

CEMETERIES AS PARTS OF SUSTAINABLE CITIES: THEIR CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE NEEDS

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Abstract. *City cemeteries are one of the typical parts of cities that can play several important roles in the life and development of a city. Some are located on the outskirts, others near the centres of modern cities. They should be carefully included in the city's development plans to exploit their potential in terms of isolated green spaces. However, most municipal authorities usually pay very limited attention to them, and the background of the Czech secularised society also has a significant effect on the low attendance and care of cemeteries. This leads to neglected care for them and vandalism in these areas. The article aims to find out the interest in cemeteries among the general public and focus on their further use in the city for their sustainability. The research focused on the cemeteries of Ostrava, the third largest city in the Czech Republic, where it examined their current state and possibilities for their improvement in order to fulfil their current and future role. The identified weaknesses will help manage the transformation of cemeteries so that they remain a full-fledged part of Central European cities. The conclusions suggest architectural and other changes to cemeteries that would be necessary to fulfil their future role.*

Keywords

Cemeteries, land use planning, cemetery renewal, vandalism, burial, grief

1. Introduction

A general phenomenon evident in the condition of cemeteries, mostly of large cities, is the marginal interest

of city representatives in the care and improvement of cemeteries, “despite the fact that it has a direct impact on land use planning and social integration.” [p. 98 in 1]. As a result of gradual secularisation, society is turning away from honouring the dead, which has a gradual negative impact on the direction, appearance and visiting rate of cemeteries [2, 3]. The post-socialist society of the Czech Republic continues to face systematic support of departure from the church as promoted by the communist regime [4]. As a result, the cemetery loses its privilege of consecrated ground, where the bereaved come to pray for their deceased loved ones. On the contrary, changes to the political regime in Czechoslovakia after 1948 resulted in a controlled transition from church ceremonies to civil ceremonies and the systematic promotion of cremation. This concerned a long-term process, when... “the long-standing conservatism arising from the established tradition of church ceremonies has not yet been overcome and simple civil forms of burial are promoted with difficulty. This is why even more intensive support is necessary of interest in the current boom in burials by cremation and the establishment of columbaria. The government of the Republic adopted Resolution No. 1093 on the perspective of constructing crematoria in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic on 14 December 1960, [p. 4 in 5]. Changes in the perception and use of cemeteries will also necessarily take place along with the spread of burials by cremation [6].

While cemeteries, which are part of the urban structure, can serve at least as a place for taking a walk for mothers with prams or for relaxing during a lunch break, cemeteries in the peripheries remain nearly completely abandoned. It is the distressing condition of cemeteries in large cities that has encouraged us to consider the role of such complexes in today's society and public space.

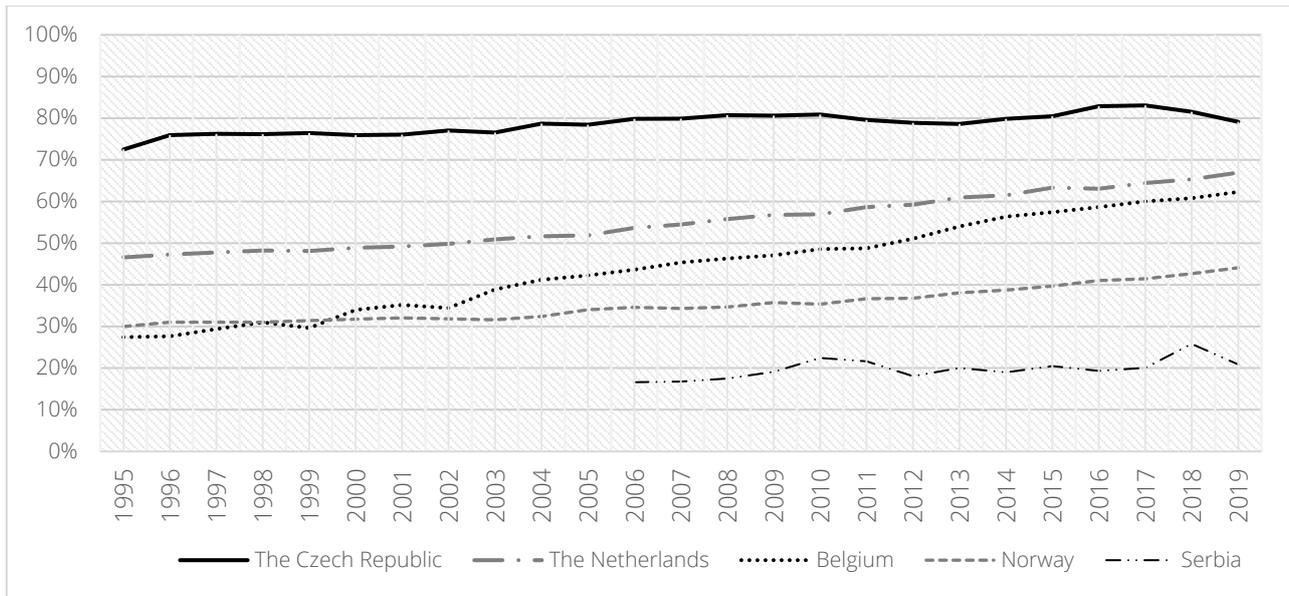


Fig. 1: Comparison of the proportion of cremations in selected states (data by: The Cremation Society of the Great Britain [13])

