

Arhitektura za lepo starost / Architecture for an Enjoyable Old Age

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Če odmislim strog režim in nenehno navzočnost bolezni in smrti, je dom upokojencev precej podoben neskončni šoli v naravi ali poletnemu taboru. Navsezadnje se da tudi tu ušpičiti marsikatero neumnost. Ravno tako se da ponoči tihotapiti po sobah in nič hudega slutečim zaspancem risati po obrazih, uprizarjati wife swap in žurati. Drugi vam skuhajo, operejo, pospravijo in preoblečejo posteljo. Nobenih skrbi nimate, le goro vrstnikov okrog sebe ...

Sama si kot idealno starost predstavljam življenje v podeželski skupnosti, na prenovljeni domačiji z dvoriščem in vrtom. Sobe so primerne za posameznike ali pare, tam sta tudi skupna kuhinja in prostor za druženje. Pranje in pospravljanje zagotavlja pogodbeno podjetje. Če se nam ne ljubi kuhati, si naročimo na dom hrano iz restavracije. Dneve preživljamo večinoma delovno, navsezadnje smo se vse življenje preživljali z umskim delom, zato to počnemo še naprej. Pišemo, prevajamo, študiramo. Včasih nas obišče mladina, ki jo mentoriramo, tu in tam pripravimo predavanja, ki se jih udeležujejo študenti in drugi zainteresirani, ohranjamo pa tudi bogate in pestre partnerske odnose. Le dobro družbo je treba dati nakup, zbrati denar in se takoj lotiti dela. Jaz nočem v Dom počitka, ampak v Dom užitka!¹

Medtem ko število prebivalstva na globalnem jugu in vzhodu narašča, se Evropa sooča z njegovim upadanjem in staranjem. Slovenija ni izjema – ne le, da delež starejše populacije najhitreje narašča, starostniki so tudi socialno najbolj ogrožena skupina, kar jasno kaže tudi dogajanje v domovih za upokojence v času epidemije koronavirusa. Problemi, povezani s staranjem prebivalstva, segajo na zdravstveno, socialno in stanovanjsko področje, a so v smislu ozaveščenosti in politike pogosto odrinjeni na družbeni rob. Starejši ljudje se poleg zdravstvenih težav soočajo z osamljenostjo, težavami pri vzdrževanju (velikokrat prevelikih) stanovanj in hiš ter z bivanjem v neprilagojenih prostorih. Evropski trendi so naravnani k čim daljšemu samostojnemu bivanju starejših v lastnih stanovanjih, v okoljih, ki jih dobro poznajo. Razvijajo se bivanjski modeli in storitve, kot so oskrbovana in varovana stanovanja, sobivanjske skupnosti, oskrba na domu, dnevni centri, medgeneracijska središča ipd. V Sloveniji žal premalo. Na drugi strani populacije so mladi, ki se soočajo z drugačnimi, a ravno tako življenjskimi problemi: prekarizacijo zaposlitev in nedostopnostjo stanovanj ter pozno osamosvojitvijo. A vendar posplošena delitev populacije na generacije, na »stare in mlade«, postavlja pod vprašaj temeljna načela skupnosti in solidarnosti, ki so bistvena za vzdržan razvoj družbe. Kako torej lahko arhitektke in arhitekti naslovimo probleme starajoče se družbe? Kako lahko pri tem presežemo stereotipne generacijske delitve ter razmišljamo o novih prostorih skupnosti?

Že desetletja se arhitektke in arhitekti ukvarjamo s tipologijami življenja v starosti. Rezultati teh raziskav so nedvomno pomembni in nekateri so tudi uveljavljeni v zakonodaji in vsakdanjem življenju. Sprejeti so normativi, ki naslavljajo potrebe invalidov in starejših, tako pri gradnji domov za stare kot stanovanj, skrbi za dostopnost javnih stavb in urejanja starostnikom prijaznih mest. A ti uspehi prikrivajo dejanske probleme in naloge: potrebna je bližina in izmenjava z ljudmi drugih starostnih skupin, vsakdanja normalnost. Predvsem pri spremembi odnosa do starosti in starostnikov se odpirajo možnosti za nove integrativne in skupne načine življenja. Uveljavljene institucionalne oblike, kot so predvsem domovi upokojencev oz. domovi za stare, so in bodo bivalno okolje za zgolj majhen odstotek starejših, velika večina se nas stara in se bo starala doma. Ko se tega zavemo, se odpro številna vprašanja in problemi, pa tudi priložnosti.

