PART II
CZĘŚĆ II

THE TOOL – DESIGN
NARZĘDZIA – PROJEKTOWANIE

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DEMOCRATIC HOUSING

MIESZKALNICTWO DEMOKRATYCZNE

Introduction

According to current understanding, the term *"democratic housing"* indicates a combination of multiple choices, bespoke architecture, bottom - up management and space for common/civic activities. The idea is that democratic architecture allows us to individually shape our living environment, allowing for respect towards others, to the inclusion of contemporary values, and provision of a physical space that facilitates dialogue among citizens. Nawratek noted that "Imagine a situation in which the apartment rent is paid not only with cash, but also with participation in the life of the community. When it is not paid only with money but also with the care of neighbors' children or care for an old woman. Imagine an experimental anti-or beyond–capitalistic structure. Imagine the open creative world. World liberated from the terror of GDP". Although the author doesn't use the term, the idea is firmly present (Nawratek 2008, str. 162).

Architecture is political, it exists within the broader physical context – but is also located firmly within the political context: it has to fit the framework of the applicable law and it needs investors. Thus architecture can be understood as political at different levels: at the level of the interpretation of form, at the level of the meaning of function, at the level of wider circumstances, and

finally at the level of types of investors. Over the years, "democratic architecture" term was connected with the ideas that no one would call democratic now. During the Second World War, Frank Lloyd Wright, asked the National Planning Resources Board through a "citizens' petition" for permission "to continue the research for Broadacre City, which he called „democratic FORM as the basis for a true capitalistic society." – today no one would have referred to this idea of a car- based, suburban utopia as 'democratic'. During the early Cold War, the name of "architecture of democracy" was given to the embassies of the United States of America, and hotels exported around the world as cultural representations of the *pax Americana* (Ockman 2011, str. 65). A later manifestation of democracy in architecture was based on the neoliberal idea of freedom to choose among a range of lifestyles and products, as a value itself. In the United States this tendency reached its architectural apotheosis in the 1990s, in the redevelopment of Times Square and in the neo-traditional ideology of the New Urbanism (Ockman 2011, p. 66). At the same time in Poland it began with an abandonment of the urban planning system and the development of the free market as the best and only planning tool; this led to a great popularity of ready-made house projects, greater urban sprawl and an associated aesthetical chaos.

1. History

"Democratic housing" has two contradictory roots in the history of architecture, of interest is that each of these roots evolved also into something that could be seen as a contradiction for democratic values.

One root is connected to the concept of social equality, social justice and collectivity. This thread can be followed from the ancient Greek idea of *agora*, through Plato's "*Republic*" , Thomas More's "*Utopia*", and the eighteenth century quasi - utopian housing concepts of Claude Nicolas Ledoux, Robert Owen and Charles Fourier. Jean Baptiste Godin collected the thread in the nineteenth century (Idem 2012, str. 43–44), for it to then thrive in the twentieth century through the actions of the Rusian Modernists: this began with Soviet collective housing such as Wenderow's idea of Falanster B. (1919) and Falanster D (Buryszkin and Twerski, competition work, 1926.). These led to the real communes, as Narkomfin by Mosei Ginzburg and Ignaty Milinis (Moscow, 1928–1932), and developed into the idea of the city-commune in the USSR. This social housing also inspired Western European urban planners, indirectly leading to the Athens Charter (date) and subsequent implementation of "Grande ensembles" all over Europe and beyond. This first thread at some point links up with the flow of modernism in architecture, and both meet a common, symbolic fate with the demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe Estate, St. Louis, Missiouri in 1973.

The second root is connected with the idea of liberalism and individualism. Although the liberal thread in general can be already seen in Marcus Aurelius' writings (II age), it actually originates in the Age of Enlightenment, in context of

democratic architecture, one should perceive Ebenezer's Howard Garden City (Czyżewski 2009), as its beginning. In spite the strong cooperative tint, the Garden City fits the liberal mould: firstly it was based on the ethos of entrepreneurship and secondly, despite the author's intentions it evolved into the liberal concept of the individual suburban house. There are, of course, many different steps between the Garden City model and current urban sprawl: in the United States, Roosevelt 's New Deal prompted individualistic society, supported by the "build-it-yourself" Usonian Automatic House, by F. W. Wright.[2] These ready-made house projects came with build-it-yourself option (Ockman 2011). The American Dream thus changed into the American horror of urban sprawl, gas-guzzlers, shopping malls, emptying cities and growing obesity. This thread began to end with Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), then the rise of New Urbanism and subsequent re-urbanisation of inner cities.

