

KATOWICE HOUSING COOPERATIVE – STRATEGIES AND INVESTMENTS

“The past is a part of the present and both will be a part of the future”
(Boussa D., 2003 [3])

Beata KOMAR*

* Dr.; Faculty of Architecture, Silesian University of Technology, Akademicka 7, 44-100 Gliwice, Poland
E-mail address: beata.komar@polsl.pl

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Abstract

Katowice Housing Cooperative (the Polish acronym: KSM) was founded in 1957. Its assets include 17 housing estates and nowadays it is still making new investments. The scope of the paper is the discussion of KSM's strategy in response to global changes affecting the city of Katowice. The paper describes the evolution of the Cooperative's activities since the 1950s until the early 21st century, conditioned by factors specific for the 1950s and the 1960s – great demand for flats, migrations of labour, rapid reconstruction of the country and its industry after World War II damages, the 1970s – the most favourable circumstances for the operation of housing cooperatives, the 1980s – the collapse of heavy industry, unemployment, the 1990s – the change of the political system in Poland, opening of the borders, migrations for work, introduction of the free market economy, shrinkage of cooperative housing initiatives, the 21st century – resurgence of cooperatives in Poland.

Streszczenie

Katowicka Spółdzielnia Mieszkaniowa powstała w 1957 roku i jest największą spółdzielnią mieszkaniową w Katowicach. Posiada w swoich zasobach 17 osiedli i obecnie rozpoczyna nowe inwestycje. Zadaniem artykułu jest pokazanie strategii KSM w odpowiedzi na zmiany globalne odczuwane w mieście Katowice. Artykuł opisuje ewolucję działania spółdzielni od lat 50. XX do początku XXI w., uwarunkowaną czynnikami charakterystycznymi dla kolejnych dekad: 50 i 60. XX w. – gład mieszkań, ruchy migracyjne, gwałtowna odbudowa przemysłu i kraju po zniszczeniach wojennych; 70. XX w. – najlepsza koniunktura dla działalności spółdzielni, 80. XX w. – upadek przemysłu ciężkiego, bezrobocie, 90. XX w. – zmiana ustroju kraju, otwarcie granic, migracje ludności za pracą, uwolnienie gospodarki rynkowej, powstanie silnego rynku deweloperskiego, kurczenie się budownictwa spółdzielczego, XXI – odrodzenie się spółdzielczości w Polsce.

Keywords: Cooperative; Housing estates; Global changes.

INTRODUCTION

Established in 1957 KSM has been operating for 50 years and its strategies [1] and activities have been conditioned by current demands, legislation, as well as by global changes affecting the world and Poland.

The Post War years in Europe and all over the world involved massive reconstruction efforts to mitigate the effects of the War. In Poland, the cooperative movement, due to a new political ideology, was rejected and considered as a remnant of capitalism. In that short period of time other housing cooperatives were in the state of crisis and KSM had no chance of spreading its wings.

Increasing problems related to the supply of flats caused by the Post-War migrations and the emergence of the Post-War generation contributed to the revival of the cooperative movement in Poland in 1956, but it had very limited autonomy. It was at that time when KSM was established. Its fast growth (as well as other housing cooperatives) was in line with a new architectural trend getting down to the Bauhouse concept and Le Corbusier's ideas of housing estates. The first such housing development was the Sarcelles estate in the suburbs of Paris, the construction of which started in 1954. Such urban development forms became popular in the second part of the 20th century, especially in the

countries where urban growth was delayed and then evolved rapidly. The construction of housing facilities was a response to intensive growth of industry and labour. Pre-cast construction elements were of great importance at that time, as they shortened the time of housing projects delivery.

However, in Europe such housing developments were discontinued and their decline commenced in the 1970s. In poverty-stricken Poland, where the demand for flats was very high, the 1970s witnessed the height of slab tower block estates.

In Poland, the crisis of the cooperative movement and the ensuing slab-tower block estates construction took place in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of the decline of heavy industry, which could be observed in the city of Katowice. The economic crisis, which was a global change, hit Poland with a 20 year delay. The main drive of the transformations was the disintegration of the Eastern Block countries, reflected in the liberation from the previously binding common building standards.

In the 1990s Poland underwent political and economic transformation and opened up to worldwide trends, such as energy efficiency and thermal modernization. Katowice Housing Cooperative introduced such solutions in 1993, and in 1997 it devised a long-term strategy of improving the quality of its resources.