Ni potrebno veliko analiz, da vidimo, da je sedanja slika bivanja starejših družbeno neracionalna in neprijazna do njih samih. Starejši največkrat živijo sami in osamljeni, v prevelikih in neprilagojenih hišah ali stanovanjih. Edina alternativa je življenje skupaj z otroki in njihovimi družinami ali pa dom za stare. Kakršne koli drugačne oblike so tako redke, da jih v Sloveniji lahko prešteješ na prste ene roke. Modernistični princip, utemeljen v začetku 20. stoletja, je zasledoval delitev funkcij in specializacijo. Stavbe so bile zasnovane in zgrajene za natančno določen namen. Ta logika je pri domovih za stare še vedno prevladujoča. Glavni principi so eksistenčni minimum, medicinski tretma in izolacija. Domovi so bili in so še vedno grajeni brez povezave z lokalno skupnostjo, vasjo ali mestno četrtjo.

Veliko vprašanje je, ali je res edini odgovor vse večja prilagojenost in namenska gradnja stavb za starejše, pa tudi, ali si bomo pri sedanjih demografskih trendih sploh lahko privoščili tak koncept. Vsekakor je potrebna strategija integracije in samoorganizacije, ko skrb ni v celoti prenesena na državo niti ni posameznik prepuščen sam sebi, ko je odgovornost celostna in vgrajena v vse plasti družbe in vsa življenjska obdobja.

1 Pavla Horáková, *Teorija čudnosti*, Sanje, 2021, prev. Anjuša Belehar

V 21. stoletju se, kar se tiče urbanosti ter načinov bivanja mladih, ponekod hitro, drugod pa mukoma in postopno uveljavljajo nove paradigme, kot so co-living, co-housing, live – work in tako naprej. Če pa natančno premislimo, lahko hitro ugotovimo, da so se te in podobne oblike že zdavnaj uveljavile pri starejših generacijah. Co-living je na neki način preizkušan v domovih za stare, co-housing poznajo starejši kot varovana stanovanja in tudi live – work je način, ki je starejšim vsaj enako blizu kot vsem drugim.

Včasih so te oblike rezultat politike, ki se zavzema za vključujočnost, solidarnost in ekonomijo delitve. Bolj pogosto pa so vzroki drugje: gre za posledico ekonomskih potreb in zmožnosti ali pa za rešitev, s katero se mlajše generacije odrešijo neposredne skrbi za starejše svojce. Stari so velikokrat obravnavani kot biznis, zlasti pri koncesionarnih domov za stare, ki z varčevanjem na stroških večajo svoj dobiček. Ekonomska logika je pri pomanjkanju »postelj v domovih« neizprosna.

Deklarirana politika je deinstitucionalizacija, kar je seveda v redu. A kaj, ko ni aktivnih instrumentov, ki bi spodbujali različne modele in oblike, kot so alternativni prostorski, programski in bivanjski modeli, sobivanje generacij, zadružno bivanje in številne specifične situacije, v katerih žive posamezniki in ki se jih ne da zvesti na skupni imenovalec. Pri razvijanju in implementaciji teh načinov bi morali poleg načela družbene in ekonomske vzdržnosti uveljavljati različne, vsakemu posamezniku prilagojene razvojne modele z zmožnostjo zajemanja različnih življenjskih stilov. Pri tem je zelo pomembna tudi arhitekturna zasnova, tako v smislu umeščanja kolektivnih formacij v mesta in vasi kot pri oblikovanju dostojnih stanovanj in drugih prostorov, ki jih uporabljajo starejši.