So how does combination of anonymous blocks of flats together with sprawled suburban houses lead to democratic housing? It's all about the combination of the idea of common good and of owns responsibility for his place to live. Theoretically, both ideas are good; however, the first was distorted by a characteristic contempt, conceit and paternalism displayed by urban planners: "We know what is best for the tenants and they do not" (MacDonald 2012, 251) and the second by extreme individualism: ultimately both of them lack something in the way of thinking and process. While upgrading the threads, democratic housing together with participatory processes, can draw the best of them.

2. Is there democratic housing in Poland?

The housing deficit in Poland is estimated between 300,000 and 820,000 apartments. Regardless of the exact number, the lack of housing is not the most serious problem in the Polish housing sector: low availability is a much more severe issue. The Polish housing market is dominated by owner-occupied flats (80% of all units in 2013), followed by housing owned by public entities, such as municipalities and the state (10.3% in 2013). The most under-represented is the non-profit sector consisting of cooperatives, company apartments, and middle rental flats (4.5% in 2013). Statistics of newly built houses show this disproportion more clearly: in 2014, 54.3% of all dwellings were flats built for sale or rent by the owners, 40% were buildings for their own use, and only 1.5% – was public and 4% - non–profit. As the result of such distribution, there

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[2] Frank Lloyd Wright is an important figure to mention: even before the conceptualization of the Usonian Houses, at the time of the so-called 'Prairie Style', Wright's mission was 'to create a truly American architecture, one appropriate for free citizens that would reflect the democratic values of this great country in which he so firmly believed, in creating what he called an "architecture for democracy" (reference – you need to check which section specifically you are quoting).

is the split of the housing market: an apartment can be bought on the open market, or practically given by the municipality, with the rent far below replacement value. So the housing problem affects most people with incomes in the 3–7 decile ratios[3] of gross earnings: they earn too much to be able to apply for public housing (regardless the chances of getting such premises) and too much for housing allowance, but not enough to get a loan, even with help of the MdM - governmental housing program (Ministry of Finance, 2015). At the same time data on dwellings completed in 2014 shows that nearly half of the apartments were established in single-family houses; taking into account the number of constructed residential buildings, single family houses made 94% of all.

This situation, which exacerbates the situation of housing and urban sprawl[4], is dictated to not only by the common dream of a house with a garden, but by a number of factors related to the availability of housing. These are firstly, the relatively low prices of land in suburban areas associated, amongst other things, with the spatial policy of municipalities according to which areas of land destined for development exceeds future needs.[5] Secondly, there is poor availability of apartments in the urban areas. A third factor is that it is cheaper to build a house independently, compared with buying an apartment from a developer. Fourthly, ignorance: a general inability to calculate the overall costs associated with the construction of a house in the suburban areas.

The problem with the current housing trend is that there is not only an imbalance between owned and rented / single-family and multi-family housing, but also the manner in which housing is implemented spatially. Detached houses in suburban areas arise independent of a rational planning infrastructure, on random plots transformed from agricultural land, with no provision of public, common spaces. Multi-family estates are often gated and guarded[6] with no connection to adjacent areas, leading to a contrast between the quality of inside and outside space. There is also a significant contrast in the quality of areas inside and outside the fences in gated estates; this increases the sense of danger and isolation among estates' inhabitants, and thus deepens the divide be-

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[3] Decile ratio of gross earnings shows how income is distributed among the society. It can be a measure of earnings disparities.

[4] The dispersal of development and spatial policy of municipalities leads to social, monetary (for both private and public sector) and environment losses. For details see *Report on the economic losses and social costs of uncontrolled urbanization* (Nowicki et al. 2014).

[5] According to zoning plans there is a land for housing over 200 million, while there is only 38 million people in Poland altogether (Nowicki et al. 2014).

[6] During a survey of new housing built between 2000 and 2012 in the Katowice region, the author found out that of the 44 examined examples, 36% were gated and guarded (Bradecki & Twardoch 2013). In Warsaw in 2006, over 400 estates were gated, a number which has since grown (Lewicka & Zaborska 2007).

tween "us" and "them". The split is also visible in the structure the tenure of new housing stock , which is hardly ever mixed[7].

Democratic architecture should be understood as the architecture of strengthening the potential of the communities on the one hand, and process that includes inhabitants at different levels on the other. The presented data proves that Polish housing in general is far from democratic. Sprawled, detached housing, and gated condominiums do not assist in an egalitarian society, neither do monocultural estates help in community building. Further, the production of , commercial housing for sale doesn't include inhabitants as decision makers at any stage, effective removing them from fundamental assessments of the construction of place.

