

Florian Nepravishtha
Andrea Maligari

MODERNISATION AND GLOBALIZATION

NEW PARADIGMS IN ARCHITECTURE, CITY, TERRITORY



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**FLORIAN NEPRAVISHTA
ANDREA MALIQARI**



La scuola di Pitagora
editrice

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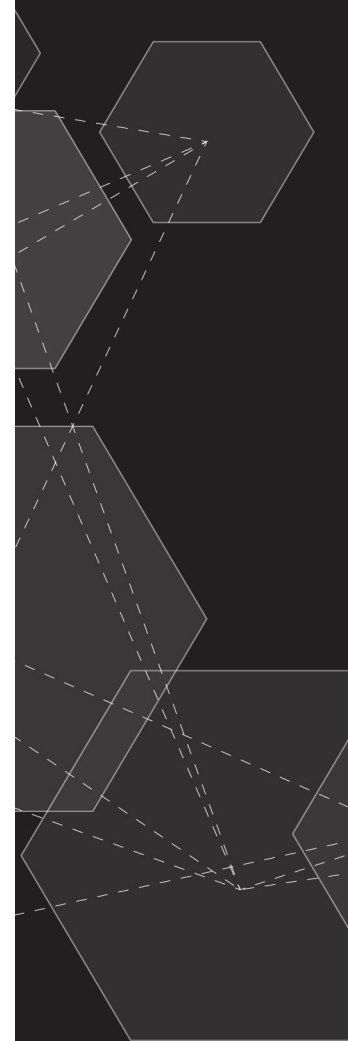
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MODERNISATION AND GLOBALIZATION

New paradigms in architecture, city, territory

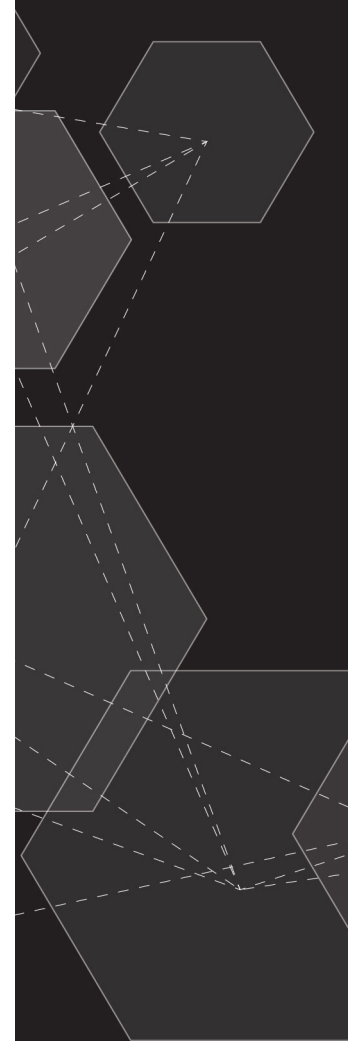


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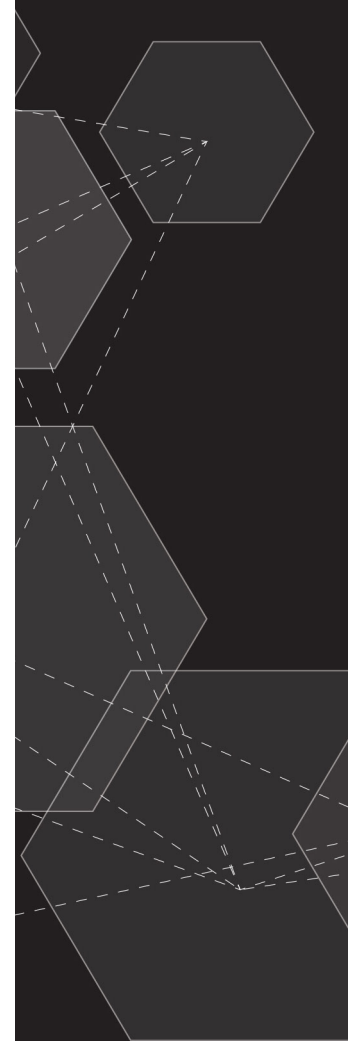
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Introduction

