Identity, urbanity and division of housing estates in the Czech Republic

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Abstract. The housing estates were built on the basis of the urban concept as a whole. These units can be viewed with a certain development potential, which they hide in the framework of a sustainable increase in the quality of life. All housing functions, not only in the housing estate, are decisive for the development of the whole society. In the sphere of housing, a person is born, formed and developed as a social and cultural being, therefore it is necessary to deal with the issue of identity, urbanity and the division of housing estates.

1. Introduction
"Housing is a basic human need" - housing is generally considered one of the basic human needs. [1]
In the philosophical anthropology of Emmanuel Levinas, dwelling, house or home has a crucial role in shaping man's relationship to the world. [2]
In 1943, the American psychologist Abraham Harold Maslow defined the hierarchy of human needs - the Maslow pyramid. The need for housing figures in this pyramid among the basic human needs on the first and second place. Housing is a need that offers satisfaction of physiological needs, provides a sense of security and safety. [3]
Housing is a complex social phenomenon that strongly reflects any change in the transformation of society and the economy. The issue of housing includes not only the design and construction of housing, but also the housing policy of the government, responding to the problems and requirements of society. The main goal of housing policy in all countries, regardless of political, cultural, social or economic differences between them, is to provide their citizens with reasonably high-quality and affordable housing. Housing, family, family or apartment houses, living environment, are current and often discussed problems of today's society. [4]
Prefabricated houses usually provide a good standard in terms of sun exposure and ventilation. Some residents appreciate living in high-rise buildings, especially for the views from the windows. Given that the majority of the settlement population consisted and often still consists of young families with school-age children playing together, the similarity of problems often puts families together. Taking into account all these facts, it is clear that panel housing estates in the Czech Republic are a reality that we will probably have to reckon with for several more years and whose huge housing stock will have to be used optimally. Experience from abroad shows that it is therefore necessary to start the process of recovery - remodeling and regeneration of housing estates as soon as possible so that these groups become full-fledged urban units. [5]
Remodeling and humanization of these files should be focused on eliminating the causes of deformations of individual components. which include [5, 6]:

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• quality of life and lifestyle - monofunctional housing estates do not create preconditions for establishing a functional community of people actively participating in improving their environment and living conditions. The process of regeneration of housing estates cannot therefore be understood only in the urban sense, but should be conceived as a process of regeneration of social life in housing estates. The basic driving force of this process should be the participation of as many inhabitants of housing estates as possible in the implementation of positive changes, ie also participation in adjustment programs and the zoning plan, creating space for their ideas and plans.
• meeting the demands of the population, there are very few job opportunities, the structure of employment and services is inadequate, leisure facilities are lacking, especially for pensioners and young people. The expansion of small-scale production, crafts and services would benefit from the possibility of converting some redundant housing units on the ground floor and lower floors into small trades and service areas. It is an elegant solution, because it would not cost much and it would bring the services closer to the inhabitants so that they do not have to travel to the city centers for them. However, a change in the legislative area will be needed.
• the appearance, proportions and scale of buildings and public spaces do not create a favorable aesthetic impression, which can be characterized as uniform, stereotypical, monotonous or inorganic without any order. The humanization of residential complexes therefore means above all the creation of a motivating atmosphere for life in this environment, which will create additional conditions for improving the function and appearance of individual buildings, ensembles and spaces. Furthermore, to create the necessary infrastructure, both technical and social, and to improve living conditions as a whole. The technical aspect considers the technical possibilities and the optimization of the execution methods. At the Faculty of Architecture, two strategic methods of humanization were proposed - improving the functional characteristics of residential complexes as a whole and reconstruction, modernization and reconstruction of the building stock.

2. Development of Housing estates to increase the quality of life
The long-term goal of development should be to transform into a pleasant, self-sufficient urban district, with a lively, diverse and in many ways normal living environment. There are certain opportunities and development potentials in housing estates for a sustainable increase in the quality of life. Innovative interventions to increase living quality can be implemented in the following directions:
• Identity - the creation of distinctive characteristic smaller housing units with a unique atmosphere into which the occupant can imprint and perceive a sense of belonging
• Urbanity - the creation of living public spaces, but only in some suitable places in the form of squares, streets or other spaces, such as play, etc.
• Orientation - to create a structured urban ensemble, divided into legible smaller units and neighborhoods, classification of public spaces, creation of a safe and passable network of walking and cycling routes, protection of green open spaces
• Residential quality - protection against traffic, especially motorized individual, noise and fumes, traffic calming. Attracting a quality natural landscape environment, remodeling greenery so that it is possible to use free undeveloped spaces in a variety of ways

It is also recommended in certain cases to complete the housing estate to the condition in which it was originally designed. In the past, the construction of standard civic amenities has been chronically delayed and the construction of centers, higher and specific facilities has been postponed. The original purpose of the surfaces, whose function was later changed, was often forgotten. It has often been changed to other civil engineering - commercial facilities, garages and asphalt parking lots, which worsen the quality of the environment. Somewhere there is still a lack of its own center, civic amenities and specific ones, such as school buildings especially for secondary and specialized schools, a business network, opportunities for the private sector, a network of services and medical facilities, job opportunities for women who would benefit from reduced traffic. It is possible to use free space between buildings and use areas on the edge of housing estates. It is possible to improve the file environment with additional
modifications that were not part of the original projects. This is due to the changing needs of the population due to the phase of the family cycle. Changes that took place in the Czech Republic after 1989, etc. As follows from surveys conducted in housing estates in Brno, Ostrava and Olomouc in 2019, it is called for the completion of recreational facilities, parks, playgrounds for certain age groups, cross-country and cycling trails, quiet areas for activities of small children. It is possible to use all areas, even those that are not temporarily built up. Improving the quality of the environment concerns the consistent differentiation of the public and semi-public parts of the ground floor, emphasizing the system of walking routes leading to the local centers of the housing estate. It is possible to differentiate and partially green (trees, grassed tiles) space for parking cars, parking areas to separate greenery, garages to build mostly underground and grass roofs or use for recreational activities (playground). Create a system of greenery, quiet corners and paths with a consistent preference for pedestrians. Adequate lighting will ensure greater security for residents and their property. [7]

