

THE COMMUNITY OF THE NEW SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED HOUSING ESTATES AND CHANGES IN HOUSING CONSTRUCTION IN KATOWICE AREA AFTER POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract

This paper examines the main tendencies in the housing construction in Katowice area during the second decade of market transformation in Poland. It particularly examines one of the most important forms of the housing construction of that period that is row, semi-detached and detached houses. The sociological investigations carried out among inhabitants allow us to specify the image of this community, regarding the most significant features – age, marital status, level of education, profession. The obtained data show that the community with the features mentioned above, live in different urban spaces.

Streszczenie

Artykuł przedstawia podstawowe kierunki i tendencje w budownictwie mieszkaniowym Katowic w drugim dziesięcioleciu urynkowania polskiej gospodarki. Szczegółowo opisuje jedną z istotniejszych form mieszkalnictwa tego okresu – osiedla domów jednorodzinnych w zabudowie wolnostojącej, bliźniaczej i szeregowej. Badania socjologiczne przeprowadzone wśród mieszkańców pozwalają na uzupełnienie tego obrazu prezentacją najważniejszych cech demograficznych zbiorowości tj. struktury wieku, stanu rodzinnego, wykształcenia, wykonywanego zawodu. Uzyskane dane wskazują na fakt umiejscowienia się w różnych punktach przestrzeni miasta społeczności o specyficznych charakterystykach.

Keywords: **Housing construction; Housing estates; Middle class; Suburbanization.**

1. INTRODUCTION

The period that followed political transformation was marked not only by changes in Polish economy but also changes in urban and social structure. Creation of new housing space can be connected with the wealth growth of some social groups, bank loans offered to individuals and activities of developers that built more flats or houses ready to move into. However, these processes resulted also in social stratification as the living standards of great part of society lowered considerably. The housing space reflects all those changes that occurred in the social structure.

2. HOUSING CONSTRUCTION IN KATOWICE AFTER 1989 YEAR

Analyzing the data that indicate the number of building permits issued by Katowice City Council, it can be noticed that some types of housing construction popular in the past decades lost its significance after 1989. (Tab. 1) It shows that no company owned houses have been released since 2001. Such situation was the result of the companies strategies that wanted to dispose of the houses and flats they owned as the companies had to maintain them from their own budgets thus generating costs. It could be done due to the Bill issued in 1994 “Regulations concerning the procedures of handing company owned houses to district authorities and individuals” [1].

Table 1.
The number of building permits issued in 2001- 2006 (source Katowice City Council)

Types of housing	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Totality
individual	161	146	65	100	188	260	140	1060
collective	142	72	29	-	93	34	3	373
for sale or rent	282	235	138	347	45	274	974	2295
communal	-	45	-	3	29	21	2	100
social for rent	-	169	82	366	27	731	-	1375
owned by a company	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
Altogether	585	671	314	816	382	1320	1119	5207

In Katowice, the number of flats that belong to the housing association is still decreasing. Only 373 housing association flats were released between 2000 and 2006 which makes rather symbolic number if you consider housing needs. For comparison in 1996 the housing associations built 77% of all flats in the multi family blocks of flats [2]. It can be explained by the fact that a significant amount of loans was not subsidized by the state budget. However, tough housing policy was slackened and housing associations were supported by the state budget means which eventually saved them from collapse.

It is worrying that almost no cheap flats available for less wealthy Katowice citizens were built then. During the period of six years only 100 permissions for council flats were issued. It can be noticed that the number of council flats is getting smaller year by year.

The flats or houses built by the developers and individual for sale or rent predominated in the last years. There were 2295 permissions issued till 2006 which made 44.1% of all new flats. In 2006 this number was almost three times bigger than in 2003 that is called a record year. The latter year results show increased dynamics of such type of housing.