The early 21st century brought about a new greater “aesthetic awareness” of the society and the ensuing abandonment of slab block states by more affluent inhabitants. This problem also occurred in other Eastern Block countries, especially in Germany. KSM addressed the problem by undertaking many repair works of its resources and by upgrading the standard of its flats and housing estates.

This period was also good for the growth of competition in the developers’ market. Unfortunately, nowadays, provided flats can only be afforded by more affluent representatives of the Polish society and the quality of the housing does not equal the price, thus, despite the economic crisis, housing cooperatives still have the power of targeting. In many cases, to meet new demands, cooperatives divide into smaller units to be able to undertake the modernization of their resources and to build new housing projects.

KSM faced the crisis by expanding the existing housing estates: for example – Zgrzebnioka, giving it a new modern quality [14] moreover, since 2008 the Cooperative has been constructing new housing estates designed in accordance with the European trends.

Nowadays in Poland housing cooperatives own about 26% of all housing resources, making them one of the most common forms of occupancy. Quality analyses of the built environment, including housing cooperatives, are performed on wide scale and in various aspects. Among many publications devoted to the discussed subject of cooperative housing, the following should be mentioned: *Maliszewski A.*, (1992) [9], *Kasperski W.*, (1971) [4]; *Madej K.*, (2002) [8]; concerning the construction processes of housing estates: *Lugez J.*, (1978) [7]; *Biliński T.*, *Gaczek W.*, *Klorek E.*, (1975) [2], concerning the modernization of housing estates: *Wojtkun G.*, (2004) [13]; concerning global social housing: *Życiński J.*, (2006) [16].

Housing in post-communist countries was also the subject of an international conference organized by the Faculty of Architecture, The Silesian University of Technology, with the IAPS cooperation: Housing and Environmental Conditions in post-communist countries. The monograph edited by *Komar B.*, *Kucharczyk-Brus B.* [5] under the same title and published by the Publishing House of The Silesian University of Technology in 2007 is the result of that meeting.

The author’s research work conducted since 2003 in Katowice, including interviews with KSM’s representatives, photographic documentation and archival materials have all contributed to the research results.

I PERIOD (1945-1970) OF GLOBAL CHANGES – POLAND

• 1945-1956

The main task of cooperative movement at that time was to rebuild the housing tissue destroyed by the Second World War. The period of so called: “Six Years’ Plan” brought about new directions in the reconstruction and expansion of Poland, yet, the majority of financial outlays was put into the development of industry, which translated into limited funds allocated for housing. At the same time, more and more people from rural areas moved to cities in search for work, and Katowice served as an excellent example of this phenomenon, receiving 50417 repatriates. Unfortunately, this social trend was not compensated by the development of housing required for the new comers. Cooperative housing resources were subjected to the state supervision. In 1950 Polish cooperative societies – using bank loans and their members’ financial contributions built 1657 dwelling places, but in the next year the figure declined to 125, whereas in 1952 it reached 141 built flats. In 1952 the

Polish cooperative housing movement became a part of the national economic plan, yet it was given no loans or credit facilities.

• 1956-1970

In 1956-1958 the cooperative housing movement in Poland was given a new direction becoming a part of the national housing policy and serving not only economic and social functions, but also political ones. In 1959-1965 there was a remarkable growth of cooperative housing organizations. The cooperative organizations became available to both white and blue collar workers who were instructed by trade unions and employers' establishments to join in. It was under such circumstances that Katowice Housing Cooperative was created.

The beginning was difficult. Although the city of Katowice did not suffer extensive War damages, it had to accommodate the influx of people from rural areas who had migrated in search for employment in the developing industry. There was a big demand for flats.

In 1957 and for the next two years KSM owned only one building located at Graniczna Street, taken over from the employer's establishment. But in 1960 it managed to construct 8 new buildings and developed its construction activity reaching the peak in the 1970s.

The analysis of KSM's documentation revealed that it adopted an interesting strategy and did not build successive housing estates as a whole, but tried to secure an equal growth of different city quarters.

Accordingly, Katowice Housing Cooperative was building several houses at different sites of Katowice. Such innovative approach contributed to the sustainable growth of the city. At the same time, quite a few in-fill buildings were constructed in the city centre (Śródmieście).

