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DEFORMATION OF THE CITY

DEFORMOWANIE MIASTA

Abstract

Cities in the present time are developing in a very vivid and dynamic way. At the same time, in Polish reality, many cities are physically losing the characteristics of buildings that defined the urban space for centuries. It seems that some cases of Polish cities are heading towards „formlessness”, and their structure instead of being crystallized is deformed and destroyed. The problem of the loss of the cities' urban form was named by the author as the deformation of the city. The article presents social, cultural and legislative phenomena which cause negative processes, also points out the chances and possibilities of real prevention of urban structure's break up.

Keywords: Chaos, shapeless city, deformed city, city without city, future of cities, city deformation, city creation, city formation

Streszczenie

Miasta w obecnym czasie rozwijają się w sposób bardzo dynamiczny i żywiołowy. Jednocześnie w rzeczywistości polskiej wiele miast fizycznie traci cechy zabudowy, która od wieków definiowała przestrzeń miejską. Wydaje się, że niektóre przypadki miast polskich zmierzają w kierunku „bezformia”, a ich struktura zamiast podlegać krystalizacji ulega deformacji i destrukcji. Problem utraty miejskiej formy miast został nazwany przez autora deformowaniem miasta. W artykule zaprezentowano zjawiska społeczne, kulturowe i legislacyjne, które wywołują niekorzystne procesy, wskazano także na szanse i możliwości realnego zapobiegania rozbijaniu struktury miejskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: Chaos, bezkształtne miasto, zdeformowane miasto, miasto bez miasta, przyszłość miast, deformowanie miasta, kreowanie miasta, formowanie miasta

1. Background

Nowadays, the cities are developing in a very vivid and dynamic way. At the same time, in Polish reality, a lot of cities physically lose the character of buildings, which defined so far the space considered as urban. It seems that some Polish cities are heading towards “formlessness”, and their structure, instead of being crystallized, is subject to deformation and destruction. The processes visible in the context of urban transformation are largely reflected in the changes that are taking place in our society and the broadly understood culture. A number of publications including *Living in the Endless City* [22] and *Drosscape – Wasting Land in Urban America* [6] point the problems of city deformation and reconfiguration, making it a reference to issues in a broader European-Atlantic context.

In the contemporary literature it can be noticed that there is a constant search for the formula of the city: the following projects can be included within the above mentioned topic: Kartal – Pendik Masterplan of Istanbul by Zaha Hadid, Masdar City by Norman Foster, Songdo – studio Kohn Pedersen Fox and Seven Mountains on Zira Island near Baku by the Danish studio Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG). In all of them the city is treated as an experimental field [22, p. 44–55].

On the other hand, we more often look at traditional urban arrangements with some nostalgia. Remo Koolhaas publications or Marta Schwartz¹. We also observe a strong movement of urban renewal which is a counterbalance to modernism – seeking to correct their own misconceptions and assumptions of modernism. This move aims to restore the old form of cities and the “meaning of the city”. According to the developers, what shaped the cities was not the need to meet housing needs nor to create infrastructure. Examples of this type of activity in Poland are Elbląg city center plan, Germany plans for Gladbeck (Michael Stojan Projects), Kirchsteigfeld (Drewitz) in Potscheid, Rieselfeld and Vauban in Freiburg, and Great Britain in Poundsbury, Poundbury, Aberdeen and Coed Darcy.

Sociologists have noted that in many cities their indigenous – rooted communities live in internal opposition to the existing and proposed changes in the scale of the city and the proliferation of its territory which destroy the traditional, fine texture of the building tissue. In practice of spatial management, in order to ensure social acceptance for the uncontrolled spread of development, the local population is presented with positive equivalents of the inconvenience caused in the form of the development of road and technical infrastructure. It is also argued that the territorial development associated with the new investment areas brings profits into a significant increase in the budget of the municipality which should be reflected in the well-being of its inhabitants.

Sociologists also point out that uncontrolled development produces untamed social phenomena and processes – similar to those in Biology. They point out that under natural conditions, a foreign implant – a new organ or invasion of a hostile virus – encounters natural resistance from the body. The organism is trying to reject what it defines as an intruder in

¹ The emerging terms “city within a city” or “non existent urbanism” are also reflections of the processes that have arisen in cities, [27].