Ne gre le za dnevne nakupe in obisk zdravnika, pomembna je tudi miza v kavarni, kjer se srečaš s prijatelji in znanci, pa kulturna ponudba, stiki z različnimi ljudmi, živalmi ... Idealno je, če gre za vzdržne modele, ki delujejo na principu samoregulacije. Tako, da se tudi neizbežne spremembe v fizičnih zmožnostih posameznika kompenzirajo z medsebojno pomočjo in bivanjem v skupnosti.

V arhitekturnem smislu je ključna strategija prenova. Prenova hiš in stanovanj, pa tudi prenova sosek, vaških jeder, mestnih predelov in tako naprej, v povezane in smiselne celote, ki bodo omogočale sobivanje, kompleksno, človeka vredno življenje za ljudi vseh starosti. Pri tem se lahko zgledujemo po tradicionalnih modelih družbene organizacije in skrbi, kot je npr. kmetija in vaška skupnost, hkrati pa razvijamo nove inovativne modele. V temelju vsakega projekta mora biti spoštovanje in upoštevanje različnosti ter različne kooperativne oblike. Lahko gre za pametna mesta in stavbe, za eko in bio ter samooskrbne skupnosti in tako naprej. Vsem udeleženi, zlasti starejšim, mora biti zagotovljeno sodelovanje (participacija) v vseh fazah načrtovanja in gradnje njihovega bivalnega okolja, tako pri določanju pravil organizacijsko in ekonomsko vzdržne skupnosti kot tudi pri snovanju arhitekturnih rešitev. Le tako bo presežen *top down* pristop, ki po navadi zgreši realne potrebe.

Številni filmi, kot je npr. slovenski *Sanremo* (2020)², z empatijo obravnavajo odnos med čustvi, staranjem in boleznijo. Film raziskuje nenavadno ozračje doma za starejše, ki niha med poetičnostjo in nekim višjim spoznanjem, povezanim s starostjo in otroškostjo. Filmov, pa tudi knjig ter drugih literarnih in umetniških del na to temo je seveda neskončno. Številni opozarjajo na kruto zapuščenost, ki jo v zadnjih letih življenja doživljajo številni starejši. Predvsem pa naslavljajo stereotipe in predsodke, o katerih je v Sobotni prilogi časopisa Delo pred skoraj desetimi leti natančno razmišljala pedagoginja in andragoginja dr. Dušana Findeisen:

Pogost stereotip, ki ga podpira sama država s svojo politiko (tudi evropska politika je v tem pogledu trd oreh), je, da je star človek nujno odvisen, šibak, potreben zaščite; po tem stereotipu se ravnata socialno varstvo in socialnovarstvena politika, kar je prav, če ne gre za stereotipen pogled, ki izključuje vse druge starejše, ki niso v tem stanju ...

Če hočemo premestiti stereotipe o starejših, jim moramo prisluhniti, jih slišati in biti z njimi v dialogu. V vsakem posamičnem primeru, zlasti danes, ko ljudje živimo zelo različno in nepredvidljivo, kar je značilnost postmodernega časa. Tudi starejši ljudje živijo zelo različno, so različno prehodili življenjsko pot, imajo različno znanje, različno kulturo. Ni jih mogoče stereotipno pometati v isti koš in jih prekriti s pregrinjalom zaznanih skupinskih značilnosti.³

Ta trditev velja seveda tudi za arhitekturo, ki se zavzema za lepo starost.

2 *Sanremo*, celovečeren film scenarista in režiserja Miroslava Mandiča, govori o Brunu in Duši, ki živita v domu starejših občanov.

Občasno se srečujeta, skupaj preživljata čas, a vedno sproti pozabljata, da se poznata. Kljub temu sta vesela vsakega novega srečanja.

3 <https://old.delo.si/zgodbe/sobotnapriloga/stereotipi-so-za-to-da-nam-ni-treba-nenehno-razmisljati-s-svojo-glavo.html>

Discounting the strict regime and the constant presence of illness and death, a retirement home is a lot like an endless school camp or summer camp. After all, there's a wealth of mischief to get into in this place, too. You can just as easily sneak into rooms, draw on the faces of unsuspecting heavy sleepers, do a bit of wife-swapping, and party. Others do your cooking, washing and cleaning, and make your bed. You don't have a thing to worry about, just a ton of peers all around you.