We consider it important to discuss the current situation of Central European cemeteries in large cities from many aspects. We continue to consider these isolated gardens with mature vegetation, which are what Central European cemeteries are, an important ecosystem within the terms of the city organism. If we understand the definition of public spaces according to Act No. 128/2000 Coll., the public space means “all squares, streets, markets, sidewalks, public greenery, parks and other spaces accessible to everyone without restrictions, i.e., serving general use, regardless of ownership of this space.” In spite of their enclosure, strict definition and separation from the surrounding area by a fence and limited opening hours, cemeteries can also be understood as a public space in the meaning of its definition. Of course, they are an important element supplementing city functions. Many of them are an important example of sepulchral art, which deserves attention for its artistic value. However, the most important is their significant historic, social and cultural aspect, which, with regard to their roles, should assume an important place in the social values of care of deceased loved ones from the aspect of sustainability and education or from the aspect of a legacy for future generations and, last but not least, to ensure their sustainability in the city.

2. Methods

In the former research, the authors made a review of contemporary cemeteries, learned about their social use and development, which allowed the elaboration of an overview of prosocial cemeteries and funeral facilities. We focused on monitoring the equipment of regional cemeteries (14 samples), examined selected Prague cemeteries in terms of their sustainability within the city organism, and focused on their possibilities for funeral

tourism. We compared the cemeteries of the large cities of Prague, Brno and Ostrava with the existence and functioning of rural cemeteries in the Vysočina region, South Bohemia and the borderland within the Sudetenland (the development of cemeteries after the expulsion of the German population after World War II). E.g. [6, 7, 8, 9]

The research that is published here was focused on cemeteries in Ostrava. Ostrava is the third largest city in the Czech Republic with about 300 thousand residents. First, an analysis of cemeteries in the city of Ostrava was performed in terms of their location, significance and also equipment (existence of chapels, ceremonial halls, crematoriums, technical background, staff facilities and equipment for visitors). This part of the research was followed by the creation of a questionnaire, which was answered by 113 respondents during the month of July 2019. Its aim was to find out the frequency of visits to cemeteries, their reasons for visiting, the distance of the visited cemeteries from the place of residence, expectations of visitors with details of weaknesses. We have included the presumed reasons for visiting the necropolis and also the negative aspects that may, from our point of view, affect the attendance of cemeteries. We also gave respondents the opportunity to express their own opinion. Representatives of all ages and levels of education were addressed. The questionnaire survey was conducted in selected cemeteries in Ostrava themselves, but also outside them, with the aim of including people who never or rarely visit the cemetery. We wondered how much our hypothesis would be confirmed or refuted, or whether we would meet with an opinion we had not heard before.

Authors also analysed the changes taking place today in the examined cemeteries in order to verify whether their management/maintenance follows social needs and preferences.

The part of the research published here was completed comparing the prosocial importance of Ostrava cemeteries with other European sites

3. Conditional transformation of cemeteries

The necessary transition of cemeteries to new methods of burial was previously discussed [9, 3]. This is related not only to trends from abroad, but mostly to the significant increase in interest in funerals by cremation in the Czech Republic, which has risen to a nationwide average of 80% (International Cremation Statistics, 2014), large cities have registered an even higher average, for instance Prague 95% and Liberec 98% [14, 15]. This situation creates a greater need for space for storing ashes, not for burials in the grave, as was common in the first half of 20th and earlier centuries.

The high degree of cremation as a way of burial according to research [16, 17] is mainly influenced by the secular, socio-economic and psychological aspects, which in large cities outweigh religious beliefs and the willingness to uphold traditions [16].

This fact of conditional transformation [19, 18] can increase the use of some complexes. However, it will not assure increased interest in the deceased after their remains have been laid to rest. We have therefore focused current research on the needs of visitors (whether in relation to burial places or funeral ceremonies) and establishment of realised or expected every-day functions in complexes. We consider it important to identify current memorialisation practices and emerging trends, highlight key priorities for improving service outcomes for the bereaved, and understand the implications of changing consumer preferences for the provision of services [21].

Research ongoing in the United Kingdom (Cemetery research group, University of York) or Norway [2] is certainly inspiring for an idea of the possible ways of using the cemetery, i.e., in addition to its original function of burial, it is also meant to be used as a public space. The problem is that its results cannot be used in our country in general due to the markedly different cultural-social background of the perception of cemeteries, which are historically considered differently in different parts of Europe. Activities normally carried out at cemeteries under the influence of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church (now the Norwegian Church) or in a different social background in the UK, as well as the different perception of public space, are unacceptable for cemeteries in Central Europe, which has been under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church for centuries and they are still perceived as sacred places, despite the high degree of secularisation.

