

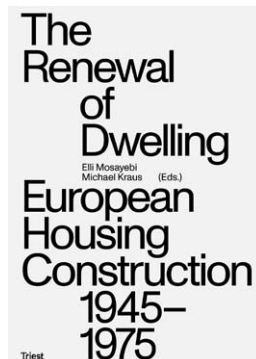
DUBRAVKO BAČIĆ

THE RENEWAL OF DWELLING

EUROPEAN HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

1945-1975

EDITORS: ELLI MOSAYEBI, MICHAEL KRAUS



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The Renewal of Dwelling: European Housing Construction 1945-1975 is a book with a long history of becoming. The work leading to the publication of this volume started with the research seminar *Wohnen in Europa* (Housing in Europe), taught at the TU Darmstadt by Professor Elli Mosayebi between 2012 and 2018. In 2016, Mosayebi organized an exhibition and international conference at the German Architecture Museum (DAM) in Frankfurt, titled 'The Renewal of Dwelling – European Housing Construction 1945-1975'. The exhibition which later extensively travelled around Europe showcased some seventy architecturally outstanding, but internationally not very well-known apartment buildings in Brussels, Zagreb, Cologne, Oslo, Porto, Lyon and Athens.

According to the editors, Mosayebi (currently Professor of Architecture and Design at the ETH Zurich) and Kraus (who was a Research Assistant at Mosayebi's chair in Darmstadt, and is currently Research Assistant at the Chair of Design and Urban Architecture at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar), the initial focus of the research was on innovative apartment floor plans arising out of specific local conditions. An analytical comparison of these projects, however, also revealed a stimulating tension between universally shared international ideals and the locally conditioned realities of particular cities and their architects. Eventually, the research material was significantly expanded and edited by Mosayebi and Kraus in a 400-page volume, which also includes essay contributions (developed out of the papers presented at the 2016 Frankfurt DAM conference) by: Jasper Cepl (Bauhaus University Weimar) with Sam Jacoby (Royal College of Art, London) and Valerio Massaro (London South Bank University), Irina Davidovici (ETH Zurich), Philippe Dufieux (ENSAL Lyon), Nuno Grande (University of Coimbra), Anne-Kristine Kronborg (Oslo School of Architecture and Design), Karin Šerman and Jana Horvat (Faculty of Architecture, University of Zagreb), and Panayiotis Tournikiotis (NTUA Athens).

The study is based on 54 selected settlements and buildings from Zagreb, Cologne, Oslo, Porto, Lyon, Athens and the regions of Liver-

pool/Manchester and Leeds/Sheffield. Each city is presented using a selection of housing developments in the catalogue section, accompanied by an essay. As the editors explain in their Introduction, the catalogue and the corresponding essays are mutually complementary – they have equal status while communicating different insights: the catalogue presents drawings (original and redrawn), sketches and photographs of architectural and urban-planning qualities, while the texts describe the projects' characteristics and specific contexts and conditions in which they were developed. In particular, the essays address the role of public policy as a moderator of funding mechanisms used for housing projects in individual cities.

Most of Europe's housing was built between 1945 and 1975. In only 30 years, the stock was not only renewed, but also significantly expanded. The public sector played a key role, as states and participating institutions sought a way to tackle the existing housing shortage. They also recognized a unique opportunity to implement their political ideals. For the first time, this publication presents how such a fundamental renewal of dwelling and its architectural implementation was achieved. A comparison between individual projects reveals universal themes, as well as local aspects integrated into the architecture.

Readers are invited to engage with the examples presented and to use the book as a kind of an "open archive", filled with interesting architecture. The content is structured non-hierarchically, in seven geographically organized chapters with examples: Porto (9 examples), Lyon (7), Cologne (8), Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield (9 examples all together), Oslo (7), Zagreb (8), and Athens (8 examples). The editors suggest grouping the housing construction projects of the European postwar period into the following six thematic fields /projects with.../: two (separate) entrances, the hidden skeleton, the garden in the facade, tall building in the city, large dimensions and the human scale, and the refined materials. This classification is based on the comparative approach of the study: the focus was not on the indi-

vidual cities or on the chronological sequence of the buildings, but rather on common and occurring themes that shaped European housing construction between the international debates and their local refractions. The aim of the book, therefore, is to reveal the diversity and richness in European housing development during the post-war renewal, and to possibly inspire new approaches.

Looking back at the heyday of European housing in the 1950s through 1970s, the publication seeks to influence future developments that are innovative under the current circumstances and demands on housing. Today, many of the presented buildings are in danger of being demolished or have already been removed, due to a lack of sufficient appreciation. The dominant narrative is one of the deficiencies, and the value debate on the preservation of such buildings lacks visions for the future. This book aims to renew the existing narrative and thereby inspire a positive approach to such post-war buildings.

Finally, Croatian readers will especially appreciate the fact that Zagreb's housing projects are well represented in this volume by such architectural masterworks as Drago Galic's *Kemikalija* residential building (1956) and his GNO-VPZ residential block in Vukovarska st. (1957), Drago Ibler's *Drveni neboder* apartment building (1958), Stanko Fabris' VP Split residential block in Vukovarska st. (1960), Ivan Vitić's National Bank apartment complex in Laginjina st. (1962), Slavko Jelinek's Zapruđe estate (1966), "Rockets" residential towers by Centar 51 (Serbetic, Iveta, Richter and Korenik, 1968), and the *Mamutica* residential complex (1974) by Đuro Mirković. In the accompanying essay dedicated to Zagreb, entitled "Private space in collectivist setting: Housing in Zagreb 1945-1975", Karin Šerman and Jana Horvat discuss the sociopolitical context and realities of the post-WW2 Zagreb housing projects, elaborating on a range of topics including the strong Modernist architectural tradition, housing legislation and policy, new socialist centre in Trnje, collective housing projects in the historical city centre, and planning and development of New Zagreb.