

ATINER CONFERENCE PAPER SERIES No: ARC2013-0717

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ATINER's Conference Paper Series

ARC2013-0717

**Social Dissolution's Reflection on
Housing in Post-war Bosnia and
Herzegovina**

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Email: info@atiner.gr URL: www.atiner.gr
URL Conference Papers Series: www.atiner.gr/papers.htm

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ISSN 2241-2891

7/11/2013

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This paper should be cited as follows:

Kreševljaković, L. (2013) "Social Dissolution's Reflection on Housing in Post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina" Athens: ATINER'S Conference Paper Series, No: ARC2013-0717.

Social Dissolution's Reflection on Housing in Post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Abstract

Multigenerational housing is increasingly represented at the beginning of XXI century. There are cultural reasons in underdeveloped countries, and mainly economic reasons in developed countries for developing such housing type. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, multigenerational individual type of housing construction is largely present after the war 1992-'95 on the surrounding slopes of Sarajevo. Because of the configuration of new settlements and the fact that it is unplanned construction, new neighbourhoods resemble slums. However, these are permanent structures for which were spent considerable economic resources. Due to the fact that people willingly choose this model of housing in the period after the war, instead of collective condominium building types, this phenomenon should be researched by the academic community. The paper argues that the causes of representation of the multigenerational individual type of housing are dissolution of former socialist society, collapse of social confidence and the inability of society to organize to a higher level but the level of family. The quality of new residence, per the criteria of the housing surface, its insulation and the open areas is significantly higher compared to the previous standards of socialist construction, while the spatial quality of settlements, its infrastructure, equipment and opportunities for further development and integration are poor. Dissolution of the society is led to the dissolution of space; therefore strengthening the community should lead to the unification of community space. Future spatial integration of settlements depends of the ability of society to integrate at a higher level from the family level.

Keywords: Multigenerational housing, spatial quality, housing typology, slums

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Introduction

After the last war period 1992-'95 Bosnian society faced a period of transition, which means the transition from a socialist to a capitalist social order. Introduction of democratic institutions and free market in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a difficult task. These changes were reflected in the different fields of human activity, including the models of housing. Sociological phenomena are evident in the entrepreneurship and architecture. Pre-war housing models are different from the model of housing in the post-war period. Relations in society are observed and drawn parallels between housing construction and changes in society.

Residential Construction before 1992

Characteristic of residential construction in Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Yugoslav period 1945-'92, is the mass construction of housing. After the World War II flats were implemented with the aim of providing "roof under the head". Apartment buildings from that period were equal to social apartment buildings across Europe, both in capitalist and in other socialist countries. Housing need is perceived as one of the basic human needs. Socialist society was created on the premises of equality, rights for all, social responsibility etc. Although this standard was difficult to achieve, it was publicly promoted. Housing construction was part of social responsibility. Residential construction has been the task of the whole society. The state was able to start implementation, as an investor in all areas of human activity, as well as residential construction. Everyone who was employed was paying for social housing. Through the institutions of government, public companies built flats. Socialist-ordered society was constructing collective housing in the form of collective building types for all members of society.

Choosing the occupiers of the flats was carried out by the working organizations. Colleagues from the office become neighbours in the apartment building or settlement. Tenants were not awarded with the ownership over the flat, because the public enterprises were investors and owners of the apartments. The employees of companies were granted by the rights to use the flats, and those rights were inheritable. The concept of inheritance of tenancy rights, as opposed to ownership of the residential area gives a priority to using, as opposed to the importance of possessing the living space. This comparison poses a direct relationship with Fromm's relationship *to have or to be?* (Fromm, 1976). For the users of social housing in Bosnian society from Yugoslav period living, or being, had primacy over the having, or possession of living space.

State of Society after 1995

After the war 1992-'95 Bosnian society faced a period of transition, which means the transition from a socialist to a capitalist social order. Wartime events in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the consequences of the war made transition period even more difficult. Bloody clash of former neighbours has significantly weakened interpersonal trust, and blocked any kind of social association in the post-war period. Croatian philosopher Boris Buden says that society is so fragmented that no longer exists. "For twenty years, the society that existed is being cut and stretched, so that at the moment cannot feel any pain anymore. It would be like if a man would cut off his hand, and he'd say, "No, it does not hurt me, it hurts my hand" '(Močnik & Buden, 2012). Social fragmentation, lack of empathy and distrust dominates over the post-war Bosnian society.