Houston, Texas

The Houston Ship Channel (due east of downtown to the water) is the region's densest concentration of intermodal sites, manufacturing establishments, and contaminated land. This region exhibits a classic dropshape signature with the majority of wasted deindustrialized land near the city center and the wasteful low density land around the city's periphery. The urbanized region also contains over 4,200 closed municipal solid waste landfills that may potentially be redeveloped.



Fig. 1. Analysis and determination of entropic sites and coefficients for Houston, Texas (source: [6, p. 123])



Fig. 2. A project of urban tissue transformation for the Kartal Region in the Metropolis of Istanbul, under the direction of Zaha Hadid (source: [36])

the system. Immunosuppressants are used to overcome the body's resistance to induce it to receive a transplanted organ. Similarly, there is a local community existing in the territory which is forced to operate in the new socio-spatial conditions. Behaviorists argue that, as with immunosuppressive drugs, the side effect of violent and unnatural spatial changes may be the destruction of natural protective systems and constituting the community at sociological level.

Persistent damage to the immune system in biology is that the body is unable to resist any infection or danger. Accordingly, they assume that the damage and disruption of existing social relationships, especially in small towns, can have similar effects.

In many small Polish cities we observe the lack of use in the planning work of existing and previously planned plans and analyzes. Marjan Kloosterboer in *Lessons of Informality* writes that actions taken in the context of new plans are based more on the tabula rasa approach than on the continuation or refinement of existing documents [19, p. 62–70]. The effects of this type of “approach” is observed in many municipalities outside the urban agglomerations such as Łomianki, Otwock, Wolomin near Warsaw, Zielonka, Zabierzów or Mogilany near Krakow. In this way there is no respect for the value of the current spatial layout and the existing landscape. There is also no appreciation of the values resulting from the band, concentric, knot or stripe-node layout of land invested in combination with high natural and recreational values with a surrounding, harmonious and already existing small urban scale.

Undoubtedly, contemporary culture is characterized by some degree of undermining tradition and authority. Looking more broadly, it seems to be the result of the dominant ways and styles in Art and Philosophy in the twentieth century. Modernism, cubism, postmodernism, and deconstructivism are the directions that have definitely broken with tradition. Modernism strongly connected with conceptualism has been called a modern movement in architecture. Kubism developing in the early twentieth century, predominantly in art, broke with the traditional representation of reality in favor of abstraction, which was

expressed by drawing lines, colors and contours. Postmodernism, although drawing on historical resources, using different stylistic styles, does not take cultural heritage seriously, it further strengthens the conviction of relativity depending on the subjective perceptions of the individual. In turn deconstructivism from its assumption is a deformation of form. Not too far from the truth is therefore the statement that modern culture, which grew mainly on the basis of postmodernism, it is a deconstruction of culture and social values. This is stated by Maria Miczyńska-Kowalska in the book *Values in postmodernism. The concept of deconstruction of social reality – critical analysis*.