3.   Case study. Kalkbreite as democratic housing

A good example of recently constructed democratic housing, Kalkbreite was founded on a very well situated, but extremely difficult to develop, triangular plot between railroad tracks and a busy road, with a tramway depot in the centre. In spite of the difficulties, Kalkbereite from the very beginning was intended as both a vital component of the neighborhood, and a city within a city itself: a place to sleep, live and work. The process was initiated in 2007, with the Kalkbreite Co-operative's motion to allocate the problematic urban plot for housing. The Co-operative's representatives, along with the city, commissioned a feasibility study and arranged an architectural competition. The winning design concept was revealed in 2010, after which the Co-operative and city representatives developed[8] the full project. The workshop participation process applied not only the building layout but also the concept of the Kalkbreite Co-operative operational model. The construction itself began in 2012; in 2014 the first tenants moved in and almost all of them have remained till today (according to interview with Res Keller, Housing Cooperative Kalkbreite Zurich Managing Director). Thanks to precise programming processes, Kalkbreite became a truly hybrid development, with different types of flats, workplaces, services and both indoor and outdoor common spaces, for a wide range of users.

The variety allows for flexibility; there are flats intended for different household models which includes individual apartments of different sizes. Both *Grosshaushalt* (large households) and *Cluster* (cluster) were implemented. These consist of several individual apartments of limited size with a large common area. In the *Grosshaushalt* model there is a large community kitchen with a hired cook, and daily nutrition plan, and community members sign up

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[7] 92% of surveyed housing complexes consist of flats with one type of tenure – usually owner-occupied in 68% of examples surveyed (Bradecki & Twardoch 2013).
[8] Muller Sigrist Architekten AG in Zurich with HAAG.LA, Zurich (landscape architecture) and Dr. Lüchinger + Meyer Bauingenieure AG, Zurich (Civil Engineering). Completion 2014.

for meals at the beginning of each week. Joint cuisine significantly reduces costs of living from the perspective of time and consumables, and thus brings environmental benefits. In the *Clusters*, common space is a large living room with a kitchen, in which members spend their free time, watch movies, and organize parties and events. The range of available housing options is further extended thanks to *Wohnjoker* (living jokers): these are additional rooms, equipped with a bathroom, but no kitchen, which can be rented by Kalkbreite residents when their housing needs change, such as teenage children or elderly parents, who need privacy or assistance. Because of environmental concerns, future tenants agreed that the private space shouldn't exceed 35sqm per person – and if it does the family is asked to change the apartment for a smaller one, or to find an additional tenant. These relatively small apartments ['9] are complemented with a wide range of community amenities, both outdoor, as a common courtyard located on the roof of the tramway depot with public access from street level through a broad, urban stair and common roof terrace, and indoor as a cafeteria, with spare rooms for additional functions, and an inner corridor. Living spaces are accompanied by facilities and additional workspaces.

The initial meeting of the Vermietungsreglement für Wohnungen der Genossenschaft Kalkbreite adopted a constitution which laid out the general conditions of lease. This stated three main principles which underpin the democratic character of the Kalkbreite. These are to create a social mix, introduced by the integration of people of different ages, stages of life, and of varying income. The philosophy was also to assist people with disabilities, and encourage the internal exchange of inhabitants in a way that occupied apartments always best meets their current needs. The residents needed to demonstrate environmental responsibility. This was encouraged by dwellings matched to the inhabitants' needs as close as possible, according to size, and functionality, a reduction of the environmental impact through sharing (laundry, kitchen, television, temporarily used appliances) and use of public transport. The third principle was solidarity, introduced by the solidarity fund (Solidaritatfonds), which serves residents in need.

4. Collaborative housing

Kalkbreite is an exceptionally good example of housing in general, and of democratic housing in particular, but it is also a representative of wider group of collective housing. "Collaborative housing" is an umbrella term which covers all variations of housing initiatives that non-profit, initiated by future inhabitants, participatory in nature and community based. There are different collaborative housing types in different countries: *co-housing* in the US, England and Australia; *bofællesskab* in Denmark; *centraal wonen* in Holland; *nachbarschaft liches*

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[9] In comparison to average area of living space per person in Zurich which exceeds 60sqm.

wohnen and *baugruppen* in Germany; *kollektivhus* in Sweden, and *korekutibu haujingu* in Japan (Fromm 2012, 364).

The models and individual cases may vary with the degree of the involvement by community, with the ownership type, with the locality in the city, and with the type of building: whether high rise or detached houses. There is a diversity of options which make them difficult to categorise, but the common key to collaborative housing lays in social capital and the resources it provides; social capital is also crucial for democratic architecture. The governance of collaborative housing is always somehow democratic: from consensus-based management involving all members of the group in co-housing, to annually elected boards of directors in co-operatives. Social capital is gained not only by facilitating community life through design and organization, but also through preferred models of financing. Most collaborative housing models allow for the elimination of the individual need for commercial banks and mortgage brokers, because they usually require only an initial deposit. The default risk connected with the mortgage responsibility is thus spread between all co-owners, so individual risk is minimized. Regardless of the ownership model: cooperative with tenants or building group with owner occupied flats (Gulota L. 2012). Thus collaborative housing seems to be the most mature form of democratic housing.