![Figure 1](image.png)

**Figure 1.** An example of the structure of the Ostrava Dubina housing estate, aerial photograph by Daniel Richterek.

The deficit of space for services is possible by changing the function of some apartments. The flats can be non-burdensome establishments, sales centers, social and medical facilities. In the Czech Republic, legislative preconditions for this are still lacking, as the necessary exclusion from the housing stock is not possible. Interesting results have been obtained in countries around the world where possible. They found that it would benefit the overall aesthetic design of the wider residential environment of the housing estate - new urban furniture (benches, artwork, water features, last but not least, trash cans). Greenery is important as an artistic element, sometimes supergraphed on the walls of houses used abroad (Japan, USA) will help. The urbanity of housing estates will help to ensure civic buildings and integrated facilities for non-housing estates, such as department stores and shopping centers (furniture, textiles, etc.), specialized repair shops, small-form theaters, clubs, sports facilities with above-standard facilities (tennis courts, swimming pools, minigolf, skateboard) and with a secured transport connection.

Housing estates are aging and maintenance is not as it should be. Determining priorities and the sequence of action is not only a matter for architects and urban planners, but also for politicians, local authorities and the entire urban population. The regeneration of housing estates should be a continuous process, the aim of which should be the conceptual transformation of housing estates into a pleasant, efficient, organized, ecological and safe place for the life of the inhabitants with the largest possible range of necessary functions. In the longer term, it is necessary to increase the useful quality of apartments - the spatial standard, storage areas in apartments and outside them, strengthening the aesthetic quality of
apartments. This also applies to the entrance areas to the houses and common interiors. There is a need to single out and emphasize public, semi-public and semi-private spaces. Entrance halls can be designed with artistic elements that have an aesthetic and cognitive function. The marked transition areas, benches, shaded rest areas, suitable forms of greenery will also help. A number of procedures and strategies have already been prepared and tested abroad. Such as the "Open Building" concept, described by Stephen H Kendall as an innovative way to produce and renovate buildings and entire neighborhoods. It is based on very advanced construction technology, information management and construction logistics. It focuses development towards the user. It also ensures that the decisions made today in new construction and renovation will allow buildings and urban substrate to remain stable in the future, as they are planned for change and considerable diversity, respecting the diversity of people's needs in today's society. [8]

3. Humanization of Housing estates from the point of view of social composition and social relations

The ration system in the housing economy in the past has been the cause of demographic homogeneity in "housing estates". A large part of the population was in the same phase of the life cycle. This resulted in a considerable homogeneity of needs and demands in the same time cycles. On the one hand, this simplified the problems, as a better estimate of entitlements and needs was possible. On the other hand, it complicated the situation due to significant capacity requirements and utilization of vacant space. Against the abnormal demographic structure, which often arises in housing estates and lasts for 20-30 years, it is appropriate to use the following procedures, following the example abroad:

- It is recommended to schedule the construction of new parts of the sets, if they are built, into stages and not to build in one unit.
- Create reserves of areas for functions that were not remembered, such as missing categories of flats - today, housing estates mainly lack small flats and luxury large flats.
- Conceive the whole set as flexible, especially the housing stock.

The problem of connecting and disconnecting individual flats according to the phases of the family cycle can be topical again - flexible and variable flats, maisonette flats with vertical interconnection. It is advantageous to hand over flats without full interior fittings, because people from some strata are willing to invest their money to obtain higher living quality and want to furnish and renovate their homes (ie territories). Strengthen migration, especially not to slow down the shift of the apartment, all this will allow faster merging. Thus, it is possible to create a deliberately good (non-fluctuating) demographic structure. Older people and adolescents will thus be able to get into the new housing estates “”- it goes without saying that they should find suitable living conditions there. Pay close attention to the young generation because the living environment provides aesthetic, cultural and living patterns. These can also be deformed by this environment. This can be done, for example, by supporting the aesthetic, scientific, technical and cultural development of the young generation.

To help build positive social relationships and improve social control, eg through local communities, sports, cultural and other activities. Residents need to be involved in changing and maintaining their environment. A change in infrastructure can be effective, i.e. the division of housing estates as self-governing districts within cities. It is necessary to complete suitable premises, people will then commute less to culture and sports to city centers. It is recommended to support local activities and the development of activities that did not have a tradition in the new housing estates - workshops, self-help workshops, local culture, photo laboratories, etc.

4. Conclusion

Flats situated in "block of flats" type buildings are an important part of the city's usable housing stock. It is not possible for housing estates to turn into ghettos within 10 to 15 years, as some sociologists and architects predict. It is likely that a differentiation will take place between good and bad settlements. We already see its first effects. Privatization will lead to growing disparities. Blocks of higher quality, such as those built in the fifties and early nineties prosperous, the premises, and especially where it is the price of lower plots the number of floors, and apartments will be high. With its settlement built by fate
resemble the seventies and eighties, with higher population densities and high maintenance and reconstruction costs, they are in a much worse situation. What is said about housing estates will have a great influence on the speed and the very essence of this process in the future. There is a danger of "self-fulfilling prophecy." In fact, people act far more according to their ideas than according to their real and objective situation. If the quarters built of prefabricated houses are given too negative an image, as has happened in France and England, for example, and people are repeated that they live in undignified conditions, it is likely that the social structure will change faster.

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