1962 brought about the regulation issued by the Polish Council of Ministers ordaining so called: "cost-effective housing", in response to rapid growth of the demand for flats. It was assumed that under the adopted plan, 40% of the required flats would be built in three years. The savings did not only concern

Table 1.
Compilation of the flats of 35m² in the management of KSM

No.	The name of the settlement	Year of construction	Total number of flats	Number of apartments – 35 m ²	Participation %
1.	OŚ. CENTRUM –I	1960-1970	1001	346	34
2.	OŚ. SUPERJEDNOSTKA	1968-1969	762	295	38
3.	OŚ. HAPEROWIEC	1967	199	23	11,5
4.	OŚ. ŚRÓDMIEŚCIE	1958-1979	851	183	21,5
5.	OŚ. GWIAZDY	1966-1983	1076	21	1.9
6.	OŚ. GISZOWIEC	1969-1987	3561	481	13,5
7.	OŚ. MURCKI	1962-1975	761	171	22
8.	OŚ. WIERZBOWA	1960-1982	852	224	26
9.	OŚ. KUKUCZKI	1977-1988	1656	10	0.6
10.	OŚ. ŚCIGAŁY	1961-2001	777	8	1
11.	OŚ. GRANICZNA	1957-1990	402	25	6
12.	OŚ. SZOPIENICE	1959-1983	1207	268	22
13.	OŚ. JANÓW	1969-1975	485	8	1.6
14.	OŚ. ŚCIEGIENNEGO	1963-1997	2344	127	3.9
15.	OŚ. ZAWODZIE	1960-2007	1783	156	8.7
16.	OŚ. ZGRZEBNIOKA	1979-2007	611	23	3.7
17.	OŚ. LIGOTA	1960-1978	557	55	9.8

square meters and floor area but also the fittings and furnishing. Thus, the flats built at that time had very small floor area, recess or blind kitchens (20% of KSM's flats), tiny bathrooms and halls. Although such cost-effective flats were not well received by the real estate market, this form of housing was abandoned several years after. The smallest flat in KSM's housing resources is M1 – with the floor area of 35 m² (Table 1).

Nevertheless, the biggest challenge for Katowice Housing Cooperative in the 1960s were the building projects in the city centre. To provide the background for the entire endeavor the urban shape of the city should be presented.

Katowice was granted the town charter in 1865. In the 19th century the most important determinant of its development was the railway line constructed in 1846, connecting Berlin and Mysłowice. Public utility buildings, tenement houses and roads were built in the vicinity of the railway. The urban tissue congested around the railway. The town grew along its east-west axis. The south-north axis of Katowice was ini-

tially designated by the estates of its owners – the Thiele-Winckler family. The autonomy of the estates area and of Brynów district was abolished as late as in 1924, and on July 1st 1924 the lands were incorporated into the town limits. On June 15th the Silesian Parliament passed the resolution concerning broadening the town boundaries and creating Great Katowice [12].

In the 1960s there was still a noticeable discord between the east-west axis settlements and the north-south axis developments. The north-south axis had dispersed settlements, many waste lands and poor quality buildings. It also contained huge brownfields previously occupied by “Marta” steel works. In the northern part of the city the following housing estates were built: Centrum – I, Wierzbowa, Ściegiennego.

Concurrently, planning works on the city centre were undertaken. The token of the changes initiated in 1965 was the roundabout (traffic circle) in memorial of General *Jerzy Ziętek* (Fig. 1) – a big transport and transit junction which facilitated the traffic along the north south axis (Korfantego Alley, former Armii



Figure 1. The roundabout (under construction) in memorial of General Jerzy Ziętek. (source: arch. Jurand Jarecki's photo archive)

Czerwonej Street) and free transit traffic along the east-west axis (Roździeńskiego Alley).

In 1967 “Haperowiec” building designed by *Jurand Jarecki* and *Marian Skalkowski* was erected at Sokolskiej 33. In 1969 at Korfantego Alley “Super-Unit” block of flats emerged, designed by Architect *Mieczysław Król*. Both buildings were KMS’s initiative. The emergence of the two above mentioned facilities resulted in another exodus of people from rural areas and from the neighboring zones to the city of Katowice. About 1660 people settled in “Super-Unit”, and 300 people in “Haperowiec”. In those times both buildings epitomized the fulfillment of the dream about workers’ own luxurious home.