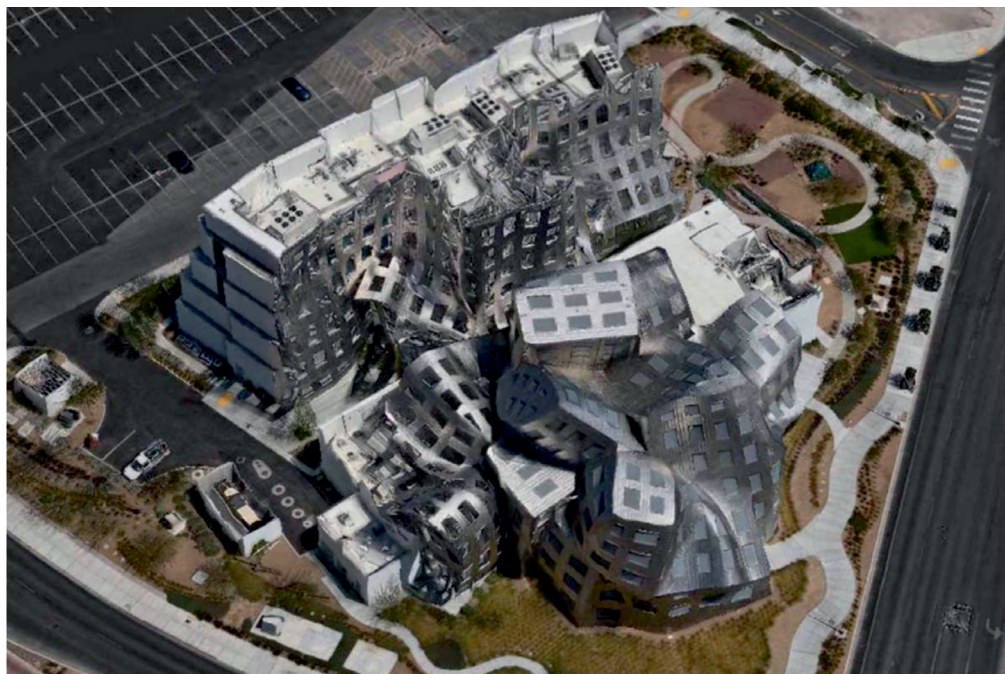


Fig. 3. Example of the deconstructive foundation by Frank Gehry's of Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health (source: [37])

Looking at the world from the perspective of civilization development, it is clear that in each of the epochs a slightly different image of man has been formed. Undoubtedly, the culture influences man and their values and patterns of behavior. The extreme and even militant individualism which is exposed by the media, in the example of politicians and even scholars, makes everything seems subjective and relative (compared by Milena Banasiak: *Beauty as a subjective and objective value* [2]). It can also be noted that what is new and modern is increasingly important. Media exerts a tremendous impact on human beings by boosting momentum to continuous change. We often behave like a spectator in front of a television that jumps from the canal to the canal, unable to stop for longer period of time, unable to concentrate for a while, and we do not enjoy our achievements and gifts for more than a few minutes.

2. Problem

Chaos in the world of culture, aesthetics and ethics results not only in conceptual chaos but also in spatial chaos. Many contemporary urbanists, architectural theoreticians and planners emphasize the fact that the structure of the city has been broken down [18, p. 125–133]. The uncontrolled spread of urban organisms in the form of distracting growth and suburban hyperplasia is one of the fundamental problems of the modern city². In fact, today's city could be compared to a clay pot. In literature, we find statements describing this phenomenon as island urbanism, urban chaos and city explosion. More broadly, looking at the disintegration of the urban structure on its fragments leads to the dysfunctionality resulting from the lack of interaction between the related parts of one organism, which is each city. In living biological organisms, it is difficult to imagine, for example, the development of the left part of the body in the case of hypopituitarism and underdevelopment of the right part. This problem is well characterized by the statements made by the Commission of the European Union: "The future of cities" quoting "Urban sprawl and the spread of low population density housing is one of the main threats to sustainable territorial development. Public services are getting more and more expensive and difficult, natural resources are over-exploited, public transport networks are insufficient, and the dependence on cars and traffic in cities and towns is very high" [13, p. VI].

The contextual approach (in the analysis of the problem) presented in this text attempts to state (present) the current city against the background of the prevailing culture, social transformation and image of the present man. Reflecting on the future of the city in our surroundings, we should ask ourselves a few questions: how to prevent the city from growing, how to control the dynamism causing the breakdown of the city form as it does not lead to city formlessness³?

3. Antidotum – theoretical part

Theoreticians of aesthetics and philosophers emphasize that to shape something, one has to shape something. This is a creationist approach, based on the assumption that there must be an entity that undertakes the creation act of the so-creator. The evolutionary approach, on the other hand, is based on the assumption that everything is happening in the same way that nature can manage itself. Life, however, shows that in the case of a city form cannot

² The modern man seems to say, "I'm free, because I am free", and he is sure of his own right and is convinced of his infallibility. It conforms to a media standard, living momentarily and most often without consequences. The world of advertising seems to imply the principle of "I consume, so I am". Much individualistic and even selfish attitudes are promoted and praised largely. The paradigm of individual economic success and material values is one of the foundations of our collective existence. Man becomes more of a pilgrim or a constantly moving nomad in a dynamic and permanently changing reality. Psychology and pedagogy confirm that it is increasingly difficult for us to reach a state of harmony, peace and balance.