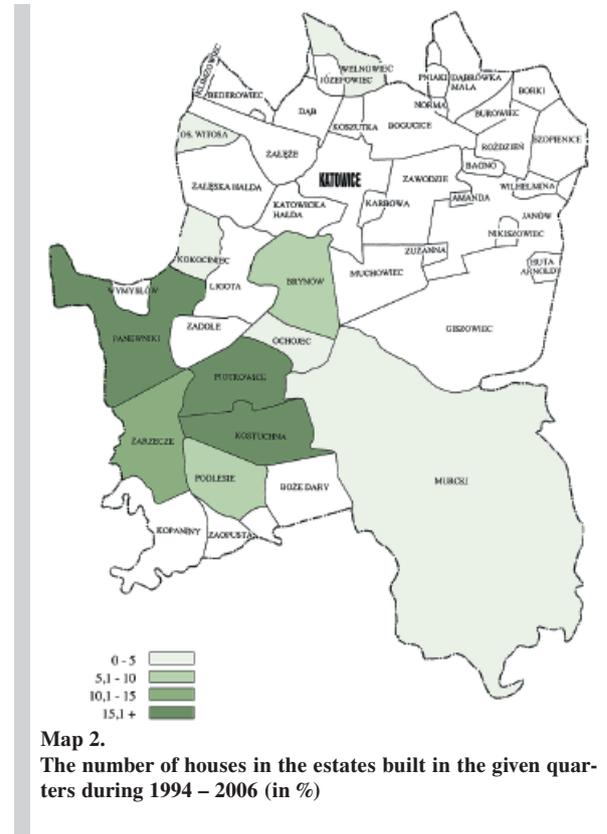
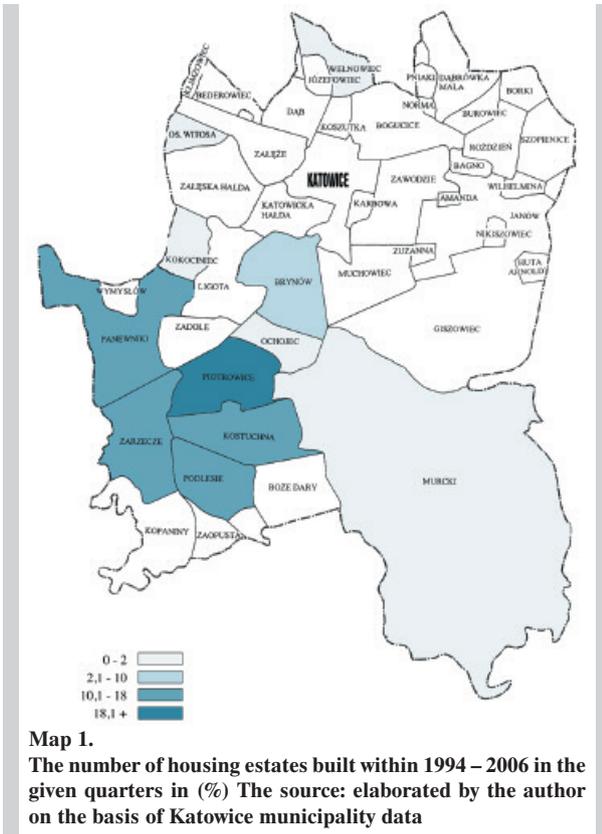
The second place is taken by the social tenement housing with 1375 permissions (26.4%). It is interesting that a part of the social tenement houses (TBS) is located in the quarters usually regarded as bad ones, e.g. Załęże. Buildings with outstanding architecture and inhabited by people of higher social status situated in such places as the one mentioned above, can improve image of these quarters.

The third place belongs to individual housing investments. Between 2000 and 2006, 1060 people applied for building permissions (20.4%). This way to solve housing problems seems to be attractive for a great part of Katowice citizens. Private investors get approximately 150 building permissions every year,

except 2002 when the number of issued permissions was limited because of the lack of Katowice land development plan. But in the following years the numbers levelled off.

The detached, semidetached and row houses made majority of all buildings that were built for sale or rent during 1994-2006. They make the new housing estates of different sizes in the urban space. The smallest one consists of five houses, the biggest of sixty ones. The average number of houses in these estates is 19 houses. The estates are mainly built by developer companies, mostly by Dombud and Millenium-Inwestycje. There are also other smaller developer firms, housing associations besides those mentioned above.

The present preferences as for the place to live show that the stereotype image of some Katowice quarter has changed [3]. The southern quarters that were not valued in the past because of lack of infrastructure such as shopping centres, bad transport system, have become attractive places for future inhabitants. Such quarters as Kostuchna, Zarzecze and Podlesie attracted the greatest number of new inhabitants and new detached housing estates. The statistic data show that these quarters are among the few ones where there was increase of new inhabitants. The increase of the number of housing estates in the southern quarters results from the accessibility and attractive price of the properties. Introduction of the market economy after 1989 resulted in significant increase of properties (land) prices within the city centre, thus the development of the housing estates moved towards cheaper southern and south eastern parts that have also great ecological qualities. The fact that there is a good communication system linking southern quarters with all important Katowice parts is also important.