From the early 1960s to the 1980s KSM built the following housing estates: Murcki, Wierzbowa, Ścigały, Ligota, Ściegienego, Janów, Zawodzie, Szopienice (Fig. 2, 3, 4, 5) a part of Giszowiec, all situated in different city quarters, and contributing to their further development. Some of the estates erected in the vicinity of industrial establishments are still inhabited by the people associated with the employers. Such estates are: Murcki, the old part of Giszowiec, Ścigały, Janów, Szopienice. At the same time, since 1965 the number of the cooperative members rose from 332 thousand to one million in 1970.

In the 1970s the time of waiting for flat allocation was prolonged to the next generation. The interviews conducted among the inhabitants of the housing resources managed by KSM confirmed the thesis that the Cooperative was building housing estates in accordance with its own plans and in consideration of its members’ needs.



Figure 2.
Murcki Estate (source: author’s photo archive)



Figure 3.
Szopienice estate (source: author’s photo archive)



Figure 4.
Janów estate (source: author’s photo archive)



Figure 5.
Giszowiec estate (source: author’s photo archive)

II PERIOD (1970-1989) OF GLOBAL CHANGES – POLAND

In Poland in 1970-1989 about 95 thousand flats were commissioned for use each year, but the influx of cooperative members reached 120 thousand. In 1986 the shortage of flats was estimated at 1-1,2 million, three quarters of which in cities.

In 1980 only 39.2% of the flats provided by the housing cooperatives were allotted to their members. The rest (32.2%) was appropriated by employers' establishments and 18.8% taken over by the state administration. The reason for such measures was constant shortage of labour, the effects of economic crisis in Western Europe and the death of political systems in the Eastern Block.

In the 1980s some housing cooperatives were divided into smaller units and several new emerged. In the late 1980s there were about 3 100 housing cooperatives, which was three times more than fifteen years back.



Figure 6.
Kukuczki estate (source: author's photo archive)



Figure 7.
Zrzebnioka estate (source: author's photo archive)



Figure 8.
Haperowiec – before thermo-modernization (source: author's photo archive)



Figure 9.
Haperowiec – after thermo-modernization in 2008 (source: author's photo archive)

Katowice Housing Cooperative did not divide. In the 1980s it commenced and continued the construction of the following housing estates: Kukuczki, Giszowiec, Zawodzie, Zgrzebnicka (Fig. 6 and 7). In 1979 the Cooperative erected 29 blocks of flats, which constituted the peak of its activity.

III PERIOD (1990s.) OF GLOBAL CHANGES – POLAND/KSM

This period was marked with new challenges and problems both for Katowice and the whole region. Heavy industry was declining, many people lost their jobs and there emerged a group of unemployed cooperative members who could not afford to pay the rent for their flats. The resulting impoverishment of the society and of cooperative members caused a decrease in the number of city inhabitants. To face the problem, KSM decided to rent some of its resources for commercial activities, thus preventing a soaring increase of rents for the flats. Currently, there are 450 usable facilities at the KSM's disposal and 25 more are destined for rent.

New times have brought about new requirements for the emerging flats and housing estates. To address the requirements, KSM constructed a new part of Zgrzebnicka estate, furnishing the ground floors with service facilities and endowing the facades with a modern look. As far as the building technology is concerned, traditional brick was given preference, facilitating the formation of architectural details.

To face modern and global energy-efficiency trends KSM commenced the activities of providing thermal protection to facades (Fig. 8 and 9).

To achieve this, 13 years ago a central renovation fund was created (separately from the renovation funds managed by particular housing estates) and a dynamic financial and renovation strategy formulated for the next 10 years, specifying particular repair and modernization works [10]. Thus, it is possible to equal the technical condition of all buildings at all estates. Currently, almost all the buildings are thermally-insulated and their facades are painted in bright, sandy colors. The window frames have also been replaced. But, considering the quantity of the buildings managed by KSM, some of them will have to undergo thermal protection measures once again, not only because of their dirtiness, but because of changes in the binding standards (ZUAT recommendations, PN-EN 13499 European standards, [6]). Thermo-modernization measures have started in 1993 (Giszowiec, Resources of Katowice Housing

Cooperative [11]) and will be continued in the nearest future.