³ The attempt to answer and solve these problems cannot remain in the world of moralizing appeals that "should be" that "it is necessary" and that "it is", the modern man who hears that "something must" – shudders at the very thought of it this type of statement reacts almost allergically.

give up only the elements. The process of creation has analyzed precisely St. Augustine. The philosopher of creation is the same as the formation. According to him, creation is the giving or materializing of essences in a given object, in other words, giving the most essential and characteristic of a given object. St. Augustine writes that creation requires participation, that is the participation and engagement. Without this participation nothing can happen. In his opinion, each form also requires measure⁴. The conclusion of his vision is to say that only in a proper form we achieve the fullness of the proper existence of the given object. The penetration of the above analysis St. Augustine urges that the definition of urban development from the perspective of form is indispensable. Trying to apply these principles to the city, it should be stated that without the active participation of the local community, the form of a city cannot itself be realized; there must also be an entity that will take responsibility and act to create a model of a city. At present, such a symbolic entity is the designer of the Local Plan of Spatial Development, however; its powers in the sphere of influence on the shape of space are small because formally responsible for the development of the plan is the head of the mayor or the president. You also need to adopt a specific (forming) principle. In spatial terms, the essence of urban form is concentration – the compactness of buildings while the coexistence of public spaces. The measure of the city is the quantity, density and intensification of buildings, and the number, form and area of public space proportional to that quantity.

For the author, in terms of urban form, these qualities seem to be fundamental to urbanism. Lastly, as in every composition, and also for the author it is the city as well, for the introduction of order we need, like in music, a specific rhythm, which would additionally organize and systematize the material that is the matter of buildings and their interstates. For example, if the width of a building plots for single-family housing starts to be greater than 30 m, then we cannot speak at this stage about urban development. Interesting insights concerning the width of plots are provided by Jacek Kozinski's lecture entitled "The social costs of the current urbanization model borne by other groups outside the local government"⁵.

As it was said, the form requires a certain principle, therefore the world without principles is a deformed world, and the emerging towns are areas filled with formlessness, in other words, amorphous cities. The powerlessness associated with lack of composition in the city results from the lack of a shared sense of duty to take care of its form. The authorities are not directly and explicitly obliged to take care of the beauty of the village. The provisions of the Land Use Planning Act do not in any way oblige the authorities in the Local Spatial Development Plans to make compositional rules for agglomeration⁶. Finally, they are not competing with each

⁴ Referring these visions to a simple example, it is important to note that only a collection of pages or pages of the appropriate layout combined with the cover, the cover page and the content in the chapters gives – defines the book [1, p. 34–42].

⁵ Jacek Kozinski's lecture: Social costs of the current urbanization model borne by other groups outside the local government. Financial effects of abandonment of land consolidation. Profitability of urbanization processes. Conference material entitled: The financial implications of the Polish spatial planning system [31].

⁶ This problem was discussed and described by prof. Barbara Bartkiewicz, among others [3, 32]; Problems of harmonizing the space of Polish cities and areas in the light of internal conditions and integration with the European Union [30].

other and we have lost the feeling that they have to be representative. This problem was largely described by Alan Berger in *The Production of Waste Landscape* [6, p. 46–63].

Choosing in practice Polish “cheaper designers” developing the planning work results in simpler, easier and incomplete solutions. On the other hand, beauty, aesthetics and representativeness require time, resources and inputs, which we still lack. Often, somewhere in the interior we envy some of their beautiful cities, without making any effort to embellish our city and its immediate surroundings. Meanwhile, spatial order, as some studies show, is one of the catalysts of development. Alicja Kopeć (Spatial order catalyses the development of Gdansk) writes about this in her article. It must be remembered that beauty is self-promoting [20].

As studies show, housing development decisions are not procedures that stop urban sprawl. These decisions largely favor the atomization and breakdown of the urban structure into sets of independent monitors. In 97% applications for housing development decisions are considered positively – according to the proposals and plans of the investors. A filter and document that has a real impact on the city is the Local Spatial Development Plan (MPZP). This is one of the reasons why it is such an important piece of local law that translates into the form of our cities. No local land use plans or their incorrect – incomplete studies have a destructive effect on our space.