It is unthinkable to go jogging in the strictly defined consecrated cemetery complexes of Central Europe. Cycling and in-line skating, as well as dogs, are strictly

forbidden in these complexes. We therefore viewed cemeteries from the viewpoint of the visitor and sought a motive for visiting the cemetery. The publication by architect Jan Almer (1880 – 1960) “On the need for the reformation of Prague cemeteries” [25], which points out the need to reform cemeteries according to the needs of funeral guests, e.g. by establishing shelters for guests to gather under during poor weather, was inspirational. Because minimum development is apparent in this direction, we focused our research on the satisfaction of visitors and funeral guests with cemetery equipment for the living, in order to verify whether the existing equipment is sufficient for the activities being carried out. We also performed an analysis of the existing 25 cemeteries in large cities, in particular to establish their weaknesses from the viewpoint of the needs of their users.

There is already a tendency by the bereaved to refrain from using existing cemetery chapels or funeral halls for ceremonies; they usually plan ceremonies outside the cemetery or leave them out completely, which is a problem not only for the operator of the facility, but chiefly from a social aspect, when the deceased’s life is not celebrated and the bereaved are not provided with the opportunity to pass through the individual phases of bereavement if they are unable to adequately say farewell to the deceased [26]. There are changes in burial practices [17], but what remains is the need for mourners to develop ways of coping with the actual loss in order to remain balanced through the grief [27].

Changes will therefore be generated over time by the economic situation, whereas operators of cemeteries, funeral halls and crematoria are already forced to start focusing on the living, who decide whether to use the aforementioned structures and complexes as clients [10].

4. Sociological background

While death is the culmination of life and all its developmental phases for psychologists, for theologians it is the end of life on earth and the beginning of another life, while sociologists consider death the end of the path of life, [p. 35 in 10] and today’s society passes on its fear of death to the medical sciences and believes in their power. The desire to leave something of oneself behind is transferred from headstones and tombs in the direction of fame and earthly power [11].

Cemeteries used to be a truly public space in the sociological meaning of the word. They were accessible to everyone, open to the public. The bereaved visited them often and in great numbers, they took care of the graves and remembered their deceased. They are not only places of remembrance (...) they are also especially selected places of attractive cultural and historical significance [p. 120 in 20]. In the symbolic meaning of the words, cemeteries are a place where the present and the past, the living and the dead meet. They used to be a place where people of various age groups, social classes, genders and

...races could meet and spend time together, [p. 29 in 12]. Today, in contrast to this fact, the Prague Cemeteries Administration had to announce the “adopt a grave” event (www.hrbitovy-adopce.cz), where people can choose the grave of an important figure, contributing financially towards the upkeep and care of it, because these graves, specifically in cemeteries of the Capital City of Prague, lie forgotten.

The lack of interest in burial sites, poor maintenance and vandalism is mainly a problem in large cities. This does not apply as fully to smaller settlements. The loss of anonymity, the higher degree of religiousness, the smaller distances and consideration of public opinion assures more care of the place of rest of deceased loved ones in smaller towns and villages [6]. Identity maintenance and the degree of secularisation of the site are also problems. Abandoned original German cemeteries in the area of the Sudetenland after the German population was displaced after the Second World War are exceptions to this statement. Some of them have remained completely abandoned, others continue to be used by the Czech population, however often with damage caused to the original headstones as a result of hatred. However, this is a separate topic, to which we devote independent research.

5. Analysis of Ostrava cemeteries

A separate task is the analysis of cemetery areas in relation to the existing settlement [22]. This is first a position in the discussed area, where the prerequisite should be a comparison of the walking distance from the seat in question. It is also a comparison of the existing area with the proposed zoning plan. Within the city of Ostrava, all 25 cemetery areas were examined. Subsequently, a pictorial map of the city was made with marked cemeteries and a comparative table of the significance of cemetery areas within their existing areas.

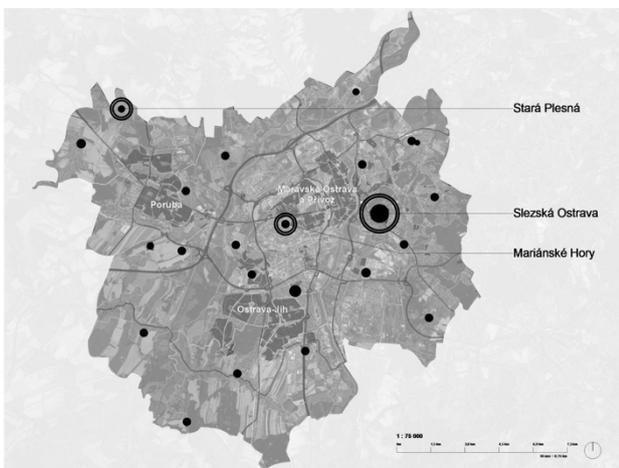


Fig. 2: The current locations of cemetery complexes in Ostrava (source: Ondřej Juračka)

It is obvious that in the final comparison, the cemetery in Silesian Ostrava with a representation of 51% = 251,202 m² significantly dominates with its area, only the cemetery in Vítkovice with 12% = 58,416 m² is in second place. On the contrary, most of the other cemetery areas did not exceed 3% - see Graph No. 6. Subsequently, the then valid zoning plan of the city of Ostrava was examined, which counted as an increase in the cemetery area by up to about 47%. This area increase concerns completely new cemetery areas, which are intended for the city districts of Ostrava-Jih and Poruba. These cemetery areas later copy the layout of the settlement, which includes the most populous city district of Ostrava-South with 105,417 inhabitants. This is about 35.2% of the population in Ostrava. This also corresponds to about 1,191 deaths per year. However, this calculation is an estimate and was derived from the fact that in the years 2010-2014, there were 11.3 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants [23]. In the case of the Ostrava-Jih and Poruba districts, it would not only be a significant relief of the surrounding municipalities, but also an improvement in the walking distance.