With the collapse of the socialist social order in the former Yugoslavia, cooperative homes in the countryside were increasingly diminished. The transition period in Serbia after 2000 initiated an avalanche of changes in the domain of social relations. Cooperative homes were synonymous with the ideological-political activities of the ruling Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) in the countryside, in the domain of architecture. The socialist transformation of the countryside has reached its final point, and cooperative homes as buildings that were in the function of that transformation are today abandoned and left to decay (Fig. 1). The research subject is the possibility of redevelopment of cooperative homes in accordance with contemporary needs of society and local context, starting from the assumption that these buildings can still play an essential role in everyday life in the countryside. In addition to service and commercial content, these buildings can play an important role in developing rural tourism or a particular purpose (education, promotion, culture, entertainment). Freed from ideological pretensions, the socio-cultural character of cooperative homes can take on the contours of different programming structures today. The work methodology also includes analysing scientific and professional literature related to the construction of cooperative homes and the socialist transformation of rural settlements in the post-war period. Examining the possibility of integrating new content and redevelopment of space will be verified by a case study that will discover realistic ways and justify interventions.



Figure 1. Abandoned and devastated Cooperative Homes in Serbian Villages. Left: Teocin - G. Milanovac, Right: Dejan - Vlasotince. Source: Author Archive.

The paper aims to point out the capacities possessed by these buildings, which need not move within their originally intended purpose. New programming requirements stem from the changing needs of the modern lifestyle, which open up vast possibilities for recycling and renewal in modern times.

Socialist transformation of villages within the Yugoslav cultural space

After the Second World War, the socialist transformation of the countryside in the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY) followed the model of Soviet colonisation. It began with agrarian reform and the formation of agricultural peasant cooperatives. The Law on Agrarian Reform and Colonization provided, among other things, for the confiscation of property by wealthy individuals to evenly distribute arable land to the broad masses. Socialist economic development was based on property confiscation. It was considered that agricultural improvement and economic and cultural transformation of villages were impossible as long as large farms existed. The resolution of the Second Plenum of the CPY established the importance of cooperatives in achieving the desired socialist transformation of the village. Cooperatives formed an ideal framework for promoting new social values.

Due to the circumstances, agricultural cooperatives have been given the role of central institutions in the countryside, bringing together various contents. The development of agricultural cooperatives was in favour of the economic unification of smallholdings, which aimed at raising the level of agricultural development (Kojić, 1950). The cooperative village did not possess an architectural heritage, which created the possibility of establishing a new construction practice: it was necessary to invent buildings that would represent the revival of the village and the acceptance of socialist ideology. Due to their position in the settlement, these buildings later became benchmarks in the future development and arrangement of rural settlements. (Kojić, 1975)

The construction of cooperative homes played an essential role in the socialist transformation of the countryside, which entailed changing economic and cultural patterns of the past. The concrete construction of homes influenced the appearance of the immediate construction of socialism in Yugoslavia among the population (Fig. 2). They were raised by the voluntary work of the peasants, and the golden age of construction was in the 1950s and 1960s (Šljukić and Janković, 2015; 197).

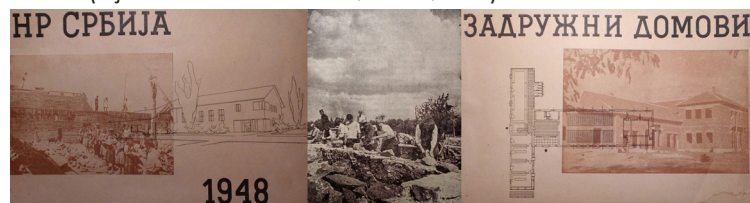


Figure 2. Catalog of standard projects of Cooperative homes (NR Serbia, 1948) and illustrations of their mass construction by the local peasant population

Cooperative homes as a legacy of socialist culture

After the war, the cultural transformation of villages in the FPRY and Serbia supported the establishment of socialist values among the rural population. Such a relationship was most evident in the field of architecture. Frederick Jameson pointed out that architecture and art, within totalitarian social systems, translate into a kind of political practice (Jameson, 1985). Such a principle essentially develops awareness in the people in a direction that is appropriate to the system, establishing new frameworks of social values. As a reflection of socio-cultural development, architecture followed the developmental trends of the establishment of the socialist social order of Yugoslavia. Homes of culture, or cooperative homes, represent buildings that, after the war, played the role of bearer of social, economic and cultural development in the countryside. The connection with the Soviet Union at the socio-political and cultural level initiated the development of Yugoslav architecture in that period, national in form, socialist in content (Bilikin, 1947).