On the other hand, in analytical and specialist studies, the classification of urban spaces is often incorrect. The statistical adoption and recognition in European Union documents that population density of 3 persons/ha is equivalent to the suburbs, and the indicator of 15 persons per ha is characteristic for the city as the minimum indicator of urbanization, contrary to any of the principles described in the books on spatial planning and urban planning⁷. It should be noted that for single-family housing it is assumed that the density of the population oscillates from 40–100 persons/ha, and for the built-up 70–200 persons/ha⁸[8]. Estimation based on the aforementioned indicators of the number of urban and suburban areas in Europe casts doubt on the reliability of conducted research and analysis. In pre-war Warsaw, population density was 243 persons/ha, with no space for squares and gardens about 500 persons/ha.

4. Antidotum – practical part

unrestrained desire to build new areas at city borders seems to be a very important issue. It is a mental problem to give up the ability to build “my-own” terrain for many people. Looking for an answer to the question of when and why we are able to give up our reason, the author in psychological and pedagogical literature has found the answer why man resigns from his rights to:

⁷ The intensity of conflicts is, for example, inversely proportional to the [5, 31].

⁸ Data compiled by the author on the basis of indicators [from:] Table 1. Defining cities by population density, p. 3, [13].

- ▶ ideas (love, victory, truth, good).
- ▶ health,
- ▶ better future.

It seems therefore that, in order to strengthen the argument for non-development of a given area, it would be necessary to address these three issues. It is worth to take care of the idea a bit earlier than at the time of developing the Local Spatial Development Plan. Creating a proper image of the city over the years results not only in its appearance but also in its commitment to the promotion of the city. In this way, the feelings of pride, belonging, respect, values of the place and social self-consciousness are strengthened. One example is Copenhagen's multi-annual and systematic approach to making it a child-friendly city [14, 15].

The author tried on the basis of conversations with various investors and students and on the basis of his own experience to compile features which we are difficult to give up in the case of having own plot, or larger area for investment. These features are also described in the literature, among others, in the articles by K.C. Sivaramakrishmanna [29]⁹, where they are ranked from the hardest to the easiest.

1. Resignation from the possibility of any development of the plot,
2. Abandonment of certain building functions,
3. Resignation from a certain building size,
4. Resignation from the form of the building,
5. Resignation from parking by the building,
6. Resignation from the shape of the roof,
7. Resignation from the color of the building,
8. Resignation from the form of advertising.

The selected feature set shows the degree of difficulty and degree of resistance we encounter when developing the Local Spatial Development Plan. At the same time, the comparison shows that practically without special loads we are able to regulate and unify the buildings with the colors and shapes of the roofs. Examples of cities whose beautiful landscape is the synergy of these two traits may be Polish Masurian Ryn, and Italian Tuscany, also Florence and Siena. Even less would seem to limit the amount of usable colors and narrowing their spectrum can significantly standardize the building¹⁰.

Turning to the issue of abandoning the possibility of building a plot clearly visible that this is an extremely difficult problem. Contemporary man with constantly taught economic principles is not inclined to altruistic actions. Payment of compensation in the event of a change of management plan to the disadvantage of the investor, involving the reduction of investment opportunities in a given area, in practice is very rarely used as means of ordering

⁹ It describes different levels of democracy including various privileges and entitlements for a given level. Democracy at the level of the state, region (voivodeship) and city. It also demonstrates that the state interest cannot be undermined by the interest of lower-level democracy, i.e. regional interest, while the regional interest cannot be affected by the urban interest.

¹⁰ The choice of aesthetic as a possible basis - the mother of ethical choices, write in his book [25].



space at the stage of implementation of the Local Plan of Spatial Development. There are no common procedures for consolidation and exchange of the land by Jacek Koziński¹¹.

On the other hand, the lack of borders in many areas of life is not conducive to the belief that there should be such a limit in the development of the city and the spread of its development.¹² The evolution of cities should rely more heavily on transformation, understood as the stratification and transformation of the inner structure and form of cities. To a lesser extent, it should be the search for new forms in the suburbs or in areas not yet invested.