After 1995 in Bosnia happened exactly the same thing what Fukuyama pointed from the experience of other former communist countries, and that is that communism created many habits - excessive dependence on the state, which has led to a radical reduction of entrepreneurial energy, inability to compromise and aversion towards voluntary cooperation in groups such as the companies and political parties, which slows down the process of fixing democracy and market economy. He believes that people in these societies gave their intellectual assent to the fact that communism should replace capitalism and democracy by voting for the "democratic" reformers, but they do not have social habits necessary to make it both functioning (Fukuyama, 1995, p. 50). The introduction of democratic institutions and premises of free market in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, with previously acquired habits of relying on the state, has caused many social and economic problems.

If there are three ways to sociability such as follows: the first based on violence and blood relations, second on voluntary associations independent of blood relationship, such as schools, clubs and professional organizations, and third on the state level (Fukuyama, 1995, p. 70), in a situation where the state's is fully weakened, where the previous system weakened entrepreneurial energy, family ties play a significant role in the process of social re-integration of society.

When it comes to housing, or entrepreneurship in that field, an important social category becomes the level of interpersonal trust - social capital. Social capital, according to James S. Coleman, is considered as ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups and organizations. Social capital is a capability that arises from the supremacy of confidence in the society or its certain parts (Fukuyama, 1995, p. 20, 35). Mass housing from the previous period, is the evidence of massive social capital of the previous totalitarian socialist Yugoslav society. The dissolution of Yugoslavia and the introduction of capitalist principles destroyed the spirit of equality and social justice, and introduced the individualistic spirit, which seeks to promote the interests of the individual versus the collective. Given that the 'social capital cannot easily develop through individuals acting on behalf of their own interests, it is based on the dominance of social, rather than individual merit.' (Fukuyama, 1995, p. 36),

the question is what are the social virtues that arise in the post-war period, as well as what kind of social capital develops in Bosnian post-war society. What social norms prevail in the process of reintegration? In which way are these changes in society, such as the collapse of society and abandonment of the previous social norms, reflected in residential construction? Is post-war housing construction involved in the reintegration process of the society? Whether residential development generates new social norm?

Renovation of Existing Housing Stock

The privatization of the existing housing stock that was conducted after the war, in 1995, turned the tenancy rights into property rights. This was reflected in the transformation of the existing collective housing. Apartment owners have felt free to modify residential space under their own discretion, which was not previously the case. Most interventions were based on improving the quality of housing in terms of restoration of the facade, windows, etc.. Interventions were individual, not coordinated, resulted in changes in the facade and exterior, depending on the preferences and capabilities of individual owners of apartments. This was reflected in the external appearance of the buildings, in terms of colours and types of facades, windows, etc. The individual, not collective approach to the reconstruction of apartment buildings is reflected in the appearance of existing collective housing (Figure 1 and 2). Activities of individuals in favour of their own interests dominated over the post-war reconstruction of existing housing stock.

Figure 1. *Private Interventions on Existing Apartment Building on Bistirk, Sarajevo, architects: Muhamed and Reuf Kadić, 1939. / 2013*





sources: http://www.a4a.info/ArticleView.asp?article_id=949 by courtesy of © Anida Krečo

Figure 2. *Private Interventions on Existing Apartment Building "Rapid" Skyscraper in Sarajevo by courtesy of © Anida Krečo*





Newly Built Residential Buildings

After the war, besides renovation of existing housing stock, construction of new housing units begins. Entrepreneurship in residential construction is mostly realized through individual investments in individual residential buildings. In the absence of trust towards the state and the collective, the only thing left is the trust in the members of the family. Priority has association on the family level. Bloodline prevails, especially when it comes to immigrants in large cities, such as Sarajevo. It is mostly the unplanned construction. It certainly can be considered completely independent, free construction activity of the large percent of the citizens. Level of expertise is reduced to the level of free-builders, who consolidate various roles in one, such as the role of investor, architect, contractor and final user of living space. According to this principle the surrounding slopes of the Sarajevo hills became the space of urban sprawl (Figure 4.). However, these are permanent structures for which were spent considerable economic resources. These settlements are not planned to be built; these settlements are self organizing urban forms; there is a constant incremental number of housing units; infrastructure is not adequately solved; therefore this type of construction can be attributed to the slums. Everything that is listed as a feature of slum construction applies to post-war housing development on the slopes around Sarajevo too, such as:

- Environmental deterioration and life-threatening problems related to sanitation and pollution (including air and water pollution from garbage and sewers);
- Exposure to environmental hazards (landslides, flooding, poor drainage);
- Further health risks, diseases and injuries related to poor construction, overcrowding, anti-social behavior and crime;
- Uncontrolled and conflicted urban sprawls;
- Informal and extralegal economies;
- Illegal and harmful infrastructural connections.

