apartment (which is certainly very good), but the fund of public apartments available to support vulnerable social groups (mainly young, migrants, homeless, victims of domestic violence, etc.). Although Serbia is one of the countries that build social housing on an average scale, this stock of housing usually „melts away“ due to the right given to users that they, like other citizens before them, can buy an apartment on favorable terms (cheap).

In this sense, the system of social housing and protection is dominated by support in the form of temporary accommodation, daycare centers, winter shelters, public kitchens, health care, psychological support, and counseling centers (including job training), while the housing first program remains a distant ideal.

There remains the problem of weak databases, weak targeting of

vulnerable social groups (weak communication with citizens and weak examination of needs), and a part of citizens remains invisible and is finally taken care of by family, relatives, or friends. IT packages can be much better used to identify these needs, examine the quality of services, and to better shape services according to community and individual needs.

In Belgrade, the mixed housing model dominates, although there are differences in the quality of residential buildings and apartments. There is, as was said, the phenomenon of fenced settlements, but they are not particularly popular with the majority of residents. There remains the problem of the existence of several informal and non-conditional settlements (ghettos - usually Roma settlements) for the reconstruction of which the authorities never have enough funds

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