As map no. 1 shows, the greatest number of housing estates with detached houses appeared in Piotrowice. Almost two times fewer new housing estates were built in Panewniki and Zarzecze. A little fewer housing estates emerged in the southern quarters Podlesie and Kostuchna. Comparing these data with map no. 2, it can be seen that there are three quarters Panewniki, Kostuchna and Piotrowice where the most houses were built. In these quarters, except Piotrowice, bigger housing estates are built, thus by the smaller number of estates there is a great number of houses. Moreover, in Kostuchna there are two biggest estates built in Katowice. The biggest one is Osiedle Bażantów with 98 terrace houses and some multi-family houses. The second one is the estate at Szarych Szeregów with 62 houses.

There are several trends as for location of new housing estates after 1990 in Katowice:

- they are built on the outskirts of the city where there is a low-density housing complex with mostly detached houses that are built individually. This area (Kostuchna, Podlesie, Zarzecze) was previously a rural one;
- the new housing estates are located near the old ones as a continuation of the existing complex

(Brynów II, estate at Kepowa street);

- the detached houses estates are located near the multi-family houses area (the complexes at Barlicki, Kempa, Rolna streets.

There has been an increase of density of flats per one hectare in the housing estates built since the 1990's as comparing to the previous years. In the 1940's the index of housing density was 10 flats per one hectare, in the 60's – 12 flats, in the 70's – 14 to 17.5 flats per one hectare. In the new housing areas that have been built since 1990's, this index is much higher – 29 to 43 flats per one hectare. The housing density in the new sites built in Katowice cannot be justified by the existing location conditions. On the contrary, the high-density housing is very often built on the verge of the low-density detached housing of much lower density index. There is also difference in proportion of built-up to not built-up areas. In Katowice, we can notice the tendency to maximize the built-up area that differs from the urban solutions used in Europe [4]. That all means that much more space is used for buildings, streets and car parks than for green recreation area.

Table 2.

The number of detached housing estates and total number of detached houses in these estates built in 1994-2006 (the source: data elaborated by the author on the basis of Katowice municipality data)

Year – the start	Number of one family houses	Number of housing estates
1994	20	1
1995	109	4
1996	21	2
1997	115	5
1998	40	3
1999	63	4
2000	45	4
2001	53	2
2002	45	3
2003	143	8
2004	41	5
2005	264	15
2006	300	12
Altogether	1259	68

Tab. 2 shows the dynamics of changes in the housing construction branch. During ten-year period (since 1994), 654 houses were built in the new housing estates whereas almost the same number of houses (605) were built in the next three years (2004-2006). Especially, a lot of new investments appeared in 2005 and 2006 which was probably connected with the access of Poland to the European Union. Private investors bought houses on a large scale because they expected the rise of the house estates prices. The further process of creating the housing space as detached housing estates will depend on many interconnected factors: macroeconomics, state housing policy, and actions undertaken by municipal authorities.

3. SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGE OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE NEW RESIDENTIAL AREAS

182 people took part in surveys that were conducted among the inhabitants living in the new detached, semidetached and row housing estates in 2005-2006. The residential areas were situated in eight, mainly southern, quarters of Katowice.

The range of the respondents' age is presented in diagram 1. More than half of the respondents are people

below 45. The largest group (37.9%) are people whose ages range from 46 to 55. The extent of settlement within this group is various – the longest period is 12 years, and the shortest is 1 month. However, the largest number of people in this group – 17 (24%) have lived in their houses for five years, 43.3% less than five years and 31.8% more than five years.