Because of the high fees and prices of properties in large cities such as Warsaw, Poznań, Cracow, Katowice, Wrocław, Łódź, their suburbs (outside the administrative borders) develop much faster than suburbs in administrative urban areas. In addition, due to the relatively constant travel costs, a large proportion of the population chooses larger, more comfortable and cheaper housing and homes under the city than smaller, more narrow, less comfortable and more expensive homes and houses in the city. Confronting even the two choices shows that homes and houses in the city should be more modernized and their cost of living (taxes, media charges) should be lower than in the suburbs¹³.

Another principle promoted by the state should be the principle of common good. Researchers studying the so-called. Common goods undermine the principles of modern economics that every human being is selfish. The basic thesis of common good is that while cooperation and altruism can be “locally unfavorable” for individuals, then groups can bring many evolutionary benefits. Edward O. Wilson and David Sloan Wilson put it this way: “Egoist wins with the altruist within the group. Groups of altruists win with selfish groups” [33]. “Already in the 1970s, Elinor Ostrom demonstrated in his empirical studies that hypotheses made by some economists that” people are incapable of long-term, stable co-operation “are false and unfounded. By researching various communities and even African tribes including Ethiopian farmers, rubber collectors in the Amazon, Indonesian fishermen, Töbel villagers in Switzerland, Ostrom has developed a set of rules for the so-shared resources ie those to which no community has exclusive rights”¹⁴. These principles according to Elinor Ostrom are as follows:

¹¹ “The social costs of the current urbanization model borne by other groups outside the local government. Financial effects of abandonment of land consolidation. Profitability of urbanization processes” [35].

¹² The situation of unstoppable development of the city clearly illuminates the following statement: “The measure of love is not how much we are able to give to another person, but from what we are able to give up”. The folk proverb says that habit is a second nature, so if we were used to the clear boundaries of our city for years, accepting it would be easier for us.

¹³ Such a description of the system of property taxes wrote in her work Barbara Bartkiewicz. The author also at several scientific conferences and several articles cited arguments for the tax increase as he moved away from the center, but in Polish realities are not yet known examples of cities that the amount of property tax inversely proportional to the distance of a given property from the center.

¹⁴ The basic questions that accompanied Elinor Ostrom during the research: (1) How to organize and manage for constant shared benefits when everyone is facing the temptation of goosebumps, avoidance of duty, and other opportunistic actions? (2) How to increase the initial opportunities for self-organization? (3) How to improve self-sustainability in the long run? (3) How to extend the possibilities of solving problems while using shared resources through self-organization without the need for continuous external support?

1. It is necessary to clearly define the limits of the common good, including who grants the right to use the resource,
2. Outsiders who do not contribute to maintaining the resources do not have the right to access and benefit or to use common goods,
3. The rules of benefit must take into account local conditions, as well as the limits of benefits – and what can be used,
4. The Kommoners, or beneficiaries of the common good, must be able to create or co-create the rules for the management of the common good – without interference by the external authorities,
5. Convoys must supervise themselves as to how their resources are shared or used,
6. The Kommoners must also develop a system of penalties for breaking rules, preferably with graduated sanctions, more and more annoying,
7. In the event of a dispute, the committees must be able to easily use the conflict resolution mechanism,
8. In the case of common goods, which are part of a larger management system, all rules must be multilayered polycentric and multilevel with benefits, monitoring, enforcement, conflict resolution and other entitlements - from local to regional level up to the domestic level [7, p. 26–28].

Although it is difficult to quantify the benefits of using the common good in the city, parks, green spaces, water reservoirs, public spaces, open spaces, but also a broader image of the city and its character, should qualify for these common goods. Many examples show that the cities in which an impersonal investor is ruling, even if the investor only piles public terrains, lose their citizenship and become somehow a corporate city. This largely endangers the attractive downtown areas in conurbations such as Katowice, Warsaw, Łódź or Poznań.