In Poland there is little in the way of collaborative housing although there exists a strong tradition of co-operative housing despite most being obliterated during the post-war period. Happily, there are examples of new initiatives which appear despite the currently unfavorable legislative frameworks.

Conclusions

"Architecture does not solve social problems. People working together solve social problems" [10]

Any architecture, even the best, can't solve social problems nor built vivid community itself. What is crucial for democratic architecture to be truly democratic is people, process and knowledge.

Potential

There is a great potential for the provision of democratic housing, which has been already described by researchers of collaborative housing. Durrett and McCamant (McCamant et al. 1994) describes its' ability to provide a self-created community of inner life; it can, for example, ease residents' daily living tasks, improve residential social contacts, lower operating costs and enhance security. Fromm focuses on its potential to enhance and repair some of the surrounding neighborhoods' issues (Fromm 2012, 388). In her paper she concludes that

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[10] Headline of the Mexican pavilion at the "Reporting from the front" 15th Biennale Architettura di Venezia.

collaborative housing can model good neighbouring through successfully mixing residential incomes, stabilizing vulnerable or marginalized groups, stabilizing small neighborhood blocks from further deterioration and create building design that extends a greater openness to the neighbourhood than seen in more conventional housing. Further it can assist in introducing a different residential population into a neighbourhood, such as homeowners to an area that lacked home ownership, and assist with involvement within communities in volunteerism and local politics. Democratic architecture is also easier to adapt for specific needs, such as senior or disabled residents.

Time / process

Collaboration is a process, not a product. Social capital is an intangible asset gained through informal trusted relationships and thus can't be achieved at once. All forms of democratic architecture require more time to evolve than the strictly commercial forms. The first step in the design process of any democratic architecture, and housing in particular, must be interviews, studies and/or workshops with future residents. That part is especially difficult to the architects in type of "creator" and too much trouble for many others (MacDonald 2012). Cooperation with non-professionals can be difficult and time consuming, even whilst working with collaborative housing groups which are dedicated to the process, and usually better skilled in the area of working with collectives. The process may also be extremely difficult when working with the general public, such as public housing, which by definition should be treated as democratic, and thus should be preceded by consultation. In addition, people that are candidates for public housing may be wary of authority, they may lack the basic knowledge about construction methods, budgeting, and basic architecture, so they can be inarticulate in the terms of their housing needs and expectations. The process involves education, but education can be mutual if architects treated it as a source of inspiration. Despite the potential difficulties, the initial development process is crucial not only because it leads to better outcomes in terms of architecture, but also because it creates the foundations for future neighbourhood collaboration (Fromm 2012, 388).

Education

In one of his essays Noam Chomsky quotes John Dewey, who devoted the greater part of his life and his thought to the issue of democracy and education: "Reforms in education could be in themselves a major lever of social change, they could lead the way to a more just and free society in which (...) the ultimate aim of production is not production of goods, but the production of free human beings associated with one another in terms of equality" (Chomsky 2012, p.37). Whether we agree on the direction of social change expected by Dewey or not we cannot deny that education is essential for the proper functioning of a democratic system; this consequently applies also for democratic housing. In order

to be able to deliver democratic housing in Poland three fields of education are crucial:

1. understanding the potential for going beyond the scheme of owner-occupied detached housing in the suburbs, including a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of living in different modes and localizations, and the importance of social strengths;

2. learning about the impact one can have on his/her surroundings at an apartment, neighbourhood, block or city level;

3. learning the tools of understanding housing with respect to form, function, and ergonomics.

Given the very low level of awareness about democratic housing in general and all mentioned above fields of interest in particular, there is a place for multiple teaching-tools, methods and channels in order to strengthen awareness. These can take the form of student workshops and open informative lectures. Student workshops allow student architects to understand the idea of democratic housing and spread it further during their future work. Open lectures can also provide a good start in making people understand not only the purely aesthetic basis of housing architecture, but also real estate market rules, and other than mortgage-burdened, suburban-detached house possibilities. As Sasskia Sassen points out "Our advanced political economies have created a world where complexity too often tends to produce elementary brutalities"; (Sassen 2014) better understanding of this complexity can be crucial in making housing architecture more democratic, and thus, less brutal.

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Streszczenie

Artykuł opisuje architekturę mieszkalnictwa demokratycznego w kontekście historii, teraźniejszości oraz możliwości przyszłego rozwoju. Prezentuje dobre praktyki oparte na badaniach *in situ*. Wśród wniosków z badań artykuł identyfikuje rekomendacje dla rozwoju architektury demokratycznej.

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