

ABSTRACT

The presented dissertation concerns selected topics on flat construction in the 60's – experiments and prefabricated housing estates – and examines them closely in four different layers - political, ideological, architectonic and social. The work is structured into four main chapters, which constitute four pillars to uncover the history of flat construction and its context.

The initial hypothesis of the dissertation was that the birth of panel housing estates at the end of the 50's, as well as its form and content in the upcoming decade, was influenced by the different starting points of the four mentioned layers.

The viewpoint of state socialism and its ideology stemmed from the situation, when architecture in the whole socialistic block seized to be the instrument of Stalinist political representation in the spirit of the socialist realism and it became an important instrument of social reform on the promoted path to communism.

This opinion, projected on an economic level, lead to an assumption that an affordable and high-quality collective housing makes the society effectively economically modernized.

The living in these housing estates was intended to become the “display window” of the socialist lifestyle as well as the means of a morally higher type of consumer society.

In the atmosphere of socialist utopia, the housing estates were planned to compete with the West and to create to it an alternative, which would be socially, technically and esthetically flawless.

The question of housing and the housing estate politics in the 60's has not yet been examined on a bureaucratic and ideological level. The dissertation brings new details to the system of deciding about various forms of flat construction and its financing.

The presented revelations mainly come from the study of archives of the *Commission for solving the housing problem matter* (1959-1962) and the *Commission for the matter of living standards* (1963-1968) under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

The third starting-point, from which the (re)form of housing developed, refers to the growing status of architectonic discipline as a genuinely creative discipline.

The text is dedicated to technological and construction experiments, conception of a housing district (residential group) and to the example of the “beautiful” panel housing estate. It ponders the relationship of the Czechoslovakian panel house and the system of districts to the soviet example.

From the artistic and historic viewpoint, it deals with the relation of construction systems and fabrication to the concrete design of the housing estate at a point, when an overly schematic (functionalist) view fails and is replaced by a view that is complex and humanistic. As a last – fourth – point in examining the development of housing estate, I would like to express the visible pressure of public opinion, sociological surveys and a fresh new view of residents from the position of cooperative and private builders.

The conclusions of this work should contribute to a more varied picture of the specific period in the Czech flat construction, which compared to the history of “uncommissioned art form” is more connected with the administrative and economic side of the state’s leading and its (non)function.

Newly the work aspires to bring to the history of collective housing a broader ideological and cultural context, connected in the 60’s with revision of Marxism. It refers to the problematics of restructuring the relation between power and culture and the humanistic discourse in philosophy, arts and the creation of environment.

Key words:

Architecture and urbanism – Housing construction – Living conditions – 1960's – Housing
politics – Socialism – Communism – Marxist theory – Humanism – Thaw – Prefab –
Experimental buildings – Housing estate – Monolith