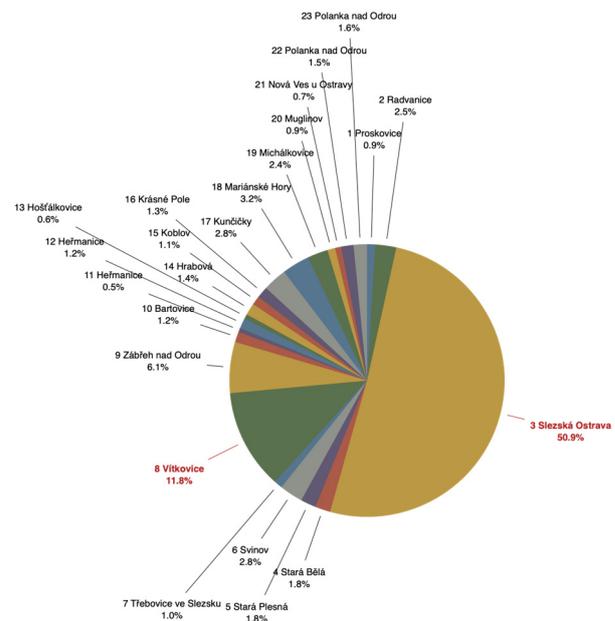


Fig. 3: The current share of the cemetery area in the existing cemeteries in Ostrava and at the same time an overview of all cemeteries included in the research, which is in this article (Author: Ondřej Juračka)

"The urban plan also envisages an increase in the area of the existing cemetery areas. This means that the current cemetery in Silesian Ostrava can increase from the current 25.1 ha to 42.7 ha - this would mean an increase of almost 41%. In the case of the outskirts of the city of Ostrava, there is also an increase in the cemetery area, often by more than 50% (in the case of the outskirts of Proskovice by up to 75.6% more). [24]"

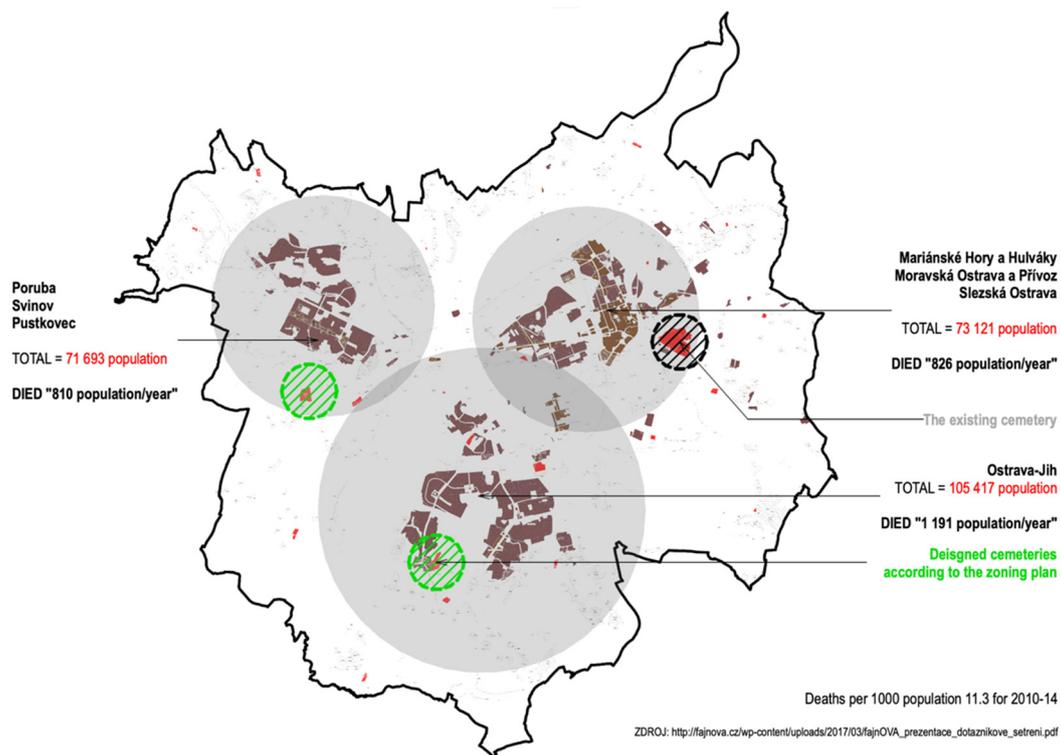


Fig. 4: Distribution of cemetery areas according to the urban plan of Ostrava (Author: Ondřej Juračka)