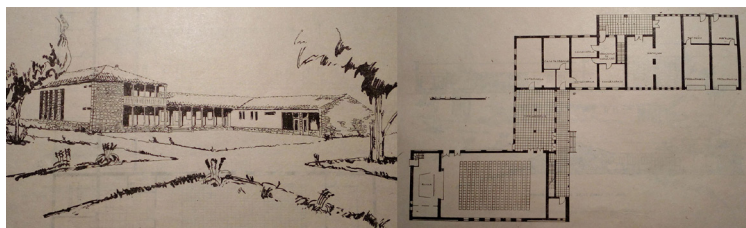


Figure 3. Cooperative home (type V), perspective view and ground floor. Source: "Cooperative homes" - Catalog of standard projects, NR Serbia, 1948.

Two units defined the structure of the homes (Fig. 3). The former belonged to the contents of economic character that supported the development of the cooperative, while the latter was in the function of educational and cultural uplift. The synergy of all the contents contributed to the creation of a new tradition in rural construction (Macura, 1948). The typology of cooperative homes was made based on the size and economic strength of the settlements for which they were planned. Primarily, it concerned universal halls, which played a crucial role in further articulating content. Accordingly, there were eight types of homes. The main reason was the tendency of mass cultural-political education of the rural population. The principles of socialist ideology were entirely an integral part of architectural practice.

The composition of cooperative homes was diverse. There were different types of basics (Krunić, 1949). Such an approach was intended to provide a specific type of construction for each possible situation to narrow the space of arbitrary activity. The selection of projects was not made according to objective architectural values but based on individual liking to representatives of cooperative organisations and parties.

Cooperative homes were often built in such a constellation of relationships, and their capacity was oversized (Fig. 4). The lack of material resources in the period in which they were built was not a problem because the authorities decided that the people should realise this idea on their own resources and on a voluntary basis. Organising mass labour actions, on the other hand, fostered a competitive spirit among the rural population.

Transformation as a way of revitalisation

Cooperative homes, as already mentioned, played a significant - forced role in terms of cultural and political activity in the countryside, which is one of the reasons for their decline in the later period. By organising various cultural events, lectures, courses, etc., they contributed to establishing values of socialist culture among the rural population. With the abandonment of socialist ideology, the role of cooperative homes became impaired. Today, they represent the sole monumental legacy of socialist culture. Many of these buildings are now collapsing and represent the ruins that are located in the centres of the settlement. The collapse of cooperative homes followed the decline of agriculture and cooperatives. The difficult economic situation of the 1990s in Serbia practically hindered the development of agriculture.



Figure 4. The volume of the Cooperative House dominates the settlement and testifies to its earlier occupancy. Today, these buildings are mainly unused and left to decay. Left: Donja Kamenica, right: Beli Potok / Knjazevac Municipality. Source: Author Archive.

The local self-government leased premises in homes for various purposes, as office and workspace, as service outlets and shops.

Parts of the space have been adapted as residential units (Fig. 5). Insisting on rural tourism development as a generator of rural regeneration has been an imperative of regional priorities in recent years. Cooperative homes in this respect may represent a benchmark for future settlement development. Being given a new role in the contemporary context and objectively preventing their further decline creates the possibility of establishing a new economic basis (Mitrović, 2015). The breadth of the concept of dealing with different types of tourism initiates an overview of the various options for converting cooperative homes. On the other hand, this would in some way reduce the negative consequences of the construction of various buildings that are designed to promote the countryside and traditional values. At the same time, by their formative and aesthetic characteristics, the use of building materials deviate from the characteristics of the area in which they were built. In that sense, existing capacities should be maximised and affirmed. Changing the purpose - conversion of cooperative homes does not mean disrespecting their cultural and educational character. Spatial ordering by its proportions enables the integration of divergent functions with minimal interventions on the existing spatial relations of elements. The House of Culture at the Beli Potok Local Community in Belgrade, which belongs to the village's heritage at the foot of mountain Avala, is a solid example of reconstruction and space conversion (Fig. 6 and 7).

