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## **HOUSED by CHOICE, HOUSED by FORCE - Homes, Conflicts and Conflicting Interests**

January 21 – 22. 2016

Architecture\_MPS, University of Cyprus; Cyprus Institute

### **Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:**

**1. Paper / Proposal Title:** Prefabricated Socialist Estate: Divergent Housing Model Augmented by an Atmosphere of Belonging

**2. Format:** Written paper

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**5. University or Company Affiliation:** Keene State College, New Hampshire, USA

**6. Abstract (300 words):**

After World War II the Soviet Union gradually forced a centrally planned economic model on postwar communist Poland. That process, coupled with a significant need for urban reconstruction, resulted in waves of in-migration to larger regional cities. In consequence, the growth and sprawl consumed adjacent towns and rural regions, and was fueled by the invention of ferroconcrete prefabrication techniques that spread rapidly behind the "Iron Curtain". This economy of scale provided housing for millions of inhabitants previously lacking access to running water, sewage systems, and space conditioning. However, it also laid the foundations for a number of future social and urban design problems. For instance, the increase of individual mobility put a significant strain on social/recreational space carefully designed by city planners. Additionally, changes in consumption patterns rendered the centrally planned apartment sizes obsolete as families grew and acquired more personal property.

Based on an example of a modular ferroconcrete plate construction located in Wroclaw, Poland, this paper identifies fundamental housing issues related to externally imposed political and governance structures, their short- and long-term influence on the built environment, particularly in the light of substantial changes that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall, and suggests divergent futures of similar housing developments in the region. Additionally, the author discusses a set of converging factors that delineate the perceptual transformation of an “atmosphere of belonging” through the eyes of a person growing up within the confines of a prefabricated high-rise socialist estate. The analysis utilizes concepts of rationalization, nostalgic reunification, and a “home, sweet home” syndrome in order to isolate the changes within the estate and the evolution of the socio-economic system from the observer’s maturation process.

The result is a comparative analysis of housing as a basic human necessity augmented by the feeling of belonging as a basic human desire.

### **7. Author(s) Biography (200 words maximum for all authors):**

Professor Sapeta is a broadly experienced architect with passion for teaching, eye for good design and sound detailing, and practical knowledge of sustainability. Over the last decade and a half, he worked with numerous boards, building committees and private clients primarily on Civic and Community type projects. He is a strong believer in collaboration and integrated systems approach to solving design challenges. Practicing those beliefs led to multiple projects recognized by clients and various peer organizations. He serves as an Associate Professor of Architecture at Keene State College in New Hampshire since 2008 and teaches sustainable design studios, digital imaging, and commercial construction courses. He offers Project-Based Service-Learning courses focused on sustainability and social justice. His research is centered around the issues of spatial density, the roles of civic and community spaces, and the future of regional towns and cities.

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