It seems that today we should at some time redefine the scope of the land use right and make a new codification of it, as described in part in *Recoded City. Co-creating Urban Futures* [12] and in Martin Baum's "Re-use" (reuse) process of urban renewal and revitalization [4, p. 145–154]. Examples of this type of activity are the Canning Town plan (a plan for parts of the eastern London district) and the Clear Willage program for Essex in eastern England.

Interesting action, shortly after World War II, was undertaken by Peter and Alison Smithson. This was an attempt to "re-identify the city". Already in the 50s of the last century, young CIAM members Peter and Alison Smithsons expressed their criticism of the ruling modernist dogma of a rational city with separate, distinct functions and disordered urban tissue. Working with photographer Nigel Hendersen tried, based on visual experience, to change the approach to urban planning. The essence of their founding was the experience accompanying man in urban space. This search for a new spatial coding appealed to architectural intuitions, employing human behavior similar to unrestricted children's play. It used the emotional reception of space as the key to its new codification. The impressionable experience of the city - going from house to street prompted them to formulate the idea of a hierarchy of relations, connections and social associations from home through the street to the urban districts. Their aim was to achieve social cohesion of the city by using proper tissue with a culturally recognized pattern of behavior.





Fig. 4. Presentation of urban space identification by Peter and Alison Smithsons at the CIAM conference in Aix-en-Provence in 1953

5. Conclusion

Stabilization maintained for centuries through faith, culture and tradition by the modern world is treated as anachronism. Challenging the foundations of ethical Christianity and natural law causes ethical and moral emancipation. In this way we are increasingly suspended in the ideological vacuum. However, in order to avoid total destabilization and destruction of culture and state, attempts to replace ethics are becoming increasingly commonplace – political ethics, based on the thesis that the only and ultimate measure of ethics is the law in force. The conviction that modern law is capable of shaping attitudes and controlling social behavior is in essence erroneous. In politics itself, especially at the local level, looking through the prism of individual good and career limits the field of vision only to the present, cutting off from the past and not looking to the future. The current effect is a measure of policy effectiveness. The words of the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard are more and more emphatic that “our existence goes beyond logic”.

If we want our cities to be re-urbanized, we must abandon passivity. Caring for any “form” requires effort and continuous effort – it is no different with the city. Examples of cities that have been leading a policy of shaping a particular image and form for a long time are Paris, Copenhagen and Berlin. Particularly in small towns, special attention should be paid to the outer areas - the coast and all the areas where investment pressures occur. These are areas where there is usually a rapid and uncontrolled development. It is important to put a stop sign for territorial expansion, in turn, to allow the downtown area to undergo further refinement and reconstruction. We have to give up the informality and indeterminacy that allows for any activity within urban and suburban spaces. It is not allowed to continue to allow the ill-considered wastage of space, which allows for free and inconsistent spillage of urban areas¹⁵. It seems important to focus on determinism and creationism in philosophy and culture, but also on closeness, rationality, completeness, harmony, clarity, uniqueness, legitimacy, as well

¹⁵ In English-language literature we deal with two terms: on the one hand there is term “waste” meaning waste, and the term “vast” means “vast” meaning large and vast urban areas.

as the reality and normativity that lead to the synthesis of culture and not to the culture of deconstruction¹⁶.

Observation of urban phenomena, however, suggests that we prefer beauty instead of formlessness and ugliness. Therefore cities like buildings should be carefully designed in terms of form and composition [11, p. 18–25]. In turn, in terms of functionality, the city was formed primarily as a community and a tool for meeting various social needs. According to New Urbanism theorists, unrestricted spatial and demographic development of cities consequently leads to their catastrophe. The pattern to which they claim to refer is the historic layout of the city with its central square and the quarterly surrounding it.

Slawomir Gzell made the right thesis that “in the liberal economy (in Poland after 1989) planning was considered as a tool of oppression”. At the same time treating the private property of the land as an inviolable property [17]. This approach in the long run leads to the depletion of open space in some small towns and suburban communities. This process may be akin to an energy policy that causes the depletion of non-renewable goods, to which some extent also undeveloped space belongs. In addition, the negation of the need and practice of urban planning and design leads to the formation of fragmentary and amorphous spaces, and in the areas of neighboring cities – overlapping amorphous urban areas¹⁷.