When I'm old, my ideal is living in a countryside community, on a renovated homestead with a yard and a garden. The rooms are suitable for individuals or couples, there is also a kitchen and a socialising space. Washing and cleaning are contracted out. If we don't feel like cooking, we order in. We spend our days mostly working - after all, we earned our way through life with mental labour, so we carry on. We write, translate, study. Sometimes, we get young visitors whom we're mentoring, occasionally we prepare lectures attended by students and others interested parties, and we also maintain rich and diverse relationships with our partners. All it takes is some good company, pooling the money, and getting down to business. I don't want to go to an old folks' home - I want to go to a fun folks' home!¹

While the population is rising in the global South and East, Europe is facing a demographic decline and an ageing trend. Slovenia is no exception - not only is its senior population rising the fastest, the elderly are also the most socially disadvantaged group, which is clearly demonstrated also by the experience of retirement homes during the coronavirus pandemic. Problems related to the ageing of the population affect the fields of health, social affairs, and housing, but in terms of awareness and policy, they're often attached distinctly low importance in the society. Beside health problems, the elderly face loneliness, difficulty maintaining their (often oversized) flats and houses, and living in unsuitable spaces. European trends favour the elderly independently living in their own homes and in familiar environments for as long as possible. Habitation models and services such as assisted living and sheltered housing are being developed, as well as co-housing communities, home care, day centres, intergenerational centres, etc. - insufficiently so, as far as Slovenia is concerned. On the other end of the population, there are young people, who face different, but also serious life problems: precarious work, as well as unattainable housing and delayed independence.

Yet the generalised segmenting of the population into generations, into "the young and the old", stands to undermine the fundamental principles of the community and of solidarity, which are central to a sustainable development of a society. How can architects address the problems of an ageing society? How can we transcend the stereotypical generational divisions and think new community spaces?

For decades, we as architects have been involved with the typologies of elderly living. The results of this research are certainly important and some have found their way into legislation as well as everyday life. Norms addressing the needs of the disabled and the elderly have been adopted both for the development of retirement homes as well as for flats, for greater accessibility of public buildings, and for elderly-friendly city layouts. But these achievements draw attention away from the actual problems and tasks: what is needed is proximity, exchanges with people of different age groups, everyday normality. Particularly the changes in attitudes towards age and the elderly are opening up possibilities for new integrative and shared ways of living. The established institutional forms, chiefly among them retirement homes or old-age homes, have been and will continue to be the living environment only for a small percentage of the elderly. The vast majority of us grow old at home, and will also do so in the future. This realisation gives rise to many questions and problems, but also to opportunities.

It doesn't take too many analyses to see that the current state of affairs of elderly living lacks social rationality and is unsympathetic to them. Most often, the elderly live alone, lonely, in oversized and unsuitable houses or units. Living with their children and their families or the retirement home is the only alternative. All other forms of living are so rare they can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The Modernist principle, established in the beginning of the 20th century, pursued the division of functions and specialisation. Buildings were designed and built for a highly specific purpose. This logic is still prevalent with retirement homes. The main principles focus on the minimum subsistence level, medical treatment, and isolation. Retirement homes were and continue to be built without a connection to the local community, village, or city quarter.

The big question is whether the ever-increasing adaptation and purpose-built development for the elderly is the only answer, as well as whether the current demographic trends are even able to support such a concept. The strategy of integration and self-organising, where the care is not wholly transferred to the domain of the State yet the individual is not left to their own devices, is certainly in order - a strategy where the responsibility is comprehensive and embedded in every social stratum and in every life stage.

1 Pavla Horáková, *Teorie podivnosti (A Theory of Strangeness)*, 2018

As regards urbanity of young people and their ways of living, the 21st century has ushered in - in some places quickly, in others gradually and with difficulty - new paradigms such as co-living, co-housing, live-work, etc. But a careful reflection quickly allows us to realise that these and similar forms have taken root with older generations a long time ago. In a way, co-living is being tried out in retirement homes, co-housing is known to the elderly as sheltered housing, and even live-work is a way of living with which the elderly are at least as familiar as everybody else.