The preliminary design adapted the home space into a kindergarten. Preschool children are housed in two

groups, on the ground floor and upstairs, where play areas and children's lounge are positioned in the former central hall of the building. The layout of the building on the corner is consistent with changing the home into a kindergarten because the composition of the existing building defines the inner courtyard as a particular setting. A play area for children and outdoor play is provided within the courtyard when weather permits.

The research aims not to evaluate the design capabilities individually or to shift the boundaries of architectural - design parameters but solely to indicate the flexibility of the structure of these buildings.

Concerning position, capacity and program content, it is shown that cultural and cooperative homes in the countryside can locate their position in a contemporary context. The trend of general digitisation and the advancement of different types of the technology enables cooperative homes in the countryside to take on the role of cultural and educational units for young people.

Conclusions

Organising the construction of cooperative homes, their many years of use, and the position they occupy point today to the consequences of ideological pretensions that supported the CP's political goals at the time than realistically affected the economic revival of the village.

Economic stagnation due to the disintegration of the Yugoslav ideology and introduction into the transition process, among other things, caused the collapse of agriculture and cooperatives, which further made the role of these buildings even more meaningless.



Figure 5. A variety of Cooperative Homes - rarely used for primary (ambulance, post office, administration) and service facilities. Left: Crnajka – Majdanpek, right: Visočka Ržana – Pirot. Source: from the author's archive.

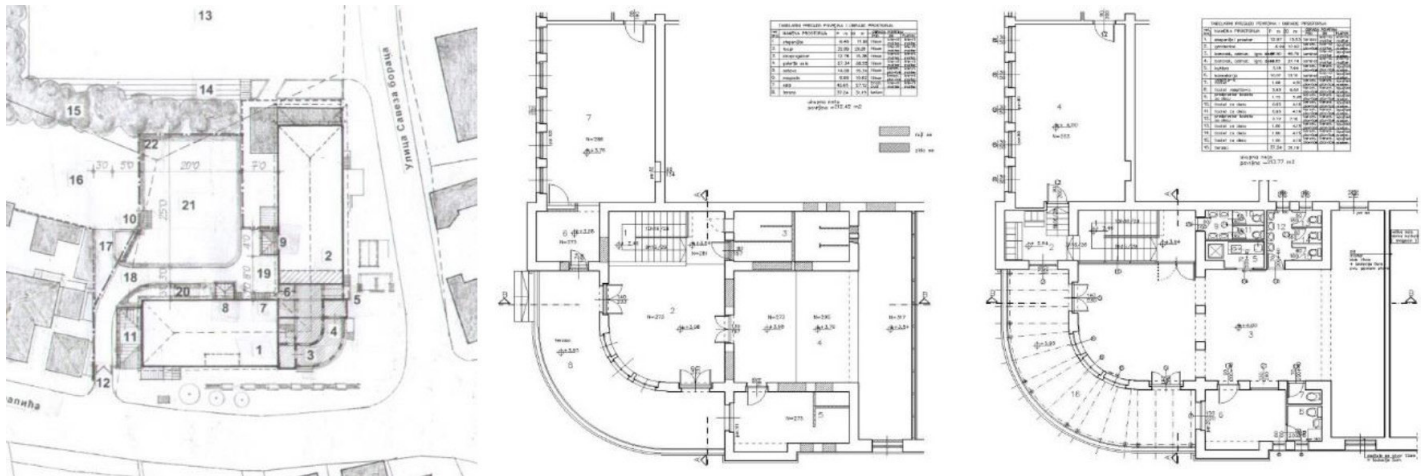


Figure 6. Position, current and new condition of a part of a cooperative home, adapted into a kindergarten - Beli Potok / Belgrade
Source: from the archive of architect A. Videnovic.



Figure 7. In the middle: The part of the Cooperative Home in Beli Potok / Belgrade has been renovated. Left and right: Side wings with excellent conversion and reactivation capabilities. Source: from the author's archive.

The relevance of cooperative homes, viewed from the contemporary historical and political distance, remained permanently determined in its original context. The massive construction of these buildings in the context of work campaigns was of greater importance than the later use of its contents. The large number of homes owned by most rural settlements in Serbia indicates a position they can take about contemporary rural development, primarily in economic terms. Neglecting this fact would lead to new and more significant tangible investments, which remain unattainable to local communities. New rural development plans should envisage the use of existing potentials (built objects). The generation of different possibilities for their conversion is due to the need to integrate many missing functions in rural settlements.

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