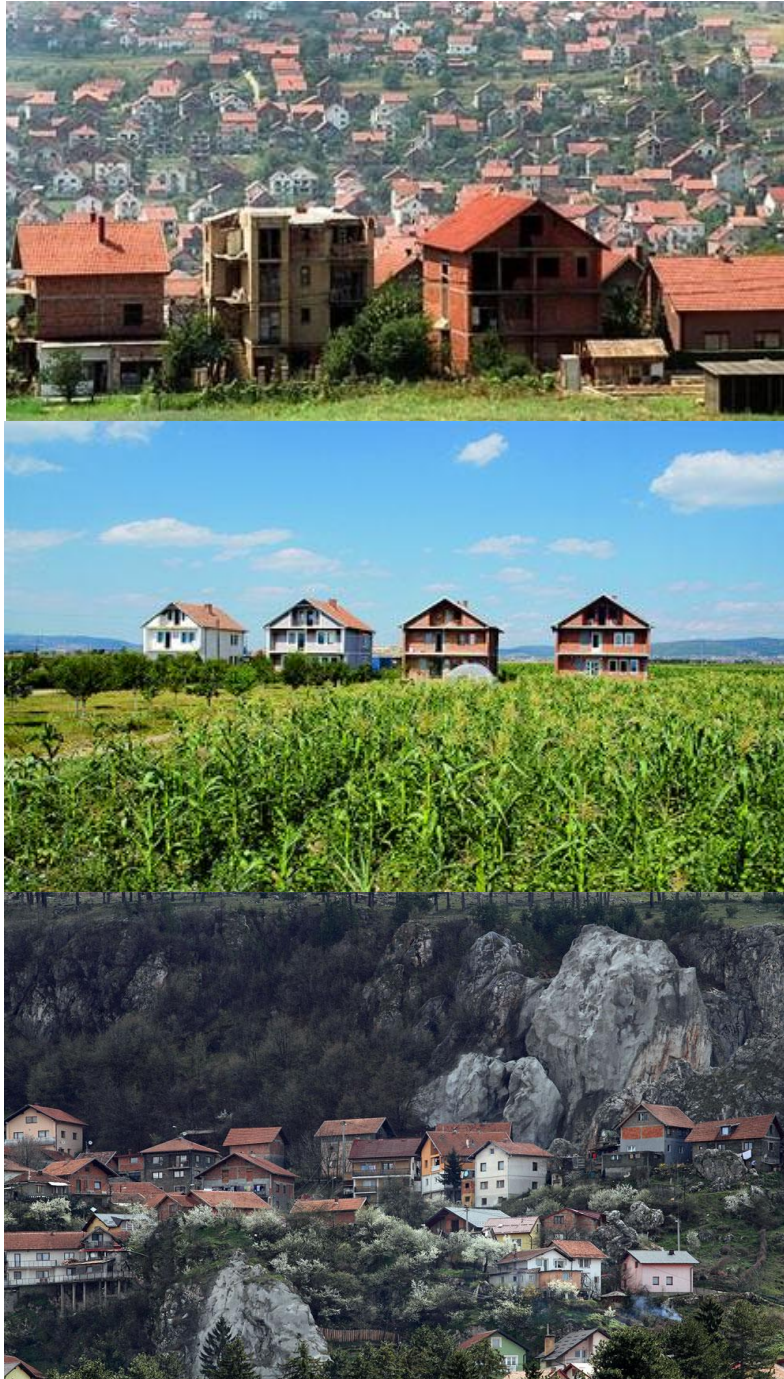
'These problems, although not limited to slum areas, further aggravate the vulnerabilities of the already deprived living conditions in the same cities and their surroundings. Moreover, slums, squatter settlements, and other low-income houses often occupy risk-prone areas that are vacant and available to establish makeshift residences. For example, if located in hilly and mountainous areas, many of them are exposed to landslides, which occur suddenly and can kill hundreds of residents (like in Rio-de-Janeiro State in Brazil in 2010)' (WHO & UN-HABITAT, 2010, p. 5,6). The same happened in Sarajevo on Pofalići hill settlement in 1999.

Self-organized housing construction that appeared after the collapse of Yugoslavia was analyzed as the phenomenon by architects from Europe, and was realized in the form of the exhibition under the title: *Balkanology, New Architecture and Urban Phenomena in South Eastern Europe*. Curator Kai Vöckler points out that since the collapse of the socialist economic system in ex-Yugoslavia and Albania and the war that led to the split of Yugoslavia, a new form of urbanisation typified by extensive informal building activity has appeared on the territory. Taking advantage of sketchy legal frameworks and governments initially too weak to enforce rules and regulations, inhabitants have taken the issue of housing shortage in their own hands, they started building new dwellings from scratch and adapting existing edifice for their own purposes (Ferguson & Vöckler, 2008).