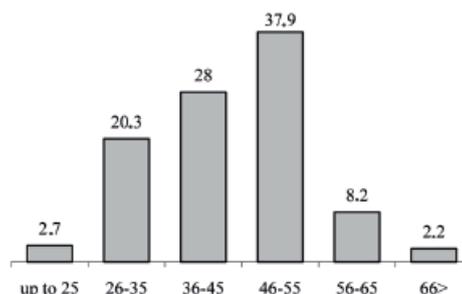


Figure 1.
The respondents' age structure

The other representatively numerous group of respondents is the range 36 to 45 year-old (28%). They have been inhabited their houses for five years (27.5%). However, majority of them (54.7%) have lived in the estate less than five years. 23% of young inhabitants up to the age of 35 live in these estates. They have mostly lived in their houses for a year up to three years. A group of inhabitants at the age of more than 56 years (10.4%) is not a group that has lived for the longest period in the given residential area. One person has been an owner of the house for nine years, most respondents belonging to this group bought their houses 5-6 years ago, though. A few people moved into their new houses a year or two ago. The largest group of respondents moved into their houses in the period of 1999-2000. People, who have owned a house for a year, make also a large group.

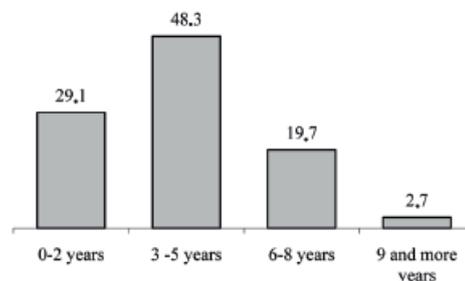


Figure 2.
The range of years people have lived in the given residential area (%)

3.1. The family structure

Majority of respondents live in the estates together with their spouses and children. The greatest number of respondents, almost half of them have one child and 35.2% two children. Families with more children – four or five, are rarely represented in a given population (5%). The young couples without children make quite large proportion of the house estate owners (5%). Much the same number of families have grown-up children that do not live with their parents in their new houses.

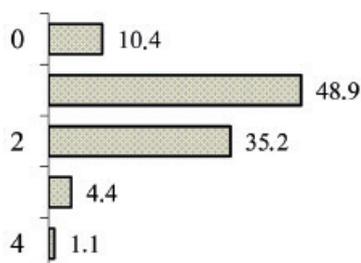


Figure 3.
The number of children in the family (%)

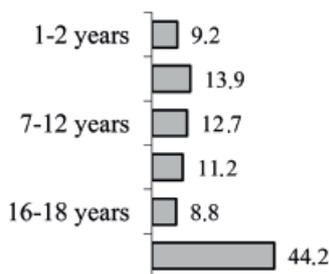


Figure 4.
The structure of the age range of the respondents' children (%)

The structure of the age range of the children due to quite large proportion of families with grown-up children (about 53% of all children) seems to be not typical for the stereotype image of new residential estates. In the sample under the survey, the largest group consists of respondents that are not the young couples but people whose age ranges from 45 to 55 – people who had an opportunity to buy their own house after the system transformation. Almost half of the respondents have grown-up children who live with their parents. Part of the respondents belonging to this age range bought their own house after they had retired and their already grown-up children left

their homes. The second group, but much smaller (21%) consists of families with preschool children that are three to six years old. There are 19.6% of children at the age of seven to twelve and there are also older children attending junior high school or senior high school, relatively 17% and 13%. There are only 14% of small children that are not three years old.

3.2. The level of education and the respondents profession

The community of residential estates that were under the survey is not highly diversified as to the level of education is concerned. Majority of respondents (80%) have graduated from the university, 6.6% respondents have doctoral degrees and small number of them have professor degrees. Respondents that have only secondary education or undergraduate education make 15.6% of the population.

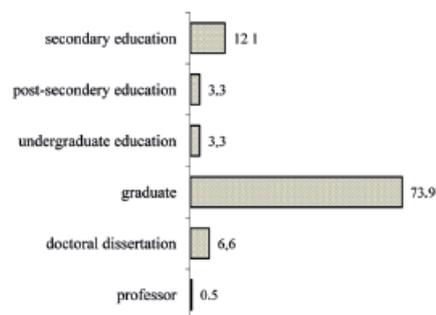


Figure 5.
The structure of respondents' level of education

Tab. 3 shows that almost half of respondents have non-technical education. Professions, in which the inhabitants of the new estates work, indicate changes on the labour market after 1990. The research results show that the largest group of inhabitants work in non-technical professions (44.5%), mostly represented by economists (14.3%), lawyers (8.7%) and doctors (6.5). The other professional groups consist of technical professions (12.6%) and firm owners (9.9%). A bit smaller group is represented by civil servants (3.3%) and respondents that work as executives, PLC presidents (2.2%) and managers (2.2%). There are also representatives of such professions that have great significance on the labour market after 1990 – land agents, property experts, financial advisors, medical representatives and marketing experts.