Occasionally, these forms are a product of a policy striving for inclusiveness, solidarity and a sharing economy. But more commonly, the causes lie elsewhere: they are a consequence of economic needs and capacities, or they are a solution allowing the younger generation to shed the responsibility of caring for their elderly relatives directly. The elderly are often regarded as a business, especially with retirement home operators, who economise on the costs for the benefit of their bottom line. And with limited admissions due to excess demand, the quest for profit trumps all.

De-institutionalisation is the official policy, which is all well and good. But there is a dire lack of active instruments fostering different models and forms such as alternative spatial, programme and living models, co-living of multiple generations, co-operative living, and the numerous specific situations in which individuals live and which may not be reduced to a common denominator. In developing and implementing these ways, various individually-tailored development models allowing for different living styles should be applied alongside the principles of social and economic sustainability. Architectural design is of great importance in this regard, both in terms of siting collective formations in cities and villages, and in terms of designing decent housing and other spaces used by the elderly.

This is not just about routine shopping and going to the doctor's, it is also important for there to be a table in a café to meet friends and acquaintances, cultural offerings, coming into contact with different people and animals, etc. It is ideal if these models are sustainable and operating on the principle of self-regulation so that the inevitable changes in the physical capabilities of an individual may be compensated for with mutual help and living in a community.

In the architectural sense, refurbishment is the key strategy. The refurbishment of houses and units, but also the refurbishment of neighbourhoods, village cores, city quarters, etc., in order for a connected and sensible whole to emerge each time at the other end, allowing for coexistence, a complex life worth living for people of all ages. To achieve this, we can follow the example of traditional models of social organisation and care, such as a farmstead or village community, and at the same time develop new innovative models. Each project must be rooted in respect and consideration of diversity, as well as in various co-operative forms. These can be represented by smart cities and buildings, by eco- and bio-approaches, subsistence communities etc. All those taking part, but especially the elderly, must be granted participation in all phases of planning and construction of their living environment, in setting the rules of a sustainable community in terms of organisation and economy, as well as in designing architectural solutions. This is the only way to advance beyond the top-down approach, which typically fails to address actual needs.

Numerous films, such as Slovenia's *Sanremo* (2020)², approach the relationship between emotions, ageing, and illness with empathy. The film explores the curious atmosphere of a retirement home, which oscillates between poetics and a kind of transcendent understanding related to old age and being a child. Of course, there is no shortage of films, as well as books and other literary and artistic works which deal with this theme. Many point the finger at the cruelty of loneliness, which many elderly experience in the final years of their lives. But in particular, they address stereotypes and prejudice articulated very clearly by pedagogy and andragogy expert Dr Dušana Findeisen in the Saturday supplement of newspaper *Delo* almost ten years ago:

A common stereotype, upheld by the State and its policies (European policies are a nut no less difficult to crack in this regard), is that an old person is necessarily dependent, weak, wanting protection; this stereotype is the guideline for welfare systems and welfare policies, which is fine as long as this is not a stereotypical view which excludes all other elderly to whom this does not apply.

If we wish to beat stereotypes about the elderly, we must listen to them, hear them, and maintain a dialogue with them. We need to do this in each individual case, particularly nowadays when people live in very different and unpredictable ways, which is typical for the Postmodern period. The elderly, too, live very differently, they have walked different paths through life, they know different things, have a different culture. There is no one stereotypical size to fit them all, and if it seems as if there is, it's because we chose to only focus at the common traits of the group.³

Naturally, this statement also holds true for architecture striving for an enjoyable old age.

² *Sanremo*, a feature film written and directed by Miroslav Mandić, tells the story of Bruno and Duša who live in a retirement home.

Occasionally, they meet and spend time together but they keep forgetting that they know each other at all. In spite of this, they enjoy each new encounter.

³ <https://old.delo.si/zgodbe/sobotnapriloga/stereotipi-so-za-to-da-nam-ni-treba-nenehno-razmisljati-s-svojo-glavo.html> (Slovene only)