IV PERIOD (XXI) OF GLOBAL CHANGES – POLAND/KSM

In Poland, a country still suffering from housing shortages, demolition of the housing resources does not take place and revitalization projects were mainly limited to thermal insulation. Yet, after some years of the standstill, KSM initiated new investments in 2009 and is currently constructing the following housing estates: Świerkowe, Zielony Zakątek and 8 multi-family houses in Zawodzie.

In the plan for 2010 the following housing projects are to be accomplished:

1) Graniczna Estate:

- Rekreacyjna Dolina – Mały Staw (Recreation Valley- Small Pond) a complex of four houses containing 128 flats with parking lots.
- Oś. Rekreacyjna Dolina – Duży Staw (Recreation Valley – Big Pond) a complex of four houses containing 120 flats, 4 functional facilities and parking lots.

2) and prepare a comprehensive design-budget documentation for the following settlements:

- Murcki Estate – 1 house /12 flats;
- Ściegiennego Estate – 3 houses / 130 flats, 1 house/ 47 flats, 1 shop;
- Ligota Estate – 1 house / 9 flats;
- Graniczna Estate – 6 houses / 176 flats with garages
- Kukuczki Estate – multi-storey car park.

It should be mentioned that the Cooperative started to advertise its offer of new houses and estates on www.ksm.pl, which is also a part of its current strategy. Thus, some of the new flats will be available in an open market.

CONCLUSIONS

In view of the presented facts, it is the author's opinion that the thesis presented in the paper should be addressed to the following conclusions:

GLOBAL CHANGE		
I period 1945-70		
Europe	Poland	KSM answers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - great demand for flats - migrations of labour - rapid reconstruction of the Europe and its industry after war damages - in 1954 created the first "block"/grand ensemble/ in Sarcelles near Paris - prefabrication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - great demand for flats - migrations of labour: - Katowice received 50417 repatriates - rapid reconstruction of the country of Poland and its industry after war damages - revival of cooperatives, but with limited autonomy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in 1957 formed Katowice Housing Cooperative - flats for „working people” became a priority - KSM starts Szopienice, Murcki estates for coal mining - KSM solves the downtown's problem, builds: Centrum-I, Super-Unit, Haperowiec, Wierzbowa, Ścigaly - KSM secures an equal growth of different city quarters - KSM builds a lot but small flats 35m²
YES		
II period 1970-89		
Europe	Poland	KSM answers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the end of building blocks - beginning of the economic crisis - collapse of heavy industry - immigration from Arab, African, Asian countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - apogee of building blocks - still great demand for flats - no immigration problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reached the peak of its activity, as it erected 29 buildings
YES/NO Poland as a communist country has different needs at that time.		
III period 1990s. XX		
Communist countries/Poland		KSM answers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - collapse of heavy industry (20 years later than in West Europe) - change of the political system in Poland and other communist countries - opening of borders - unemployment - migrations for work - introduction of the free market economy - emergence of a strong developers' market - shrinkage of cooperative housing initiatives 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - after the collapse of heavy industry, the unemployed do not pay rent: KSM reduces maintenance costs of buildings by renting spaces for services (450 rooms rented e.g. medicin, trade, small offices) - KSM expands settlements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graniczna - Zawodzie - Ścigaly - Zgrzebniocka
Europe	Poland	KSM answers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - thermo-modernization – a global trend-an attempt to reduce the maintenance costs of buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - changes in the binding standards of thermo-modernization (ZUAT recommendations, PN-EN 13499 European standards) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1997 KSM created a central renovation fund and a dynamic financial and renovation strategy was formulated for the next 10 years, specifying particular repair and modernization works.
YES KSM does not give up!		
IV period XXI		
Europe	Poland	KSM answers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demolition of block of flats - revitalization of block of flats and great housing estates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poland is too poor to destroy blocks - still demand for flats - revitalization of blocks is reduced mainly to thermo-modernization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KSM does not build blocks any longer - KSM builds houses (Zielony Zakątek, Oś. Świerkowe) - KSM implements the settlement Recreational Valley – Small Pond and Big Pond - KSM cares for its assets
YES/NO different needs		

KSM does not build typical building blocks, as it was before, but try to respond to new trends in contemporary architecture and urban planning. The period since 1957 until now shows the evolution housing cooperatives in Poland experienced went through strategies which were used by cooperative until the transition in 1989 were typical for many of these institutions. But now on the housing market only those cooperatives exist which have managed to find in a new reality and to create a competitive offer to the expensive housing development companies. KSM is one of them.

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