However, it is necessary to take into account the specific development of the city of Ostrava, which is very unique. Previously, these were separate settlements, today urban districts, which mostly contained a separate infrastructure, including cemetery districts. As the city merged into a single entity, "local" cemeteries often disappeared in favour of a new and larger entity. The negative impact is the resulting walking distance, where in the case of the Poruba city district, the walking distance to the Central Cemetery in Silesian Ostrava has already increased from the original 15 minutes by more than three times. However, it is essential that the above-mentioned "extinction" of cemeteries was caused mainly by unsuitable subsoil. One such example is the former city cemetery in Moravian Ostrava. "The Municipal Cemetery in Moravská Ostrava (today's Milady Horáková Park) was very inappropriately based on impermeable clay soils, which caused groundwater to accumulate in the graves." [30 p. 13] As a result, the remains of the cemetery were exhumed and relocated to the current central cemetery in Silesian Ostrava and the cemetery was transformed into a city park.

6. Results

The questionnaire survey provided answers from the respondents almost evenly distributed in the specified age categories in order to ensure the opinion of all generations. Also, the representation of respondents by education was

quite balanced, as can be seen from the chart below.

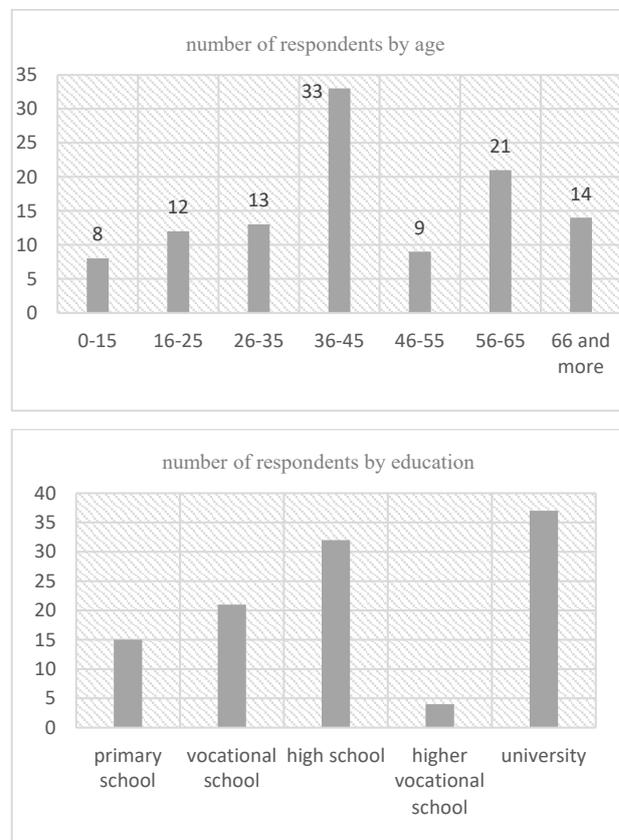


Fig. 5: Number of respondents by age and by education (source: questionnaire survey, Klára Palánová, Ondřej Juračka)

We assumed more reasons to visit the cemetery than were subsequently shown to be relevant and we found this result very surprising. The reason is nearly always visiting a deceased love one, caring for the grave or the site of the urn/ashes and attending funeral ceremonies. Other reasons appeared in single cases and are therefore insignificant. This includes walking or meeting with someone, an artistic experience, etc. Ostrava cemeteries are also rarely visited for funeral tourism (grief tourism), as is common in selected cemeteries in Prague (Olšany cemeteries, Vyšehrad cemetery) [9].

In the event that the facilities lacking at the cemetery were specified, young people up to 45 years of age willingly confirmed our hypothesis of a lack of space for resting, prayer, meditation and space for refreshments, even just in the form of vending machines. Older people over 65 years of age, usually women, pointed out the feeling of danger and the ever-present vandalism.

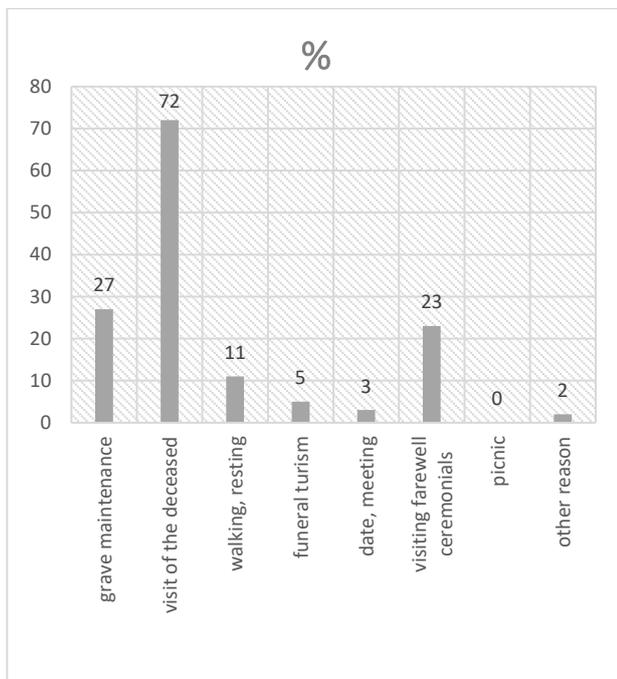


Fig. 6: Reasons for visiting cemeteries expressed as a percentage according to answers from respondents in the questionnaire survey (source: questionnaire survey, Klára Palánová, Ondřej Juračka)