The impact of neoliberal doctrine in the economy, using the slogans of “better housing in a green habitat”, not only results in the outflow of population from the city, but also the outflow of capital and its relocation to suburban areas. It would be appropriate to change the structure or form of ownership of space, in which there should not be entities, i.e. very small and independent municipalities, which pursue spatial policy completely independent of large cities, consisting solely of investing in further free space.

Nowadays, the authorities try to be softly postmodern, pretending not to notice that in the physical sense, the outflow of people and capital in the long run means slow but consistent and time-bound agony of the city.

In Polish reality, in the absence of Local Spatial Development Plans, scattering of buildings continues, leading to the entropy of the settlement system of the city, resulting in system inefficiency and increasing costs of its maintenance in the sparse area. It seems that in the Polish spatial reality, At the very least, it is necessary to initialize the order, i.e., the sequences of actions consistent with the logic of reaching the desired and assumed result. These actions, if implemented, will ensure consistency in the creation of real and real urban space. At the beginning of this process should be the vision – “Idea”, which is the basis for the formulation of strategic objectives. In other words, without a substantively prepared and developed idea, what city vision we want to achieve and why, there is no question of its rational development, and even more of a planned and balanced development. The idea should include a “concept”

¹⁶ At the same time, it is important to deny the fear of making a mistake at the time of making such a decision. Such an anxiety leads to the failure to take any decision or to make a decision so general that nothing is wrong and, in addition, usually very populist.

¹⁷ In Polish reality, in the absence of Local Spatial Development Plans, scattering of buildings leads to further entropy of the city's settlement system, resulting in system inefficiencies and increased costs of maintenance in sparse areas.

that must include operational objectives. Finally, on the basis of a precise and clear concept, you can execute the “Plan”, which will in a detail solve a predetermined concept and sanction the findings and assumptions. This orderly design process is in contrast to the action that treats chaos as a synonym for dynamism, potential, and opportunity for more interesting development.

In the adopted solutions it is necessary to clearly translate the individual spatial decisions into concrete urban forms. First and foremost, they should be solutions consisting in complementing elements, and in addition, they create order and harmony. In particular urban reality, especially in small towns as a rule, one should accept:

- ▶ respect for the local identity (identity) of urban tissue based on the synthesis of the cultural, social and urban environment,
- ▶ maintenance of the area and size of the spatial units¹⁸,
- ▶ the distinctiveness of the character of the teams and the readability of the nodal points,
- ▶ uniqueness of borders,
- ▶ creation of characteristic points of the system along with new dominant.

The above mentioned features are nothing more than a consistent translation of the principles of urban composition presented among others. By K. Lynch, K. Wejchert or J. Żórawski.

At the same time, in thinking about the design of urban space, one must follow the principle of complementarity, taking into account the complexity and harmony of the whole system. This type of attempt was made by Shasa Delz during the implementation of the Adis Abebe Revitalization Program (GTZ 2006, Addis Ababa: GTZ 2006) [10].

He developed the rules of social dialogue accompanying the planning process, laying down the following principles:

- ▶ From “control to chance”,
- ▶ From “nostalgia to reality and rationality”,
- ▶ From “argumentation to dialogue and dialectical discussion”,
- ▶ From “thinking in what direction to thinking: what if – and what will be the effects of concrete decisions”¹⁹.

At the very end, Bartłomiej Gutowski could say that every city represents in the sphere an iconic expression of human strength and greatness, but at the same time its weaknesses and deficiencies. The city is an expression of our aspirations and desires and a testimony of the culture in which it was born. It would be good if the cities that left us would be a testament to harmony and order, not dissolution and romance [16].

¹⁸ Unit size should be adequate to units occurring in a populated, existing area.

¹⁹ The proposed strategy of action according to Felix Heisel and Bisrat Kifle, consisting in changes of attitude during spatial planning, described in accordance with the following principles: from simplicity towards immersion, from control towards possibilities, from nostalgia towards reality, from dialectic argument towards dialogic discussion [21, p. 190–200].

a)



b)



Fig. 5a, b. Expressive and consistent vision of urban space presented by the 4AM team Architects in the competition for the project pl. Narutowicza in Warsaw. The work awarded by the jury of the competition (source: [34])

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