Architectural type that was chosen by the most of the illegal constructors, the prevailing model is multigenerational house with approx. 10x8 meters with the same apartments on each floor (Figure 3.). It has ground floor level, 1-2 upper floors and apartment in the attic. Therefore it is a collective residential building. The roof is gabled mostly due to higher utilization of space. Following the example of the previous socialist model, the issue of equality is present through the repetition of equal flat on each floor. The living area of individual housing units is identical in size and disposition on each floor. Tenants are usually related by blood, or separate housing units are used as rental apartments. Multigenerational individual type of housing construction is largely present after the last war. This is not a joint household, not a collective housing in the community. It sounds paradoxical, but the principle of physical separation is preferred here, common areas are kept to a minimum, usually in the form of an external stairway. The quality of new residence, per the criteria

of the housing surface, its insulation and the open areas is significantly higher compared to the previous standards of socialist construction, while the spatial quality of settlements, its infrastructure, equipment and opportunities for further development and integration are poor (Figure 3.).

Figure 3. *Illegal Settlements in Serbia, Kosovo & Bosnia*



sources: http://www.b92.net/news/pics/2011/01/9134590674d2cf14cf03ff765543126_orig.jpg
<http://www.worldchanging.com/archives/009039.html> © Kai Voeckler by courtesy of © Anida Krečo

Dissolution of the society is led to the dissolution of space; therefore strengthening the community should lead to the unification of community space. Future spatial integration of settlements depends of the ability of society to integrate at a higher level from the family level.

Figure 4. *Urban Sprawl on the Hills Around Sarajevo* by courtesy of © Anida Krečo



Aftermath

The whole urban sprawl is based on illegal premises. People massively participate in the illegal construction, with a high level of cooperation, with a common interest to persevere in it. If confidence is defined as 'an expectation of one of the community members that will behave regularly, honestly and cooperatively to the other members of the community, according to the corresponding norms' (Fukuyama, 1995, p. 35), it is clear that massive illegal construction resulted in a new kind of confidence on the basis of new "illegal" standards, different in relation to the previous ones. Pooling at the level of family association served for the initial residential construction, but as given to be massive it bared a new form of housing and a new form of association on higher level. Being united in the massive illegal form of housing construction creates a new kind of social capital. New social capital generated by this type of housing construction is aimed at the implementation of individual interests. The principle of private property is respected to the absurd. One of these absurdities is the process of legalization. It is the process by which formally unplanned constructed buildings are legalized, but essentially it legalizes the contempt of national plans and regulations. Only in Sarajevo, there is undergoing procedure to legalize about 36,000 housing units (Fena, 2012). A similar situation exists in the region, such as Serbia, where this year 1.3 million

of these residential units will be legalized (Al Jazeera, 2013). The state is not able to implement development plan, the predominance of the private property over the state is such that private investors take full control over the construction of the building within their private property. All this leads to the territorial division of the state to the individual property over which the state has no control. It is the spatial manifestation of the collapse of the post war Bosnian society which was previously discussed. In a word: it is a process of neo-liberal de-urbanization of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Figure 5.).

Figure 5. *Neo-liberal De-urbanisation of Sarajevo ("UNIS" tower on the left and urban sprawl on the hills on the right) by courtesy of © Anida Krečo*



Conclusions

The analysis of the existing housing stock from the period before 1992, the sociological background of its construction, clearly showed that the form of housing projects reflected collective attitude toward the problem of housing for all members of society. The principles of the supremacy of the collective, as opposed to individual consciousness are evident in housing construction of this period.

The period after the war brought the privatization of the existing housing stock. Private interventions are reflected on the external appearance of apartment buildings. The predominance of individual as opposed to collective interests prevailed, which was evident in the post-war architecture of the existing housing stock.

Post-war construction of new residential buildings is characterized by a complete domination of the organized investments at the family level, which resulted in construction of individual multigenerational residential buildings, with 2-3 residential units to accommodate more families related by blood or for rental purposes. This is a classic example of urban sprawl, with all the characteristics of slums. The absence of government control over the

development of urban area, the legalization of illegal facilities built under exclusive demands and wishes of investors are bear witnesses to the complete dominance of private property over state property. Bear witness to the disintegration of the state into private plots, whose equivalent, in sociological terms, is complete fragmentation of the post-socialist societies.

Dissolution of post-war Bosnian society is followed by the process of neo-liberal de-urbanization of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is *directly mapped on housing stock*.

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