With regard to the issue of vandalism and the visibly poor care of gravesites, we were interested in the frequency of visits by respondents to cemeteries in Ostrava. The fast lifestyle, great distances and preference of life here and now, along with the generally low religiousness and also the anonymity of a large city generate a low visiting rate to cemetery complexes [6]. It is therefore positive that only 9 (i.e., 8%) of respondents admitted to zero visits to a cemetery (this mostly concerns people up to 45 years of age). A third admitted to visiting a cemetery at least 1-2 times a year, mostly on the occasion of the state holiday of All Soul's Day on November 2nd. This holy day is considered to be a social event and flowers are laid on the grave and candles are lit. The tradition has

been supported by primary schools in recent years, which focus on educational outings with pupils at cemeteries at this time. Another third of the respondents visits a cemetery 3 – 6 times a year, mostly at Christmas, Easter, the anniversary of the death or birth of the deceased or during a funeral. The reason for visiting the cemetery is usually a visit to a deceased loved one, to a lesser degree to care for the grave or urn site and to attend a funeral. Several individuals gave their reason for visiting a cemetery as walking, meeting someone or funeral tourism.

From the viewpoint of the sustainability of cemeteries within the city organism, it was also very important to establish the frequency of visits by individuals throughout the year. We found that 14 respondents (i.e., 12%) visit the cemetery once a month and 9 (8%) visit every week. However, this is conditional to the cemetery being a short distance away from their place of residence or employment (within 10 minutes).

What seems to be absolutely crucial for the future objective of cemeteries is the fact that nearly three quarters of respondents (69%) choose to visit at the weekend or on a state holiday, in the afternoon. The visiting rate is therefore significantly lower over the week, which is closely related to the respondents frequently mentioned (one fifth of respondents) need to increase safety (either using a camera system, patrols, municipal police and also by improving lighting away from the main cemetery routes) and also an emphasis on the ever-present traces of vandalism and lack of interest in care of gravesites.

On the basis of an analysis of the current realisation of new cemetery complexes and the accompanying funeral architecture in the Netherlands and Belgium, the questionnaire included an inquiry regarding restaurants or another options for refreshment within the cemetery complex. Using the example of the Belgian realisation of a new cemetery with crematorium in Heimolen [28] with a restaurant situated close to the main entrance to the cemetery (but on the land of the cemetery) or with a link to the discreet and popular North Lodge cafe directly in Brompton cemetery in London close to the entrance, we can see an opportunity for this use by funeral guests, for example, and also by visitors to the cemetery. It is not usual in the Czech Republic to have any type of refreshments on the perimeters or within the cemetery complex, despite the fact that the location means half an hour travel for half of respondents and even 45 – 60 minutes travel for a quarter of respondents. The location of cemeteries at the periphery of the city assumes a longer journey. In the questionnaire, 17 respondents (16%) confirmed interest in any form of refreshments (even in the form of vending machines), mostly for the purpose of refreshment when visiting the cemetery, not for funeral banquets. Surprisingly, this concerned people up to 45 years of age. This was closely linked to the requirement – by a third of respondents – to establish a sheltered area at cemeteries for rest or during poor weather.

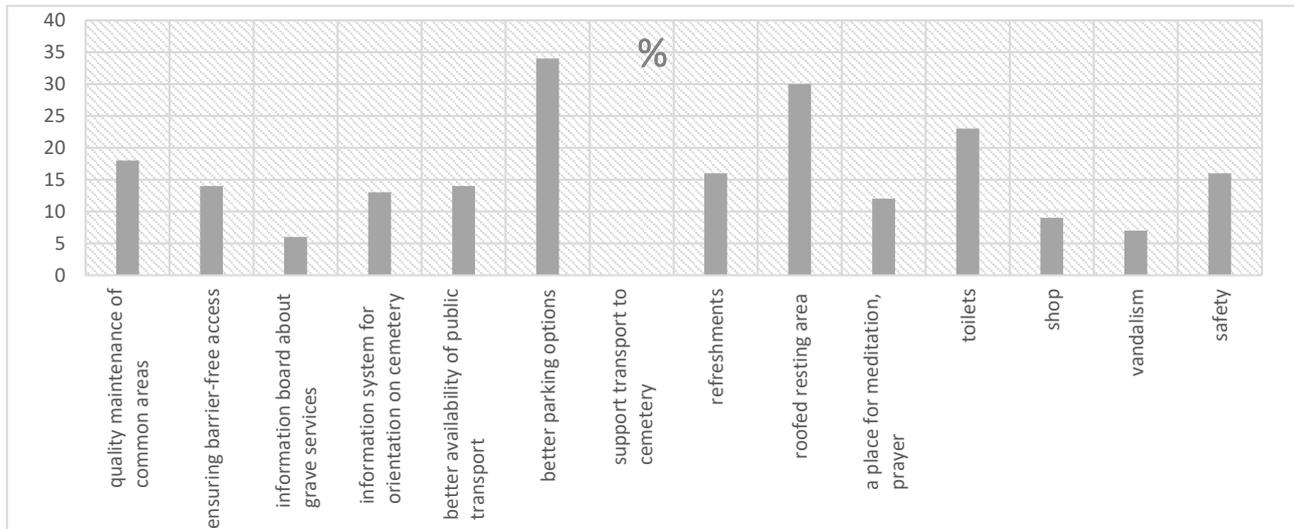


Fig. 7: Elements or services that are lacking at cemeteries or identification of the weaknesses of cemeteries as indicated by respondents (source: questionnaire survey, Klára Palánová, Ondřej Juračka)