Table 3.
Professions of the respondents (percentages don't sum to 100 because of the lack of data)

Profession	%
Non-technical professions (lawyers, doctors, academic workers, high school teachers, economists, artists)	46.2
Engineers	12.6
Entrepreneurs	12.1
Civil servants	3.3
Service and commerce workers	2.7
Executives	2.2
Managers	2.2
Administrative workers	2.2
Retired people	2.1
Other	8.8

3.3. The former place of living

The flat in the block of flats was the former place of living for most of the respondents (75.6%) and 10% of respondents lived in a tenement house in the city centre. Only 12.2% of respondents lived in one family house. Buying a new house means for them moving to the modern house in a better residential quarter. However, the present house is the first own house for 85% of respondents so the experience of living in such a type of housing is quite new for them.

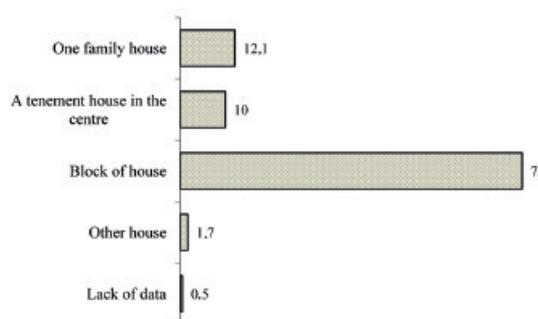


Figure 6.
The former place of living (%)

3.4. Cultural features of the new housing estates residents

Similarity of demographic features is an essential factor in cementing new housing estates community. Another important element affecting relations between neighbours is an attitude to a house as value. The research shows that owning a house is a way to find safer living environment for a family. For 94% of

respondents, safety proved to be the most important factor behind the decision to buy a house. The second most important value perceived by the new houses owners is more friendly neighbourhood in the estates area. It seems, though, that the neighbourhood is valued based on well-behaved and distanced demeanour towards other residents, which ensures peaceful life. There were not too many cases of binding friendship ties observed. When moving to the new housing estates, the residents already had a circle of family and friends outside the new estates, which is why they do not feel the need to build new social relations. Social ties appear when it is necessary to solve a mutual problem which is important to the whole community, therefore they are most often of functional nature.

The research findings also show a different attitude to the notion of a house. For some people a house is a place to carry out their activity thanks to larger space and a piece of own garden. Others mention the prestige of owning a house in suitable location in the city area. Individual people treat a house as capital investment.

The most important values for the residents are: safety, friendly social relations, autocreation and prestige. Despite the evident residents' homogeneity, they do not constitute a local community typical of the old traditional housing estates and villages. They are an example of new urban living environment based on safety and status.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The one-family house estates built by development firms belong to the fastest developing types of residential quarters in Katowice. The new types of residential area in Katowice correlate with the social changes that occur in economic and social spheres. These factors influence changes in the urban space. The inhabitants of the new residential areas are the former intelligentsia because majority of people living there have university education, 50% of them non-technical one. This social group gained most as a result of the system transformation. This group has become the basis of the middle class in Poland. Its representatives tend to move out from blocks of flats to the new quarters. About three fourths of respondents lived earlier in a multi-family block of flats. The outskirts appeared to be attractive areas for them to fulfill the need of having their own house which was earlier impossible. Thus, a half of respondents are

more than 45 years old and part of them acquired the house being at retirement age. This fact corresponds to the structure of families that live in the new estates and it shows that almost half of children are grown up (of age). Considering all these factors, it can be noticed that the new residential space is created by a specific group (social environment) being homogeneous in comparison to inhabitants of other residential spaces.

The estates that are built in the suburban quarters of Katowice are the image of more and more dynamic suburbanization processes. As a result, there are enclaves in the city that are inhabited by people of higher social status and areas of poverty with decapitalized housing resources. What may be worrying is the lack of clear municipal policy with regard to solving housing problems of people with the lowest income. The number of communal flats being built stand in blatant contrast to the number of estates built for people from the middle class who move out of the city centre in search of safer living areas.

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Figure 7.
Katowice, Sołtysia St.



Figure 8.
Katowice, Szarych Szeregów St.



Figure 9.
Katowice, Bażantów Housing Estate