This leads us to the comment by architect J. Almer, who writes of the need for an appropriate vacant space where vehicles and the public can gather in greater numbers. He considers the absence of such a space to be a defect, particularly on the occasion of important funerals and various celebrations, especially in the area surrounding funeral buildings and chapels, because neighbouring tombs and graves are often seriously damaged during similar large gatherings, particularly due to simple curiosity and often also the sensationalism of the crowd. The dimensions, modification and furnishings of rooms and buildings for displaying the deceased, organising funerals and funeral or posthumous ceremonies, are in most cases completely insufficient or even dismal in most cases at all cemeteries, unless funerals are held in churches built especially for this purpose or at churches that are also parish churches. There is similarly no shelter for the public in the event of sudden poor weather, particularly rain. He also mentions the difficult access to some cemeteries by public transport and also access to graves, mainly in older parts of cemeteries, when the aspect of proceeds from the lease of graves has exceeded the aspect of the layout, where there are minimum paths and these are also unpaved, which means they turn muddy when it rains. [25] (p. 6). 2 respondents pointed out the layout and difficult access to densely situated graves.

Analysis of the results of the questionnaire survey confirmed that the abovementioned comments have not been dealt with for over 90 years and remain of current interest, not only in Prague, but also in Ostrava.

Furthermore, in addition to ordinary shelters to protect against poor weather, 12 respondents added that they lack a space for meditation or prayer at cemeteries. The

examined cemeteries in Ostrava usually lack a church chapel, in a minimum of cases they are equipped with a funeral hall and there is a crematorium at the central cemetery [29]. This concept is also supported by the fact that 26%, i.e., 313,847 residents of the Moravian Silesian Region (out of a total of 1,201,431 residents) [31], for whom Ostrava is a regional city, consider themselves religious according to the results of the 2011 census, whether they claim affiliation to a particular faith or not. This proportion exceeds the nationwide average and more attention devoted to this topic in the future would therefore be justified.

If only a bench currently serves as such a place at the cemeteries in Ostrava (sometimes identified as a lacking or insufficient element of cemetery equipment in the questionnaire survey), this situation seems insufficient according to the current needs of society.

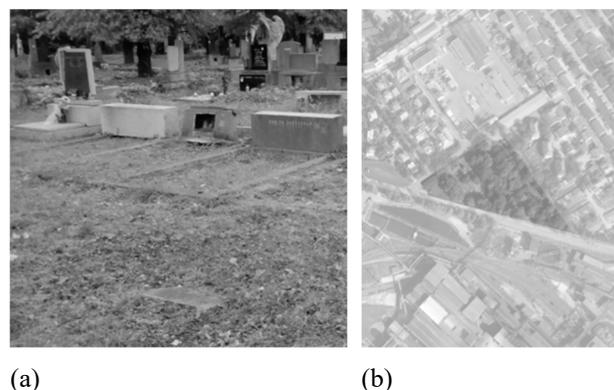


Fig. 8: Cemetery at Ostrava-Mariánské Hory with (a) unmaintained graves and urn niches destroyed by vandals who stole or destroyed the urns. (b) an arial image of the torso of the original cemetery complex (source: Klára Palánová, 2020)

7. Discussion

An example of a lack of interest in cemeteries by representatives of city districts is the cemetery complex in Ostrava-Mariánské hory [30], which is currently used minimally, only ashes may be stored here. It is infrequently visited and suffers from vandalism. Part of the complex was aggressively closed during socialism, including part of the Jewish cemetery. This was forced to make way for the development of metallurgical plants and the newly constructed busy road (Železárenská). The complex lost its original symmetrical rectangular layout, which grew from the entrance, with a main road in the form of a cross. There is now just a piece of land in the form of an irregular triangle here. Renovation of the cemetery was discussed by students of architecture of the Technical University in Ostrava with representatives of the city district in 2012 [12]. Despite extensive media coverage, a presentation by the university and a vague presentation by the town hall, the complex was not modified. Efforts for renovation have now been renewed by the newly-appointed mayor, and so the question is whether this will provide a future and restore dignity to a place of final rest.

Another example is the crematorium dating from 1970, which can be seen at the central cemetery in Ostrava-Slezská Ostrava [29]. This rises from the highest point of a sloping complex, with a straight, ascending monumental avenue leading to it from the main gate. The overall appearance and monumentality, as well as the dark and tall space of the funeral hall, does not correspond to current requirements and concepts of a place for funeral ceremonies and interest in leasing this space has fallen considerably. The organisationally chaotic structure does not function fully according to the needs of the current market. Its monumentality in the landscape of an extensive cemetery complex, along with the similarly monumental headstones along the access route, does not provide a suitable space for meditation or relaxation. Similarly, access to the complex, with regard to the hilly terrain and its size, is complicated for older residents, disabled people or young children. The location of the cemetery outside the main area of Ostrava, 50 minutes away by public transport from the most densely populated city districts, is not very suitable. The original central cemetery located near the historic centre of the city was closed due to inappropriate soil conditions. The original cubist crematorium, which was part of this city cemetery, was demolished for political reasons. "Despite the fact that it was a symbol of progress and the fight against reaction and obscurantism at the time of its origin, the communist regime considered it simply a sombre reminder of death and the unavoidable human fate, which had no right to be located right next to an avenue along which processions on the First of May travelled, manifesting the joyful mood and optimism of the working masses." [p. 44 in 32]. The population therefore chooses smaller and closer cemeteries in less populated city districts or in neighbouring villages to lay their loved ones to rest, which increases their capacities outside the actual potential of these villages. The need to revitalise the

funeral hall of the crematorium resulted in an architectural tender, which is currently still in progress. However, there are no other plans for the time being for the actual cemetery complex, which absolutely lacks a human scale.

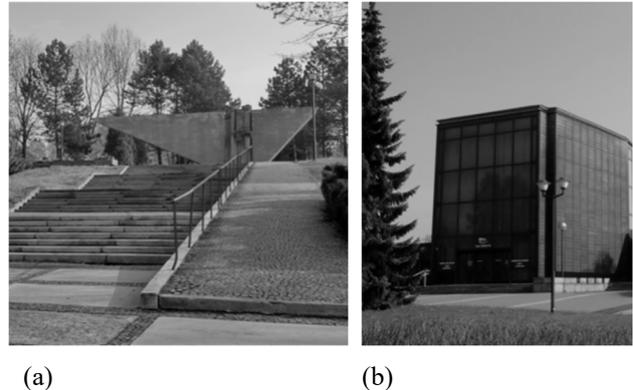


Fig. 9: Central cemetery in Ostrava-Slezská Ostrava with (a) monumental access avenue to the funeral hall of the crematorium, (b) crematorium (source: Klára Palánová, 2018)

However, positive changes can be seen, for example, in the cemetery in Ostrava-Plesná [33], where a place for meditation has been created within the scope of the garden and landscaping and this is certainly one of the first actions that could be developed further in the future also with regard to the positive response among respondents. The author has tried to express the lines of the lives of the population of the Ostrava-Plesná city district using the undulating lines of the paths, the pavements are intended to connect the individual epitaph slabs where the urns with ashes are stored and symbolically connect the fates of the deceased. The sculpture situated in the middle of the lines of paths symbolises the Christian cross as a symbol of hope for the souls of the deceased.

The cemetery in Bologna in Italy is also inspirational. This has been designed as a mirror image of the city of the living, i.e., it creates homes for the dead, bordered and connected by arbours, like in Bologna itself. This creates a number of "houses" and gardens, which provide enough covered space for meditation and rest.

A similar solution can be seen at the Hus Congregational House in Olomouc, where a whole floor below the prayer room is devoted to storing urns in a columbarium. As a reformation church, the Hus Congregational House has permitted cremation since 1920. The space itself is simultaneously a chapel and a place for prayer, rest and visiting deceased loved ones. There is also a space here for lighting candles and a fountain for placing flowers.

The placement of columbaria under a roof or within a newly established "chapel" is more and more frequent. Original historic chapel tombs, which would otherwise be unused, are also used for this purpose, for example at Olšany Cemetery in Prague.

And the last example of the positive trend in cemeteries, but never realised, is the concept of the former director of the Prague Cemeteries Administration, Mgr. Martin Červený, to establish a gift and coffee shop at the

edge of the cemeteries in Olšany, which are a funeral tourism destination.

8. Conclusions

Over the last one hundred years, since the time cremation was permitted in Czechoslovakia, there has been a marked change in burial methods, which historic cemeteries with skeleton graves have gradually responded to, albeit not very flexibly.

However, attention should also be devoted to assuring suitable and expected facilities for the bereaved and other visitors to the cemetery.

We focused on cemeteries in Ostrava, the third largest city in the Czech Republic, in order to prove the need for changes and the development of the needs and expectations of respondents living in the city, on the basis of a questionnaire survey.

This mainly concerns the supplementation of existing complexes by minor architectural elements and landscape elements, the existence of which will provide a physical and also spiritual resource for visitors to the cemetery and the bereaved.

We cannot expect Central European historic cemeteries to become a normal part of public space within the urban system. They will always remain isolated green gardens of peace, which however – particularly in large cities – will remain an important element of the city organism.

In future research, it would be appropriate to compare our results with the opinions of respondents from other regions, where we can assume significantly different rates of religiousness, or with the distinctive function of funeral tourism, whereas different percentages of individual expectations and needs and also functions would be expected and others would probably be added.

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